

Transformed, Part 6, Romans 7:14-8:4 “The Struggle Within”

Charlie Brown went to Lucy for some advice about life. *“Life is like a deck chair, Charlie Brown,” “On a cruise ship of life, some people place their chair at **the rear** of the ship so they can see **where they have been**. Others place their chair at the **front** of the ship so they can see **where they are going**.”*

Lucy looks at the puzzled Charlie Brown and asks,
“Which way is your deck chair facing?”

Without hesitation Charlie replies in frustration,
“I can't even get my deck chair unfolded.”

I think there are many of us in this room who right now or at some point in our lives we related to Charlie – Brown – I can't figure this out.

Life is full of Struggles:

A) Marriage struggles, Parenting struggles, Relationship Struggles, Financial struggles, Physical Struggles.

B) Class Struggles and turf Struggles – Life is full of struggles – but probably the greatest struggle that we will face as believers is the Struggle within.

Galatians 5:17

“The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.”

C) It is that struggle that Paul addresses here in the 2nd half of Romans 7

We Noted in our study last time - that in Ch. 7 Paul is talking about the believers relationship to the law

A) Ch. 6:5 Foundational statement

Aa) United with Christ in His death and His Resurrection. Everything Literally Us Spiritually.

B) Result? Ch. 6 we learned that we were dead to Sin

1) Ch. 7 We are also Dead to the law- in this sense: The law of God is no longer the means whereby a person comes into right standing with God.

C) Last Wed. Ch. 5 Justified by faith – Declared righteous by placing our faith in what Jesus did for us on the Cross

That is how we become right with God! – Faith in Jesus Christ – His perfect life – His perfect sacrifice. – We are free!

A) Now that doesn't mean that the Law is not good or doesn't have a purpose!

B)The law defines what righteousness looks like – and in doing so showed us how we sinned and missed the mark.

C)Galatians – School Master – to drive us to Grace

D)We finished our time last week – Purpose of the law

1. **V.7 The law revealed my sin** – Coveting
2. **V.8,9 The law aroused my sin nature** – Someone says – Don't something in us that wants to do that. – Don't eat chocolate
3. **V.10-11 The law slew Paul** – Condemned me – Sinner
4. **V.12,13 The law magnified my sin** – Put my life under a microscope and revealed how far from the standard I really am.

So the law served that Purpose in Paul's life!

A)The law is good – Good guide – reveals God's standard.

- 1)Don't kill – that is good.
- 2)Don't commit adultery – good
- 3) Don't steal – Covet –lie - honor your mother and father

C)All of those things – That makes sense and we have seen the pain the fall out that happens in society when pp don't adhere to those things

But now we are in Christ – married to Christ – freed from the law – free to walk according to a higher law – God's spirit in our hearts.

A)But in Christ – God says – new way of living

B)Problem is this: We still battle with the flesh – this body and **these sinful tendencies that are just a part of our physical make up.**

C)Paul describes that struggle in the verses we are looking at today

Bible teachers are divided as to Paul's spiritual condition – as he penned these verses.

A)There are some who say: Paul is writing from the perspective of a non believer – before he was regenerated –

B)This describes the struggle of a person before coming to Christ.

Others say: No, this is definitely Paul talking about the struggle a Christian goes thru with his flesh.

A)I tend to agree with that view for several reasons:

1) It fits nicely as a commentary to what Paul wrote in Galatians – definitely to believers – that the flesh and the Spirit are at war.

Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh

2. V.7-13 Paul is speaking in the past tense concerning his relationship to the law – this is definitely before Christ

A) He mentions how the law revealed his sin of coveting

B) But in v.14-25 the language switches to the present tense.

C) That is significant because it means that he is now describing his experience at the time he wrote this letter to the Romans

D) Present struggle of a regenerate person

3. V.14 Paul says the law is spiritual but I am Carnal – sold under sin.

A) Paul admits that he is carnal – that word carnal is only used of believers in the NT.

B) We tend to think of the word carnal as being – given over to worldliness and sinfulness.

1) But in the NT it is used simply to mean fleshly – of the flesh. – Romans 8 Paul will talk about being carnally minded – vs spiritually minded.

C) So a carnal Christian can be one who is distracted by the things of the world.

1) It can also be one who is trying to please God in the energy of the flesh.

D) Paul said of the church in Corinth

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. {carnality was due to their lack of maturity.}

For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?

Carnality seen in their division {Focused on the flesh – the instrument and their own personal preference.

So Paul uses the term always to describe one who was a believer.

