

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning
Week 37 (September 7-13, 2014)

Leaving our old life of sin and learning to walk in Biblical truth by the power of God will take us an entire lifetime. Paul writes about this period of time when we **want** to live for God but still yield to the desires of the flesh. That will be the topic of discussion in this week's devotions.

Sunday, September 7 (read Romans 7:7-12)
For apart from law, sin is dead. (Romans 7:8b)

God wants you to know just how tough it is to live under the law. When you finally realize that it is **impossible** for you or for anyone else to keep all the requirements of the Old Testament law, you have to choose between two options: 1) You can give up and say that no one can live like God requires in our sinful world, or 2) You can accept God's free gift of salvation through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. Those who do the latter will soon come to understand that while the **penalty** for sin has been paid, the **power** of sin still remains! The law was given to make us aware of our sins (v. 7). The law is not sin in and of itself, but it does arouse within us the curiosity to explore the forbidden fruit (v. 8). Praise the Lord today because the penalty for sin has been paid on Calvary and the requirements of the law have been met. "Jesus paid it all! All to Him I owe!" (From the hymn, "Jesus Paid it All")

Monday, September 8 (reread Romans 7:7-12)
Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. (Romans 7:9)

If I begin a message by saying, "Whatever you do, do not look under the communion table," every one of you would suddenly have a desire to see what is under that table. Until I made that statement, none of you would want to look, but once it was forbidden, you all would have a desire. That is exactly what Paul is saying in Romans 7:9-10. "The law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good" (v. 12), but, in our own sinful natures, we are **not** holy, righteous and good (v. 11). May I be very blunt with you? If you are **not** experiencing the battle between your sinful nature and the commands of God, you did not surrender your life to Jesus when you joined the church and were baptized. **All** true believers struggle with living the life worthy of His high calling, but Paul gives us wonderful news: You have been delivered from the law! Praise God today that "apart from law, sin is dead" (v. 8b).

Tuesday, September 9 (read Romans 7:13-20)
We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. (Romans 7:14)

Through the pen of the Apostle Paul, God uses **repetition** to drive His point home. All effective speakers will do the same thing so that you leave the service with a full knowledge of the main points. The Lord wants everyone to understand that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a), so He reminds us that the **law** does not bring death; it is **our sin** that brings the sentence of death (v. 13). The law is merely an instrument through which we understand what sin is (v. 7). The **spiritual** laws of God cannot find a home within **unspiritual** mankind (v. 14). That's where the battle begins! We want to follow God's rules, but we find we are incapable of keeping the law in our own sinful bodies (v. 16-20). The truth of the Word of God is this: Once we accept the finished works of Jesus to pay the **penalty** for our sins, God begins to work through His Holy Spirit to break the **power** of sin in the new Christian. This process is known as **sanctification**. Are you experiencing the convicting and cleansing power of the Spirit in your life? "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?" (2 Corinthians 13:5)

Wednesday, September 10 (read Romans 7:21-25)

What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 7:24-25a)

I would love to avoid the struggle with my old fleshly desires, but the truth is that **all** true believers will experience the battle between the flesh and the Spirit (v. 21-23). We truly want to obey God's law, but the various members of our sinful body fail to cooperate. Why did God give the law if He knew we couldn't keep it? "The law was put in charge **to lead us to Christ** that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24, emphasis mine). We all should get to the point that we cry out to God as Paul does in the printed verse above (v. 24). The immediate answer to our questions follows with praise: "Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Our minds truly want to obey Jesus, but our sinful natures get in the way (v. 25).

Thursday, September 11 (read Romans 8:1-4)

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:1-2)

The printed verses proclaim one of God's great promises. What a thrill it is to know that we who believe will never be condemned for our sins, because Jesus has paid the **penalty** in full by His death on the cross! The law could save no one because it was weakened by our sinful natures, so Jesus willingly left the splendor of Heaven to come to earth "to be a sin offering" (v. 3). He traded His righteousness for our sinfulness so that everyone who walks according to the Spirit and not according to the sinful nature can enjoy imputed (transferred from Him to us) righteousness from our Lord (v. 4). Are you willing to submit to the Spirit of God? Over the next few weeks, we will study Scriptures that deal with that very subject!

Friday, September 12 (read Romans 8:5-11)

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. (Romans 8:9a)

God reminds us of the impossibility of pleasing Him when we are **controlled** by the sinful nature (v. 5-8). The great news is in today's printed verse! Those of you who truly give your hearts to Jesus will experience the arrival of the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth (see John 16:13). God's living presence will convict you when you sin and teach you when you study His Word (see John 14:26). The Spirit will also assure you that the same God who raised Jesus from the dead will also "give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you" (v. 11). The 9th verse applies to those who claim to be Christians, but who have no desire to be changed by the Spirit. Are you sure that God's Spirit is alive within you (see 2 Corinthians 13:5)?

Saturday, September 13 (read Romans 8:12-17)

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. (Romans 8:16)

A healthy Christian life will consist of accepting God's pardon for all our sins and learning to walk with him through the Spirit. As we grow in our faith, the Spirit will reveal many misdeeds in our body that we never considered to be wrong (v. 12-13). The wonderful promise follows these thoughts: ". . . because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God (v. 14). There is no need to fear (see 1 John 4:18) because you have been accepted as a child of God and can literally call God "daddy," the American equivalent of the Jewish word "Abba" (v. 15). This gives you all the rights and benefits of being co-heirs with Christ, but you must also be willing to "share in His sufferings in order that we (you) may also share in His glory" (v. 16-17). Are you willing to follow the Spirit into a deeper walk?