

## Romans Session 93

### The Believer and Indwelling Sin 4

**Romans 7:14-25 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> *For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.*

<sup>15</sup> *For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.*

<sup>16</sup> *But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.*

<sup>17</sup> *So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.*

<sup>18</sup> *For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.*

<sup>19</sup> *For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.*

<sup>20</sup> *But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.*

<sup>21</sup> *I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.*

<sup>22</sup> *For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,*

<sup>23</sup> *but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.*

<sup>24</sup> *Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?*

<sup>25</sup> *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.*

In these verses Paul speaks of a conscious and determined battle against sin, which is still a powerful enemy but is no longer his master.

While he is revealing the struggle within, he continues to show that the Law is righteous and good and shows the benefits for those who are enabled by the Spirit to keep the law. It is a supernatural move by the Spirit of God to enable us to adhere to the law of God. Only through Jesus can this be done.

Although the Law cannot save, it continues to convict of sin in both the non-believer and the believer.

Paul in this chapter gives a series of laments and we began by taking on the first one in verses;

**Romans 7:14-17 (NASB)**

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<sup>15</sup> *For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.*

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As we go through this study we learn that Paul gives us first the condition he finds himself in, and then reveals the proof of the condition, and then he goes on to talk of the source of this condition.

#### THE CONDITION (CONT'D)

Last time we were together we talked of the condition he found himself in.

<sup>14</sup> *For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.*

Paul says, although I have been redeemed, I am still of the flesh, still earth bound and mortal.

And we noted carefully that Paul never says he is still in the flesh but uses the term still of the flesh.

He has explained that believers are not still in the flesh, no longer bound by and enslaved to its sinfulness as they once were.

The Christian's spirit, his inner self, has been completely and forever cleansed of sin. It is for that reason that, at death, he is prepared to enter God's presence in perfect holiness and purity.

At that time his spiritual birth has already occurred, his flesh, with its remaining sin, is left behind.

The idea is that the believer is no longer still in the flesh, but the flesh is still present with them.

That's the condition and he then goes on to speak of the proof of this condition;

## THE PROOF

***<sup>45</sup> For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.***

He says I do not understand, (Ginosko) this word means taking in knowledge regarding something or someone, knowledge that goes beyond the merely factual.

It was used of the relationship between husband and wife, and often between God and His people.

Paul also uses the term in relationship to the saved and the Savior;

***Galatians 4:9 (NASB)***

***<sup>9</sup> But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?***

By further extension, the word was used in the sense of approving or accepting something or someone:

***1 Corinthians 8:3 (NASB)***

***<sup>3</sup> but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.***

This word seems to have the same meaning here. And is consistent with the last half of the sentence.

Paul found himself doing things he did not approve of. It was not that he was unable to do a good thing but that when he saw the fullness and grandeur of God's law, he was not able to measure up completely.

It was not that he could never accomplish any good at all, nor that he could never faithfully obey God. The apostle was rather expressing an inner turmoil, of the most profound kind, of sincerely desiring in his heart to fulfill the spirit as well as the letter of the law. Because he found that he could not and was not able to live up to the Lord's perfect standards and his own heart's desire.

It was not Paul's conscience that was bothering him because of some unforgiven sin or selfish reluctance to follow the Lord. It was his inner man, recreated in the likeness of Christ and indwelt by His Spirit, that now could see something of the true holiness, goodness and glory of God's law and was grieved at his least infraction or falling short of it.

In glaring contrast to his pre-conversion, self-satisfaction in thinking himself blameless before God's law, Paul now realized how wretchedly short of God's perfect law he lived, even as a Spirit-indwelt believer and an apostle of Jesus Christ.

The spirit of humble contrition is a mark of every spiritual disciple of Christ, who cries out, **“Lord, I can’t be all you want me to be, I am unable to fulfill your perfect holy, and glorious law”**

In great frustration and sorrow, he painfully confesses with Paul, **I am not practicing what I would like to do.**

**Now that being said, we go on to Paul revealing the source of his problem.**

Having seen the condition he is in and realizing that the proof is in the living, he now moves on to speak of the source of the problem.

