

Glen Park Gospel Church
Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

Rev Chris Trinham

Studies in Romans Series 4

No 13

Paul's Own Experience

Scripture Reading: Romans 7:1-13

Key Verse: *I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;* Romans 7:9 NIV

There is a disagreement between some conservative scholars whether Romans chapter seven describes Christian experience before or after coming to Christ. You will find powerful arguments on either side. There are elements common to both; the same law, the same flesh, the same sin, the same death, the same Spirit, the same life. To me the truth is that the Christian, having been delivered from the domination of self (the flesh) by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ then tends to revert back to a dependence upon his old resources to live the new God-pleasing life. Paul writes in another place: *You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?* Galatians 3:1-3 NIV

Review Paul's Experience.

Take a moment to re-read Paul's testimony; how he found Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, and then learned live the life to which he was called. See Acts 9:1-31 & Galatians 1:11-2.2.

Now learn something of what he experienced in these fourteen years. Romans 7:7-13.

For I was alive once v9. When was this? It was when he came to the Lord in Damascus by the ministry of Ananias, Acts 9:10. He became alive when he was raised to new life in Christ.

Apart from the law v9. When he put his faith in Jesus Christ the righteousness of God came to him 'apart from the law'. See Romans 3:21&22 where the same phrase is used. It is true for Jew and Gentile. Paul trusted in the Christ who died for him to take the penalty of his sin and give him righteousness in exchange. The law had nothing to do with it. This transaction was by faith in Christ alone.

In those first heady days, like so many new Christians, Paul 'walked on air', telling all who would listen about his new Saviour Acts 9:30.

But when the commandment came, sin revived and I died v9. Then God

began to deal with Paul about the presence and power of sin still existing in his life, for he had not yet learned the distinction of its penalty and its presence. The purpose of the law is to reveal the sinfulness of sin Romans 3:20. He tells us in Romans 7:7 that his problem was covetousness, and the law of Moses warned him quite clearly Deuteronomy 5:21. His faith in Christ gave him life, but his subsequent experience showed him to be in the grip of the sin which carries the stench of death.

The commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be to death v10. The commandment says, do this and live; but we can't and qualify for death. Paul, like so many of God's children determined to keep the law and so live a life pleasing to God, but he failed.

For sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me and slew me. V11. 'Sin' in v11 is in the Greek, 'the sin' or the sin nature all men inherit from Adam.

As we saw, Paul uses the words "the" sin' in these chapters when he refers to the inherited sin nature, and the word 'sin' without the word "the" to refer to the sins we experience due to our actions. Unfortunately, no English

translation brings out this distinction, which makes the passage harder to understand. Here is today's selection expanded with these distinctions emphasised.

Romans 7:7-13 What shall we say then? *Is the law sin due to experience?* No way! No, I had no experiential knowledge of *the sin nature*, but through the function of the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, You shall not covet. 8 But *the sin nature*, taking leverage by the commandment, wrought in me all kind of evil desire. For without the law, sin as *my act* was dead.

9 You see, I was alive independent of the law once: but when the commandment came, *the sin nature* revived, and I died. 10 Thus the commandment, which was *ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death. 11 For *the sin nature*, taking leverage by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*.

12 So then the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good. 13 Did then that which is good become death to me? Certainly not!

But *the sin nature* so that it might manifest sin in *my experience* produced death in me by the means of that which is good; so that through the commandment *the sin nature* might become so very exceedingly sinful.

When Paul put his faith first in Christ he was freed from the penalty of sin, and he was born again by the Holy Spirit as a child of God. Life was imputed to Paul by faith. However there are two aspects to the life we receive. Life for eternity and life for the here and now; but, the one abundant,

Life is imputed by faith the moment we come to Christ. Life is imparted by faith moment by moment as we live in Christ. You in Jesus and Jesus in you.

overcoming victorious life on either this or that side of our resurrection. It is as if the sin the nature said to Paul, "God hates covetousness. Read the commandment. You must deal with it Paul. You must live the life the law demands. You owe it to your Lord." Paul utterly and hopelessly failed like we all do. Have you noticed that it is your own pet sins that trip you up time and time again.

When Paul tried to live the life, sin delivered the death blow to his efforts. He failed again and again. Sin is always unto death. Sin is never unto life, even for the Christian. Romans 6:16. There is never anything excusable about sin. Paul had then yet to learn that the victorious life is also imparted by faith in the One who is the source of life.

Paul's sin was utterly deserving of death, even though he was redeemed. The result of this was:

Sin shown the commandment becomes exceeding sinful v13. Paul through experience, like all Christians had to learn how all our best efforts at reform are utterly worthless and abhorrent to God. *The sin nature*, the old nature, the old man, the old me, the flesh is only deserving of death. The sin nature in me must die.

Is there an answer? Yes, there is an answer, but first we must understand the problem. Unless we understand the problem, we will never seek the answer. This is the problem, as Isaiah put it so succinctly:

But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. Isaiah 64:6

Welcome

Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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