

## Romans part 7

### Recap

Paul just got done showing that the law is still good and useful, just not as a means of obtaining righteousness. Jesus fulfilled the law, so righteousness comes through faith in Him.

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

- Is Paul speaking from the perspective of a saved person, or an unsaved person?
- Again, we are a 3-part being – Spirit, Soul, Body. We are primarily Spirit. And our Spirit is not carnal. But our body is.
- Why does Paul say I am carnal, sold under sin?

Romans 7:14-25 is Paul recounting his struggle as a saved man dealing with sin. Listen to vs. 15 and see if you can relate:

**Romans 7:15** For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.

- I think every believer has this fight in them.
- So back to vs. 14, why does Paul say he is carnal, sold under sin?
- The more Paul struggles with sin, the more he is aware of his flesh. His body. His carnality. And as we showed last week, this is where sin resides.
  - **Romans 6:12** Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

Paul has gotten saved, understood that his righteousness comes from faith, not by works. Knows that he is dead to sin and alive to Christ. Realizes that the law is useful to bring knowledge of what is sinful – But still struggles with sin.

**Romans 7:15-16** For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. <sup>16</sup> If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that *it is* good.

- Paul's problem is not desire. He wants to do good. He does not want to sin.
- Paul's problem is not lack of knowledge. He knows the right answers. He knows what is right and what is wrong.
- Paul's problem is not an incorrect worldview. He agrees with God's law.

### **So what is the problem?**

**Romans 7:17-20** But now, *it is* no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do not find. <sup>19</sup> For the good that I will *to do*, I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do*, that I practice. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I will not *to do*, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

- The problem is that sin resides in the flesh.
- There is nothing in the flesh that is good.

Now we need Biblical definitions.

**Good** – A moral quality. Righteous. Holy.

- **Mark 10:18** So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God.
- **Romans 3:10** As it is written: "*There is none righteous, no, not one;*

So Paul is saying that in his flesh, there is no good. Nothing in the flesh can bring righteousness or holiness. Even acts that we may consider good by human standards, done apart from God are not good.

- **1 Corinthians 13:1-3** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I

could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.<sup>3</sup> And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

**Flesh** – The normal human existence apart from God. Trying to get your needs met apart from God.

- Remember, we saw in Romans 2 and part of 3 that you cannot obtain righteousness apart from God.
- The flesh wars against this.

Sin can always be traced back to getting one of our core needs met apart from God. There are 5 needs – LAWS plus righteousness. (Love, Acceptance, Worth, Security).

Paul concludes that it is not truly him that sins, but rather sin that resides in his flesh:

- **Romans 7:20** Now if I do what I will not *to do*, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.
- Paul is not excusing sinful behavior, nor justifying it. He is simply conveying a real truth:

Who you are, when you are saved, is righteous and who you really are (your spirit), does not sin.

But your spirit lives in a body. And that body is still corruptible. The flesh is still listening to the world.

But the real truth is this - **The impulse to sin does not come from who we really are in Jesus Christ.**

- Understanding who you are in Christ, your true Identity, is the key to overcoming sin. Not will power.
- Paul willed not to sin – unsuccessfully.

**Romans 7:21-23** I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.<sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.<sup>23</sup> 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 is breaking down the parts of a human – The inward man, his spirit, delights in the ways of God. Yearns for righteousness and holiness because that is who he is.
- But in his members, his flesh, there is still a desire to sin.

