

Hidden Hills Sovereign Grace Baptist Church**Wednesday Sermon****Date: December 16, 2020****Text: Romans 7:14-25****Scripture Reading: Romans 7:14-25****Subject: Strife of the two natures of the redeemed – Deliverance through Jesus Christ**

In the first thirteen verses of this seventh chapter, we found these things about all of us who are the redeemed of the LORD.

1. We are dead to the law by the body of Christ (we were crucified with him), that we might be joined to Christ to bear fruit unto God (verses 1-4)
2. When we were in flesh (before our conversion) the motions of sin and actual sin reigned in us bringing forth fruit unto death. (V-5).
3. We are delivered from the law, being dead to it that we should serve in newness of spirit. (V-6).
4. We gained knowledge of our sin by knowledge of the law which said “thou shalt not covet, et al.” (V-7)
5. The commandment worked in my all manner of vehement and eager for carnal things – the things of the world. I had not before the law came seen my passions for evil thing as sin against God. (V8).
6. I had considered myself alive – good and just; had a high opinion of myself, but when the law came, sin revived and slew me (showed me my and all my depravity). (V9)
7. The holy, just and good law occasioned death to me – it slew me. (V10-12). The law showed me that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful (V13).

Now, we begin again with the 14th verse of this seventh chapter and consider Paul's personal record of the strife between the flesh (carnal nature) and the inward man. This chapter shows, that though believers are justified from sin, yet still sin remains in them, and the flesh (called the body of this death) constantly wars against the spirit. Thanks be to God that we have the victory in our Lord Jesus Christ and in him alone. For this evening, let us consider the last twelve verses of this seventh chapter. Please consider this as we look closely at these last twelve verses:

Romans 7:14 (KJV) *For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

For we know that the law is spiritual: -- The law speaks to our inner person, our spirit, therefore, we understand the law to be spiritual. The work of the law is written in our hearts, our conscience bears witness of it.

But I am carnal, sold under sin. – Carnal? This word is translated from the Greek word: “σαρκικός sarkikos sar-kee-kos” which appears eleven times in the NT. It is translated as carnal nine times and fleshly two times. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the adjective “carnal” as: “Of or pertaining to the flesh or body; bodily, corporeal. – Pertaining to the body as the seat of passions and appetites; fleshly, sensual.” Our King James Version translators did a great job of choosing the right English word. Paul says, I am (not used to be, but am) carnal, **sold under sin**. What does he mean by this expression?

I am paraphrasing a comment from John Gill on this expression: from this verse to the end of the chapter many are of opinion, that the apostle speaks in the person of an unregenerate man, or of himself as unregenerate; but nothing is more clear, than that he

speaks all along of himself in the first person, "I am carnal":, etc. αὐτος εγω, "I myself", as in [Ro 7:25](#).

Romans 7:25 (KJV) *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind **I myself** serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*

He speaks in the present tense of what he then was and found; whereas, when he speaks of his unregenerate state, and how it was with him under the first convictions of sin, he speaks of them as things past, [Ro 7:5](#);

Romans 7:5 (KJV) *For **when we were in the flesh**, the **motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members** to bring forth fruit unto death.*

Several things which are said by the apostle can neither agree with him, nor any other, but as regenerate (**born of God – Ik**); such as to "hate evil", "delight in the law of God", and "serve it with the mind", [Ro 7:15](#).

Romans 7:15 (KJV) *For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*

Moreover, the distinctions between flesh and spirit, the inward and the outward man, and the struggle there is between them, are to be found in none but those who are born of God. Certainly, the thanksgiving for deliverance from the body of this death by Christ can only come from such as are born again. Nor are any of the things said inapplicable to men that are born again, as will appear by the consideration of them as they follow: for when the apostle says, "I am carnal"; his meaning is, either that he was so by nature, and as he saw himself when sin through the law became exceeding sinful to him; or as he might be denominated (**designated – Ik**) from the flesh or corruption of nature which was still in him,

and from the infirmities of the flesh he was attended with." I most certainly agree with John Gill.

Romans 7:15 (KJV) *For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*

For that which I do I allow not: -- I do not like, love, and approve of these things, or I do not "allow" of them, and indulge myself in them, I loathe them and loathe myself for them. Are these the words man who has not been born from above? Do you think that the apostle speaks of himself as unregenerate (still in his sins), or represents such a man? No, he is not and does not.

For what I would, that do I not; -- Such a will as this is never to be found in unregenerate persons. This is from God, and the power of his grace: when he says he did not what he willed, what he was desirous of, and bent upon, his sense is, not that he never did any good thing he willed; for he did many good things, as every good man does, but he did not always do the good he willed, and never perfectly, nor anything without grace and strength from Christ.

