

ROMANS 7:14-25

INTRODUCTION

- **Romans 1:16-17** - For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ – power of salvation!
 - The just shall live by faith – the theme for the next 8 chapters...
 - Those who are justified – forgiven – cleansed from sin – live by faith
- **Romans 1:18-3:20** – All of us are sinners – all of us will be judged for our sin...
- **Romans 3:21-5:21** - All of us can be saved - righteousness by grace through faith in Jesus!
- **Romans 6:1-8:39** – Now that we are saved - how to live for Jesus...
 - The problem of sin...
 - Now we are saved – can we go on living just as we did before Jesus - God Forbid!
 - We've been crucified with Christ – our old sinful man is dead – we are dead to sin
 - We've been resurrected with Christ – we have been born again – not to keep sinning
 - Can we 'occasionally' sin – since we are under grace - God Forbid!
 - Whomever we give ourselves to sin/Jesus – we become the slaves to...
 - If we obey sin – bondage / shame / death - If we obey Jesus – freedom / life!
 - How to keep from sinning – how to live for Jesus...
 - Paul tells us what will not work – the Law...
 - The Law – the list of rules on how to live our life in Jesus – does not keep us from sin
 - 1st – The Law only stirs up sin in us – 'do not touch' – then sin brings death...
 - 2nd – The Law is a mirror – it shows us our sin – but has no power to keep us from sin
 - 3rd – The Law is perfect, but we are not – the shortcoming of the Law is us
 - The Law – the list – can tell us what to do – but it cannot make us want to do it!
 - Which brings us to the greatest problem in overcoming sin – us...

I AM THE PROBLEM... VS. 14-25 (3 THINGS)

- **THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM – FLESH VS. THE SPIRIT... VS. 14**
 - We are all made up of 3 parts – Spirit, mind, and body...
 - Spirit – the only part of us that is eternal – desires to please and serve Jesus
 - Body – the flesh – the physical body we live in – desires to please and serve itself
 - Mind – the place where we make our choices and decisions – the Spirit or the flesh
 - Defining the flesh or body...
 - The physical desires/needs of men – representing the sinful nature of man
 - Has no desire to please God – serve God – it only thinks about its momentary needs
 - Does not think about the consequences for its actions – only momentary pleasure
 - The fruit – or evidence – of the flesh in our lives (*partial list*)...
 - **Galatians 5:19-21** – “Sexual immorality, impure thoughts, eagerness for lustful pleasure, idolatry, participation in demonic activities, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, divisions, the feeling that everyone is wrong except those in your own little group, envy, drunkenness, wild parties...”
 - Defining the Spirit...
 - The eternal part of man – the knowledge of God placed in the heart of a man...

