

Pt 20 Romans 7:14-25, O Wretched Man That I Am

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Romans 7:14-25

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.
15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.
16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.
17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.
18 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.
19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.
20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.
21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.
22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:
23 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.
24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?
25 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.

We pick up where we left off 2-weeks ago in the middle of Chapter 7. The last thing we saw was Paul using himself as an example of how the law caused him to understand his sin but that it “**wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.**”

We explained that word **concupiscence** means: “**desire, craving, longing, desire for what is forbidden, lust.**”

It is our fleshly carnal nature to want to do what is forbidden. David wrote in **Psalms 51:5** **Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.**

Here in our opening text, Paul continues using himself as the example of a sinful man.

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

It is believed that Paul was converted around 37-40 AD. AD, of course meaning **Anno Domini** which is Latin for “**The Year of Our Lord.**” Some people mistakenly think AD stands for **After Death** but it does not, it actually signifies the **Birth of Christ**, whereas BC means **Before Christ**.

You may have noticed in the past 20-years or so there has been a push to start using BCE and CE instead of BC and AD. BCE means “Before Common Era” and CE means “Common Era.” The reason for this is because the secular world wants to rid everything of religion or anything about Christ. It should go without saying, we will continue using BC and AD and so will most of the world.

Paul's Epistle (**which means letter**) to the Romans was most likely written between 56-58 AD, so Paul had been in the ministry anywhere from 18 to 20-years by this time. In other words, he is not a rookie Christian but a seasoned veteran.

We clearly see that Paul is stating that he **IS** carnal, **sold under sin**. It does not say “**I WAS** carnal, it says **I AM** carnal.

You would be shocked and amazed to know there is a large percentage of people that identify as a Christian that believe once you become a Christian that you no longer sin.

If that is true then the Bible is filled with lies because I find these verses in the Word of God: **1 John 1:8-10** **If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.**

The Book of 1 John was written to **SAVED** people, not **LOST** people. Let's look again at verse 14 **For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.**

Believe it or not, there are some that want to claim Paul was speaking about an unregenerate man or himself **BEFORE** he was saved. That these qualities he mentions could only be found in a lost man.

I understand how someone may **WANT** to believe that, but they are simply wrong. Paul is without doubt referring to himself in the present tense.

If I counted it correctly, Paul uses the word “**I**” 30-times in these 12-verses alone and the word “**me**” 7-times in these verses. It is clear he means himself and not someone else and not himself before he was saved but himself in present tense.

Paul expresses his desire to live Spiritually. In his mind and heart, he earnestly desires to live a righteous life, but his flesh prevents him from doing so. He says he is “**carnal.**” The word carnal means “**fleshly, animalistic in nature.**”

He says he is “**sold under sin.**” This does not mean that Paul is a servant to sin but that he is an unwilling participant. Like someone who is captured and sold into slavery against their will.

He is describing the inward struggle, the battle between:

1. The inward man and the outward man
2. The fleshly man and the spiritual man
3. The new man and the old man
4. The new creature and the old creature

What Paul is describing is the life of a **true Christian**. I want to say something that my greatly help you in your Christian walk: For years I struggled with doubts about my salvation. Whenever I would sin, I would question “**am I truly saved? Would a person truly saved sin?**” I would look at other Christians and think “**wow, they are living like a Christian ought to live, they are much better than I am, maybe that's how a real Christian should be.**” I would base it on their external actions or how they looked and things they said and assumed since I didn't measure up to their goodness that I must not have really gotten saved.

But finally, the Lord revealed to me in His Word that saved people will have a struggle. That if I was **NOT** saved, I wouldn't have a struggle with sin. We seem to be a walking contradiction. You see, if you were lost, you would not have this inner struggle. Lost people do not have a New Creature living within them. When they sin, they do not have the same shame and guilt that they have sinned against God. Sure, they may regret something they did or be sorry they got caught or sorry that they have to face consequences for their actions, but the actual act of sin does not bother them. They sin and sin willingly because they live for themselves, they live in the flesh and not the Spirit.

