

The Problem of Mistaken Identity – Part 2

Romans 7:24-8:1; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 4-2-23

- 1. The Problem of Evil (The Dark Side of Easter):** *Evil is the human condition and the Christian's contradiction.* The dark side of Easter is the problem of evil in the world because of the problem of evil in every heart. Again, the problem out there in the world is the problem within my own heart!

I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. – Romans 7:21

- Paul is dealing with the reality of evil in Romans 7.
- He recognizes that the reality of evil in the world is the reality of evil in his own heart.
- This evil reigned in the unbelieving, unregenerate Paul.
- This evil indwells the believing, regenerate Paul.

The Problem of Evil

Evil is hostility toward God who is perfect love and perfect good. (Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21) Evil is ingratitude to God for all the good He has blessed us with and a refusal to believe that He is good and the source of all good. (Luke 6:35; Romans 1:21) Evil is spiritual adultery or the worship of other gods by looking to creation for our help and happiness instead of God our Creator and all the wrong attitudes and words and actions that flow from it. (Jeremiah 2:13, 19; Matthew 16:4; Romans 1:25) Evil is a fundamental heart issue that is the refusal to listen to God and trust Him and to do what He says. (Jeremiah 16:12; Psalm 2:1-3; John 3:19; 7:7) Evil in our hearts and lives is something we quickly dismiss and often fail to see clearly. (Joshua 24:16, 23; Matthew 26:33-35) When we talk about the root of the tree, we are talking about the fundamental stance of the heart toward God and the Law of God and the things of God. (Luke 6:43-45; 1 Samuel 16:7; Romans 7:22; 8:6-8) We may think that to talk about people being evil that we are saying that they should not be loved by us, but God loves evil people. (Luke 6:35; Matthew 5:45) We may think that to talk about people being evil that we are saying that they are irredeemable but that's the very people Jesus came to redeem. (Mark 2:15-17) When we say that all men are evil, we do not mean that there is nothing good, in any sense, about them or that they are as evil as Hitler. (Luke 11:13) But, we are saying, that the Bible reveals that, on the heart level, the truest part of us, apart from redeeming grace we are fundamentally hostile to God and His Word, and therefore, fundamentally evil, until God gives us a new heart. And that's why we can't save ourselves and why we need a Savior! (Ezekiel 36:22-32) So why do we as Christians need to think about the reality of evil in all men and women? Because this is what God has saved us from. Because this is what still resides in us (indwelling sin). Because this is why it is important for us to share the gospel and pray. Because without an understanding of the true condition of man, we will not understand what Easter is all about. (Galatians 1:4)

- 2. The Solution of Easter (The Good Friday of Easter):** *God used evil to rescue the world from evil through the cross.* The good of the Good Friday of Easter is the solution to evil that is provided in the cross of Jesus. The answer to evil is evil worked together for good!

²⁴ *Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?* ²⁵ *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

- Paul cries out in anguish over the evil he still finds in him!
- Then he asks the question that he already knows the answer to.
- The solution is found in the Person and work of Jesus!
- To die on a cross was to be cursed by God! (Deuteronomy 21:23; Galatians 3:13)
- Jesus suffered the wrath of evil men in order to endure the wrath of God so that He could deliver us from all evil!
- Jesus suffered the curse in order to bring us the blessing! – Genesis 50:19-20

The worst case of mistaken identity! – John 18:30; Mark 15:22-39

- 3. The Declaration of Righteousness (The New Standing of Easter):** *When justice is satisfied, condemnation is silenced.* The comfort and sweetness of Easter is the declaration of no condemnation, no matter what! God declares believers to be righteous even when they're not, because of His Son!

¹ *Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

³ *For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,*

- Paul exults in the reality that though sin still indwells him, he stands before God without condemnation!
- And this is directly related to the reality that Jesus experienced the sentence and execution of our condemnation on the cross.
- Jesus was condemned – sentenced and executed – so that we would never have to be! – Romans 5:16, 18

In Christ, we have a new position and a new person and a new power. In our *new position,* we are forgiven of all sin and righteous as Christ.

- We are forgiven.* – Romans 5:6-11
- We are righteous.* – Romans 5:15-17
- We are not condemned regardless of our sin because of what Jesus did for us.* – Romans 8:1-4; Luke 23:39-43
- We are not condemned and we are forever loved!* – Romans 8:31-39; John 17:23; 2 Chronicles 33:1-16; Romans 3:21-26