



Sunday January 11, 2015

ROMANS 7:14-25

NO LONGER DECEIVED

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SERMON NOTES: Romans 7:14-25

I HAVE A **PROBLEM**

Romans 7: 14-18, 14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. 15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.

- **Sin affects everything**
- **Sin distorts God's truth**
 - affecting the way **we think**

Romans 1:18-23 (NIV84) — 18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. . . . 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie . . .

- affecting the way **we act**

Romans 1:28-31 (NIV84) — 28 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. 29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

- **Sin has destroyed our relationship with God**

Romans 3:9-12, 20 (NIV84) — ⁹ . . . We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. ¹⁰ As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." . . . ²⁰ **Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.**

PAUL'S TESTIMONY

Philippians 3:4–9 (NIV84)

⁴ . . . If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.

⁷ But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith

I LACK THE POWER TO CHANGE

Romans 7:18-20, ¹⁸ . . . For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

- I am powerless to free myself

I'M IN NEED OF A RESCUE:

Romans 7:21-25 (NIV84) — 21 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

The first principle in Finding Me is to admit that I am not God. I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and my life is unmanageable.

(adapted from Celebrate Recovery)

CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE: Romans 7:14-25

OPENING

- Share a few of your 2015 resolutions. How well are you doing at fulfilling them? How you already given up?

Leaders Note: The purpose of this question is to get as many people as possible talking about the subject. If people are struggling to think of resolutions for this year, have them think back to previous years. Or you can suggest some possible resolutions, like weight loss, getting in shape, eating better, etc. You may find it helpful to lead off with one of your own experiences in order to break the ice.

GOING DEEPER

Paul writes in Romans 7:10-11, ¹⁰ “I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. ¹¹ For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. ¹² So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.”

Paul’s problem is not with the law- it is holy, just, good - but rather with the fact that sin deceived him. Paul insists that sin manipulates the law with an evil intent. Instead of bringing us closer to God, sin has actually used the commands to keep us from Him. Sin left us striving for something God was all too willing to freely give.

- In 7:14-18. The apostle Paul shares some of his internal conflicts. He is unable to keep the law. He refers to himself as “**sold as a slave to sin**”. Pastor Bruce highlighted some of the ways sin complicates life. **Share from your life experience how you have witnessed sin complicate life.**

Leaders Note: You may want to suggest possible ways that this can happen: a lie that leads to cover up, anger that creates broken relationships, bad choices that produce harsh consequences.

- Romans 7:18-20. What admission does Paul make in this section? Using Paul’s testimony from Philippians 3:4-9, explain the central truth Paul came to understand. **How can this truth help us in our striving to become better people?**

Leaders Note: In Romans 7:18-20, Paul is talking about his struggle with the power of sinful desires. While he knows that sin is wrong, he cannot keep himself from falling into it. In Philippians 3:4-9, Paul argues that only the righteousness of Christ is powerful enough to break his sinful desires.

As we strive to become better people, we need to depend entirely on Christ’s righteousness, as God continues to recreate us and reform us in the image of His Son. (Romans 8:29) We cannot overcome sin by ourselves. We must maintain an active, intimate relationship with Christ, because only then can His power really change us from the inside out.

- Romans 7:21-25. Paul saw in Jesus a redeemer, one who came to save. If we fail to see Jesus in this way, we will try to bring about change in our own efforts. It is precisely from this position of dependence where we will find strength in the midst of our weakness.

Leaders Note: There is no question here, but you can note how the passage in Romans 7 ends with the phrase, "Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (v. 25), as an answer to the question, "Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (v.24)

CHALLENGE:

- The first principle in Finding Me is to admit that I am not God: I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and my life is unmanageable. **How might we put this principle into action?**

Leaders Note: We must maintain and intimate relationship with Christ if we are to "find a better me". One way to develop intimacy with Christ is to practice four time honored disciplines of the faith:

- *A deeper knowledge of God's truth as He reveals it in scripture*
- *A richer prayer life*
- *A commitment of time, talent and treasure in God's service*
- *An ability to share our life in Christ with others who are still seeking*

One purpose of our Connect Groups is to encourage each of us toward a more intimate relationship with God, as we work on these disciplines together.