

## The Flesh - The Enemy of The Soul – 2/25/24

**TEXT- Romans 8:1-8** *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

**INTRO** – There are three enemies of the Christian. The world, the flesh, and the Devil. Paul admonishes us to war a good warfare. He concludes his ministry with the testimony that he fought a good fight. The comic strip Pogo said, “We have met the enemy and the enemy is us.” A preacher announced his Sunday night sermon follow his Sunday morning message by stating someone in this church is causing great problems and tonight he would release their name and identify them. That night he stated the person that causes the greatest problem in the church was his flesh.

### I. Defining the Flesh

God created man in intellectual and moral likeness.

Adam and Eve were in a state of untested holiness but they chose to disobey God.

**Genesis 1:26-27** *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

The Bible says that humanity’s nature, both the physical and spiritual, were good, yet both were adversely affected by sin. The end result of sin is a nature often referred to as the “flesh” in Scripture—something that opposes God and seeks sinful gratification.

The flesh can be defined as: “A compulsive inner force inherited from man’s fall, which expresses itself in general and specific rebellion against God and His righteousness. The flesh can never be reformed or improved. The only hope for escape from the law of the flesh is its total execution and replacement by a new life in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The flesh is the ego which feels an emptiness and uses the resources in its own power to try to fill it. Flesh is the “I” who tries to satisfy me with anything but God’s mercy.

### II. The Influence of the Flesh

- A person becomes a slave to his/her fleshly nature
- Obeying the flesh always results in breaking God’s moral law.

Scripture states that those who live according to the flesh, will experience separation from God both in this life and the next:

- The understanding is darkened (Eph. 4 :18; 1 Cor. 2 :14)
- The heart is deceitful and wicked (Jer. 17 :9, 10)
- The mind and conscience are defiled (Gen. 6:5; Titus 1:15)
- The flesh and spirit are defiled (2 Cor. 7 :5)
- The will is enfeebled (Rom. 7 :18)
- We are utterly destitute of any God-like qualities which meet the requirements of God's holiness (Rom. 7:18).

### III. The Consequences of Living in the Flesh

- **The Illustration of Hagar and Sarah:**

**Galatians 4:23-24** *But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. 24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.*

**Jeremiah 17:9** *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

- **Death**

**Romans 6:16** *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

- **Corruption**

**Galatians 6:7-8** *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

- **Division**

**1 Corinthians 3:1-4** *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal*

### IV. The Weapons of our Warfare

- **Salvation – Receiving the Spirit**

**John 1:12-13** *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*

- **Protection**

**Ephesians 6:10-11** *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*



- **Agression – The battle for the mind**

**2 Corinthians 10:3-4** *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)*

## **V. The Path to Victory**

**The answer to our problems is not pills, programs, counsel, or human effort.**

**There is no other source of power to gain victory over the flesh. Either we walk in the flesh or we walk in the Spirit.**

**Galatians 5:16-21** *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. 18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

- **Everyone faces the challenge to fight the flesh. We all are flesh.**

**Mark 14:38** *Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.*

- **Yeilding to God brings victory**

**Romans 6:19** *I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*

- **Crucifixion of the flesh**

**Galatians 5:24** *And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

**Colossians 3:5-8** *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. 8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.*

- **Chastisement**

**Hebrews 12:9-10** *Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we*

*might be partakers of his holiness.*

- **Imputation**

**Romans 13:14** *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

What comes into the mind will influence our actions.

- **Implementation**

### **1. Right thinking**

**Philippians 4:8** *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

### **2. Right reading**

**Joshua 1:8** *This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

### **3. Right music - Christian songs soothe the soul.**

**1 Timothy 4:15** *Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.*

### **4. Right praying**

**Ephesians 6:18** *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints*

### **5. Right service**

**Galatians 5:13** *For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.*

### **6. Right influences**

**Proverbs 27:17** *Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*

**CONCL** –In Galatians 5:24 the “flesh” is crucified and in 2:20 “I” am or the “ego is crucified.” And notice in 2:20 that since the old fleshly ego is crucified, a new “I” lives, and the peculiar thing about this new “I” is that it lives by *faith*. “The life I live in the flesh I live *by faith* in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.”

When we are led by the Spirit, we are not under the punishment or the oppression of the law because what the law requires the Spirit produces; namely, love. Notice verse 22: the first and all-encompassing fruit of the Spirit is love, which verse 14 says fulfills the whole law.