But what I hate, that do I. -- Sin was what he hated because it is contrary to the pure and holy nature of God, to the good and righteous law of God, and was in itself, to his view, exceeding sinful. He hated vain thoughts, unclean desires, revengeful lusts, the secret motions of all sin in his heart, and the various evil actions of life. This can never be said of an unregenerate man who loves sin, delights in iniquity, and takes pleasure in them that do it. Yet what the apostle hated he did; he did this with his carnal I, his flesh, and through the power of it, and force of temptation, though not without reluctance, remorse, and repentance.

Please consider with me that no person who is born of God can perform all he knows and loves as good perfectly; nor can he perfectly follow the lusts of his flesh. Consider this passage:

Galatians 5:16-17 (KJV) *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

Romans 7:16 (KJV) *If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.*

If then I do that which I would not, -- It is clear from the previous verse that Paul's experience was that he did that which he would not – that which he hated.

I consent unto the law that it is good. – The law of God (the Ten Commandments) forbade those things which were hateful, and commanded those things which were desirable to a good man; and so is acknowledged that the law is good and just and holy.

Romans 7:17 (KJV) *Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

Now then it is no more I that do it, -- This statement is drawn from what Paul said before, that since he did not approve, but hated what he did, and willed the contrary, it was not he as spiritual, as born again, as a new man, a new creature, that did it.

1 John 3:9 (KJV) *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.*

But sin that dwelleth in me. – Sin that dwells in me, that is, in the old man, the carnal I, the evil present with him, the law in his members. This sin not only existed in him, and worked in him, and at times worked very strongly. Sin dwelt in him. Sin had its abode in him as it has in all regenerate persons, and will have, as long as they are in the body.

Romans 7:18 (KJV) *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: -- That is, in his flesh, or Paul's carnal self – as it is true of us all who are born of God. Still there were many good things dwelt in him because there was the good work of grace and the good word of God in him. The Holy Spirit dwelt in him. His meaning is, that there was no good thing naturally in him; nothing good but what God had put there. There was no good thing in his "flesh"; in the old man that was in him, which has nothing in his nature good; no good thing comes out of him, nor is any good thing done by him. This explanatory and limiting clause, "that is, in my flesh", clearly proves, that the apostle speaks of himself at the time he penned these words. Had he spoke in the person of an unregenerate man, there would have been no room nor reason for such a restriction, seeing an unregenerate man is nothing else but flesh, the corrupt nature in him; and who does not know, that no good thing dwells in such persons?

for to will is present with me; -- "To will" is not of the power and faculty of the human will naturally, which is common to all men. It is not a will to that which is evil; but of a will to that which was good. This good will which he had not of himself, but from God,

and is only to be found in persons born of God. To will speaks of the readiness of his mind and will to that which is spiritually good, like that which Christ observes of his disciples, when he said, "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak", [Mt 26:41](#).

but how to perform that which is good I find not. – Paul (and us) found he had no strength of himself to do what he willed; and that he could do nothing without Christ; and that what he did by the strength and grace of Christ, he did not do perfectly. To will to live without sin, not to have a lustful or a revengeful thought in his breast, was present with him, but how to perform, how to live in this manner, which was so desirable to him, being born again, he found not. It may be asked, how does this agree with what the apostle says, "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure?" [Php 2:13](#). To this it may be replied, that when God does work in his people both to will and to do, he does not work both equally alike, or to the same degree, so that the work follows the desires of the will. When our LORD works in us to will and to do, we never do all that we would. Sometimes God works in us to will, when he does not work in us to do. That can be seen in the case of the disciples of Christ in whom he worked to will to watch with Christ an hour, but did not work in them to do, [Mt 26:40](#).

Romans 7:19 (KJV) *For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.*

The apostle here repeats what he had said of himself in [Ro 7:15](#) to strengthen and confirm this part of his experience. Though he had a will to that which was good, yet he lacked power, and had no power of himself to perform; and therefore often did what he would not, and what he would he did not.

Romans 7:20 (KJV) Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

The same conclusion is found here, as in [Ro 7:17](#). This is not to excuse himself from blame in sinning, but to trace the lusts of his heart, and the sins of his life, to the source and fountain of them, the corruption of his nature; and to ascribe them to the proper cause of them, which was not the law of God, nor the new man, but sin that dwelt in him.

Romans 7:21 (KJV) I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

I find then a law, -- We might ask ourselves, what law? I believe he speaking of this like a law of nature which is an unfailing rule about the determination of a body to certain motions, changes, and relations, which uniformly take place in the same circumstances. Something that happens every time I will to do good – without exception.

That, when I would do good, evil is present with me. -- As soon as any good thought arises in me, any good resolve, or I am about to do anything that is good. Evil (the corrupt nature in me) hinders me; it came into the world with me, and it has continued with me ever since; it cleaves close unto me, it lies very nigh me, and whenever there is any motion to that which is good, it starts up, which seemed to lie asleep before, and exerts itself, so that I cannot do the good I would.

