

Musing #58: Romans 7:21-25

21-25 I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. 22 I love God’s law with all my heart. 23 But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. 24 Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? 25 Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I’m a slave to God’s Law in my mind, but I’m a slave to sin’s law in my body.

The King James Version states it this way: **“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”**

An interesting side note: *This body of death...* is a reference to “the flesh. If we take the word FLESH, remove the H and read the word backward, it spells SELF. Clever!”

Paul’s reference here is to a practice commonly used to punish a murderer. The body that he killed was tied to the back of the body of the killer hand to hand, foot to foot, sometimes head to head. The killer was free to move wherever he desired, but wherever he went, the man he killed went with him, bound until the killer’s own death.

It is not solely Christ’s life that frees me from sin. It is “the law of life in Christ” that frees me. The higher law is now our very life. We are learning to live under that higher law.

There are three fundamental laws that we are learning...

1. The law of our spirit and mind—wants to do God’s will
2. The law of sin—pulling us against God’s will
3. The law of the Spirit of Life in Christ—the power we have in union with God’s indwelling Holy Spirit

All believers are somewhere in the process on our way to the end of our own resources in our contention with the **power of sin**. When we “get tired...of being tired,” we find rest in the power of the indwelling Spirit.

The word **rest** is mentioned in our Bible over 500 times.

Matthew 11:28-29 AMP “**Come to Me, all who are weary and heavily burdened [by religious rituals that provide no peace], and I will give you rest [refreshing your souls with salvation]. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me [following Me as My disciple], for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest (renewal, blessed quiet) for your souls.**

Over 16 times, the writer of Hebrews uses the word “rest,” such as in **4:10-11 AMP** **For the one who has once entered His rest has also rested from [the weariness and pain of] his [human] labors, just as God rested from [those labors uniquely] His own. Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest [of God, to know and experience it for ourselves]...**

God has made it clear to us that only believers can enter into God’s **rest**. Is it only for New Testament believers? No! The **rest** for God’s people always been available since the foundation of the world.

Peter Lord had a good reminder hanging on his office wall... **“You can’t, I never said you could. I can, and always said I would.”**

God hasn't done away with the law. But He has exchanged our old life with His eternal life. All the things I couldn't do, I can now do... through the power of His Life within me. That power had changed everything.

It reminds me of a comment made by J. Vernon McGee when he was asked what the difference was between the son and the pig in the story of the Prodigal Son facing his dilemma. McGee responded.... **"No pig ever said to itself... 'I will arise and go to my father'only sons and daughters can say that."**

Romans 7 — Gives us a good look at our struggle, not with the condemnation of sins (plural) but with the ever-present power of sin (singular).

Paul's discoveries in Romans 7 boil down to:

1. that sin dwelt in him
2. that he delighted in God's law
3. that his will was powerless against the power of sin
4. that sinful self was not his real person
5. that deliverance was through the indwelling Spirit

What is the key?

The key lies in cultivating our new, natural personhood. When confronted with a decision, I instinctively discern its appropriateness for me. My inner self experiences unease, which is the manifestation of my true self. However, my soul occasionally transgresses boundaries, a testament to the influence of sin. This unsettling sensation serves as a reminder to diligently listen and trust my inner guidance. I must rely on my intuition and spiritual discernment to identify what is right.

This is the essence of my true self, my new personhood in Christ. It is the voice of my spirit and His Spirit that unequivocally declares, "No!"

I must align my actions with the truth I perceive within my inner self. If I receive a quiet "stop" from my spirit, I am reminded of Oswald Chambers' wisdom: ***"When in doubt, don't!"***

In the upcoming session, we will further explore how Paul, in his practical approach, referred to himself more than 40 times in Chapter 7. This serves as a pivotal moment, allowing us to recognize that the resolution to this dilemma is graciously provided by the indwelling Holy Spirit, who is mentioned more than 20 times in Chapter 8.

Ultimately, the focus is on developing the ability to hear and trust the indwelling Holy Spirit to correct us when necessary and guide us towards wisdom and the best course of action in every decision we encounter.

Through a thorough examination of Paul's conclusion of the dilemma, read carefully as his transition is depicted in The Passion Translation—

(Romans 7:21-8:13), Through my experience of this principle, I discover that even when I want to do good, evil is ready to sabotage me. Truly, deep within my true identity, I love to do what pleases God. But I discern another power operating in my humanity, waging a war against the moral principles of my conscience and bringing me into captivity as a prisoner to the "law" of sin—this unwelcome intruder in my humanity. What an agonizing situation I am in! So who has the power to rescue this miserable man from the unwelcome intruder of sin and death? I give all my thanks to God, for his mighty power has finally provided a way out through our Lord Jesus, the Anointed One! So if left to myself, the flesh is aligned with the law of sin, but now my renewed mind is fixed on and submitted to God's righteous

principles. So now the case is closed. There remains no accusing voice of condemnation against those who are joined in life-union with Jesus, the Anointed One. For the “law” of the Spirit of life flowing through the anointing of Jesus has liberated us from the “law” of sin and death. For God achieved what the law was unable to accomplish, because the law was limited by the weakness of human nature. Yet God sent us his Son in human form to identify with human weakness. Clothed with humanity, God’s Son gave his body to be the sin-offering so that God could once and for all condemn the guilt and power of sin. So now every righteous requirement of the law can be fulfilled through the Anointed One living his life in us. And we are free to live, not according to our flesh, but by the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit! Those who are motivated by the flesh only pursue what benefits themselves. But those who live by the impulses of the Holy Spirit are motivated to pursue spiritual realities. For the sense and reason of the flesh is death, but the mind-set controlled by the Spirit finds life and peace. In fact, the mind-set focused on the flesh fights God’s plan and refuses to submit to his direction, because it cannot! For no matter how hard they try, God finds no pleasure with those who are controlled by the flesh. But when the Spirit of Christ empowers your life, you are not dominated by the flesh but by the Spirit. And if you are not joined to the Spirit of the Anointed One, you are not of him. Now Christ lives his life in you! And even though your body may be dead because of the effects of sin, his life-giving Spirit imparts life to you because you are fully accepted by God. Yes, God raised Jesus to life! And since God’s Spirit of Resurrection lives in you, he will also raise your dying body to life by the same Spirit that breathes life into you! So then, beloved ones, the flesh has no claims on us at all, and we have no further obligation to live in obedience to it. For when you live controlled by the flesh, you are about to die. But if the life of the Spirit puts to death the corrupt ways of the flesh, we then taste his abundant life.

In our next session, we will expand on Paul’s remedy from *this body of death* by delving into Romans Chapter 8.