

“The Remaining Corruption May for a Time Prevail” (Sanctification, part 6, WCF 13.3.1)

2021.02.14 Sabbath School Lesson

Hopewell ARPC, Culleoka, TN

WCF 13.3

*III. In which war, although the remaining corruption, for a time, may much prevail;(k) yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome;(l) and so, the saints grow in grace,(m) perfecting holiness in the fear of God.(n)*

*(k) Rom. 7:23.*

*(l) Rom. 6:14; I John 5:4; Eph. 4:15, 16.*

*(m) II Pet. 3:18; II Cor. 3:18.*

*(n) II Cor. 7:1.*

**Remaining Corruption, for a time, may much prevail**

Romans 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. <sup>15</sup> For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. <sup>16</sup> If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. <sup>17</sup> But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. <sup>19</sup> For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

<sup>21</sup> I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. <sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> 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.

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**(The following is a machine-generated transcription.** Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are welcome to listen to the audio recording, which you may find via [tinysa.com/hopewellarp](http://tinysa.com/hopewellarp))

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We'll start the third paragraph of chapter 13 this morning, but before we do so let's go ahead and pray. Our Father how we thank you for you?

Marvelous provision. We see in your icy blasts the greatness of your power that no man can stop. Just as you tell us in Job we pray Lord for the safety of all those you have ventured out. That if they are still coming that you would keep them in the way to worship safely if they are returning home that you would keep them in the way home safely but oh God how we thank you for these little glimpses of your power knowing that it has been much more focused and.

Expended spent exercised on saving us in Christ bringing us to faith in him making us alive so that we could come to faith so that we could be joined to him and have him as our worthiness and his sacrifice wipe out our guilt and the wrath that we deserve.

We thank you Lord that you also exercise your almighty power in conforming us to Christ. And in working out his life in us so that as we are engaged in battle that often seems to be going poorly. And we cry out who will save me from the body of this death.

We may answer with your own word. Thanks me to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So Lord we pray that you would help us by your spirit as we consider some portions of your word that the certainty of the victory of Christ in our sanctification would come through and that we would come away being as sure of that impending victory as we are of his completed victory on the cross.

For our justification. And so help us as we study we ask in Jesus name amen.

Come in command.

So we've just heard about the irreconcilable war. Which is what happens when you have remaining corruption in you but you've been given a new nature. By the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is at war with that remaining sin and that sin that fleshlyness is at war. With the spirit and so there is this irreconcilable war and many of us have found that when we are not doing battle that we are losing battle because if you're in the battle, but you're not fighting you are losing that's pretty much how that works and so we lose track we get distracted we lose focus we're emphasizing other things and soon we find find that our fleshliness has crept up on.

Us as we. As we consider second Samuel 3, or in the. Samuel reading this morning what will find or I think it's too into chapter 3 but we find abner, you know thought he was really going to help David out but he was just kind of positioning himself and Joab made big

show of trying to protect David from Abner when he really just wanted revenge our flesh is sneaky so when we are not battling we're losing but it's even more frustrating sometimes when we find that even when we are battling it feels like we're losing.

And that's where the paragraph three of the Westminster confession begins in which war although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, what does prevail mean?

What's it mean? Andrew to win exactly. So, you know when you're playing tag or? You know, nobody would ever sword fight with sticks because you can poke someone's eye out or whatever it is that you guys do instead of I want or I beat you every once in a while you can say I have prevailed.

And expand your vocabulary. But in this part of the live the confession it says, although the remaining corruption the remaining deadness and decay that belongs to the state of sin and misery in which we came into this world, although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail. Yet.

Through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying spirit of Christ the regenerate part death overcome. So the Holy Spirit is the spirit of Christ who has been sent into our hearts. You remember that in the fullness of time God sent his son into the world and then for those who have believed we know that he has also sent this the spirit of his son into our hearts and it's the spirit of Christ.

And, And we get strength from Christ and we get holiness from Christ. So yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying spirit of Christ the regenerate part death overcome. Now the regenerate part is our new self in the Lord Jesus in you know, we'll get to Romans 6 and we'll talk about the resurrection of Christ and being regenerated would be like spiritual resurrection if we had been alive before.