Romans 7:22 (KJV) For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

For I delight in the law of God – The word “delight” is found only here in the NT. It comes from the Greek word “συνηδομαι sunedomai *soon-ay'-dom-ahee*” which is a compound word in the Greek Middle Voice. The delight is something we do for ourselves. This is an emotion of pleasure when we meditate on the law of God. This shows that the apostle is not speaking of an unrenewed man. Of a renewed man it might be said that his conscience approves the law; that his understanding is convinced that the law is good. But never yet did it occur that an impenitent sinner found emotions of pleasure in the contemplation of the pure and spiritual law of God. It is the natural, obvious, and usual mode of conveying the feelings of godliness, an agreement and approbation to the Divine law followed with emotions of sensible delight in the contemplation.

After the inward man: -- The inward man stands in opposition to a carnal and corrupt nature; to the evil passions and desires of the soul in an unrenewed state; to what is called elsewhere "the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. The "inward man" is elsewhere called "the new man," ([Eph 4:24](#)) and speaks of not the mere intellect, or conscience, but is a personification of the principles of action by which a child of God is governed; the new nature; the holy disposition; the inclination of the heart that is renewed.

Romans 7:23 (KJV) *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

But I see another law in my members, -- In my body; in my flesh; in my corrupt and sinful inclinations. Comp. The body is composed of many members; and as the flesh is regarded as the

source of sin, ([Ro 7:18](#)) the law of sin is said to be in the members, i.e. in the body itself.

warring against the law of my mind, -- fighting against; or resisting.

The law of my mind, -- The law of my mind stands opposed to the prevailing inclinations of my corrupt nature. It means the same as was expressed by the phrase "the inward man," and speaks of the desires and purposes of a renewed heart.

and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. – This speaks of of a captivity to sin, but different from that an unregenerate man. The unsaved man is a voluntary captive to sin and Satan, gives up himself to such slavery and bondage, and rather goes willingly into it. Whereas we as God's children are, through the force of sin, and power of temptation, violently drawn and carried into captivity; in which we are held against our will. This captivity does not mean absolute dominion, which sin never has over a regenerate man. A regenerate man, being carried captive by sin, does not come under the absolute dominion of sin, or cease to be a subject of the kingdom of grace. The phrase of "bringing into captivity" supposes that the person before was not a captive; whereas every unsaved person is a captive and was always so, and never otherwise. This captivity is very distressing and uneasy to the person, and makes him cry out, "O wretched man", etc. whereas the captivity of an unregenerate person is very agreeable to him; he likes his prison, he loves his chains, and do not and cannot choose to be in any other state and condition.

Romans 7:24 (KJV) O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

O wretched man that I am! – The feeling expressed by this lamentation is the result of this painful conflict and this frequent subjection to sinful predispositions. The effect of this conflict is

(1.) to produce pain and distress, it is often an agonizing struggle between good and evil; a struggle which frustrates the peace, and renders life difficult.

(2.) It tends to produce humility. It is humbling to man to be thus under the influence of evil passions.

Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? -- Who shall rescue me from this body of sin and the condition of a mind in deep distress, and conscious of its own weakness?

Romans 7:25 (KJV) I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. – In the midst of Paul's groaning over the sin in his body he breaks out into praises. Many, perhaps all poor drooping souls have found it so. The cry of all of God's children with Paul is *Who shall deliver me?* say we ([Ro 7:24](#)), as if we were at a loss for help. When we are under the sense of the remaining power of sin and corruption, we shall see reason to bless God through Christ who is our mediator and our forerunner – who has, by one offering forever saved those who are sanctified and saved us from wrath due us for our sin. He is now our advocate and soon shall show himself as our coming King to subdue finally the body of this death.

1 Corinthians 15:51-57 (KJV) *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump:*

for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. **53** *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.* **54** *So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.* **55** *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* **56** *The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.* **57** *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Blessed be God that giveth us this victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; -- With the understanding, the conscience, the purposes and intentions of the soul. This is a characteristic of the renewed nature. Of no impenitent sinner could it be ever said that with his mind he served the law of God.

But with the flesh the law of sin. --The corrupt propensities and lusts which are in the members of my body. The flesh throughout, in all its Adamic natural passions, leads to sin. It has no tendency to holiness and is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be. Paul divided himself as it were into two parts:

- (1) the mind, by which he means his inward man, his renewed self; and
- (2) "the flesh", by which he designs his carnal I, that was sold under sin:

By these Paule accounts for his serving, at different times, two different laws; "the law of God", written on his mind, and in the

service of which he delighted as a regenerate man; "and the law of sin", to which he was sometimes carried captive.

How important that we notice Paul does not say "I have served", as referring to his past state of being unregenerate, but "I serve", in the present tense in his state as a believer in Christ, made up of flesh and spirit. In these last words the apostle gives of himself (and all of us) agrees with all he had said before, and confirms the whole discourse concerning indwelling sin, as a regenerate person and the present conflict.