4.V.18 Paul says I know that in me (that is in my flesh) nothing good dwells

A) That is the reasoning of a believer – and unbeliever never makes that kind of distinction – in my flesh

5.V.22 For I delight in the law of God in my inward man

A)First of all what unbeliever delights in the law of God? No way – law is their kill joy

B)They delight in the law of self – pleasing me

C)Now someone could argue, well a Jewish person would delight in the law especially one like Paul – training to be a Pharisee

D)But that phrase the inward man – once again is a description describing the believer

6.V.24,25 The Solution? – who can save me from myself? Jesus our Lord

A)Once again – Paul is writing to the church

B)So Paul brings out this inward struggle

**Lets break it down and make some insights: V.15-20
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.**

A)Some have been convinced, from this verse alone, that Paul was a golfer.

Aa)If you have ever tried golf, you know that this is the very thing that happens.

B)I want to hit it straight – practice – visualize – it just doesn't happen very often.

1) What you want to do, you do not do. What you do not want to do, that is the very thing you do.

2)Don't hit the tree – 90% air – Jim B – 3 times

C)What about Dieting – I am going to Diet this week- No more ice Cream for a whole month.

D)Cold Stone gift certificate –

1)Worse –My wife – Evil, brings ice cream home

Dd)Like Adam I say Lord it is the woman that you gave me!

E) Of course, Paul is referring to a much greater problem than dieting and playing golf.

1)The Struggle summed up – “What I want to do – I don't do – What I hate – I end up doing.”

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.

A)“The problem isn't with the law,” said Paul. “The problem is with the sin in *me*.”

B)Not an excuse – the Devil made me do it – Lady with the Dress –

C)Paul is not saying – the sin in me made me do it – EXCUSE – BUT MORE FACT

1)There is a struggle { come back to this in v.20 – explain more

18a For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh- My carnal fleshly self) nothing good dwells; HUGE!!!!!!!

A)Whenever I'm disappointed in myself, it's because I'm denying what God said when He said,

“Rob, in you dwells no good thing.”

B)I still struggle with this. I understand the concept theologically and can quote the verse from memory.

1)But too often I think, *There's some good in me—isn't there? My mom says there is - Am I really this bad, Lord? YEP!!!!!!!!!!!!*

C)Every time I get down on myself, I hear His voice again saying, **“Rob, didn't I tell you straight out, didn't I record it in black and white that in your flesh, in you personally, dwells no good thing?”**

1)Why, then, are you disappointed in yourself?”

D)Those who have a tendency to despair of life do so because they think there's something good in them that they're failing to utilize.

1)They're not living up to their self-image.

E)Although we want our kids to have high self-esteem, confidence the Scriptures say, “Sorry. In you dwells no good thing.”

1)It is really freeing to realize – nothing good in me – if anyone sees anything – worthy – only because of Jesus.

Not an excuse to use as Ammo – Rotten to your spouse – You heard what Pastor Rob Said – Nothing good – live with it.

A)Not the point – It is a fact for you to know – to understand why you still will have times of failure.

V.18b 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.

A)It Not just bad things – doing – but not doing good things!

B)Lord I am going to get up in the morning and have devos at 4:30 every day. { Rough night of sleep – sleep in – what was I thinking.

C)**Mark Ayres** – College Girlfriend best friend this guy – sweet guy – felt Jealous.

1)I knew it was wrong – So I determined I am going to be nice to Mark.

D)Not going to get agitated when he is around. – More I tried – the worse it was.

1)I wanted to beat him up every time I saw him.

E)What made matters worse – he was so nice to me! **Graveyard – 2am – Hey how is it going. – Praying for you.**

F) What I wanted to do – what I knew was the right thing to do – I was unable to perform it

20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

This statement is really evidence of the new birth –

A)The fact that there is a struggle is evidence that God has done a work in Paul. & in US Example

B)Here's how to differentiate between a pig and a prodigal, between an unbeliever and a carnal Christian:

1)Take the pig out of the pigpen, wash him in bubble bath, spray him with cologne, put a ribbon in his hair, a bow on his tail, and watch what happens the first time he sees some mud.

C)The pig will wallow in it with joy.

D)The prodigal, on the other hand, although he might foolishly find himself in the mud from time to time, will not be comfortable there.

1)Eventually, he'll come to his senses and say, "Get me out of here. I hate this stuff"

D)The Struggle is evidence of the New life –I don't belong in the Mud which is exactly the point Paul is wanting to make.

1)No struggle, you have to question if really saved.

21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

A law – not THE law, AN EVIL FORCE –

A)whenever I determine to do the right thing there is this conflict in me – there is a traitor working against me – my flesh.

B)This goes beyond the intellect -In my mind as a believer I want to follow the law of God.

