

**"The Doctrine of Sanctification"****Romans 5:12-8:13****Part 20**

**INTRODUCTION:** In our study of Romans, we have been in Romans 7 now for quite some time. We are currently looking at some of the most important verses and thoughts which we will find in God's Word concerning the Christian life. We are looking at Romans 7:14-25. It is in these verses that Paul has recorded a discovery which he had made in his own life as a believer. He was saved, and the flesh had been crucified with Christ, but he had discovered that the flesh was not dead, but it was alive, and it still longed for a sinful life. He had discovered that in his flesh there was nothing good. He was saved but the flesh was still the flesh and there was nothing he could do to bring the flesh to the place where it longed for the which was spiritual. The flesh had to constantly be reckoned as crucified/powerless because it is only the cross that will render the flesh powerless.

Now, last week we talked about how all of us go through the battle with the flesh and we all fail miserably. The discovery which Paul recorded in Romans 7 is a discovery which everyone of us must make on our own. This discovery is made by failing in our battle and it is not until we come to the same conclusion that Paul reached in Romans 7:24 that we realize we need the Liberator/Jesus Christ in our daily lives.

Before we move on tonight I thought it would be a good time to consider the "time" it can take for us to make this discovery and to come to the place where we become dependent upon Jesus Christ in our everyday lives. I want you to notice what Miles Stanford recorded in his book, *The Complete Green Letters*:

*"It seems that most believers have difficulty in realizing and facing up to the inexorable fact that God does not hurry in His development of our Christian life. He is working from and for eternity! So many feel they are not making progress unless they are swiftly and constantly forging ahead. Now it is true that the new convert often begins and continues for some time at a fast rate. But this will not continue if there is to be healthy growth and ultimate maturity. God himself will modify the pace. This is important to see, since in most instances when seeming declension begins to set in, it is not, as so many think, a matter of backsliding.*

*John Darby makes it plain that "it is God's way to set people aside after their first start, that self-confidence may die down. Thus, Moses was forty years. On his first start he had to run away. Paul was three years also, after his first testimony. Not that God did not*

approve the first earnest testimony. We must get to know ourselves and that we have no strength. Thus, we must learn, and then leaning on the Lord we can with more maturity, and more experientially, deal with souls."

Notice the words of George Goodman:

"Some have been betrayed into professing perfection or full deliverance, because at the time they speak they are happy and confident in the Lord. They forget that it is not a present experience that ensures fruit unto maturity, but a patient continuance in well doing. To taste of the grace of God is one thing; to be established in it and manifest it in character, habit, and regular life, is another. Experiences and blessings, though real gracious visitations from the Lord, are not sufficient to rest upon, nor should they lead us to glory in ourselves, as if we had a store of grace for time to come or were yet at the end of the conflict. No. Fruit ripens slowly; days of sunshine and days of storm each add their share. Blessing will succeed blessing, and storm follow storm before the fruit is full grown or comes to maturity."

Let me show you another portion from Stanford's book:

"We might consider some familiar names of believers whom God obviously brought to maturity and used for His glory -- such as Pierson, Chapman, Tauler, Moody, Goforth, Mueller, Taylor, Watt, Trumbull, Meyer, Murray, Havergal, Guyon, Mabie, Gordon, Hyde, Mantle, McCheyne, McConkey, Deck, Paxson, Stoney, Saphir, Carmichael, and Hopkins. The average for these was fifteen years after they entered their life work before they began to know the Lord Jesus as their Life, and ceased trying to work for Him and began allowing Him to be their All in all and do His work through them. This is not to discourage us in any way, but to help us to settle down with our sights on eternity, by faith that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:12b, 14)."

So here is the point I want you to grasp; it takes time to reach spiritual maturity and there are seasons of growth and then there are seasons where we seem to make very little progress.

I will give you one more thought from Stanford and then we shall move on:

"Since the Christian life matures and becomes fruitful by the principle of growth (2 Peter 3:18), rather than by struggle and "experiences," much time is involved. Unless we see and surrender to this, there is bound to be constant frustration, to say nothing of resistance to our Father's development processes for us. Dr. A.H. Strong illustrates for us: "A student asked the President of his school whether he could not take a shorter course than

*the one prescribed. 'Oh yes,' replied the President, 'but then it depends upon what you want to be. When God wants to make an oak, He takes a hundred years, but when He wants to make a squash, He takes six months.'" Strong also wisely points out to us that "growth is not a uniform thing in the tree or in the Christian, In some single months there is more growth than in all the year besides. During the rest of the year, however, there is solidification, without which the green timber would be useless. The period of rapid growth, when woody fibre is actually deposited between the bark and the trunk, occupies but four to six weeks in May, June and July."*

So, growth takes time and it takes knowledge. There are some believers who go through their lives and they sit under legalistic teaching and they continue to live most of their Christian lives in utter frustration. Under the teaching they never come to understand that what is recorded in Romans 7 is something they too must discover. They are never taught that God uses their failures to bring them to the place of full dependence upon Jesus Christ.

Let me share something with you that I received from a news article this week:

*Pope Francis finally approved the changes he has long wanted to implement to the Lord's Prayer by replacing "lead us not into temptation" with "do not let us fall into temptation," reports UCatholic.*

I read this article this week several thoughts came into my mind.