### THE SOURCE

*Romans 7:16-17 (NASB)*

<sup>16</sup> *But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.*

<sup>17</sup> *So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.*

Paul now deals with the reason, or source, of his inability to perfectly fulfill the law, and he begins by staunchly defending the divine standard

**“whatever the reason for my doing the very thing I do not wish to do, he says, it is not the law’s fault. I agree with the Law in every detail. My new self, the new creation that placed God’s incorruptible and eternal seed within me, is whole-heartedly confessing that the law is good.**

In my redeemed being I sincerely long to honor the law and to fulfill it perfectly.

Every true Christian has in his heart a sense of the moral excellence of God’s Law.

And the more mature he becomes in Christ, the more fully he perceives and lauds the law’s goodness, holiness, and glory.

The more profoundly he is committed to the direction of the Holy Spirit in his life, the deeper his love for the Lord Jesus Christ becomes, the deeper his sense of God’s holiness and majesty becomes, and the greater will be his longing to fulfill God’s law.

What then is the problem? What is the source of our failure to live up to God’s standards and our own inner desires?

**“Now it is no longer I who is the one doing it,” Paul explains, “but sin which indwells me”**

Paul is not trying to escape personal responsibility. He was not mixing the pure gospel with Greek philosophical dualism, which later plagues the early church and is popular in some church circles today.

The apostle was not teaching that the spirit world is all good and the physical world all evil, as the influential Gnostic philosophy of his day contended.

Proponents of that ungodly school of thought invariably develop moral insensitivity. They justify their sin by claiming it is entirely the product of their physical bodies, which are going to be destroyed anyway, and that the inner, spiritual person remains innately good and is untouched by and unaccountable for anything the body does.

The Apostle had already confessed his own complicity in his sin.

**"I am of the flesh, sold into bondage to sin"** he said of his present earthly life as a believer.

If the real inner Christian were not responsible for sin in his life, he would have no reason to confess it and have it cleansed and forgiven.

As already noted, John makes clear that a claim of sinlessness makes God a liar and proves that His Word is not in us.  
**(1John 1:10)**

A true believer is continually recognizing and confessing his sin **(v 9)**

Throughout this chapter Paul has spoken in personal, nontechnical terms. He has not been drawing precise theological distinctions between the old pre-conversion life of a believer and his new life in Christ.

He certainly was not teaching that a Christian has two natures or two personalities.

There is just one saved person, just as previously there was one lost person.

In verse 17, however, Paul becomes more technical and theologically precise in his terminology. There had been a radical change in his life, as there has been in every Christians life.

The words, **"no longer"** (Ouketi) this is a negative adverb of time, indicating a complete and permanent change. Paul's new **I**, his new inner self, **no longer approves** of the sin that still clings to him through the flesh. Before his conversion his inner self approved of the sin he committed, **now** his inner self, a completely new inner self, strongly disapproves.

He explains the reason for that change in his letter to the Galatians;

***Galatians 2:20 (NASB)***

***<sup>20</sup> "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.***

After Salvation, sin, like a deposed and exiled ruler, no longer reigns in a person's life, but It manages to survive. It no longer resides in the innermost self but finds its residual dwelling in his flesh, in the unredeemed humanness that remains until a believer meets the Lord at the Rapture or at death.

***Galatians 5:17 (NASB)***

***<sup>17</sup> For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.***

In this life, Christians are somewhat like an unskilled artist who beholds a beautiful scene that he wants to paint. But his lack of talent prevents him from doing the scene justice. The fault is not in the scene, or in the canvas, the brushes, or the paint but in the painter. That is why we need to ask the master painter, Jesus Christ, to place His hand over ours to paint the strokes that, independent of Him, we could never produce.

Jesus said;

**John 15:5 (NASB)**

***<sup>5</sup> "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.***

We can only live victoriously when walk by His Spirit and in His Power. Otherwise we will end up carrying out the fleshly desires.

**Galatians 5:16 (NASB)**

***<sup>16</sup> But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. we walk by Christ's own Spirit and in His power, in order not to "carry out the desire of the flesh"***