

Romans, pt.11, 7.14–25, 11.26.06

Christianity w/o Power

Introduction

- Moving Day analogy
 - Leaving an old life & patterns; mindsets & habits don't necessarily change overnight
 - Everything is new; no need to remodel as long as you stay in the flow of where God is; adjustments are made
- Romans 7 is about the adjustment to the new way of living...new neighborhood. It's a transitional time from the old life to the new life; old house to the new house; this isn't a slight upgrade, but a totally different way of living (moving from a shack to a mansion).
 - Beverly Hillbillies
 - Mindset has to change
 - New patterns develop
 - New relationships developed
 - Completely new spiritual fabric woven into your life
 - Trying to make these changes w/o the HS
- Context: Ch.3–5: justification; ch.6–8: sanctification
 - Read Text
 - The law refers to both the moral law (Sermon on the Mount/ethical & moral teachings of both Testaments) and our conscience
 - In ch.3–5 – the Law can't save you, it is by faith;
 - Ch.7 – the law can't sanctify you (conform you to the image of Jesus) it is by the Spirit; the law is good, but can't be kept apart from the HS.
 - We are right to look to the law for moral guidance, but wrong to look to it for saving or transforming power. They were looking to the Law for their sanctification
- Ch.7 describes Christians trying to live a good life without the full use or dependency upon the HS inside of them. Believers who have an OT mindset; They are saved, but are bound by rules and not

experiencing the freedom that's found in Jesus through the activity of the HS, who is operating inside of them.

- I don't believe Paul is talking about an unsaved person;
- I don't believe he's talking about a carnal Christian – “I want to do what is right; I love God's law”.
- I don't believe that he's describing normative Christianity
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- Trying to live the Christian life w/o the full measure & assistance of the HS. They have the Word, but not the Spirit (Qualify)

Battling our sinful nature without the Spirit/Law abiding Christianity -

7.14-20

Verse 14 - 17;18-20 are mirror images of the other

- **v.14, 18** – “all too human, a slave to sin”; “nothing good in me lives, that is, in my sinful nature”
 - Living within us is the sinful nature.
 - Rom.6.18,22 - I have been set free from the sinful nature...I've moved to a new house...but if I haven't come to walk in all the fullness of the Spirit & I'm still trying to live out of my own strength I'll continue to walk in defeat.
 - I am related to Adam both genetically & spiritually. I have received a new nature, but I still have the old nature...the old nature is the dying part of me...it is putrid and decaying and though it is defeated it still has influence
 - w/o the activity of the HS I will be a constant victim of it.
- -PLEASE NOTE THE ABSENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THIS PASSAGE
- -“nothing good in me”, refers to our inability to turn a desire into an action; we can do good deeds, but we are all tainted by sin; the things we want to do aren't always so easily done...
- **v.15, 18bf.** - Read text. Describing a believer who is divided. We've all felt this tension... everyone can identify with this passage

- -This person is in transition from a former life to a new life...depending upon his discipleship he will probably struggle with living the kind of life he knows that honors God.
- -He doesn't know how to live in the Spirit;
- -Paul's readers like today's new believers often think that now since they have placed their faith in Jesus and they have a Bible(the Law), that all is well. Yet, there is still much more to living the Christian life...
- -Here's how you know if you're living a life walking in the power of the HS or you are battling the sinful nature w/o the HS: Is v.18b-19 normative or is it normal. Are you always tripping or occasionally tripping?
- They'll always be this tension, but for a Christian walking in the Spirit it shouldn't be normative.
- Verse 19 is several pages of the autobiography of my Christian life, but it's not the whole of the biography
- **v.16f, 20** - Read text
- Try as I may to live a good life I am always being sabotaged by my sinful nature; it's like a horror picture...I'm walking away from the burial plot with my old life that's been put to death and then suddenly a hand comes from underground and pulls me down with it.
- Romans 6.5-7 - that sinful nature was crucified with Christ; he not only took away my sins, but he defeated the mechanism that creates those sins. In war, the way you keep your enemy from being resupplied with weapons, ammunition, etc is two-fold. You destroy the supply lines that deliver the enemies supplies and you can destroy the manufacturer that made the supplies. This is what Jesus did. Jesus' death both took away my sins and the nature that dominated me.
- Jesus' death has now made it possible for me to live free from the tyranny of that manufacturer...It is still there, but it's I am free from being oppressed/dominated by my sinful nature

- I cannot win the battle over the residual sinful nature w/o the HS. w/o the HS, I will always have a conflict with the sinful nature & I will never experience the freedom promised by Jesus. I agree that I shouldn't be doing certain things and the law is right, but I still do it. There is a disconnect between my will and deeds.

The outcome of a Christian who wrestles with his sinful nature w/o the full activity of the HS is always defeat. You didn't get saved on your own; you can't get sanctified on your own (both in cooperation with your will.)

Law abiding Christians (Christians focused on being sanctified by keeping the Law – moral conscience/ ethical teachings/Sermon on the Mount) will always live defeated lives. They'll look whole on the outside, but the inside will be a smelly, putrid mess. The only way we can truly keep the law is to both know it and follow it through the power of the HS.

Baptist tradition – Word w/o the emphasis of the Spirit.

Battling our sinful nature with our minds/Will power Christianity, 7.21–25

- **You have the right heart...** "I love God's law with all my heart". This is true of some of you; you really love God & His word
- **You experience the war in your mind...** "another power within me that is at war with my mind...in my mind I really want to obey God's law."
- Your mind wants to do what is right, but you find yourself caving into the sinful nature..."a slave to sin."
- **Your frustrated**, "who will free me from this body of death?" Body of death might be referring to a cruel & grotesque punishment inflicted on murderers. A dead
- **You find yourself defeated** – "a slave to sin"
 - **Rom.6.20–23:** You are no longer a slave to sin. This contradicts 7.21–25.

- This passage is about Christianity with no power behind it...a shell of a building...glorious decorated on the outside, but empty and bare on the inside
- It's a will power based Christianity...you need will power, but moreover you need God's power to bring ultimate victory.
- Consider how you deal with selfishness in will power Christianity. In a conversation about a particular course of action – going to eat, what to do with your ailing parent...you have your agenda...you sense a little resistance/anger/frustration...you hear the other options, but you want a certain decision arrived at...will power Christianity says, "I'm not going to say anything/I'm going to resist demanding my way." The problem is that you've only suppressed your selfishness, not overcome it. You're still frustrated with decision (and express it when it doesn't work out) and you still believe your
- I'm not suggesting that you don't have emotions and strong opinions, but the Holy Spirit gives you the ability to move forward without frustrations...make adjustments and it not tear into you.
- The hallmark of will power Christianity is suppression. Whereas Spirit filled Christianity (not talking about speaking in tongues, etc.)it is more than suppression, but ultimately deliverance from that resident sinful nature.

Conclusion:

You didn't save yourself. It was through the blood of Jesus.

You don't sanctify yourself. It is through the activity of the Holy Spirit. (Look at the following 2 weeks).

Your part is to put yourself in a position where the HS can bring about the greatest change.

Rom.7.4–6 contrasts the old & new way. There are too many Christians who start in faith, and never enter into the freedom of Christ. Christianity for some is still about doing right & staying away from wrong; everything is a struggle; I'll have victory in the sweet by & by...in heaven you'll have victory over death, but on earth you can have victory over sin

If you've entered into a relationship with Jesus through faith, his blood not only forgave you of your sins, but His Spirit has been deposited within you to subdue the sinful nature...