

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 40 (September 30-October 6, 2018)

The Bible teaches that we are born with a sin nature that manifests itself even from the mother's womb (see Psalm 51:5); therefore, the Holy Spirit living within a believer will co-exist and conflict with the former controlling resident, the sin nature. We will examine Scripture this week to see how this conflict is resolved.

Sunday, September 30 (read Romans 7:1-6)

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 7:5)

The law of the Old Testament consists of more than 600 rules and commands. It was given so that we would realize how impossible it is to keep it perfectly, thus causing us to turn to Jesus for mercy and grace (see Romans 5:20-21). By dying to the laws of Moses that bound us, we come under the **grace** and **truth** that come through Jesus (see John 1:17) as illustrated by remarriage (1-3). God wants His children to bear fruit (v. 4), but it will happen only when we realize that Jesus is the Vine that feeds us and we are merely the branches (see John 15:5-8). Formerly, sinful passions ruled our lives, **but now** we are able to live in the new way of the Spirit (v. 5-6). Are you willing to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

Monday, October 1 (read Romans 7:7-12)

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. (Romans 7:7)

It is not possible to break a law unless one exists! Adam and Eve had only one restriction, but that was enough for them to violate the command, thus ushering sin into the world (see Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6-7). In today's text, Paul describes the rebellion of the sin nature once a commandment is given. By nature, we are prone to disobey authority. Observe a newborn baby to see how quickly he/she rejects the will of the parents to assert his/her own will. "The law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good" (v. 12), but we are ruled by the sin nature prior to the entrance of the Holy Spirit. The question is, "Are you willing to allow the Spirit to rule your life from now on?"

Tuesday, October 2 (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)

We have already learned that the law that was so pure and good only brought conviction and made us aware of our spiritual poverty without God (v. 13). The law is holy and spiritual, but we are unable to keep it because of our sin natures (v. 14). If you think that conversion will remedy this mess, you are in for a rude awakening. Salvation pays the **penalty** for our sins, but the old nature will battle with the new spiritual nature for the rest of our time on earth (v. 15-20). If you do not identify with this battle, it is not because you have conquered all sinful habits and thoughts, but rather because you do not have God's Holy Spirit living in you, thus there is no battle for control taking place in your heart. Please don't throw a new convert under the bus because he/she has trouble breaking old habits or addictions. God is patient with us, not wanting anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9).

Wednesday, October 3 (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)

As you can see from the printed verse, victory is ahead for the true believer! Someday we will be like Him, for we will finally see Him as He is. In the meantime, God calls us His children even while we are fighting against our sinful natures (see 1 John 3:1-3). Every real Christian wants to live for Jesus, but we are all trapped in bodies whose members want to be self-serving (v. 21-23). So we see that we can never put much trust in our bodies, because they are still subject to sin, even after we have made up our minds to cease from sinful activities (v. 25). Wouldn't it be great to walk in the Spirit at all times? That question leads us into my favorite chapter in God's Word, the 8th chapter of Romans.

Thursday, October 4 (read Romans 8:1-4)

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus . . . (Romans 8:1)

Wow! What a promise! Those who receive Jesus will never be condemned, because the Lord paid the debt in full and declared His followers **not guilty!** Lost people think that's too good to be true. Christ rejecters will spend eternity realizing that their debt had been paid and all they had to do was to receive Jesus as their Savior and Lord. The law is still powerless to save anyone, because it is weakened by our sinful natures. God's marvelous plan, however, was fulfilled when He gave His sinless Son to die on the cross to satisfy His demands for a perfect sacrifice (v. 3). Those of us who have received that sacrifice have committed to living with God's Spirit in control (v. 4). We know from chapter 7 that we will fight the battle for the rest of our days on earth, but it will certainly be worth it all when we see Jesus face to face!

Friday, October 5 (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. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. (Romans 8:9).

What do you think about most often? We are given a simple formula to determine the presence of the Holy Spirit within us by that simple question. Is your mind on spiritual things or worldly things? The two are hostile to each other as you remember from the devotions from chapter 7 earlier this week (v. 5-8). I printed v. 9 above because I stated on Tuesday that you do not have the Holy Spirit unless you identify with the battle between the sin nature and the Spirit. Paul verifies my statement with those verses. The good news is this: If Christ is living in you the Spirit is alive even as you live in a body that is still tempted by sin (v. 10). God wants to give new life to your mortal bodies if only you'll allow the Spirit to have His way (v. 11). Now is a great time to make a decision to follow Jesus through the power of the Spirit.

Saturday, October 6 (read Romans 8:12-18)

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. (Romans 8:18)

God expects you to live according to the Spirit, not according to the sinful nature. In fact, if you are allowing the Spirit to put to death the misdeeds of the body, you are already God's child (v. 12-14). You have nothing to fear because God the Father allows you to call Him "Abba," the Jewish word for daddy (v. 15). He has placed His Spirit within you to prove that you have been accepted into His kingdom (v. 16). That means that you are "Heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (v. 17a). Wow! Can you grasp that truth? The only warning that goes with that promise is the fact that suffering is coming to all believers, but, **even that** comes with the wonderful promise printed in today's featured verse above. Rejoice! You're a child of the King!