### **Proverbs 30:6**

*<sup>6</sup> Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*

I realize the Pope is not a believer, but the article reminded me about how many people do not realize that falling into temptation is a part of the believer's growing experience. God does not cause us to fall nor does He tempt us, but He permits us to fall and fail so that we too will cry out as Paul did in Romans 7:24.

The past two weeks we looked at "The Struggle" and tonight we see the next heading;

## **I. The Hope**

### **Notice Romans 7:24**

Paul was looking to be delivered from the "corpse" of his flesh. The word "delivered" means "to be rescued". It was used as a military term speaking of a soldier who would run onto the battlefield in order to rescue his fellow soldier from the enemy.

**Notice Romans 7:25a**

Jesus Christ is our HOPE.

Now, there are those who teach that Paul is speaking of our "completed salvation" here. They will point to something that Paul recorded in Romans 8.

**Romans 8:18-23**

<sup>18</sup> For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

<sup>19</sup> For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

<sup>20</sup> For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

<sup>21</sup> Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

<sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

<sup>23</sup> And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Some teach that this final redemption of the body is what Paul is speaking of in Romans 7:25. They teach that Paul is looking ahead to the day when we get our new glorified body and we are then set free from this body of death. They also connect this with 1 Corinthians 15.

**1 Corinthians 15:53-54, 57**

<sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

<sup>54</sup> So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

<sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, it is true that when the rapture happens, or we die that we are then free from this body of death/the flesh.

But there is a major problem in teaching that this is what Paul has in mind in Romans 7:25 and the problem is, "What do we do until then? Is there no help for us now?"

In Romans 7:25 Paul is not looking toward our completed salvation because that would be no help against the flesh for today. He is speaking of the power that we have THROUGH Jesus Christ at this present time. God has not left us powerless only to wait for the redemption of the body when we receive our glorified body. God has provided for us the power to live the victorious life now. So, this power accessed through Jesus Christ but what does that mean to me?

This power only comes when we realize our inability to conquer the flesh and the temptations that appeal to the flesh. This power is received only when our inability is acknowledged. When we give up. He takes up. May the Lord give us the desire to please Him in a holy life and the will to give Him the reins of our hearts that He may produce His overcoming life in and through us by the Spirit! This power comes when we see our own helplessness and we reckon ourselves to be dead to sin and the law by being crucified with Jesus Christ. This brings to mind what Paul recorded in 2 Corinthians.

### 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

<sup>9</sup> *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

<sup>10</sup> *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

This is our answer! The more we acknowledge our weakness and rely upon the finished work of Jesus Christ the stronger we become for it is then that the power of Jesus Christ rests upon us.

Newell sums up this chapter writing...

*I thank God, for deliverance through Jesus Christ our Lord. Ah! The answer to Paul's self-despairing question, **Who shall deliver me?** is a new revelation, - even identification with Christ in His death! For just as the sinner struggles in vain to find forgiveness and peace, until he looks outside himself to Him who made peace by the blood of His cross, just so does the quickened soul, struggling unto despair to find victory over sin by self-effort, look outside himself to Christ in Whom he is, and in Whom (or with Whom) he died to Sin (Ro 6:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and to law! Paul was not delivered by Christ, but **through** Him; not by anything Christ then or at that time did for him; but through the revelation of the fact that he had died with Christ at the cross to this hated indwelling sin, and law of sin;*

and to God's Law, which gave sin its power. It was a new vision or revelation of the salvation which is in Christ- as described in Ro 7:4, 6.

The sinner is not forgiven by what Christ now does, but by faith in what He did do at the cross, for, "The word of the cross is the power of God." (1Cor 1:18) Just so, the believer is not delivered by what Christ does for him now; but in the revelation to his soul of identification with Christ's death at the cross: for again, "The word of the cross is the power of God."

It will be by the Holy Spirit, that this deliverance is wrought in us; as we shall see in Romans 8. **Through our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is God's order.**

#### **Notice Romans 7:25**

The end of this verse is a conclusion. It is introduced with the words "so then". The conclusion which Paul had reached was that with his mind or with the new man he would serve the law of God, but with the flesh he would serve the sin principle. In other words, he is telling us that the two natures will always be opposed. The new man longs to live in obedience to the law of God but the old man/sin nature longs to live in sin. If the flesh dominated in his life he would do that which he hated, but if the Holy Spirit dominated in his life then he would do that which the new man longed to do. Because this battle is ever present he needed to be dependent upon the finished work of Jesus Christ for daily living just as he was dependent upon the finished work of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin.

#### **Conclusion:**

When you were saved you had to stop trusting in your own ability and surrender to what Jesus Christ did for you upon the cross. It is the very same way for gaining victory over temptations of the flesh. We were crucified with Christ and so we are dead to the sin principle and we are dead to the Law which stirs sin up. So, to gain victory over sin we must stop trusting in our own ability (because we have none) and we must have faith in the work which Jesus did for us upon the cross. Until we see our inability and we rest in what Jesus Christ did for us we will struggle repeatedly with reoccurring sin.