**The Law is Spiritual**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Romans 7:13-19**

**Wednesday Evening**

**July 17, 2024**

**Romans 7:13-19**

13 Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 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. 16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. 17 But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

18 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. 19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.

**13 Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.**

Saints, Paul asks, “Did the law, which is good, cause my doom?” Again he answers his own question, Of course not!

The law was given by God; it tells us what God desires of us, and it is good.

**Ephesians 2:1-3**

1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

**James 1:14-15**

14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

It is sin, not the law, that brings death, and it is only through the law that we can see how terrible sin really is.

Sin uses God’s good commandments to continue to produce death in people because people cannot keep the law in their own strength.

But, by using the commandments as instruments of death, sin reveals itself in all its ugliness.

**14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.**

Saints, how can we be free from sin and yet continue to do wrong?

In Christ, we are free from the penalty of sin (judgment) and the power of sin (hopelessness).

But while still in the flesh, we are not free from the presence of sin (temptations) and the possibility of sin (failures).

Paul never claimed that being under grace instead of under the law meant that a believer was somehow above the law.

In fact, having described such a great distance between the law and sin, he realized that he was still far more acquainted with the reality of sin than the righteous standard of the law.

**Romans 8:7-11**

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

So,

Paul writes, the trouble is not with the law but with me, because I am sold into slavery, with sin as my master.

The law has an uncanny capacity for reminding us of what we once were, and of how captivating that old life can still appear.

Our hope never shifts back to the law. We must daily focus on Christ.

**15 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.**

Saints, by introducing his personal dilemma, Paul invites us to consider how well we understand our own behavior.

As long as believers live in this world as men and women of flesh and blood, they will face a constant tension—the conflict between their sinful nature and their new spiritual life.

Paul wrote to the Galatians, “The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants.

And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires.

These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict”

**Galatians 5:17**

For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

Saints, Paul shares three lessons that he learned in trying to deal with his old sinful desires.

**1. Knowledge of the law is not the answer**

**2. Self-determination to want to do what is right doesn’t succeed**

**3. Becoming a Christian does not stamp out all sin and temptation from a person’s life**

Being born again starts in a moment of faith, but becoming like Christ takes a lifetime.

Paul compares Christian growth to a strenuous race or fight

**1 Corinthians 9:24-27**

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

**2 Timothy 4:7**

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith

Thus, as Paul has been emphasizing since the beginning of this letter, no one in the world is innocent;

no one deserves to be saved—not the pagan who doesn’t know God’s laws,

nor the Christian or Jew who knows them and tries to keep them. All of us must depend totally on the work of Christ for our salvation. We cannot earn it by our good behavior.

**16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.**

Saints, we want to obey God’s law, yet we still fail.

Our failure is not the law’s fault, nor is it our own fault:

**It is sin inside me that makes me do these evil things**

If sin did not exist, then the law would give us guidelines for living perfectly.

**But Sin Perverts Everything**

**17 But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.**

Saints, Paul is not abdicating responsibility for his sin; instead, he is making the point that his desires and the sin within him are in constant conflict.

Sin is a power that, at times, can still win because his redemption is not yet complete

**1 John 3:1-3**

1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

**18 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.**

Saints, in our sinful nature, there is nothing good. Paul sees this as part of being human.

Although we belong to Christ and have died to sin, we still live in a sinful world and have a sinful nature that is rotten through and through.

The tension continues—trying to do good and not being able to do it.

Paul describes the person who knows what is good and might even desire to do it, but this person lacks the power.

**1 Corinthians 2:3-5**

3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

**19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.**

Saints, believers, still have a sinful nature that pulls them to do what they don’t want to do.

The seeming contradiction of “I do—I don’t do” emphasizes how difficult it is to identify the sources of our sinful behaviors.

Without the Holy Spirit’s help, the person is dominated by the power of sin and continues to do evil when he actually desires to do good.

**2 Corinthians 3:17-18**

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.”**