

The Struggle with Sin

{Part 2}

Romans 7: 21-25

Last Lord's day we considered verses 17-20 under the title "The Struggle with Sin"

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}

We will continue with that title as we consider verses 21-25 which will conclude this chapter

=====

1} A Grievous Discovery = verse 21

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

Barnes:

"His representing this as a law is in accordance with all that he says of it, that it is servitude, that he is in bondage to it, and that it impedes his efforts to be holy and pure. The meaning is this, "I find a habit, a propensity, an influence of corrupt passions and desires, which, when I would do right, impedes my progress, and prevents my accomplishing what I would.""

See Psalm 40:12

Also Psalm 65:3

Calvin:

“the sentence would run better thus, “While the faithful strive after what is good, they find in themselves a certain law which exercises a tyrannical power; for a vicious propensity, adverse to and resisting the law of God, is implanted in their very marrow and bones.”

He Adds:

“that contest between the spirit and the flesh, which Augustine in some place calls the Christian struggle (*luctam Christianam.*)

The law calls man to the rule of righteousness; iniquity, which is, as it were, the tyrannical law of Satan, instigates him to wickedness: the Spirit leads him to render obedience to the divine law; the flesh draws him back to what is of an opposite character. Man, thus impelled by contrary desires, is now in a manner a twofold being;”

Haldane:

This law is the greatest grievance to every Christian. It disturbs his happiness and peace more than any other cause. It constantly besets him, and, from its influence, his very prayers, instead of being in themselves worthy of God, need forgiveness, and can be accepted only through the mediation of Christ. It is strange that any Christian should even hesitate as to the character in which the Apostle uses this language. It entirely suits the Christian, and not in one solitary feature does it wear the feeblest semblance of any other character.

“evil is present with me.”

Read William H. Page 234 {Bottom quote}

2} A Gratifying Delight = verse 22

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

“Delight”

Barnes:

“The word used here Συνήδομαι *Sunēdōmai*, occurs no where else in the New Testament. It properly means to rejoice with anyone; and expresses not only approbation of the understanding, as the expression, “I consent unto the law,” in Rom 7:16, but more than that it denotes sensible pleasure in the heart. It indicates not only intellectual assent, but emotion, an emotion of pleasure in the contemplation of the Law. And this shows that the

apostle is not speaking of an unrenewed man. Of such a man it might be said that his conscience approved the Law; that his understanding was convinced that the Law was good; but never yet did it occur that an impenitent sinner found emotions of pleasure in the contemplation of the pure and spiritual Law of God. If this expression can be applied to an unrenewed man, there is, perhaps, not a single mark of a pious mind which may not with equal propriety be so applied.”

Compare [Psa 119:97](#), “O how love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day.” [Psa 1:2](#), “but his delight is in the law of the Lord.” [Psa 19:7-11](#); [Job 23:12](#).

See Psalm 40:8

Psalm 119: 24; 47-48

Reasons for this love – see verses 97-104

Barnes:

In the law of God - The word “law” here is used in a large sense, to denote all the communications which God had made to control man. The sense is, that the apostle was pleased with the whole. One mark of genuine piety is to be pleased with the whole of the divine requirements.

“The Inward Man”

Which is called the New Man in Ephesians 4:24

Calvin:

“The inner man then is not simply the soul, but that spiritual part which has been regenerated by God; and the members signify the other remaining part;”

Haldane:

To delight in the law of the Lord is characteristic of the regenerate man. The unregenerate man hates that law as far as he sees the extent of its demands to transcend his power of fulfilment. He is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, ch. viii. 7. How, then, can he delight in it ?

3} An Unrelenting and Unmerciful Enemy = 23

Rom 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.

But I see another law in my members

Read William H. Page 236.

Barnes:

“**And bringing me into captivity** - Making me a prisoner, or a captive. This is the completion of the figure respecting the warfare. A captive taken in war was at the disposal of the victor. So the apostle represents himself as engaged in a warfare; and as being overcome, and made an unwilling captive to the evil inclinations of the heart.”

In this warfare Paul exhorts Timothy in 1 Tim. 6:12

4} A Desperate Cry = 24

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

“O wretched man that I am!”

Compare:

Psalm 38: 8-10

Barnes:

“The expression “body of this death” is a Hebraism, denoting a body deadly in its tendency; and the whole expression may mean the corrupt principles of man; the carnal, evil affections that lead to death or to condemnation.”

He Goes on:

“Some have supposed that he refers to a custom practiced by ancient tyrants, of binding a dead body to a captive as a punishment, and compelling him to drag the cumbersome and offensive burden with him wherever he went. I do not see any evidence that the apostle had this in view. But such a fact may be used as a striking and perhaps not improper illustration of the meaning of the apostle here.”

“Who Shall Deliver”

Calvin:

“But he asks not by whom he was to be delivered, as one in doubt, like unbelievers, who understand not that there is but one real deliverer: but it is the voice of one panting and almost fainting, because he does not find immediate help, as he longs for. And he mentions the word rescue, in order that he might show, that for his liberation no ordinary exercise of divine power was necessary.”

5} A Glorious Doxology = 25a

Rom 7:25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Calvin:

“He then immediately subjoined this thanksgiving, lest any should think that in his complaint he perversely murmured against God”

He goes on:

Though Paul then bewailed his lot, and sighed for his departure, he yet confesses that he acquiesced in the good pleasure of God; for it does not become the saints, while examining their own defects, to forget what they have already received from God.

Barnes:

That is, I thank God for effecting a deliverance to which I am myself incompetent.

He also says:

The superiority of the gospel to the Law in overcoming all the evils under which man labors, is thus triumphantly established; compare [1Co 15:57](#).

See Psalm 107: 15-16

6} A Gracious Conclusion = 26b

.....So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Calvin:

A short epilogue, in which he teaches us, that the faithful never reach the goal of righteousness as long as they dwell in the flesh, but that they are running their course, until they put off the body.

Barnes:

Of no impenitent sinner could it be ever affirmed that with his mind he served the Law of God.

Conclusion:

Barnes:

We have thus,

- (1) A view of the sad and painful conflict between sin and God. They are opposed in all things.
- (2) We see the raging, withering effect of sin on the soul. In all circumstances it tends to death and woe.
- (3) We see the feebleness of the Law and of conscience to overcome this. The tendency of both is to produce conflict and woe. And,
- (4) We see that the gospel only can overcome sin.