- Understanding life is about far more than momentary needs and pleasure
- Recognizing the consequences – both temporary and eternal – for actions
- Desiring to please and serve the Lord in both actions and thought...
- The fruit of the Spirit – or evidence – of the Spirit in our lives...
- **Galatians 5:22-23** – “Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...”
- o The Law is ‘Spiritual’ / but I am ‘flesh’ – sold out to sin...
 - Paul draws a powerful contrast – between the flesh and the spirit...
 - Before we knew Jesus – there was only the flesh in us – the spirit was dead
 - Our mind was dominated by our ‘flesh’ – we could only make sinful choices
 - But when we believed in Jesus – our spirit was born again
 - Our spirit was given control of our mind/choices – but we still live in our sinful bodies...
 - Setting the stage for a life long epic battle inside of us – our flesh vs. our spirit...
- **THE RESULT OF THE PROBLEM – WAR... vs. 15-23**
 - o What I do – vs. - what I ‘know’ I should do... vs. 15
 - We ‘know’ as Christian what God expects – and we ‘know’ we should do the right things
 - We also ‘know’ what God tells us not do – we ‘know’ we should not do the wrong things
 - If given 2 lists – one good & one bad – could you tell which was which...
 - Read the Bible / pray / go to church / love others / help those who are in need...
 - Gambling / being drunk / cheating / lying / partying / fighting
 - All of us know ‘good’ from ‘bad’ – we know what God says we should be doing...
 - Yet somehow we end up doing all the ‘bad’ things – and miss all the ‘good’ ones...
 - We are left to wonder what is wrong with us – we don’t understand what we are doing
 - o Doing what I hate – proves the Law is good... vs. 16
 - The Law – list – tells me what I should be doing as a good Christian
 - When I choose not to do the right thing – I show that the Law is good – but I am not
 - When we make the list – literally or just in our heads – of the things we ‘should do’
 - Get up early and read our Bibles / invite unsaved friends to church / pray...
 - It is a good list – they all good things – and we might even do them... for a few days...
 - But when we start to sleep in / hang out with friends – rather than inviting them...
 - Our list condemns us – the list (Law) is good – but we are not able to follow it...
 - It is not that we do not do the right things – we cannot do the right things!
 - o Not me – but the sin in me... vs. 17
 - The problem is not in our list (Law) the problem is what we ‘want’...
 - My problem is my heart/desires – I am the problem – I sin because I want to!
 - If I don’t want to get up to read my Bible – if I don’t want to go to church – I won’t
 - If I want to go to the disco – or if I want to be prideful and angry – I will...
 - Why do I do what I know is sin – because I want to – no one forces me...
 - Why don’t I do what I know is good and right – because I don’t want to
 - And the challenge is I cannot change my heart – how can you change what you want...
 - I can say I ‘want’ to get up at 4am and pray – but come 4am – I WANT to sleep!
 - o In me – in my ‘flesh’ – there is nothing good... vs. 18-19
 - So often we want to look for another excuse for our sin - anything but us...

- I had a counseling session with a young man who was struggling with gambling...
 - He stole money from his parents just so he could gamble – and lose it...
 - When I asked him why he did it – he told me he was ‘addicted’ to gambling...
 - We have lots of terms to justify our sins – angry person / abused / alcoholism / poor...
 - All of them are just ways of trying to avoid the real issue – us!
 - If I asked you if you wanted to do good or ‘bad’ – as believers in Jesus you answer ‘good’
 - The problem is we are depending on ourselves – and there is nothing good in us!
 - We ‘know’ what God wants – but we cannot change our heart to do ‘want’ to do it...
 - Therefore we keep right on sinning – instead of doing things that are pleasing to God
- o THIS IS WAR... vs. 20-23
- Drawing the battle lines...
 - Since we are doing what we ‘know’ is not ‘good’ – we can see our flesh/sinful nature
 - But since we rejoice in what we ‘know’ is ‘good’ – we can see our spirit
 - As we battle to make ‘good’ decisions we see the ‘all out warfare’ over our choices
 - Between my spirit that desires to please God – and my flesh that wants to please itself!
 - **Galatians 5:17** – “The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict.”
 - Every decision we make is influenced by this battle – the flesh vs. the spirit
 - Our minds are literally a battle ground for the control of our actions
 - Do we choose to live for pleasure/the moment – or do we live for the Lord
 - The flesh says I’m hungry – and have no food – so I will steal food to eat...
 - The Spirit says it’s wrong to steal – trust in the Lord to provide for our food
 - The Spirit says to get up in the morning and spend time with God in His Word...
 - The flesh says keep sleeping – you can always read your Bible – buas lang
 - The question remains – who can change our desires/wants
 - How can we not only ‘know’ the right thing to do – but also ‘want’ to do the right thing...
- THE HOPE FOR THE PROBLEM – MISERABLE MAN THAT I AM... vs. 24-25
- o When we understand the battle – we look for the right weapon...
- I fear many people come to the ‘battle against sin’ woefully unprepared
 - Like bringing sticks to a gun fight...
 - They come depending on themselves – then are confused when sin wins the battle
 - It is only when we realize we cannot change our hearts – we look for a better answer
 - We understand we need to cry out to Jesus – the one who can change our heart!
 - Jesus changes our desires so we don’t want to do the things that are wrong...
 - Instead we want to do those things that please the Lord!