

Romans 8:5~8, part 1

In Paul's day, there were 3 major forms of Rabbinic styles of teaching... Mashal (Psalms 78 parables). Hyperbole (pluck out eye, cut off hand, camel through eye of needle). Kalvyhomer (Comparrison, birds how much more, you give kids how much more will your father)

Here Paul has been using the *Mashal* form of teaching to make his point... How that all men are "in bondage to Sin," and how Christ delivers us from that bondage.

The purposing for using these various forms of teaching, is to us to understand with our feeble, weak carnal minds...spiritual truth. ¹⁹*I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh:* You might say they help bring it down to our level.

Up to this point, Paul has used the analogy of Death, a Slave and his Master, marriage... Here, he uses the human body to explain how all men are in "Bondage to Sin". Which is the most important truth we need to understand. Mainly because most have a much different perspective of what SIN is...

Many have the perspective that SIN is a title given to our "wrong acts..." SIN is when we mess up... But SIN is a "Living Entity" that is living within every one of us...

In chapter 7, we read of the events leading up to Paul's salvation experience...As Paul sought to live a righteous life, as he sought to live in a way that pleased God...as he submitted himself to the Laws of God, with great diligence I might add... He was very sincere, very zealous...he *longed* to please God.

But the more he submitted himself to "God's Ways", the more he gave himself to the *Law of Moses*...a very strange thing began taking place. He began to notice, all manner of "evil desires" beginning to come to surface in his heart! Desires that were the "opposite" of what he really wanted...desires that were contrary to the ways of God...

It's important to understand here, that Paul was not talking about "outward acts of sin", Paul didn't begin to go out and *steal* things, it wasn't that he started *having an affair* with a married woman... He's not speaking of outward acts of sin...but rather of "evil desires" that began to surface in his heart. Desires that he himself did not approve of, desires & longings that were contrary to the way he wanted to live for God.

Even though "outwardly" he was a good, moral man...one who approve and supported the ways of God, inwardly...a much different man began to surface. It was as if 2 different people were living inside one body! So much so, that in describing his experience, two times he says... "*Its no longer I that do it...*"

Paul says... "*That's not the real me...*" Paul had come to realize, that "*he was in bondage to SIN...*" Like a prisoner held captive, like a slave under a wicked master...Paul found himself in bondage to SIN.

The Law of Moses had fulfilled its purpose in Paul's life...to manifest the SIN in him... It's not a description of what physiologist might call, someone who has a "split-personality," but it is a picture of the "humans soul" in bondage to "SIN."

Paul describes what he had come to understand, using the analogy of our human bodies...7:21~24...

²¹*I find then a law, (A principle) 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?*

The image is clear... **The inner man is in bondage to the flesh.**

When you read of the struggle he is having, you quickly learn that he is greatly frustrated with this **body of Death**, as he calls it... In the inward man, he loves God and longs to do the will of God...but he is constantly buffeted by something inside him, which is completely contrary to God, something that overtakes him and overpowers him and causes him to transgress the law of God... Paul describes it as being "*Trapped inside a body*" that won't cooperate with him...

Paul is talking about "**The Flesh...**" Not this "*physical body*", now that's where the analogy ends. The body we dwell in is *neither evil or good*...it is *neutral*. Paul simply used the analogy to help us to picture what was *going on inside him*. It's like there's a "*spiritual entity*" living inside him, something that is "*outside him*", *not part of him*...**Yet it lives with him**... A living entity that is opposed to the things of God, that has no interest in serving God. And Paul finds, that every time he seeks to adhere to the will and ways of God, *this thing* rears it's ugly head and overpowers him. He learns that he is held captive by this thing and under it's control.

Having said that...its extremely important again to explain that Paul is not speaking to "*outward acts of sin*". As far as "*fleshly acts of sin*"...Paul was blameless... The struggle and failures to live up to God's law is one in the heart! **Outwardly**, Paul appeared to be a righteous man, a man of integrity.

(Ph 3) ⁴Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: ⁵Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; ⁶Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. ⁷But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them **but dung**, that I may win Christ. ⁹And be found in him, not having **mine own righteousness, which is of the law**, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

Why in the world does he call his "*Clean living*" to the Law...**manure**?