We talked about resurrection because you're alive and then you're dead and then you're alive again. It's a little bit different for a spiritually because we weren't alive to begin with. So maybe instead of resurrection, it's just direction but it's being alive for the first time. And the wonderful thing is that if this being alive for the first time has come from the resurrected Lord Jesus, it will win the battle.

Even if the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail. So beginning again, I'm beginning of the paragraph and then we will when we're complete the paragraph we'll look at the scripture texts in which war although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail yet through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying spirit of Christ the regenerate part doth overcome.

And so the saints grow in grace. And that's encouraging. You can know a lot of your theology of sanctification and know that there is one massively sanctifying event in the Christian's experience and that is death. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at their death. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are at their death made perfect and holiness.

And do immediately pass into glory in their bodies being still united to Christ do rest in the grave until they come but the more you walk with Christ, the more you look forward to being made perfect and holiness. Now, we might because of the remaining corruption for a time much prevailing and the difficulty that we experience in the irreconcil.

Able war, we may be discouraged that no progress is being made at all. And that and we can start hoping for that perfection that we'll get at our deaths in a way that overlooks that there is progress happening now. But there is progress happening now. And the Bible uses the language of growth to to describe our walk with the Lord Jesus and so and so the Saints grow in grace and this growth is part of that process that He will complete.

And so it's part of his perfecting holiness in us perfecting holiness in the fear of God. So let's let's take a look at each of those sections and you'll remember. The you know, whenever there are proof texts the assumption is. That we will understand the context in Scripture from which it comes and not just look at isolated verses.

So we're thinking now in the about that first main clause there in which war although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail. And that's important to see because sinners or Christians who are still centers who still sin can stumble and fall grievously can struggle mightily and when it's with respect to ourselves that can that can cause or shake our assurance and when your assurances shaken, of course, you should run back to Jesus Christ.

The question of oh, no what if I'm not saved is not answered by thinking back to a moment. In time when you made a decision. The question of oh no what if I'm not saved is answered by the one who saves okay, what if you're not saved? Who is the one who saves?

Jesus. So. It's important to remember that the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail for yourself you go running back to Christ you don't obsess over the past you cling to him in the present and what you often find is that you have been his and that he was allowing you to be shaken to strengthen.

Your resolve for repentance your desire to rest in him your desire to return to him serve him growing him so forth so in which war although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, it's also important in thinking about your brothers and sisters in the church. We are not to go around suspecting one another's conversion in the church this in some churches well meaning and sincere it's almost like a competitive sport and it's always the sins that that you see other people committing that are the really the ones that really

make a profession of faith dubious then and the sins that you commit their understandable, you know Christians humble into those all the time and, It's an awful thing to do but.

Knowing that the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail we are to have that end of Galatians five beginning of Galatians six care for one another in the battle between the flesh and the spirit and if our brother is caught in a sin we are to come alongside them and help them presuming that their brothers.

There is a process by which confrontation about the sin and lack of repentance and escalation with two or three witnesses and the whole process of church discipline and those whom the Lord has set over us to oversee that process there's a there's a process by which you might come at last if there's no repentance to say this one was called a brother but we had to put them out of a church out of the church because they wouldn't repent of their sin, but until someone has put out of the church we are to give what is called.

The judgment of charity and we are to presume them not a false brother but a stumbling brother and laboring in prayer with God for them and laboring in those parts of our. Relationship with them in the church that God has given us to help them see Christ's love for them to love Christ because he first loved them and to keep his commandments because they love him.

So the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail and what we have for that is 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. So let's back up Romans 7:23 is as the text that proves it and so we call it a proof text.

But as a text in a context, so we start in verse 14 for we know that the law is spiritual but I am carnal sold under sin. So I begin in the flesh the law came from the spirit. So if the flesh wars against the spirit and the the spirit wars against the flesh, you can already see how we would start out at war with the law.

And he is describing what he was like outside of Christ. He was at war with the law. By the time we get to the end of the passage, he's agreeing with the law. He's now in an alliance with the law, but he's at war with his sin. Why? Because who he is now is not from the flesh who he is now is from the Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit who makes you alive who gives you spiritual life to believe in Jesus and when you get that new nature from the Spirit that makes you in agreement with the law of, Law is now your friend and now the enemy is your flesh, which is what you used to be.

