

Date : 20 October 2024
Theme : Making our salvation sure
Topic : Sanctification – Our battle against sin
Passage : *Romans 7*
Key verse : *...What a wretched man I am? Who will rescue me from the body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!... Romans 7:24-25(a)*

Introduction

Our study in *Romans*, thus far...

- **Justification by grace through faith *Romans 1-5*** (delivered from the penalty of sin).
How we have been delivered from God's wrath (*Romans 1 to 3: 3:20*), being justified freely by grace through faith in the redemption of Christ Jesus.
We learn about faith *Romans 4* and grace *Romans 5* for justification is to receive God's gift of righteousness without any work by us. We do not have to do anything.
- **Sanctification by grace through faith *Romans 6-8*** (to be delivered from the power of sin).
Following justification, the next phase of our journey of faith is sanctification.
(Last Sunday's study in *Romans 6* dealt with identification with Christ in His death and power to walk in newness of life. Believers in Christ have died to the flesh and are no longer under the compulsion to obey the tyranny of sin).
- **How can we win the battle against sin? *Romans 7*** is the question to address today.
...But now, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code... Romans 7:6.
In our union with Christ by faith, His death took the full payment for our sin debt (as revealed by the Law), releasing us from all penalties under the Law. However, freed from the Law does not mean free of the Law.

1. What is the nature of the conflicts?

a) There are two natures within every born again Christian.

Even though we have been born into God's Kingdom, and have the new nature...

- Our Old nature (Physical birth) continues to exist.
 - The flesh rebels and lusts for what is forbidden.
 - It does not submit to the law of God, nor receive the things of the Spirit of God.
 - Hostile to God, it is also called the carnal mind, the flesh, and sinful nature.
- New nature (Spiritual birth) made righteous with conviction of sin
 - √ The believer's new delight in God's Law
...I delight in God's law... Romans 7:22
 - √ New desire
...I have the desire to do what is good (to please God)... Romans 7: 21
 - √ New inner man
...in my inner being I delight in God's law... Romans 7:22
(A new spirit; the new covenant of grace at work to engender heart obedience)
 - √ New Master (allegiance)
...I myself, in my mind am a slave to God's law...Romans 7:25
(A new service of the will, subject to the law of the God).

There is a continual tug of war between our old / sinful nature and the new man.

b) The battle in my mind *Romans 7:23*

What's the problem of the mind?

- It is the battleground that Satan wants to control if we allow him to. We open the door to the enemy when we surrender our mind to be controlled by our sinful nature.
- The enemy then manipulates our thinking to take hold of every thought that exalts itself against God.
- The problem is because the carnal mind will not submit to God.

(The old nature seeks to bring my mind under captivity to the law of sin and death. Satan has dominion over this law influencing my thoughts, values and blinding my eyes to the truth. World views and propaganda in the media incessantly promote ungodly thinking. When we lack discernment of God's truth, we inadvertently adopt worldviews which oppose God's truths).

2. How can we win this battle? *Romans 7:1-6*

a) Victory is assured

(*1 Corinthians 10:13* is a familiar verse about victory is assured when we face temptations).

- Released from the law, we are not controlled by the old written code. *Romans 7:6*
- Our new life is empowered by the Spirit of God.

b) Who will rescue us?

- Jesus Christ our Lord has promised never to leave us.
- We need to exercise faith in His precious promises.

c) We have grace (in this ongoing struggle, God has promised that we are under grace).

- More grace – Sin will not have control over us for when we face greater pressures, there will be more grace. There is room for repentance with God's grace.
- Grace ...to bear fruit to God... *Romans 7:4*

We have died to the law through Jesus' death that we might belong to Him and His resurrection power *Romans 7:4*. Victory in Jesus does not mean there is no struggle – Jesus works through us, not instead of us, in the battle against sin.

- Fruit of righteousness (live righteously) that praises God. *Philippians 1:11*
(Augustine (5th century believer, in North Africa) lived a life of debauchery and sin in his pre-conversion days. Once, after his conversion, he met one of his past lovers who ran up to him with a kiss, then invited him to return to his old ways. Augustine's reply to her was simply ...*The Augustine you knew is dead*).
- Fruit of Holy Spirit *Galatians 5:22-23*
- Fruit of our lips that confess his Name *Hebrews 13:15*

Application

(We) belong ...to Him who was raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God. For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies... so that we bore fruit for death... *Romans 7:4,5*

- We bear fruit by abiding in Him, like every fruit-bearing branch growing from a tree.
(When we set rules to promote self-worthiness instead of seeking relationship with the Lord, we end up frustrated; but by trusting in His grace for each day we receive strength to live righteously).

I bear fruit for God, not death.

- God's covenant of grace for acceptance is not conditioned by our getting better first.

I accept my position in the covenant of grace.

- Grace has to do with His gifts rather than records we work for.

I receive God's grace gifts by faith.