

"The Doctrine of Sanctification"

Romans 5:12-8:13

Part 18

Introduction: In our study of Romans we are currently looking at Romans 7:14-25. It is in this section that Paul describes for us something else which the Law cannot do for us. So far, we have seen several things the Law cannot do. It cannot justify us for we are justified by faith alone. The Law cannot sanctify us for it has no power to do so. It cannot condemn us because we are dead to the Law in Christ. Once a person has died the Law has absolutely no authority over them. The Law can convict us, and this is one of the reasons why the Law was given. When the sinner is brought face to face with the Law the sinner is then able to clearly see their sin for the Law stirs the sin within the sinner.

In the section we are currently looking at we see yet another thing which the Law cannot do and that is it cannot free us from sin. The Law will make the sin known in our lives, but it has no power to free us from sin.

Last week in our study Paul stated a very important Truth concerning the believer.

Notice Romans 7:14

The Law is spiritual, but the believer is "carnal" which means "fleshy". The point which Paul is making here is that even after we are saved we still have the sin nature. He also states that he was sold under sin and so are we. This means that our flesh/sin nature is a slave to sin. The flesh cannot be made to crave that which is spiritual and therefore there will always be a conflict within our lives because of the two natures which exist within us. Trying to bring the flesh into submission to spiritual Truth is like mixing baking soda and vinegar. The two do not mix and when they are placed together there is a reaction. So, it is also true within our lives that when we try to walk in obedience to the Word of God in the power of the flesh we continuously fail. This is something which every believer experiences in their walk. As we move on today in our study Paul is going to describe the struggle which takes place in the life of the believer after salvation.

"The Struggle"

Notice Romans 7:15

There is so much Truth contained within this verse. Paul tells us that the very things he does not allow he finds himself doing. The life he desires to live he cannot seem to produce. He then states that what he does at times are the very things he hates.

Let me point out here something very important. For those who want to use grace as a license to sin and live however they please, then this verse is proof that you cannot do that. Let us remember that back in Romans 6 Paul stated that we are dead to sin.

Romans 6:1-2

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

² God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

The relationship which we once had with the sin nature has been broken and so we cannot go back and live the way we used to live before salvation. As we look at our verse here in Romans 7 we see that when a believer sins there is a conviction. There is a grieving of the Holy Spirit and therefore it causes a sadness and a repentance in our lives. So, for someone to profess to be saved and to then go and live in sin is proof they are not truly saved.

This does not mean we will not sin again for we do but it means that a life of habitual sin is not possible. Let me remind you again what John wrote in 1 John.

1 John 3:2-9

² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

³ And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

⁴ Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

⁵ And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

⁶ Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

⁷ Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

⁸ *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

⁹ *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

John tells us that habitual sin is the mark of the unsaved person. Now, someone might say, "Well, I know a person who is a believer and they have drifted off into sin and they seem to be enjoying their life." I say, "They may have PROFESSED to be a believer but according to the Bible they cannot be saved." Let me share with you a story as told by Dennis De Hann:

Dead Ducks Don't Flutter - *Many years ago, a wealthy man went duck hunting with a hired hand named Sam. They took a horse and carriage, and along the way a rim came off one of the wheels. As Sam hammered it back on, he accidentally hit his finger. Instantly he let go with some bad words. He quickly fell to his knees, asking God's forgiveness. "Lord, it's so difficult at times to live the Christian life," he prayed.*

"Sam," said the man, "I know you're a Christian, but tell me why you struggle so. I'm an atheist, and I don't have problems like that."

Sam didn't know what to say. Just then two ducks flew overhead. The man raised his gun and two shots rang out. "Leave the dead one and go after that wounded bird!" he shouted. Sam pointed at the duck that was fluttering desperately to escape and said, "I've got an answer for you now, Boss. You said that my Christianity isn't any good because I have to struggle so. Well, I'm the wounded duck, and I struggle to get away from the devil. But Boss, you're the dead duck!"

That insight fits Paul's description of his Christian experience in Romans 7:14-25. Struggle is one evidence of God's work in our lives. Forgiveness of sin is available, so don't despair. Remember, dead ducks don't flutter.

***Struggle, yes, it's part of living,
Nothing's gained on beds of ease;
But when our heart is set on Jesus,
Struggle drives us to our knees.***

There is therefore going to be times of failure in our lives but with that failure there will be a hatred for the sin which we have committed and an attitude of repentance.

2 Corinthians 7:10

¹⁰ For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Notice Romans 7:16

Paul's problem was not desire for he desired to walk in obedience to the Word. His problem was not knowledge for he knew right from wrong. His problem was a lack of power to overcome the desires of the flesh. When he did that which he did not want to do then he was agreeing with the Law that it is good. Let us keep in mind he is still on a mission to prove to the Jew that he was not casting the Law aside, but he is showing that the Law serves a purpose. The Law will frustrate an unsaved person until they cry out for salvation. It will frustrate a saved person who is trying to live a holy life by keeping a list of "do's" and "don'ts" in the power of the flesh. The Law will show a believer even though it is **good**, it can never make him **good** because the flesh is against that which is spiritual. The Law has no power to offer to us for sanctification. Sanctification comes only by the work of the Spirit, as He lives the life of Jesus Christ through us.