For we know that the laws spiritual but I'm carnal sold understand for what I am doing. I do not understand for what I will to do he wills to do that which is good because he has been renewed in the spirit regenerated in the spirit by the Spirit that I do not practice but what I hate what does he hate?

He hates his his sin, but what I hate that I do. Now as obviously it converted man unbelievers don't hate sin they hate feeling bad about sin they hate consequences of sin, they hate the idea that they might be punished for their sin by God, they hate that others don't like their sin or judge their sin but the sin they love.

That's why that's why you know that cartoon meme rings so true where the lady tells the little boy. You know, Johnny just follow your heart and then in the next frame you see Johnny asking his heart okay heart what should we do and in the frame after that you see his heart triumphantly saying sin?

But when you come to hate sin, it is no longer it is no longer you who do it but the sin he dwells in me so but what I hate I do if then I do what I will not to do. I agree with the law that it is good, but now it is no longer.

I who do it but sin that dwells in me now he's not. He's not refusing to take responsibility for his sin what he's doing is he's recognizing that you can only have one fundamental nature at a time. And sin is no longer his fundamental nature because he has been renewed resurrected by the Holy Spirit, he trusts in Jesus Christ, he belongs to Christ, there's a new him.

And the new him hates everything that's left from the old him. Now the old him is still from him and he's still responsible for it but he is fighting it now it is no longer I would do it but sin that dwells in me that's a very important verse when you hear people who identify themselves with a particular sin the big one that.

That we? Have discussion of and our culture right now is homosexuality and even in the denomination that I came from right before the Lord called me to hope well there are a lot of people who use the phrase gay Christian or the idea of a homosexual Christian but that is not who you are that is not your identity, whatever your remaining sin is, so you know, you're not a thief Christian you're not a murderer Christian you're.

You're not an alcoholic Christian you are a Christian who says that is not me and I am fighting against it even though it seems for a time much to prevail. Continuing then in verse 18, Roman seven. I know that in me that is in my flesh nothing good dwells for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good.

I do not find. For the good that I will to do. I do not do. But the evil that I will not to do that. I practice does this sound like what some people call the Victorian victorious Christian life. Is does Paul feel like he's winning as he writes this.

Now he knows that he will win because we're actually gonna go a chapter before this into Romans chapter six when we get to the certainty of victory which I think is wonderful because most of us I think when we want to think about the certainty of our victory we go to the next chapter Romans 8 and those whom he justified he glorified and we are already more than conquerors and and the decree of God that brought us by the call of God into the love of God.

From which we can never be separated because it came in the Son of God so you can go forward from Romans 8 or from Romans 7 into Romans 8 to get the certainty of victory we're going to go back because that certainty is guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus and that's the connection that chapter chapter 6 makes but right now we're not talking about the certainty of victory that's an that's in the next part of Westminster confession.

13-3, we're just talking about how for a time. Remaining corruption may much prevail and so not to judge ourselves quickly not to judge others quickly not to become overly discouraged either about ourselves or about others, but to turn our attention to him who has the willing and the doing in him as we learned in earlier parts of the chapter on sanctification.

So how to perform was good. I do not find okay we're at the end of verse 19 now if I do what I will not to do it is no longer. I who do it but sin that dwells in me almost an exact restatement of what we talked about in verse 17.

I find then verse 21 a law that evil is present with me the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God, according to the inward man, what kind of person delights in the law of God according to the inward man. Not the kind of person in the lights and how much better he knows the law of God than you do.

Not the kind of person who delights in appearing to keep the law of God on the surface better than anybody else or at least telling myself that and trying to convince them, what kind of person delights in the law of God according to the inward man just loves. His law.

His delight is in the law of the Lord and on his law he meditates day and night.

We make it a little bit easier. Is this an unbeliever? Is this an unconverted person? Absolutely not. But many times in the history of the church there have been teachers who wanting to have a better hope of the victorious Christian life the idea that our growth in holiness is not going to come with these great struggles and not going to feel like we are losing a lot of the time and oftentimes they've tried to take this part of Romans chapter 7 and say, oh, that's what Paul was like, Before he got saved.

And then you just have to look at verse 22 and say I delight in the law of God according to the inward man, that's what Paul was like before he got saved. No, I delighted to bludgeon everybody else with the law of God. In fact that part of my life the way I used the law of God then is what leads me to say in other places in my writing that I'm the chief of sinners because I persecuted the church of the Lord Jesus Christ and we know in particular if, You look at the.

