

Romans 28 – Failure of Self

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Romans 7:15-25

Prologue: Law Mirrors Sin Within

- Though Law reveals the hidden sin within, we perceive it as an enigma
- Sinful self does not desire to know one's inner sin
- Sinful self finds another use for the Law: Works



Prologue: Law Reveals Inner Sinner

- The sinful self one hides from the world and often even from one's self
- Through Law our sinful self stares back at us
- Scientism seeks to make this to be the good self



Prologue: How Sinners Use Law

- Sinners seek to use the Law via Works to remake their image into goodness
- This is self-delusion, psychosis, of one's goodness
- Jews, and Paul, defined their rightness via Law Works; religion of works



Paul's Struggle to Understand

- After salvation Paul spent some time in *Arabia* seeking to correlate the Old Testament with Jesus as Messiah whom he could no longer deny (Ac 9:1-9; Ga 1:14-17)
 - One of his defining moments was his vision of Heaven which occurred 14 years before he wrote of it, in Lystra (Ac 14:19-21; 2Co 12:1-6)
 - Paul was in the ministry over ten years before this vision; I believe he is revealing his inner struggle in Romans

Paul Discusses His Own Struggle

- Paul's writing subtly moved from an abstract to a personal discussion common to all Christians (1Co 10:13)
 - Paul is careful to not elevate himself above others to give his argument more *authority* (2Co 12:1-6)
 - His admission that he shares their ongoing struggle lends credence to his discussion
 - Every Christian struggles to understand self and flesh

The Premise of the Struggle

- Paul logically states the premise of this struggle which he has systematically built toward since Chapter One
 - The Moral Law is spiritual; by implication, Good
 - Christian is betrayed by the flesh to the power of sin
 - Assumption: Salvation *freed* one from sin {And sinning}
 - Reality: Christian continue to sin (1); 1:6-10)
 - Self Conclusion: I must be stronger to control sin (10: 4-7)

Truth of the Problem: Ignorance

- The truth of this inner struggle is our ignorance of why it exists: Why am "I" still sinning?
 - Key exists in the text itself staring at the reader's face
 - Paul uses the word "I" twenty-five times in our text
 - Paul's perspective, our perspective, is from the "I" position: Am I not the *hero* of my worldview?
 - Paul defines this inner struggle: Failure of self's strength

"I do not understand..."

- The first step in solving a problem is to understand what one *does not* understand; otherwise, one does not know what answer(s) to seek (10: 7,7-8)
 - Paul, and us, do not do what we *know* to be right while simultaneously we do what we *know* to be wrong (Sin)
 - Salvation freed Christians from the death sentence of the Moral Law; but the Moral Law remains, *defining* right and wrong for maturing believer in Christ (10: 5:17-18)

Conundrum

- If one does what one *knows* is sin (Wrong), then by admission one *acknowledges* the Law is Good (Right)
 - The Christian has a *new nature* which does not sin as it is of God's nature seeking to please Him
 - Sin is the controlling element causing us to sin against our *new nature* producing guilt
 - Where does the sin nature reside? The Flesh (σάρξ sarx)

Made in the Flesh

- Adam, and all his descendants, were made in the flesh
 - Adam, like Cain and all descendants, must control the *flesh*; sin lies at the door desiring one's destruction (Ge 4:6-7)
 - All failed and thus lived under the dominion of sin, except Christ who controlled His flesh via the Spirit
 - Flesh has always been the door to sin, *covetousness*, via lust of the *flesh*, lust of the *eyes* and the pride of *life* (1Jo 2:16)

Sin: Ultimate Stalker

- Satan stalks mankind as a lion to devour, ensnare, man in sin; not as a leader of sin but enslaved, without hope (1Th 5:8)
 - Satan - Active spiritual agent who is a slave to sin
 - World - Political system in place, controlled by Satan
 - Flesh - Body with its sin element enslaving man to sin
- Satan agrees with his sin nature, as do all sinners, totally rejecting God and His Truth; i.e., ungodly (Ro 1:18-21)

Laws at War Within

- Paul clearly states there are two laws or systems at work in the Christian
 - Law of Sin - Flesh constantly opposing the *new nature* and the good the *new nature* seeks to perform
 - Law of New Nature - Moral Law which defines mature growth in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit (Ga 2:20)
 - Self - Our individual nature seeks to control sin and do good; failing miserably without power of the Spirit (Rp 4:30)

Wretched People that We Are!

- In one exclamation of utter frustration, Paul sums up the reason for the failure: Self-empowerment which has been his theme throughout his discussion
 - Self *before* salvation did not seek God's salvation (Ro 1:10-18)
 - Self rejected God's truth, building its *ungodly* worldview
 - Self *after* salvation is powerless as a babe in Christ (1Co 3:1)
 - Christ, our example, controlled His flesh by the Spirit

Old Testament Our Example

- The Old Testament teaches by example what the New Testament teaches by precept (1Co 10:6-11)
 - Adam failed though taught directly by Christ (Ge 3:6-7; 1Th 2:16)
 - Cain failed though warned directly by God (Ge 4:6-7)
 - Moses, through pride, made himself equal with God (Nu 20:10-13)
 - David failed through covetousness troubling his family (2Sa 12:7-13)

No one is above the Law of God; All are accountable for Sin
Adam, Moses and David were saved; yet, acted no different than Cain
The same is true of Christians which is why we needed these examples

Christ is Our Example

- Biblical answer; people learn experientially: Christ, our example, lived in the flesh by the Spirit; so must we (Ph 2:5-8)
 - God sent Melchizedek to strengthen Abram before his meeting with the King of Sodom, less he fall (Ge 14:17-20)
 - God sent Paul a thorn in the flesh after his Lystra stoning to remind him his strength was small (Co 12:7-10)
 - Our strength is small and faints in adversity for the flesh is weak; unless strengthened the Spirit (Pr 24:10; Mt 26:41; Ro 5:6)

Christ is the Answer!

- Jesus Christ, the One who can deliver us from our bodies of death by maturation in Him: Discernment (He 5:14)
 - Christian lives in the new nature by the power of Christ
 - Flesh continues to live partnered with sin until death
 - The commonality: "I" Thus, we are responsible to confess our fleshly sins rather than justifying them, for we will stand before Christ's Bema Seat (Co 5:9; 1Jo 1:9)

Epilogue: Truth of the Problem

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Christian and the Church

- As Christians ignore the truth of the Bible and become ensnared in sin, so also do their churches
 - Church of Ephesus - Lost its first love, Christ, to love *weak self* {god}, enslaving itself to sin: world, flesh, Satan (Re 2:1-7)
 - Church of Laodicea - Blind to its true condition, hiding behind the lie of its own worldview: Self as god
 - Solution: Christ in you, hope of glory: **Always** (Col 1:24-28)