

The Battle is Real 1

Romans 7:14-25 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. ¹⁷ So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

❖ Recap (A lot of Groundwork to Lay First)

➤ Romans 1-6

- **1 - Paul** makes his case for the gospel... that it is the power of God to save all who believe
 - He also begins from that point to show that all men are guilty before God
 - That all men have a law... but all men have sinned against God
- **He proves** this through chapters 2 and 3... He said it doesn't matter if they have a written law
 - Or if they are a law unto themselves
 - None are righteous
- **In Chapter 4...** Paul begins explaining the Doctrine of Salvation by Faith Alone...
 - He uses Abraham as an example of someone saved by Faith... before the law was given
 - God credited Abraham as Righteous because he believed God
- **In Chapter 5** He continues to prove that our right standing with God is through Faith
 - He parallels the First Adam... with the Second... namely Jesus
 - And He shows how sin came to all through Adam...
 - But righteousness comes to believers through Jesus Christ
 - He explains Grace as the basis of salvation... and Faith is how we access Grace
- **In Chapter 6...** Paul moves from our being saved by Faith alone
 - And he begins to show us how we are to live...
 - He is talking about our Sanctification... that process we are in now...
 - Where God is making us more and more like Him... being made holy...
 - **Romans 6:13 ¹³ Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.**

➤ Romans 7:1-13 (Last Week)

- Paul is saying we walk in a new way... In the Spirit...
- The keeping of law... if we were Jewish... or even American with our own standards...
- Keeping of a set of rules to establish a righteousness before God
 - That is dead now for believers...
- We belong to another... And He has given us a new Spirit...
- He says... sin came alone and used the law to deceive us...
 - So... that is where we have come from... as a brief recap... now

❖ Outline:

- What do we learn from this text? This Man is Paul... but he also represents you and me... so you can think personally about each point.

- 1) There is a Divided Man
- 2) This Man Still Has Indwelling Sin
- 3) This Man Loves the Ways of God
- 4) There is a Battle Going on Within Him
- 5) He Sees and Laments His Fallenness
- 6) Jesus is His Only Hope

❖ Introduction (Bear with me for a moment)

- **Did you follow the flow of the text...**
 - Here is a man in a great battle within himself...
 - A battle to do what is right instead of falling into sin
- **What is He doing with this section of scripture? What is the main point here?**
 - **If you remember... Paul has been arguing that you are made right with God...**
 - By faith alone... Not by works... Not by following the law...
 - Which in turn led to being questioned:
 - ◆ Should I sin so grace would abound...
 - ◆ Which Paul says... NO!
 - **This leads Paul to say we must die to the law...**
 - And by that I believe he means...
 - Die to law keeping as a means of right standing before God
 - He goes on to say that sin used the law against us...
 - **He Goes even further...**
 - Not only does a person die to law keeping for the purpose of right standing before God
 - He also must die to the law... so that he can bear fruit for God...
 - This is the process of sanctification... the part where we are being made Holy....
 - **So... in summary we see...**
 - Being made right with God by faith... which is justification
 - And being in the process of growing in holiness... which is sanctification
 - Both require faith and a death to law keeping as a means of righteousness...
 - ◆ or as a means of keeping one's righteousness
 - **But... this led to people assuming Paul meant the law is evil...**
 - **So... Paul is using these verses (14-25) to clear that up...**
 - The main point of these verses is:
 - ◆ Sin is evil... and our flesh is weak... not that the law is sin... bc it is not...
 - ◆ Sin is evil... and our flesh is weak... not that the law is sin... bc it is not...
 - **The problem is not with the law... it is good... the problem is with the flesh... and sin**
 - ◆ the flesh is what is weak and sinful... and sin is deceptive
 - ◆ so here we transition to the second half of chapter 7...
 - ◆ Paul is going to show you the weakness of his own flesh
 - and how sin works within the person
 - **Paul is going to use himself as an example as to how this battle plays out.**
 - So in verses 14-25 Paul is showing the battle that is going on within Himself...
 - And He does this to show how it all works from the inside.
 - Which leads us to an important question....
 - **Which Paul is it?**
 - **There is great debate back and forth as to if it is:**