1)I want to walk in His ways and keep His commandments.

2)That's truly my determination and my mind-set.

C)But my body rebels. Desire takes over! Desire overrides the mind.

Why the Bible says guard the heart with all diligence for out of it flows the issues of life.

A)The heart is a powerful device, the heart is more powerful than the mind.

B)More powerful device than the intellect. Because the heart is not that thing pumping in your chest – the heart is the seat of all desire.

It desires both good and evil – Desire is powerful.

A)**Eating** – My mind says –not one more bite – but desire says – but it is so good.

B)Then – **the desert tray comes** – The mind says – no way – desire says that cheese cake looks amazing

C)**Rational** says – no – but Desire says **YESSSSSS**

That is why a person with a PHD – smart – can commit adultery and completely destroy their life and family

A){Seen it happen too many times } **Are they stupid – no – actually really smart – just given over to Desire.**

B)**Why I always tell young couples dating – don't start the fire – don't get the spark going**

1){Ask them – Do you want to be a Virgin when get married? Yes

C)**Don't get the spark going – they begin to rationalize**

D)**Just a kiss – Never satisfied** – Desire says – **another kiss will not hurt –**

1)Get physical and all rationale gets thrown out the window.

E)**Start rationalizing - Making out is not sex**

1) Touching each other not sex –

F)**Paul says in my mind – I say – don't go there – but desire takes over ! Struggle**

**Then Paul makes this remarkable statement in v.24
O wretched man that I am!**

A)**Wretched speaks of being completely exhausted after the battle is over**

B)**Mental and emotional struggle where he finally collapses and says – I am done**

C)**What is wrong with me?** That is exactly how I felt with Mark – **I am a wretch** – I am not even saved –

D)**Peter – depart from me a sinful man**

Counseling a Pastor {Another church– Broken –2nd time - God just wants to keep you in that place.

“Before God can use a man greatly he must wound him deeply.” Oswald Chambers

God wants us to come to that Place where we say: O wretched man that I am.

Resist the proud and He gives grace to the humble.

A)You can meet someone with a lot of Bible knowledge they can talk about deep things – problem is they are proud – **Pride just oozes out of them –**

B)**Knowledge puffs up**

C)**But you meet someone close to Jesus – Humble – Humility that is there**

1)Awesome God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.

D)Truth of the matter is this: When we are doing our best and we sense His presence – the overwhelming sense is this – I am a sinful man.

Paul – Saved sinners – One – I am chief

A)Closer he got to Jesus the more he sensed his own imperfections –

B)which is good because the more we are aware of our imperfections the more that we will depend on His grace.

C)Poor in Spirit. – Life of Humility and dependence.

O WRETCHED MAN ...Who will deliver me from this body of death?

A)In Paul's day, the sentence of a man convicted of first-degree murder could be to be tied to the body of his victim. Palm –Palm –stomach to stomach

B)Often, the stench alone would kill the murderer.

C)It is possibly this Roman practice to which Paul is referring when he cries,

“Who will free me from the failures, shortcomings, and sinful tendencies I'm forced to drag behind me wherever I go?”

Paul is now ready to lead us into an explosively liberating truth.

A)In verse 18, he said, “How can I get victory?”

B)After struggling a little longer, he realizes it's not “how.” It's “*who.*” – It is Him – It is Jesus

C)Many Christians are concerned with “how.”

1)They want procedures, plans, and programs,”

D)Not realizing – those things only perpetuate the struggle.

E)The flesh always cries, “How?” The Bible always answers, “Him!”

His life invading your life – His spirit empowering your Spirit.

A)This is where I came with Mark – God I can't – but I can! Liberating

B)Had to pray daily for a while – Lord I can't but You can – Help me

1)Poor in Spirit – Broken –God loves that

C)It is our pride that says – I want a plan – I want to feel like I earned this

D)Humble heart – Says – Nothing good dwells in me – in my flesh – wretch –

1)Jesus help me

Who can save me? V.25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Summary statement So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

A) Paul is saying that even though In Christ – I am freed from sin and free from the law –

B) Set free – new life in Christ – New power thru Christ

C) As long as we are living in these bodies on this planet there is going to be a struggle – there will be times when we give into the flesh – we sin.

D) But the good news is this – Ch. 8 This is what we need to remember – (NO CH. BREAKS)

Rom 8:1-4

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Come back to this – next week –

Conviction vs Condemnation –

Walk according to the flesh – always condemned – always failing –

Or always pleasing your flesh rather than pleasing God

Walk in the Spirit – His heart – His perspective

Desire to please God rather than the flesh

Empowering