

## The Battle is Real 2

Romans 7:14-25 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. <sup>15</sup> For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. <sup>16</sup> Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. <sup>17</sup> So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. <sup>21</sup> So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. <sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> 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.

### ❖ 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...
- **Ask Yourselves....** Why? How? How is chapter 7 laying the groundwork for Romans 8:1?

### ❖ Recap (Going to Repeat a Few Things... want to make sure it sticks with you)

- **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 <sup>13</sup> 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 (2 Weeks Ago)**
  - 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 along and used the law to deceive us...
    - So... that is where we have come from... as a brief recap... now

### ❖ Outline:

- 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

### ❖ Remember the Main Point of this Section of Scripture

- **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
- **Paul has been making an argument that...**
  - 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
- **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...
  - Which leads us to an important question....

## ❖ Which Paul is it? (Must have Humility Here)

- **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...**
- **3 Proofs that it is Paul as a Christian (Compelling Evidence) – there are so many more**
  - 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; <sup>2</sup> 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:**
  - <sup>18</sup> For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.
  - <sup>24</sup> Wretched 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.
- **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...
  - **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...**

**To the Text: 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...**

- <sup>14</sup> For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

❖ **2) This Man Still Has Indwelling Sin**

➤ **There are a few things I want you to notice from the section of scripture**

- <sup>14</sup> For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.

- Focus on: **"I am of the flesh, sold under sin..."**

◆ I think we can say Paul is saying here: *"I am a person of the flesh... I was sold under sin... in the past this happened to me and this is where I am today as a result..."*

◆ I think also... that verse 18 explains Paul's intentions here...

- <sup>18</sup> For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.
  - Essentially Paul knows that there is nothing good about us... on our own
  - ◆ **I am of the flesh... then he explains what he means...**
    - **Sold under sin...** so... **sold under sin** describes what it means to be **of the flesh**.
- **Again... Paul wants to make sure he is being heard clearly... The law is good, it is spiritual**
  - God's law is from the Spirit of God...
  - But not me... Rather... I am the problem
    - ◆ There is something about me that still rises up against God's ways
- **Again... here is Paul reminding his readers... the law is good...**
  - But I am in the flesh still...
  - **What is the flesh again?** The part of the person that is in rebellion against God...
    - ◆ The part of the person that rises up to sin against God
    - ◆ It is not the body itself... rather... it is an aspect of the person... called the flesh...
      - b/c it uses your body... to do sinful behaviors... it takes good passions from God
      - And uses them wrongly...
    - ◆ **Paul uses this word flesh... because it literally means the physical body...**
      - Because it is in the physical body that "flesh" manifests itself...
      - The body is the battlefield... or even the mind is used in a fleshly sense
        - And this is why He told us to make war in Chapter 6
    - **Let me explain our "flesh" to kids so they can understand...**
      - ◆ **You know when you want something at home... like a cookie... or to play video games**
        - But... your parent who loves you... has said... no... at least not now...
        - Because they want to make sure you eat your healthy supper, or do your homework...
        - They want to make sure you are healthy...
      - ◆ **But... you really really want that cookie... because you know it is gonna taste good...**
        - Now... there is nothing wrong with your craving for a cookie... it is normal...
        - You are supposed to get hungry.... God made you that way...
      - ◆ **Or... you really really want to play that video game... because it is fun**
        - Or you can be creative, or you like to compete...
        - And having fun and being creative and competing are good things...
      - ◆ **The Problem: These are not good things for you right now...**
        - You may think they are... but your parents know they are not good for you...
        - But... you have this craving...
          - this longing to do these things when your parent isn't paying attention
      - ◆ **That is your flesh at work...**
        - It is that part of you that wants to do what you want to do...
        - regardless of what your parents or God is telling you
        - Your flesh is manifesting or showing itself... by disobeying your parent...
          - Or stealing, or lying about it when you get caught
  - **The New American Commentary puts it like this:**
    - "Even though the believer has a new nature acquired by a spiritual rebirth, the old nature continues to exert its maleficent influence."
  - **Paul is not failing to remember our new state...**
    - Rather he says...**I am of the flesh...**
      - ◆ I still have that fleshly body...
  - **I am sold under sin...**
    - And this is the truth for all people...
    - This verb "sold" is in the perfect tense...