**Hebrews 10:14** For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

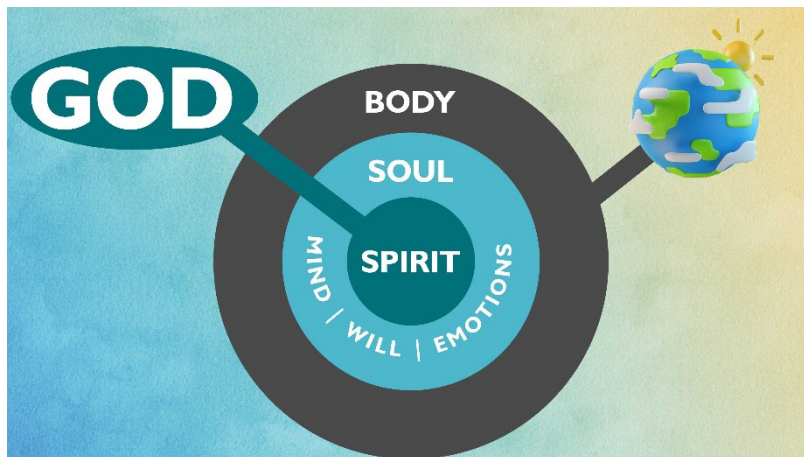
- We walk in a dichotomy. We are perfect, yet we are being perfected.
- Sanctification is having your body come under control so that you are walking according to the spirit and not the flesh.

Who you are is righteous. Just because there is weakness in your flesh do not fall for the lie that you are still sinful.

Your body is not who you are. It contains who you are.

In order to live as holy, you must live from who you truly are. And if you only see yourself as a carnal, flesh being, then you will live out of that.

Remember this diagram from last week:



Our Spirit is connected to God. Our body is connected to the world. Our soul is listening to one or the other. Choose to walk in the spirit and listen to God, rather than the world.

**Colossians 3:1-3** If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. <sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

**Romans 7:24-25** O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> 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.

- Wretched = worn out, exhausted from trials.
- Trying to live holy on your own efforts is exhausting.
- Who will deliver me? Paul has referred to himself some 40 times since Romans 7:13. In the pit of his unsuccessful struggle against sin, Paul became entirely self-focused and self-obsessed.
- We will never be able to will ourselves to stop sinning. The answer is not to try harder.
- The answer is what Paul says here - I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!
- Note that Paul says this body of death. He is separating out who he really is and his flesh that desires sin.

### **Where does this leave us?**

**Romans 8:1** *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

- You are not under condemnation.
- If you feel condemned, that is not from God. He brings correction and conviction, but never condemnation.
- Those not in Christ Jesus will face condemnation.
- Is there a qualifier here? Is there only no condemnation when we walk in the spirit? Yes and no.
- What Paul is saying is this – Those who are in Christ Jesus, they are under grace and not the law. Therefore, they are righteous, not based

on works, but on faith and grace – so they are not under any condemnation.

- But those that live according to the flesh, those trying to earn righteousness through acts and works, they will be under condemnation.

This is the secret of the Christian life – Allow yourself to be Spirit led. Walk in the spirit. Do not walk according to what we experience in the world, live according to the promises of God.

Believe God is who God says He is. Believe you are who God says you are. And you will live free of condemnation, and free from sin.

**Romans 8:2-4** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

- Paul basically recaps the Gospel plan here.
  - Christ has set us free from sin and death
  - The law could not accomplish this – but not because the law is wrong, but because in our flesh we are weak.
  - God sent Jesus to pay the price.
  - Since our flesh is what is weak, Jesus came in the flesh. And He took our sin into His perfect flesh – and condemned sin in His flesh. The penalty for sin has been paid.
  - So for those who are now in the spirit and not the flesh – those under grace and not the law – the requirement, the penalty of sin (which is death) is fulfilled and we are only seen by God as righteous.
  - There is no more death because of sin – separation from God.

**Romans 8:5-8** For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. <sup>7</sup> Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. <sup>8</sup> So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

- There is a difference between the way a true believer lives their life and the way an unbeliever lives their life.
  - Remember that the Gospel is transformative power.
- Unbelievers live according to the flesh and set their minds on things of the flesh. What does your doctor's report say, what does the bank account say, what does your boss say? How do you feel?
- Believers listen to God. They believe what the Bible says. They live by faith and not by sight. What truly matters is what God is saying about a situation.
- Living by the spirit will bring life and peace.
- Living carnally – just by what is in the physical – will rob you of peace.
- Those that live without the spirit, no matter what they are doing, will not please God. Only through faith and living in the spirit, which will then always please God.
  - **Hebrews 11:6** But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.