

## **The Struggle with Sin**

### **{Part 1}**

#### ***Romans 7: 17-20***

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Intro:

The Christian life, among other things, is a life that is described in the NT as that of Warfare!

Read 2 Cor. 10: 3-5

Also 1 Tim. 1: 18

2 Tim. 2: 3-4 {We are called Soldiers!}

In Eph 6: 10-18 we are told that for this warfare we need nothing less than the “Armour of God”

Now,

In all Warfare the most vital question we must ask is:

Q. Who is my Enemy?

So,

As Christian Warriors;

Q. Who or what is our Enemy?

Here is the Bad news!

We have no less than 3 great Enemies!!

The World, The Flesh and The Devil!!

Now,

Another question we must ask is;

Q. Who or what is my most dangerous Enemy?

Q. Which of the above 3?

Read 1 John 2: 16

The Flesh is our greatest and most dangerous enemy!!

Q. Why?

Because of where it is!!

It is inside you and me!!

The Flesh is a “Fifth Column” that wars inside us!

The Term “Fifth Column” comes from the Spanish Civil war.

Emilio Mola who was a Nationalist leader.

Q. What is a fifth column?

{note as we read this definition how well it describes the sinful nature that is called flesh within us}

Wikipedia:

“A **Fifth Column** is a group of people who undermine a larger group, such as a nation or a besieged city, from within. The activities of a Fifth Column can be overt or clandestine. Forces gathered in secret can mobilize when coordination with an external attack requires and extend even to uniformed military operations as part of a coordinated campaign. They can be clandestine, involving acts of sabotage, disinformation, or espionage executed within defense lines by secret sympathizers with an external force.”

Now,

This is exactly what Paul is referring to in Romans 7: 17-23

We will, God willing, look at four points in verses 17-20 this morning.

Outline:

The Flesh: {The Fifth Column}

1} Controlled by Sin {verses 17 and 20}

2} Corrupted by Sin {verse 18a}

3} Confused by Sin {verse 18b}

4} Contradicted by Sin {verse 19}

**“The Flesh” 1} Controlled by Sin {verses 17 and 20}**

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

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

Q. Is Paul using an excuse here?

Al Martin refers to the Statement “We are all Sinners” as:

“The Hypocrites Couch and the Believers Bed of Nails”

William Hendrikson:

“...since Paul himself does not want to act contrary to God’s will, the sins committed should be *basically* ascribed not to him but to sin. It is *sinful nature*, here and elsewhere called *the flesh* which is the real culprit, the actual offender. It is that wicked squatter, dwelling with Paul in the latter’s own house (his soul) who is at the bottom of all this iniquity. It is that intruder who so often makes it impossible for Paul to do the good he wants to do.”

This is exactly what verse 17 says:

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

Robert Haldane notes:

“It is not, then, to extenuate the evil of sin, or to furnish an excuse for it, that Paul says, It is no more I, but sin that dwelleth in me ; but to show that, notwithstanding his seeing it to be evil, and hating it, the root still subsisted in him, and was chargeable upon him.”

Calvin writes forcefully:

“This is not the pleading of one excusing himself, as though he was blameless, as the case is with many triflers who think that they have a sufficient defense to cover all their wickedness, when they cast the blame on the flesh; but it is a declaration, by which he shows how very far he dissented from his own flesh in his spiritual feeling; for the faithful are carried along in their obedience to God with such fervour of spirit that they deny the flesh.”

Again,

Paul repeats the same principle in verse 20:

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

Note,

The emphasis on struggle here!

“That I would not”

Only a believer knows this struggle!

{Illus, support the Armed Struggle!}

Contrast Psalm 25: 3 metrical version

The Unbelievers relationship to sin is described in:

Isa 59:7 Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction *are* in their paths.

So,

The Flesh is controlled by Sin!

**“The Flesh” 2} Corrupted by Sin {verse 18a}**

**Rom 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing:**

Note,

Only a Believer would say this!!

Haldane:

“Who ever has a proper knowledge of himself will be convinced that naturally there is nothing good in him. What Paul knew was, that in him dwelt no good thing. This goes beyond what he had asserted in the end of the preceding verse. There he asserts that the evil which he did was caused by sin dwelling in him. **Here he asserts not only that sin dwelt in him, but that no good thing dwelt in Him.**”

Note,

The qualification:

**“That is, in my flesh”**

It is not all of him!! It is his flesh, the old Man!!

Contrast,

For the Unbeliever:

Read Titus 1: 15-16

So;

The Flesh is Controlled and Corrupted by Sin!

**“The Flesh” 3} Confused by Sin {verse 18b}**

**for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.**

Sin Confuses us!!

Compare:

Heb 12: 1-3

Calvin:

“the flesh not only impedes the faithful, so that they cannot run swiftly, but it sets also before them many obstacles at which they stumble.”

Read Galatians 5: 17

That Cannot be said of the ungodly but only of the believer!!

So,

We are Controlled, Corrupted and Confused by Sin!

**“The Flesh” 4} Contradicted by Sin {verse 19}**

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

Q. Are we not a constant contradiction of and to ourselves?

Compare verse 15

This is why Paul says in:

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

Rom 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.

In 1763,

Augustus Toplady wrote these words:

**Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling;  
Naked, come to Thee for dress;  
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;  
Foul, I to the fountain fly;  
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.**

May God bless his word to our souls this day!!

Amen.