- **1 Paul before being a Christian... or 2 Paul after he becomes a Christian...**
- And you can tell from the verses... that one of these views brings great relief
 - ◆ If Paul is talking about himself after he has become a Christian...
 - It will really help a lot of us in here understand the struggle we are in
 - Or some would say it gives a license to sin... (But shame on those people)
- **There are arguments from both sides of the issue...**
 - but I personally think the evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of one...
 - It seems to me Paul is speaking of himself now... as a Christian...
 - Let me give you just 3 proofs... there are so many... at least 10
 - And you can research them or get with me and we can go through them...
 - ◆ But these are obvious upon reading the text
- **Proof that it is Paul as a Christian (Compelling Evidence)**
 - 1) He is Speaking in the Present Tense
 - 2) This Man loves the law of God
 - 3) This Man is acquainted with his sinful nature
- **1) He is Speaking in the Present tense**
 - 40 ish times Paul uses "I" or the present tense to describe himself...
 - So... the present tense means right now... so it seems Paul is speaking of himself...
 - As of "right now" when he is writing... which was after he became a Christian...
 - **Examples: "I am of flesh . . . what I am doing, I do not understand . . .**
 - I do the very thing I do not want . . . I find then the principle that evil is present in me . . .
 - For I joyfully concur with the law of God . . . with my mind I am serving the law of God . . .
 - For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing"
- **2) This Man loves the law of God**
 - I spent some time in the early stages of sermon prep just asking... Which Paul is it...
 - I came away thinking... This man is a Believer... why? B/C he loves God's Word
 - **For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,**
 - This sounds like a man that loves God's Word...
 - But on a different level than a Pharisee that keeps it for self-righteousness
 - **This is the Psalm 1 man...**
 - **Psalm 1:1-2 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.**
- **3) This Man is acquainted with his sinful nature**
 - You might argue... well... A pre Christian Paul could indeed speak of the law as a delight...
 - And I would say... yes... that is true...
 - **But, a pre-Christian Paul would never speak of himself like this:**
 - ¹⁸For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.
 - ²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
 - **In Fact... He spoke of himself entirely differently... He was too cool for school...**
 - He was practically perfect in his own eyes before becoming a Christian...
 - **Philippians 3:4-6 If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.**
 - **Galatians 1:13-14 For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; 14 and I was advancing in**

Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

- **Pre Christian Paul would not have seen himself as a wretched sinner... He would not have said:**
 - 1 Timothy 1:15 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

❖ Why is proving that Paul is speaking of himself as a Christian so important?

➤ 2 Reasons:

- 1) There is a hopelessness associated with trying to be perfect
- 2) There is a blind pride-filled arrogance to thinking you are perfect
 - And this is very dangerous...
 - Because it fills a church with Fake people... People that never mess up...
 - So that the real people... can not find help or a place to belong...
 - **Because they are the only ones that struggle...**
 - ◆ Don't be that perfect acting person... Don't you do it...
 - ◆ Be real to those around you... let them know you fail...
 - **Let's not promote a Fake Christianity... because People will see right through it...**
 - ◆ And it will keep people out of the church or worse... the kingdom of God...
 - ◆ Because it is fake... it is not real...

➤ Here Paul is giving us a moment to catch our breath...

- A moment to say... Yes... I love and delight in God's law...
- Oh how I wish I were a better Christian... Oh how I wish I served Jesus more faithfully
- But, I see my sin... and I am not ruined; because God is at Work in me...
- So... this battle is real... and I am going to fight with all my might
- And when I fail... and I will... I will repent honestly before God
- And I will have the strength to get back up and fight again...
- Because I am not without hope... for such is the pattern of all followers of Jesus

➤ Relief... but not license...

❖ Romans 8:1

- Ok: Now... Before we get into this text... I want you to see where it is taking us
- I think this will help you get a better understanding of where we are right now.
- **Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**

➤ At the end of this personal look into Paul's own life...

- He wants us to come out on the other side to see this verse...

➤ Now... there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...

- Yeah... you may still struggle with sin a bit... but you are not condemned...

➤ Paul says... I have proven to you that you are made right and kept right... BY FAITH...

- And I have shown you my own struggles...
- So ... let me assure you... Don't live in guilt and shame... there is no need...
- Because... Now... there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

➤ Isn't that Beautiful? Some may say... that just gives you a license to sin...

- I say NO NO NO!.... It keeps me in the fight... it keeps my working and striving...
- It gives me hope every day to grow into Christ-likeness...
- I would have given myself back to sin if it were not for this truth...

What do we learn from this text? This Man is Paul... but he also represents you and me... so you can think personally about each point.

❖ 1) There is a Divided Man

➤ Let's look at how Paul describes this division within himself...

- ¹⁴ For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.
- ¹⁷ So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.
- ¹⁸ For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.
 - Better Translation: for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not. (NASB)
- ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.
- ²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.
- ²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.
 - What is going on here? Is Paul crazy? Or is this normal?
 - This is very normal for the Christian... I believe we see it throughout Scripture...

➤ What happens when a person is saved...

