

## The Believer's Struggle with Sin

### *Romans 7:13~25, part 1*

This morning, we will embark on what I think may well be one of the most important studies during my time here with you... Here Paul brings to a conclusion to what he has been speaking too this entire letter. It marks the end of Paul's explaining the Law, and marks the beginning of his explaining "Life in the Spirit!" Over and over in my mind, I kept coming back to the analogy of "The Birthing of a Child..." It has been a tremendous struggle and labor for me to get this truth out, like the process of "being in labor". Here in 7:13~25, is the final stage, life is fixing to be born...

I cannot begin to express to you the importance of understanding this passage, in the life of a believer. It speaks of "**The Believer's Struggle with Sin...**" It speaks of an individual, who has come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, an individual who has come to the realization of the utter depravity of their own heart, their sinfulness, and have "*repented*" of their sins... And now, with all their heart, they seek to serve God with all that is within them. But only to realize, that even though they repented of their sin, which means to "*turn*" from their sin...their sin did not leave them! It doesn't take long to find this out...

Even though we have "*Died to Sin*" as Paul taught in chapter 6:2... Sin has not "*Died to us!*"

It's very important to understand what I'm saying...

The individual described here, is no longer "*living in sin*" but "*sin is still living in him.*"

The individual described in this passage, has truly had a change of heart! It becomes clear, the individual described here, Loves God...and...Hates SIN! Without a doubt, "*hatred for Sin*" is the clearest and surest sign of genuine salvation there is... It is impossible to love God & love Sin...

The individual described in this passage, loves God with all that is within him, one who longs to serve God and do His Will... But at the same time, he finds that Sin is still very much alive in him, and that he is constantly being hindered by it...a SIN that he HATES! The Believer quickly finds out, that when Christ came into his heart...that the sin in his heart was not eradicated. He quickly learns that "*evil desires*" and "*wrong thoughts*" and such still reside in him, and are still *very much alive!*

Anybody here have this same struggle?

There is likely no other passage in scripture that better explains the Christian life than this one...

The "*Key*" to being victorious, lies in having a "*right understanding*" of the **place and purpose** of the Mosaic Law in the life of a believer in Christ!

Something that Paul has been speaking too since back in 3:31...

<sup>31</sup>*Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*

Everything up to this point, Paul has clearly shown what the "*Purpose and Place*" of the Law **was not!**

(Chapter 3) It was not for Justification... Paul has proven, Jew or Gentile, those with the Law, those who had not the law, neither is any different. All are under sin! Man's justification comes only by faith, through God's Grace and Mercy...revealed in Christ death on the cross!

(Chapter 4) Examples of Abraham & David... Salvation by faith, through grace...

(Chapter 5) God's Plan of Salvation...Man's Sin...God's Law...Man's Redemption...

(Vs 12) SIN entered...(Vs 20) LAW entered...so that Christ might enter...

<sup>20</sup>Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: <sup>21</sup>That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Law "Entered" to cause the SIN in us to abound...to "Come out!"

The Law would cause us to "see our need" of grace...our need of Christ!

Once the Law had fulfilled its purpose in our life, by bringing us to Christ, we enter into a new relationship with God through His Son...Jesus Christ.

(Chapter 7:1~6) Paul explains this transition using the analogy of a marriage...

Then, in verse 7, Paul ask a question... Is the Law Sin? Which left on its own seems like a strange question...But given all that Paul has said to this point, one might misunderstand what Paul is saying about the Law... So here in verses 7~12, Paul wants to make clear the matter...

<sup>7</sup>What shall we say then? *Is the law sin?*

A question that is "*Birthed*" out of his previous statements in verses 5&6...*death, delivered, held*... Looking back further in chapter 6...we see the same thing, even more so...

Paul "*Clearly*" associates being "Set free from sin" with being "Set free from the Law..."

Is the Law Sin?... God forbid... I would have never known Sin if not for the Law...

When the Law became active in Paul's heart, when he came to the understanding that it wasn't merely speaking to the "*Outward Actions*" of man, but spoke to the "*Inward Attitude*" of man, he found himself "*guilty*" of transgressing them! When the law manifested the "*evil desires*" of his heart, he found himself "*condemned*"!

(Vs 12) *The Law is Holy, and the Commandment holy, and just, and good...*

<sup>13</sup>*Was then that which is good made death unto me?*

Was the **Holy, just and good** law of God the *cause of my death*?

God forbid. **But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.**

Simply put... God's **Holy and Righteous** Law *was simply used to reveal the SIN in us.*

The **Law of God** is so "**Holy & So Righteous**", that when it enters into the ears of men, and makes it's way down into the human heart, the *glory* that radiates from the Law *illuminates* the *hidden sins* of man!