It was produced by the power of the flesh...

Before he came to know Christ, Paul *walked in the flesh*, Paul was *carnally minded*. And was under the illusion, that his spotless life in contrast with the Law, made him in right standing with God.

Until one day, when the Law accomplished its purpose in his life, and opened his eye's to the Sin that was in his heart! Paul became aware of all sorts of evil desires and sins that were in his heart.

I am deeply concerned, due to a lack of solid biblical preaching of the word of God, little sermons, cute stories, talks... That there are many in our churches today, that is still in bondage to Sin, due to not understanding what Sin really is.

Their view of Sin, comes from a "*carnal, fleshly*" perspective...

Sinners are those who... *Gamble, Drink, Do Drugs*, etc... Things, which we all agree, aren't good, and certainly the Christian shouldn't partake in... But believe it or not, those are not the SIN that the bible speaks of... The outward acts are simply the product of Sin... The physical acts of sin are like apples on a tree... You can remove all the apples, but the tree remains. Listen, the message of Christ does not focus on the apples...*but the tree*...the SOURCE of the problem! Sin in us!

Its important to understand this...because the “*carnally minded*” individual, that Paul refers to here in verses 5&6, sees himself as righteous, and right with God on the basis that he does not DO those things!

Mark 7 helps us to understand better...

Nothing “*Without*” defiles a man... Drinking, drugs, etc... Of course we shouldn’t do those things, and this passage should never be used to justify drinking or what ever... The point Jesus is trying to make is, that the PROBLEM is in the HEART! The problem is SIN which lives in the heart!

It’s important to have the “*Right understanding*” of sin, because a carnal man, a fleshly man thinks within himself, that because he doesn’t do such things, that he is righteous! Like the men that Jesus was really speaking too here in Mark. They brought up the issue of sin in verse 5... To which Jesus exposes their fleshliness in verses 6~7...how their worship was all EXTERNAL!

(7:18~22) What really defiles a man...

To be ***carnally minded*** means to “*think fleshly.*” To *think* PHYSICAL... It describes someone who is “*Spiritually Dead...*” (Vs 6) To be “*Carnally Minded is death!*”

Someone who is “*Carnally Minded*” is someone who takes the scriptures at face value, and think only in terms of Physical acts...“*outward acts of sin*”. Never giving any thought to the Spiritual, they never think in terms of the heart! The God of this world has “*blinded*” the minds of them that believe not...

Instead of “*seeing*” this wretched body of SIN that is in them, they see themselves as good people, as righteous before God, because they “*think*” only in terms of physical acts.

Listen... What Paul is saying here is extremely important to understand...

I’ve said it before, and I’ll say it again...RELIGION is a very dangerous thing... By simply submitting to the Law of God, there is an “*outward Righteousness*” that comes as a result... It brings with it an appearance of “RIGHT LIVING...”But that does not “*Justify*” a man! That does not declare a man free from the wrath of God!

But even so...it cannot, nor is able to produce the righteousness God requires...

Paul says... *For what the Law could not do... What couldn’t the Law do?*

Bring us to right standing with God! It is impossible that the Law could make us Right with God! Why?

The Law can’t change the heart... All the Law is able to do is to manifest the “*Evilness*” of men’s hearts... All the law can do is shine its light in our hearts to reveal the SIN that is living there! To manifest our carnal, fleshly rebellious nature that lives within us! Then having done so, exhort us to turn from it, to die to our own will and ways, knowing how it is opposed and contrary to God! And yield our heart, our mind (THE WILL) to Christ!

Verse 5 speaks to “*Our Wills*”... Something the law could not change. The only thing the law could do is to manifest that we are not in God’s will! That we have a *rebellious nature* inside us, a Sinful nature, that Paul calls...the ***Flesh!***

The gospel is a call for all men and women to turn from the flesh, to turn from a life of rebellion against God, and yield our lives to Christ. To surrender “*Our Will*” for “*His Will...*”

Simply put...Righteousness is not determined by “*how clean*” we live our lives... But rather...who will “*Live our Lives unto...*” **My will...or...God’s will...**