

The Battle is Real 3

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**.

❖ 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?

❖ Remember the Main Point of this Section of Scripture

- **Here is a man in a great battle within himself...**
- **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...
 - **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
- **Paul is going to use himself as an example as to how this battle plays out.**

❖ 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

❖ 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

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 (this is important to you b/c you are pictured here)**
 - **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.**

- ❖ **2) This Man Still Has Indwelling Sin (this is important to you b/c you are pictured here)**
 - **There are a few things I want you to notice from the section of scripture**
 - ¹⁴ **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..."*
 - **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...
 - **Sin is Indwelling the Man...**
 - ¹⁷ **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...
 - ¹⁸ **For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.**

- ❖ **3) This Man Loves the Ways of God (this is important to you b/c you are pictured here)**
 - **There are three things that point to Paul's love for God's Ways**
 - 1) He sees God's Law is Spiritual
 - 2) He says God's Law is Good
 - 3) He delights in the Law of God
 - This last one is the one that stands out most dramatically...
 - **Let's look at these three ways that Paul sees the law of God**
 - **And as we look... the goal is that we would be challenged by Paul's view of God's law**
 - **Ask ourselves the question? Do I love God's law like this man?**
 - **If not... what does that mean?**
 - **1) He sees God's Law is Spiritual**
 - ²⁵ **For we know that the law is spiritual**
 - Far from being something that he sees as evil... rather he sees the law as Spiritual
 - Meaning... it is from the spirit of God
 - So... if it is from the Spirit of God...
 - **2) He says God's Law is good**
 - ^{16b} **I agree with the law, that it is good.**
 - God's law must be good... I agree with it...
 - Even though sin used God's law against me... causing me to want to rebel
 - God's law is nonetheless good

- Good... meaning...: it is advantageous or desirable... it has pleasurable qualities
- He continues...

➤ 3) He Delights in the Law of God

- ²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,
 - He delights... or has great pleasure in
 - Or happily approves of... God's law...
- If someone ... like Chandel... or my grandmother... made me banana pudding...
 - I would be delighted... very happy
- And Paul says... I delight in the law of God
 - Job 23:12 I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food.
 - Psalm 19:10 More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.
- Notice: His delight in the law of God is in his "inner being"
 - His inner being... or inner man... is His new Spiritual Self...
 - Here... to me... is another proof that this is Paul after he was saved...
 - I believe you can have an outward delight in God's Word before salvation
 - ♦ Matthew 23:27 ²⁷ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.
 - Paul was a Pharisee
 - But I do not think Paul would describe himself as delighting in God's Law
 - ♦ In his inner being... before he came to know Christ...
 - ♦ This seems to be in line with what happens after a person is saved...
 - Indeed... it is not possible to have this delight for God's Word
 - ♦ Until after the Holy Spirit has come into your life...
 - ♦ Because... there is no "inner man" as Paul speaks of him here...
 - ♦ There is no inner man in this context before salvation...
 - ♦ This happens after a person comes to know Jesus...
 - Colossians 3:10 ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.
 - Paul is reminding them that they are not the same person...
 - Also in 2 Corinthians
 - 2 Corinthians 4:16 ¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.
 - Again... this is Paul reminding them... of their inner self... this new self...
 - Or as he will call it... a new creation or new creature
 - 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.
 - This happens after the person is in Christ... He is a new person

➤ Now that Paul was filled with the Spirit of God... He delights in the law of God

➤ Finally...His Response to God's Law: He serves God's Law...

- So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind,
- So... Paul's inner man serves the law of God...
- The New American Commentary on Romans says:
 - "Paul said that he himself (who he really was in Christ) had committed himself to serving the law of God (it was the rational thing to do)"

