

ROMANS 7:14-25

“The Old Nature vs. The New Nature”

Introduction:

1. Up to this point, the Apostle Paul has been describing a past experience in his life - speaking about his condition before his conversion.
2. Now Paul changes to the present tense to describe what he is experiencing after his conversion.
3. In these verses today, we see struggles. Not only ones Paul had experienced, but also the struggle between the two natures within us, battling who will dominate over us.
1. Paul makes a contrast between the spiritual man and the carnal man.

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

*The term “carnal” just means “fleshly” and refers to the present condition of a person, whether they are a believer or an unbeliever.

2. The spiritual man is delivered from the law and has found his faith in God’s revelation. Whereas, the natural man is doomed by the law and spiritually dead. By the same token, the carnal man is defeated by the law.
3. The word “carnal” is not used to describe an unsaved person, but a Christian, who though saved, is still in bondage to the power of the flesh.
 - a. A carnal Christian cannot live as God desires because they are still a slave to sin.
 - b. The phrase “sold under sin” in the last part of verse 14 means just that - a slave to sin.
4. Paul is insinuating that he is still under that “old Adam” nature with the desire and tendency to sin. We all struggle with this sin principle.

Ephesians 4:22 - That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

1. In verses 15 through 21, it teaches that believers have two natures. Verse 15 shows us that the old nature (the flesh/old Adam) cannot be improved and the flesh is bad news. Remember Galatians 5:19-21.

Romans 7:15 - For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

2. Because of the back and forth in his experience, he says he had not yet understood or perceived what he did at times. Paul finds himself indulging in things that he does not want to do and practicing things he hates.
3. Paul goes on describing that these two opposite forces are at work in him. He has the ability to know and choose to do good, but there is a breakdown between this and his practice or performance.
4. Verses 15 through 19 show the issue of performance, trying to please God - but doing the opposite of what one wants to do.

Romans 7:16 - If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

1. This verse shows that if Paul disapproves of what he's doing and the law also disapproves, then Paul is in agreement with the law — because the law is good.
2. Paul committing acts, which his better judgment condemns, he sees as siding with the law against himself - because the law is good.
3. The lost person does what he desires and is willing to condemn God's law if it interferes with his desires. Paul is saying that in his heart he is not opposing the law, but is consenting in his heart that the law is right.

*The problem is not the law, it is in men and we need help.

Romans 7:17 - Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

1. Paul understands that he has this old Adam sin nature which he was born with and can do nothing right. But, there is another part of Paul (this new nature) that wants to follow and agree with God's law.
2. Paul can see that these two natures are incompatible. He explains this in:
Galatians 5:16-17 - This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.
Gal. 5:17 - For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary to one another: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.
3. This leads to the conclusion that the culprit is not the new man in Christ, but the sinful and corrupt nature (the old man) that dwells in him.
1. The term, "that is, in my flesh," means the evil and corrupt nature which we inherited from Adam. This is

Romans 7:18 - 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.

still in every believer to keep us away from holiness.

2. But Paul also has a will to do right, that we as believers also have. He was in a position to choose good, but too often the sin in his flesh would win.
Philippians 2:13 - For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.
3. Paul desired to do right from his new nature, but was blocked by the sin in his flesh to carry out and perform godly works.
1. Therefore the conflict between the two natures rages on. Paul finds himself failing to do the good he wants

Romans 7:19 - For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

to do, and instead, doing the evil that he despises.

2. Sounds like most of us today - doing the opposite of what one wants to do. Paul is expanding on these two natures living inside us.

Romans 7:20 - Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

1. The carnal believer finds himself at a crossroads in life, desiring two different qualities of life at the same time.
2. Paul is not excusing himself or disclaiming responsibility. Paul is allowing us to see how the Lord helped him to understand himself better. He is revealing to us the fundamentals we must see in ourselves before we can have a sound basis for true spirituality.
3. Paul is giving us insight into the fact that we have two natures:
 - a. Through faith in Christ, we have a divine nature.
 - b. Through Adam, we are sinner in our nature - where sin dwells in our flesh.
4. Paul recognized these two supernatural forces working in the world: God and Satan.

*God working in 2 Corinthians 13:14 - The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

*Satan working in 2 Corinthians 4:4 - In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

1. Paul is saying that when he wills to do good, then the law (evil) jumps in. This law is never absent, but it

Romans 7:21 - I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

is always present.

2. Paul give us 4 principles of laws pertaining to us in the last verses of this chapter.
 - a. The law of sin which is in my members - the flesh (in verse 23).
 - b. The law of my mind - the redeemed mind in Romans 12:2 (in verse 23).
 - c. The law of sinning to God - after the inward man (in verse 22).
 - d. The law of God (in verse 22) - the principles and truths pertaining to this present dispensation of grace.
3. Paul finds the principle of law at work in his life, causing all his good intentions to end in failure.
 1. The "law of God" mentioned here is not the Mosaic Law, but this law is distinct from Moses' law. This law of God involves a special revelation of truth and principles given to the Body Church.

Romans 7:22 - For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

2. Paul delights in the law of God because of this new nature he has received. He knows that the law is holy and he wants to do God's will in his life.
3. Paul has been given this special wisdom from God.

I Corinthians 2:7 - But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

Galatians 1:12 - For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

4. Paul's inner man affirms the grace truth of the old man versus the new man.

Ephesians 3:3, 5 - How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Eph. 3:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

1. Paul sees "another law" in his members. This is the sin principle expressed in his flesh. When Adam fell

Romans 7:23 - 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.

in the Garden of Eden, he placed the whole human race under this law.

Ephesians 2:3 - Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

2. It is the law of sin asserting itself in the members of the believer's body - causing the eyes to look at lust, or the tongue yearn to gossip, and the ears strain to hear improper and impure words.
3. Paul uses "the law of my mind" to refer to his regenerated and redeemed mind that desires to follow God's truth and the special revelation given to the Church Body.

Galatians 5:16 - *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

1. Paul cries out with the question. He sees that the carnal believer is bound to the old sin nature and truly is a wretched man.

Romans 7:24 - O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

*The word "wretched" means to be miserable, or pitiable, because of the many defeats by sin in his flesh. It feels like he has a decomposing body strapped to his back - that old nature in all of its corruption. Paul understands he must have help.

2. The "body of this death" refers to the believer who is dominated by his flesh, while he desires to gain victory over it.
 - a. Moses dealt with this in the wilderness in dealing with his people, who complained about a lack of food in the wilderness. He felt this great burden bestowed upon him.
 - b. Moses goes to the Lord, complaining about this heavy burden.

Numbers 11:15 - And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.

3. Moses felt miserable and not able to bear it alone and needed help.

Romans 7:25 - 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.

1. Paul is grateful to God for the potential victory from the flesh through Jesus Christ. Paul knew that his flesh (the old man) and his nature would always be subject to sin.

2. It is so vital to renew our minds with God's Word.

Romans 12:2 - And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

3. Paul thanks God, that through the Lord Jesus Christ, he is no longer the wretched man he had been.

a. Paul knew the strength of his enemy within, giving him reason to flee to his position in Christ for his victory!

b. The flesh continually attacks our minds in our relationship with God's Word. It tries to weaken us to not do right. But, thanks be to God, we can have victory over sin!