- It means that this being sold under sin is a thing that happened in the past...
  - ◆ But... it continues on even till today in the present...
- **Paul is not forgetting that he was set free by Jesus... He continually affirms this...**
  - Paul is not forgetting that he has died to His bondage and slavery to sin...
  - Although this is true... it never takes away from the fact that Paul...
  - Still has his flesh rising up in him... and his flesh will continue to war against the Spirit...
- **Verse 14 sets the stage for Paul's explanation in the following verses of the inward battle...**
  - He shows you the source of the problem: is that part of us that is not yet made new
  - Our flesh... that which is fighting to have its way in rebellion...
- **Essentially... I believe Paul is just teaching...**
  - Even though you have given your life to Jesus... and you are serving Him...
    - and you have a new heart and your Spirit has been born by the Spirit of God
    - You still have that side of you that wants sin...
  - **This is the very reason Paul tells us to fight...**
    - Because although Jesus has conquered... we are still in the fight...
    - He told us... back in Romans 6
      - ◆ **Romans 6:12 <sup>12</sup> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.**
- **Summary: Even though you are right with God by Faith in Jesus Christ**
  - And He has awakened your soul and set you free from sin
  - You can still have momentary lapses back into sin... This is very clear from the scriptures...
  - Even the apostles experienced this.
    - Why would he tell us not to let sin reign in us in Romans 6:12 if it weren't possible
    - **Galatians 5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.**
    - ◆ Here we see the possibility of going back into bondage to sin
- **Illustration: This is how it makes sense to me:**
  - Imagine for a second that your parents were prisoners of war... they were captured by the enemy
  - They were put into prison... and at some point you were born...
  - **And now... you are a prisoner as well...**
    - So... for years you are in prison
  - **Then, A Hero comes along... And He sets you free from the prison....**
    - But... He does not take you with Him to His side...
    - He sets you free behind enemy lines... Because He has a role for you
  - **You are going to be used to help others be set free...**
    - and along the way... you are going to be shaped into a great warrior...
    - But, in the meantime... You are still in enemy territory... and you will still have battles to fight
    - And He says... don't get recaptured... keep fighting till you reach my side...
  - **Also... He shows you how to continue to be free...**
    - So, if you are about to be recaptured... you know how to avoid the trap
    - Or... if you do get recaptured... you will know how to escape
  - **The enemy is going to:**
    - Try to take you by force at times... He is also going to be subtle...
    - He is going to try to convince you to join his side...
    - He is going to come to you when you're out there fighting...
    - When you're on just a little sleep, or you are hungry or thirsty
    - He is going to offer you all sorts of pleasures to join him...
    - He is going to give you stuff if you will submit to him

- **So you fight battle after battle... because you were born here... and although you are free now**
  - You have a long fight ahead of you... and at times you lose battles
  - At times you get recaptured... But, you know how to escape the grasp of the enemy
- **The War will last your entire life...**
  - And you will either become really good at fighting and winning... Because you follow your liberator's advice...
  - Or you will experience many many struggles and defeats along the way...
- **In the End... if you were faithful to endure...**
  - I'm not saying there were no bumps... but you endure...
  - Your liberator will give you complete and total victory because He has already won the War...

➤ **Sin is Indwelling the Man...**

- I want you to see... that all redeemed men... still have sin dwelling in them...
  - Paul makes it very clear here... He is not giving us an excuse...
  - He is teaching us what is going on... why it is we want to do right, but don't always
- **Notice these 6 places within our section of scripture from today**
  - **<sup>17</sup>So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.**
    - ◆ Sin is still alive within Paul... dwelling with him... at home in him...
  - **<sup>18</sup>For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.**
    - ◆ Paul is saying... on my own I am nothing... I have nothing to boast about
    - ◆ My flesh has nothing good in it... it wants to rise up in rebellion against God
  - **<sup>20</sup>..., but sin that dwells within me.**
    - ◆ Again... He says that sin is living within him...
    - ◆ And let me say... Everyone has different things that they struggle with
    - ◆ My sins and your sins are not going to be the same at the same time... or intensity
  - **<sup>23</sup>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.**
    - ◆ Paul gives us more detail... Not only is sin dwelling in him... but look at what it is doing
    - ◆ It is fighting him... it is waging a war against him...
  - **<sup>24</sup>Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?**
    - ◆ Just focus on that last part... a body of death...
    - ◆ His physical body is not the problem... rather, it is what sin is doing with it
    - ◆ It is a body of death because sin has risen up to bring it down...
    - ◆ And Paul is stuck with a body that He is still fighting... and inward battle
    - ◆ Is this not what Paul is saying later in Romans 8:10
      - **Romans 8:10 <sup>10</sup>But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.**
  - **<sup>25</sup>..., but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.**
    - ◆ Finally Paul tells us that his flesh... it is fighting against the Spirit...
    - ◆ His flesh is serving the law of sin... That is what it does...
- **John MacArthur wrote "Lingering sin does battle with every good thing a believer desires to do, every good thought, every good intention, every good motive, every good word, every good deed"**

➤ **So... what do you do about this indwelling sin problem?**

- **Romans 8:13 is going to give us instructions on how we are to battle...**
- **Romans 8:13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**
  - So... Here we see practical instructions to "fight" .... To put to death deeds of the body... or flesh
- **Let me give you something even more practical**

- Romans 8:5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.
  - ◆ Set their minds on either the flesh... or set their minds on things of the Spirit...
- **Do you see where the battles starts?**
  - Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,
    - ◆ There is work to do be done in the Spirit and in the mind...
    - ◆ You must work consciously to walk in God's ways...
- **We have seen this before in our study in Colossians 3**
  - Colosians 3:1-2 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.
  - Colossians 3:16 <sup>16</sup>Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,

#### ❖ There is a Balance Here...

- Our next point is that this man loves the ways of God... So... don't **only** pay attention to this one point
- Paul is not saying He is completely unable to do good things...
- He just isn't able to fully and completely follow the richness of God's perfect law

#### ❖ A Brief Warning:

- **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...
- **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.
    - 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