A true Christian, on the other hand, will have guilt and remorse over their sin because they know they are sinning against God and not being pleasing to Him and the Spirit will convict them of their sin.

Paul describes a true Christian's feeling in these next verses:

15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

This battle plays out not only in the heart but in the mind and will of every believer. Non-believers do not have this struggle. They sin and sin willingly and with pleasure with no intentions of doing what is right. They do not see right and wrong the same way as a Christian. So, a lost person would not “**hate**” sin the way Paul is describing here.

I think we can all identify with Paul here. Deep inside, in your mind, in your heart you do not want to sin because you hate it, yet we often give in to our fleshly carnal nature.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

Here Paul is explaining that when he does give into sin then it causes him to realize that the law is good. The law forbids these sinful acts and commands acts of obedience and righteousness. The law shines a light on his sinful condition and reveals it.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

This is an interesting verse and one which allows us to clearly see that there are two creatures living inside of us.

It is not the New Spirit or the New Man in us that sins, but it is the old spirit, the old man, the old flesh that causes us to sin.

Think of it like this: We have the flesh and carnal nature of the 1st Adam in our mortal bodies, but we have the Spirit of Christ or the 2nd Adam within us as well. Unfortunately, we will have this struggle until the day we close our eyes in death. The Spirit and the Flesh are in war with each other.

18 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.

Notice that Paul makes a distinction between the flesh and the Spirit. He says, “**For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh)** and then he emphasizes that he is referring to his flesh, **dwelleth no good thing.**”

The disciples were the same way, even when they were around Jesus. If you remember just before Jesus was arrested, he went into the garden to pray and he asked Peter, James, and John to watch and pray for him, but they fell asleep? This is what Jesus said to them: **Mark 14:38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.**

In the Gospel of Matthew, it says this: **Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.**

Again, a distinction between the spirit and the flesh. The **spirit is ready**, the **spirit is willing**, but the flesh is weak. The disciples allowed their flesh to override the Spirit.

If you remember in **John chapter 3** when Nicodemus came to Jesus in the night to ask him about the Kingdom of God and Jesus told him that he must be born again, and he was confused. **John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.**

Just as Jesus says those born in the flesh are flesh – we will always be flesh until Jesus redeems us and glorifies us. But, those born of the Spirit (meaning the Spirit of God) is of the spirit. The Spirit is perfect. The Spirit is sinless. The Spirit is righteous. But the flesh is NONE of those things. This is what is referred to as the **New Birth**.

Back in our opening text in **Romans 7:18b - 19**, Paul says **...for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.**

Paul wants to live for God. He wants to do the right thing. He wants to live a spiritual life but when he tries, he fails. In fact, he finds that he is doing the opposite of what he truly desires to do.

Am I the only one that knows exactly what Paul means? I think if you are being honest with yourself then you too know what he means.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Paul is not trying to go the easy way out. He's not saying that he is not to blame for the times he sins. He is stating the fact that even though he is saved and a new creature in Christ, he cannot escape the sin that still dwells within him.

Listen, you cannot escape the sin that dwells inside of you. You will have to deal with it until you close your eyes in death. A Christian will have to battle, flee, pray, and struggle with sin as long as we live.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

23 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.

Paul uses the word “captivity” here describing the law of sin that is in him. This does not mean that Paul is a slave to sin. He is not controlled by sin, but that he is a captive to it and in his own power and by his own actions, he is unable to escape it.

Then, one of the most memorable statements ever written by Paul: **24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?**

Paul sees himself as he truly is – wretched. That word means troubled, afflicted, and miserable. There seems to be no escape from his sin, from his sickness over it and his inability to stop sinning and asks the question: “Who shall deliver me?”

I love his answer: **25 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.**

There is only One way of escape. Only One by whom we can be delivered from this body of sin and misery – Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus is the ONLY way. Jesus said in **John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

He said in **Matthew 11:28-30 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.**

What about you this morning? Do you need rest for your weary soul?