The section where Stephen in the synagogue. In the Gentiles synagogue, that would have been Paul's home church. Yes, Charlie.

Oh, you you have an inward man. He's just dead and wicked. Yeah, but. You know, when one of the complaints against Stephen that led to his being stoned, if you look in the book of Acts is that he spoke against the law so they said we'll fix that notion eventually but you know when Paul was holding the coats of those who were stoning Stephen who were killing Stephen and approving of what they did he thought he was approving of the law, but it wasn't from his inward man.

It was a, It was a proving of the law in this murderous way. When he says I delight in the law of God, according to the inward man, he's describing the blessed condition of a believer, but it's also the often frustrating condition of a believer because and this is our proof text but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind.

So you can see here more clearly even that he's taken responsibility. He says this sinfulness is in me. It's in part of who I am it is not. Who I am but it still coming from me. 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.

Oh wretched man that I am who will deliver me from this body of death? 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. So the apostle here is teaching us the truth that we have summarized in the first clause of 13.3 in which war although the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail.

So if that's where it ended and if that's where the teaching of the Bible ended then the child's most famous complaint would actually be true. You would say. Mommy or mommy would say to you. Now mommy said it up. But you did did it up? And Jesus says you should obey Mommy.

And then the child says, but I can't. Oh. That sounds like the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail. If that's where it ended you would be right You can't because you do not have in you the ability to overcome the wicked rebellious heart. You're actually more right than you know, because you probably are physically able to go get the broom out of the closet and the dustpan and sweep carefully and getting all the corners and make sure you start at the edges and paint yourself towards the spot just like mom showed

you and used the dustbin to get up every last bit and you know client down on it with the broom as you walk to the trash can and make.

Sure that everything gets into the trash can. Your physically and mentally able to do all those things. But the remaining corruption in your heart says, I hate going to the closet and I hate grabbing the broom and I despise the corners and I refuse to touch the edges and I'm gonna do everything sloppily and badly and as quickly and poorly as possible and shake the dust all over the carpet on the way to the trash because I want to be my own God.

That's what your flesh says. So you're actually more right than you know, when you say I can. But the Christian has a new life that doesn't come from himself. It didn't come from your flesh. It came from Christ and praise God that's not where the teaching of either this little paragraph in the confession or of the Bible ends yet through the continual supply of strength.

From the sanctifying spirit of Christ the regenerate part doth overcome. So the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail but because it's from the spirit of Christ that you are battling against your flesh. Remember the flesh battles against the spirit the spirit battles against the flesh. If you are a believer in Jesus the way that that happened was the third person of the trinity made you alive by the resurrection.

Power of Jesus. This is one of the places where this this decisionistic idea of conversion that everyone is able to believe whenever they want and that that you get saved just by making a decision that's going to let you down. Because you need to know that the way that you got saved was the Almighty power of the third person of the Trinity applying to you joining you to the second person of the Trinity.

When you've got that underneath how you how you were made right with God. Then he could say the resurrection of Jesus and the Holy Spirit whom he gave me to apply that resurrection to me cannot lose this battle cannot lose this war. And that's where we'll have to pick up next week because we definitely don't have time to do even the Romans 6 portion of the next phrase, but invite you to look at that you take the sheet home.

If you can get home if not we'll all sit around and pick up the sheets and and and chat over whatever wonderful things we can we can all supply and enjoy together. But look over that Romans 6 verses 5 through 14 about the Gary. T of victory over sin that the resurrection of Jesus and that God's grace, which has joined us to Jesus gives us.

And if not then we'll we'll consider it together next week. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven how we thank you?

That what the law could not accomplish. Weakened as it was by our flesh that you have accomplished by your Holy Spirit and that the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled not only by Christ's having kept it for us and earned our justification, but also in us who walk by Christ who walk according to your commandments.

We thank you that. You have written on our hearts your law that when we are finding the flesh prevailing for a time that we can fall back on the certainty that it is just for a time and that the resurrection power of Jesus will not ultimately fail. So we pray Lord that you'd help us to fight in the battle against sin and that you would encourage us to look away from ourselves and unto Christ glorify him by growing us in grace we ask in his name amen.