- They were once dead in their trespasses and sins... But God comes along and wakens them
- He gives them a new heart and a new Spirit...
- But, He does not give them a new body... The flesh is not yet redeemed or made new...
- **So... the person... although He has a new nature...**
 - Although Paul says: **2 Corinthians 5:17** ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
 - ◆ And this is true... but you have to take the Bible as a whole...
 - ◆ Although we have died to sin... in many ways...
 - ◆ And sin and death have been dealt with by God ultimately
 - ◆ We still live in this... as Paul describes it "body of death"
- **The Person still has to fight against the weakness of flesh working with sin...**
 - Let me give you a verse that sums this up completely:
 - ◆ **Galatians 5:16-17** ¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

➤ A Proof of Personal Experience.... (little more detail)

- Warning... just because it is personal experience doesn't make it true
- It must line up with scriptures... and I believe this does...
- **My divided self...** What Paul is saying completely resonates with me
 - What I want is one thing... what I live out is something else entirely...
 - ◆ I am embarrassed to be too detailed...
- **I want to wake up every day and spend about 2 hrs alone with God...**
 - I want to meditate on His word and memorize it
 - I want to pray for my household, my family members, my friends from high school and college
 - I want to pray for my right now friends and acquaintances...
 - I want to pray for the people I work with... I want to pray for every single church member...
 - And all the churches around the world, plus persecuted peoples
- **I want to take care of my body every day...** I want to eat right and exercises
 - I want to work hard and not get distracted...
- **I want to be a very patient father...** but also one who disciplines my children so they see
 - God's hand of discipline while also seeing His mercy... I want to be consistent with it
- **I want to be kind to my wife at all times...** I want to be understanding of her...
 - I want to be an encouragement to her and lift her up to God daily

- I want to make her feel special... I want to forget my needs... be selfless
- I do not want to get upset if my wife or kids don't live up to my expectations
- **I want** to get stuff done around the house
- **I want** to witness to all the lost people I have come to know in my life...
 - I also want to go and find strangers to share the gospel with on a daily basis
- **I want** to be very generous with my money... I want to manage it well
- **I want** to serve with my time... I want to help people
- **I want** to stop and rest well at times... I do not want to spend too much time with entertainment
 - Entertainment that keeps me from God... it is easy to get too much MEDIA
- **I want** to disciples people... I want to be willing to wake up at anytime to meet with them
- **I want** to master new disciplines... so I can use them to honor God
- **I want** to pray with my kids before they go to bed every night...
 - I want to have Bible study with my family every night
- **I do not want** to lose my temper with my family...
- **I do not want** to talk too much, I want to listen more...
- **I do not want** to think too highly of myself...
- **I want** to have pure eyes and a pure mind and a pure heart
 - Not one that is drawn away by temptation....
- **I could go on and on... About the way in which I long to live...**
 - But... do I do all these things? You know me... No... I do not
 - Sometimes... yes... but not at the rate I would like
 - I struggle with indwelling sin
 - **God has been gracious and He has been growing me in many many ways...**
 - But I have not yet arrived... I am not close to being perfect...
 - I so often say with Paul:
 - ◆ ²⁴ **Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?**
- **I think Paul had something like this in mind...**
 - This is the way of the Christian... Striving, but not quite there yet...
- **Application: Own up to your sins... But never stop fighting...**
 - Be gracious to your brothers and sisters around you... as a matter of fact... help them
 - Grow with them... Do not put others down... Go to them and help them up
 - Do not overlook sin or delight in it or treat it as no big deal...
 - But be understanding... Don't talk about them behind their back...
 - **Matthew 7:3-5 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴ How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.**

- ❖ 2) This Man Still Has Indwelling Sin
- ❖ 3) This Man Loves the Ways of God
- ❖ 4) There is a Battle Going on Within Him
- ❖ 5) He Sees and Laments His Falleness
- ❖ 6) Jesus is His Only Hope

❖ **A Brief Warning:**

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- **Although we see a divided man here...** Do not go so far as to think He was out of control
 - This is a man who was acquainted with His sinful self... He saw the sin that was left
 - But He was also a man that strived daily to live for Jesus...
- **Do not think for one second that Paul is giving you license to do what you want...**
 - That is exactly what He said would not happen...
- **Remember in chapter 6?** He answered the question... should we sin so grace will abound?
 - His answer was a resounding NO!... And Why?
 - Because that is not what God is doing... He saves us with the intent to Sanctify us
 - Paul tells us:
 - **Romans 6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.**
 - ◆ That is how Paul lived his life...
- **Paul fought against the sin in his life....**
 - **1 Corinthians 9:27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.**
 - **2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.**
 - **Philippians 3:12-15 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**
 - Does this look like a man who just gave in? No.... this man fought
 - His body of sin wanted to bring him down... Satan worked against him...
 - He even had what he called a thorn in the flesh... that humbled him...
 - And he had to rely on the grace of Jesus Christ...
 - He got up and battled sin every day... and He won... He won the war...
 - Although there were some lost battles along the way...
 - Jesus brought him through...

❖ Invitation

- Come... give yourself anew to God today...
- Come... receive a free gift of salvation if you would only Believe