**Wiersbe...** The Law is a *mirror* that reveals the "*inner man*" and shows us how dirty he is...

As the *light of the Law of God* shines in our hearts, it helps us see the things *we cannot see with the human eye*...the *unholy and unrighteous thoughts and desires* that lie way below the surface.

Paul's answer is amazing... The Law does not *kill you*, the law does not *condemn you*...  
The law *simply reveals* the condemnation and death that is already there! God used it to reveal my  
“Spiritually Dead” condition!

Interesting... The Law served a very similar function to Christ... According to John 3:17~19, neither was  
given to “*Condemn us*”, but to manifest our “*Already Condemned state!*”

(John 3) <sup>17</sup>For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him  
might be saved. <sup>18</sup>He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned  
already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. <sup>19</sup>And this is the  
condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their  
deeds were evil.

We don't mess up and become condemned, but we are already condemned...  
The Law and Christ are a lot of like... both are light a light that reveals the SIN in us!

Beloved... We are “*Spiritually Dead*” in our SIN!

<sup>14</sup>For we know that *the law is spiritual*: but *I am carnal*, sold under sin.

“For we know...” Paul had come to realize a very important truth... In order to “*understand the struggle  
we have with sin*,” is to understand this very important principle...

...*the law is spiritual*: but *I am carnal*... It is a “*Comparison*” ...

A comparison given to illustrate the VAST DIFFERENCE between the Law and Man... Paul says, “*the  
Law is Spiritual, and I am Carnal*...” suggesting that the difference between the two are “*Worlds apart!*”

The Law is from the “*Spirit World*” and I am of the “*Physical World*.”

The Law is “*Spiritual*” which speaks of what we “*cannot see with human eyes*...”

I am “*Carnal*” which speaks of what we “*can see with human eyes*...”

Two totally different worlds, two totally different things, complete opposites!

And it is “*extremely important*” to understand this principle... because it becomes the basis of  
understanding our struggles in living out the Christian life!

Another way to say verse 14... “The Law is *spiritual*...and **I'm not!**”

*I am Carnal*...or “*Fleshly*...” and being *fleshly*, I am “*subject to the desires of the Flesh!*”

That is the very essence of what Paul is saying in verse 21...

<sup>21</sup>*I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.*

I find, that when I seek to serve God, when I seek to pursue “*spiritual things*”, that I am hindered by the  
“*desires of my flesh*,” which is in me, the desires that are *contrary to the spiritual*, and the desires that  
naturally *oppose the spiritual!*

In short, Paul says, “*being the human that I am, makes it hard to serve God in the way that I so  
long to do*...” I find myself “*constantly hindered*” by this **flesh!**

Listen how he describes his struggle...

<sup>15</sup>*For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*

That describes a man in “*great conflict!*”

At times, I find myself doing what I'm totally against, doing what I don't agree with at all... I find, that what I really want to do...I don't do...but rather, end up doing what I hate...

What's he mean, he can't do what he wants to do?

What's he mean, he does what he hates?

Anyone not familiar with this passage, might conclude that this is a description a "lost man..." One who doesn't know God, or if he does, than it certainly is a very "immature in the faith..."

But as we will see, that's not the case at all... Contrary to what one might initially think, It actually describes someone who is "very mature."

**T:** Listen closely... The "*Unspiritual Man*" has no such struggles...for he has not such "perception" of indwelling sin. He has no such struggles because he "*sees himself as righteous*" by his "*Outward adherence*" to the Law. Overall, he considers himself to be a pretty good person. He has "*no comprehension*" of the wretchedness of his own heart!

You see...the person described here is the *Apostle Paul*... One that I don't think any sane man would argue, that was likely the most spiritual man to ever walk the earth!

We learn that to "*grow Spiritually*" is to grow in the awareness of one's own sinfulness! We are not "*Spiritual*..." we are "*Carnal*" through and through! We learn from Paul here, that as we grow in Christ, as we draw closer and closer to Him...His GLORY manifest more and more of the Sin that is in our hearts!

(Vs 13) Paul says, God used the Holy Law to reveal the SIN that is in us...

<sup>14</sup>For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. <sup>15</sup>For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. <sup>16</sup>If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. <sup>17</sup>Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me.

The Law stirs up the sin within us... Causing a conflict to take place... It's almost as if there are two people living in me...and in one sense there is... Me, and then there is SIN... A SIN that holds me captive, that holds me in bondage...

**(Vs 15~17) Holds an Unbelievable Truth...**I am able to see this by the Law of God... In my heart, I really want to serve God, I really want to do what is right, and not have the evil desires that I have... But I keep finding myself doing just the opposite! That proves to me, that the Law is good, because I agree with the law that it is good, its what I really want to do... But at the same time I come to another realization, and that of the SIN INDWELLING in me! I come to learn, that its not the real me that is sinning...but SIN that is in me... I love the Law, I long to fulfill his will...but this thing inside me overtakes me...

<sup>24</sup>*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

<sup>25</sup>*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*