Notice a story from the Daily Bread:

*This verse is illustrated by the story of a little lizard known as a **skink** - The smooth, shiny lizard known as a skink doesn't ordinarily draw crowds at the zoo. But the little critter discovered by a homeowner in Jacksonville, Florida, created quite a stir because it had two heads, one at each end of its body. What an unusual spectacle! And what an illustration of absolute frustration! When it tried to run, its legs actually moved in opposite directions.*

As I studied its picture in a newspaper, I thought, How incredible! Yet how typical of many believers in Christ! We all have an innate tendency to sin; but when we are born again by faith in the Lord Jesus, we receive a wonderful new nature. This often creates an intense struggle. We experience a continual conflict between the mind of Christ and our old ways of thinking. If we do not submit ourselves completely to the Savior but try to serve self as well, we resemble the two-headed skink who attempts to go in opposite directions at the same time. Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other"

*Two laws compete within my breast,
The one is bad, the other blest,
The new I love, the old I hate;
The one I serve will dominate.*

*Two heads may be better than one,
but a double-minded person is no good at all.*

Notice Romans 7:17

Paul is not making excuses with his statement here. He is stating a fact which he has discovered that needs to be known by all believers. When he says it was not him violating the Law but sin within him he is revealing that HE is not the same person HE used to be. The old Paul was dead and now he was a new man in Christ. It was not this new man who was leading the rebellion against the Law, but it was the sin nature that remained in him after salvation. Now the same can be said of us too. But this is not to be an excuse. We are not the person we were before we were saved but now we are new creations in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

We are new creations, but we still have the sin nature. But we cannot blame the flesh for our sin because the flesh was crucified with Jesus Christ and therefore our old nature has been rendered powerless. He is not dead, but he has been stripped of his power to control us. Let me show what Newell has to say concerning this verse:

"No more I!"

*"That was a wonderful discovery! For a forgiven Saul, who had gone on in joy awhile without inward trouble, it was indeed a terrible awakening to become again convicted-not now of sins, but of indwelling sin, of a hateful power that seemed one's very self-but was really "our old man." But he is making discoveries about himself- amazing things, brought out for the first time in Scripture. He is going much further than "consenting to the Law that it is right"; for now, instead of being completely over-whelmed by this holy, righteous Law; he arrives at (and writes down for us!) a conclusion that is daring: Since I am doing what I am not wishing, there must be another and evil principle working within me. For it is not my real self that is working out this evil, but sin which dwelleth in me. An unwelcome, hateful presence! For, though our Old Man was crucified with Christ, put in the place of certain, though not instant death - we find, though we have "put him off" we must "put away, " as to everything of the former life, "the Old Man" (Ep 4:22). **And, to be put away, he must be discovered to us, and this is what is so vividly set before - us in this struggle.***

Note, it is never said the Old Man is dead, but that we died (Ro 6:2). We were federally identified with Christ, and passed on with Him into burial (Ro 6:3), and now share His Risen life (Ro 6:4). The old man is not to be "counted dead" (as some very dear brethren have put it): but to be counted crucified (Gal 2:20) - his place being there only."

Our sin nature no longer reigns after we are saved but he does manage to survive, and he will survive until we die, or we are raptured away. Notice the words of an unnamed writer:

"In this life, Christians are somewhat like an unskilled artist who beholds a beautiful scene that he wants to paint. But his lack of talent prevents him from doing the scene justice. The fault is not in the scene, or in the canvas, the brushes, or the paint but in the painter. That is why we need to ask the master painter, Jesus Christ, to place His hand over ours in order to paint the strokes that, independent of Him, we could never produce."

This brings to mind what Jesus said in John 15.

John 15:5

*⁵ I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: **for without me ye can do nothing.***

Notice Romans 7:18a

The flesh still remains the flesh after salvation and it can never be trained or even bludgeoned into obedience to the Word of God. That is why it must remain in its place on the cross.

Notice Romans 7:18b

The Law can convict us of sin and make the sin in our lives known but it cannot provide the power to overcome sin.

Conclusion:

Here in this verse again we see another evidence of salvation in the believer's life. Paul says, "for to will is present with me". This means that he was willing and even had a great burning desire to live in obedience to the Law, but he was struggling because of the presence of sin within him, namely the sin nature.

Any person who knows Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior will have within them a willingness to walk in obedience to the Word of God. This will be evident because when we are saved we are given the heart of Jesus Christ when we are given the Holy Spirit to dwell within us. The Spirit of God will long for that which is spiritual, and He will long to live in obedience to the Word of God. Paul was not perfect in practice and neither are we but there certainly was the willingness to live in obedience because of the new man within him and that very desire will be in us if we are saved.

Ephesians 4:23-24

²³ And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

²⁴ And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