- ❖ 4) There is a Battle Going on Within Him (this is important to you b/c you are pictured here)
 - ²¹So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²²For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³but 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.
 - 1) There are two laws in view here.
 - 1) The Law of Sin and 2) The Law of God
 - It is easy for us to grasp what the Law of God is...
 - ◆ The law of God is His word and instruction toward us...
 - ◆ And with it... comes rewards and punishments...
 - The keeping of God's Word brings reward...
 - ◆ By example: Jesus taught us to repent and believe the gospel
 - By obeying this Word or Law from God... we gain eternal life...
 - There are other laws throughout the universe...
 - ◆ There are the laws of thermodynamics...
 - ◆ There is the law of gravity...
 - We have observed this law of gravity...
 - If you drop something... you find very quickly that gravity will pull it down
 - We find that if we are walking... we stay firmly planted on the ground
 - We do not float away
 - ◆ There is a reward to the law of gravity...
 - We stay safe when we obey
 - ◆ There is also punishment to not keeping this law...
 - When we try to defy it... we end up with broken bones
 - Or maybe the loss of our lives....
 - Now: What about this: 1) The Law of Sin.... What does he mean by this?
 - In verse 21 Paul begins talking about this law of sin... he says:
 - ◆ ²¹So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.
 - Right away... we see that Paul has observed something...
 - ◆ That there is a law that works... and it works when:
 - He wants to do what is right... evil lies close at hand...
 - So... Paul knows... that just like anytime He wanted to walk in water...
 - ◆ Gravity would be there to pull him down...
 - ◆ So also... when he wants to do what is right... evil is there... to pull him down...
 - ◆ He follows by saying: ²²For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,
 - But... He continues:
 - ◆ ²³but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind
 - Paul observes that there is another law besides the law of God
 - ◆ He says he sees it in his members...
 - ◆ Members are essentially just your body parts...
 - Hands, feet, stomach, sexual organs, brain, etc.
 - ◆ This is the same law he spoke of in vs 22...
 - when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.
 - ◆ This law is in his "members" and it is waging a war against the law of his mind...
 - The law of his mind is in reference back to the law of God...
 - The law that He delights in... that God has placed within him
 - So... if God's law is at work... Paul knows this other law will be at work...
 - Waging war... against God's Word to do good... it will fight you to do evil
 - Paul continues his observation in the last part of verse 23

◆ ^{23b} and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

- **A- First** He said he found there was a law that anytime he wanted to do right
 - ◆ Evil was close at hand
- **B- Then** He said... this law is waging a war against God's law in his mind...
- **C- Now...** He defines it and gives us a point of its origin...
 - ◆ He calls it the law of sin...
 - ◆ And He says this law of sin... it dwells within his members...
- **Greg Herrick... who got his doctorate from Dallas Theological Seminary**
 - ◆ He comments on what John Owens, the puritan writer, wrote on this subject
 - ◆ "It is interesting to note, as Owen does, that it is generally through its rewards that it entices men to sins of commission and through its punishments—by exciting fear in people—that it leads men to sins of omission, i.e., they willfully shun necessary duties and skirt around God's commands. In both cases, namely, sins of commission and sins of omission, the will is opposed to God and aligned with the law of sin."

➤ **So... let's summarize this if we can...**

- Paul is a picture of all believers... God has given Paul the Holy Spirit
- So the law of God is planted within his mind and his heart...
- **But, Paul finds that things are not so easy as he may have thought them to be...**
 - Although God has Finally and Decisively defeated sin...
 - ◆ We are still progressing in our battle against it...
 - ◆ Until we see Full victory over it...
- **We will not see full victory until the redemption of our bodies...**
 - He will go on in 8:23 to say we: "groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."
- **So... for now...** there is the law of God planted within us... and we delight in it...
- **But there is another law... The law of Sin...**
 - And ... the law of sin is seated within the members of our body
 - ◆ And it works in a certain way... Just like the law of gravity works... the law of sin works
 - ◆ And the way it works is:
 - ◆ When we want to do right... evil is close at hand
- **Simple as that... John Owen put it like this...**
 - "If it (law of sin) came upon the soul only at certain seasons, much obedience might be perfectly accomplished in its absence...But the soul is its home; there it dwells, and is no wanderer. Wherever you are, whatever you are about, this law of sin is always in you; in the best that you do, and in the worst. Men little consider what a dangerous companion is always at home with them...There is a living coal continually in their houses; which, if it be not looked unto, will fire [burn] them, and it may be consume them.
 - In chapter 8... Paul is going to give us instructions in how to fight...

➤ **Paul sums this battle up in Galatians:**

- Galatians 5:17–18: "For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want"

➤ **This is where we will end today**

❖ **Invitation:** Are you in the battle yet? If you are... how hard are you fighting...