

At War with Indwelling Sin

Text: Romans 7:7-25

Introduction:

1. This chapter deals with the believer's relationship to the law. Essentially, the Apostle Paul enlarges upon the truth of 6:14 *"for ye are not under the law, but under grace."*
2. Paul describes his own struggle with indwelling sin (17-18) under the law as a newly saved man before coming to understand the truth of his identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection as detailed in Chapter 6 and Vs. 1-6 of this chapter.
3. The post or pre-conversion question. We know the Apostle Paul is speaking as a saved man for the following reasons:
 - Sanctification now in focus, not justification. Epistle follows a logical sequence.
 - Paul describes himself as "alive without the law once". Paul would not describe a man "dead in trespasses and sins" as being "alive".
 - Paul desires to do good and hates sin (Vs. 15)
 - Paul delights in the law of God after the inner man (Vs. 22).
 - Paul's cry for deliverance is that of a saved man. Newell: "This man of Romans Seven is crying for deliverance, - not from sin's guilt and penalty, but from its power. Not for forgiveness of sins, but help against indwelling sin. This man is exercised, not about the day of judgment, but about a condition of bondage to that which he hates."

I. Paul's Discovery of Indwelling Sin (Vs. 7-14)

A. The Spirituality of the Law (Vs. 7, 12)

1. It's Function (Vs. 7)
 - a. Gives the knowledge of sin (Vs. 7)
 - i. 'covet' = the commandment that deals with the inner man, not just the outward actions.
 - ii. Paul becomes aware of the spiritual nature of the law.
 - b. Makes sin serious (Vs. 13)
2. It's Character (Vs. 12)
 - a. Holy = exposition of the character of a Holy God
 - b. Just = perfect in its judgments
 - c. Good = not tainted with evil in anyway
 - d. Spiritual (Vs. 14)

B. The Stimulation of Sin (Vs. 8-9)

1. Concupiscence awakened (Vs. 8)
 - a. "occasion" = a starting place, a base of operations. The law furnished sin with the material or ground of assault (Wuest)

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- b. 'concupiscence' = strong lusting
 - c. "without the law sin was dead" = indwelling sin lies dormant in the heart apart from the law
 - d. "The natural corruption of his heart took occasion from the restraints of the law, to struggle against it, and break out with more violence. Whatever is prohibited is only the more eagerly desired. The prohibitions of the law increased the desire of what is prohibited." (Haldane)
2. Sin Revived (Vs. 9)
 3. Note: The law did not generate the lust but the sin nature used the law as its opportunity to stir up sinful impulses.
 4. The fallacy of the idea that placing the believer under the law will produce holiness. The believer who seeks to live under the law in his own strength will find sin awakened in his life.
- C. The Slaying by Sin (Vs. 10-11)**
1. Sin portrayed as a victorious conqueror
 2. Sin found its occasion in the commandment
- D. The Seriousness of Sin (Vs. 12-13)**
1. Sin revealed for what it is – "might appear sin"
 2. Sin made exceeding sinful
- E. The Slavery to Sin (Vs. 14)**
1. 'carnal' = fleshly.
 2. Word describes a believer, not an unsaved person (Refer 1. Cor. 3:1-3)

II. Paul's Defeat to Indwelling Sin (Vs. 15-23)

A. Failure in his actions (Vs. 15-17; 19-20)

1. Paul has just made reference to the fact he is 'carnal' in Vs. 14. The failures that follow are a manifestation of a carnal believer.
2. Failure to accomplish good – sins of omission
3. Failure to overcome evil – sins of commission

B. Failure in his determination (Vs. 18)

1. "to will is present with me" = the desire to live right was present. Lit. "being constantly desirous" The desire to do God's will is always with him, the ability or power to perform it is not.
2. "how to perform" = Paul's will not strong enough
3. Illustration: The will is like a switch. It has not power of itself but can connect you to the power source. The power to live the Christian life is not in the will but in the Holy Spirit.

C. Failure to his passions (Vs. 21-23)

1. He desires to do right (Vs. 21)
2. He delights in God's law (Vs. 22)
3. He encounters defeat to sin's law (Vs. 23)

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- a. The internal war/conflict is described
- b. Gal. 5:16-17 *“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 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.”*
- c. Indwelling sin is too powerful for Paul and he finds himself defeated

III. Paul’s Deliverance from Indwelling Sin (Vs. 24-25)

A. The Plea for Deliverance (Vs. 24)

1. As soon as you realize the solution is not in you, then you will begin to look outside yourself for the source of deliverance.
2. ‘who’ = not what but who! Not something but someone! Not a process but a Person!

B. The Person for Deliverance (Vs. 25)

1. Galatians 2:20 *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; **yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:** and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”* Sin will slay us when we fight it in our own strength. The only
2. The key is found in the truths either side of this description of defeat. Romans 6 – Our Union with Christ. Romans 8 – Our walk in the Spirit
3. Newell: “Ah! The answer to Paul’s self-despairing question, “Who shall deliver me?” is a new revelation – even identification with Christ in His death! For just as the sinner struggles in vain to find forgiveness and peace, until he looks outside himself to Him who made peace by the blood of His cross, just so does the quickened soul, struggling unto despair to find victory over sin by self-effort, look outside himself to Christ – in whom he is, and in whom he died to sin and to law!”
4. The believer lives not by an external legal principle, but by an inner life principle.
5. Personal pronoun ‘I’ found a staggering 32 times in these verses. Sin is mentioned 15 times. Paul tried to live up to the law’s demands and failed! If the greatest man of God who walked planet earth could not defeat indwelling sin in his own strength then what hope have we!!! The answer is found in

Conclusion: Illustration: Watchman Nee’s testimony.

Sin was still defeating me, and I saw that something was fundamentally wrong. So I asked God to show me what was the meaning of the expression, “I have been crucified with Christ.” It has become clear to me that when speaking of this subject God nowhere says ‘You must be’ but always

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'You have been.'...I remember one morning – how can I ever forget it! – I was sitting upstairs reading Romans and I came to the words: "*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*" Knowing this! How could I know it? I prayed, 'Lord, open my eyes!' and then, in a flash, I saw. I had earlier been reading I. Corinthians 1:30: 'Ye are in Christ Jesus.' I turned to it and looked at it again. 'That you are in Christ Jesus is God's doing!' It was amazing! Then if Christ dies, and that is certain fact, and if God put me into him, then I must have died too. All at once I saw my oneness with Christ: that I was in him, and that when he died I died. My death to sin was a matter of the past and not of the future. Against the Tide (Pg. 122-123)