

Glen Park Gospel Church  
**Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes**

Rev Chris Trinham

Studies in Romans Series 4

No 14

### Paul's Confusion.

Scripture Reading: Romans 7:14-25

The apostle Paul spoke in his letters of three kinds of people. One who has not received the Lord Jesus and is not a Christian he calls a 'soulish man' or man of soul 1 Corinthians 2:14, (translated 'man without the spirit' NIV or 'natural man' AV & NASB). Those who have availed themselves of all the resources of living in Christ he called 'spiritual' or of the spirit 1 Corinthians 2:15. But there is another group, they are Christian, but not enjoying the blessing of godly living. These he called fleshly, (translated carnal AV & NASB or worldly NIV) Flesh here is not body, the carcass. Paul's use of 'flesh' indicates the self conscious, world relating part of man. Romans 7 describes the confusion Paul's experienced as a Christian struggling for a fully fledged faith.

#### Paul experience as a young

**Christian confused him.** I do not understand what I do, for what I want to do I do not do, but I do what I hate v15. Or, "I want to live by God's law, but I find myself doing the opposite." How many of us are in the same bind. We want to please God in our heart and mind, but we cannot stop sinning, despite the fact that we have accepted Christ as our sin offering and are able to confess for forgiveness our shortcomings. This is not what we would expect of the Christian life. We would have expected to be able to resist sin and live lives that are holy and pleasing to God.

#### Let us identify and define Paul's main concepts to aid our understanding:

*The Jewish law:* Paul as Jew and a Pharisee initially has the law of Moses in mind, also called here the 'the law of God' v22. It is given the quality 'spiritual' v14.

*The law of the flesh* (in my members) v23, called also 'an other or different law'. The law of the flesh is always urging against the law of God, urging the person to sin. This is the

law of the sinful nature common to all mankind.

*The law of constant conflict* v21 The word 'law' in v21 is preceded by an article indicating a particular law or principle, a principle of human experience. This is due to the 'law in my members' (my flesh), ready to take advantage of my bodily impulses. v23.

*The law of the mind* v23. This is the principle of the higher nature which makes men believe in something better, even if they do not desire it for themselves, a vestige of the image of God in man, what Paul calls here 'the inner man' v22.

The law of the mind and the law of the flesh are always at war, creating the law of constant conflict. The law of God stands in violation.

*The sinful nature* dwelling in him, inherited from Adam urging him to choose sin. Paul differentiated this nature by using the Greek 'the', 'the sin' *Sin* which he does by his own choice as a sinner. *I, my, me;* Paul uses the word 'ego',

emphatic in Greek, in these verses. This word we have incorporated into words such as 'egotistical' to point to the inner person. Review the passage and see how this theme dominates.

*The flesh*, being the body, not so much the tissue but the world conscious man, rather than the self conscious ego. V14,18 The NIV translates this word 'of flesh' as unspiritual, but that is not what it says. 'Man of flesh' is the best translation. (NASB)

#### Paul Found he had a two natures

v17. This was his experience; he in his inner man (Eph 3:16) knew and desired what was good and conformed to the spiritual law of God. But the flesh, the worldly man defeated his every attempt to live a consistent godly, spiritual life. Willing and doing v18 were different things.

**Paul was in conflict** v23. The inner man approved of God's law but the fleshly man followed the dictates of the old Adam nature residing in him. Paul was the battle ground, being torn this way and that.

**Paul was powerless to do anything about it, try as he might.** v18-20. Note carefully what he is saying in

these verses 'I (*ego - I, my, me*) cannot do anything about it. I am powerless to please God in my living.' Have you progressed this far in your spiritual pilgrimage? You have received the Lord as your justification and are pleased to know that you have been forgiven your sin. You have sought to live so as to please God. You have done your very best, but failed. You will not make a change if you do not recognise the problem. If so you need to make:

**Paul's great discovery** v24. 'I can do nothing about my condition. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?' He recognises the need for someone from outside his experience to come to his aid and rescue him. Have you come also to this point in your life?

**Paul's other grateful discovery** v25. I thank God. This phrase no doubt expressed Paul's relief that there was help at hand. It is so translated into English. 'Thank' is the word 'grace' in later texts as used in Romans 6:14 and there is no direct object which bids us supply it. 'Grace *will do it* through Jesus Christ our Lord.' The meaning is clear. What Paul could not do, God has graciously provided by faith in Jesus.

How do we resolve this tension and it is a tension in the life of every believer? It is not through trying but trusting. Up until now, Paul has studiously avoided teaching about the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian. As the believer trusts God for victory in this conflict, it is the Holy Spirit who does the work of making experiencing the life of Jesus Christ a personal reality. We take up this topic of our next study.

## Welcome

Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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