

THE CHRISTIAN STRUGGLE

HOW MEN RESPOND TO THE CONDEMNATION OF SIN

*"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus
hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*

~ Romans 8:2

1. The Natural Life

- a. The natural man is reprobate - under sin – Rom 3:9-18, 23
- b. Sin ~*def.* Anything contrary to the truth of God.
 - i. Sin is the great problem of this world. Sin has real consequences.
 - ii. Acknowledging sin results in significant inner problems- guilt, grief, misery, despair, distress, depression, anger, anguish, anxiety, trouble, torment, pain, Feelings of being trapped, worthless, unfit, bound, stuck, failure, hopeless.
 - iii. Sin brings condemnation to your inner man, and death/ruin everywhere.

2. The Natural Struggle

- a. Conscience ~*def.* Internal knowledge/conviction/judgment of what is true, just, right
 - i. Everyone has a God-given conscience that bears witness to sin – Rom 2:15
 - ii. A conscience can be seared (made not to sense anymore) – 1 Tim 4:2
- b. When our conscience is afflicted by sin, we can live in 1) condemnation or 2) denial.
 - i. 1) Condemnation – the natural consequence of our sinful flesh
 - ii. 2) Denial – of sin, ignore it, hide it, forget it, accuse/excuse, blame, victim
 - 1. Denial requires a defiled mind and conscience. Titus 1:15
 - iii. The struggle is betwixt two: a desire for life, and a clear conscience.

3. The Spiritual Life

- a. The word of God produces faith – Rom 10:17
- b. Ye heard the word of truth, ye believed, ye received the Spirit - Eph 1:13
- c. The natural man receives not spiritual things, but we have a mind - 1 Cor 2:9-16
- d. Spirituality is established faith – Rom 1:11-12
- e. Paul establishes spiritual life in Romans:
 - i. Salvation (in Christ) 3:24-26, 4:5, 5:8-10, 5:18-21
 - ii. Identification (in Christ) 6:4-6, 6:18, 6:23

4. The Christian Struggle

- a. Christianity guarantees eternal life, not an easy life
- b. A saint sealed with the Spirit can struggle just as the natural man
- c. You are free from the penalty and power of sin, but sin is still present –Rom 7:18-21

- d. When the conscience is afflicted by sin, we can live in 1) condemnation or 2) denial
 - i. 1) Condemnation – result of losing the war of mind and flesh – Rom 7:22-24
 - 1. There are two laws: the law of God, the law of sin.
 - ii. 2) Denial – of sin in the Christian, saved = sinless, Christian = holier than all.
 - 1. Christianity does not deny sin, it saves from the power of sin.
 - iii. The struggle is betwixt two: a desire to do right, and a clear conscience

5. The Spiritual Mind

- a. *"Jesus Christ our Lord"* is necessary because sin is the problem. Rom 7:25
- b. The saint has a third option for responding to a sin afflicted conscience: Rom 8:1-3
 - i. 3) Spirit – who reveals the things of God for us to know what is freely given.
- c. *Why no condemnation?*
 - i. 8:1 - Our minds set on the Spirit (a new mind by faith), not flesh or denial
 - ii. 8:2 - Law of the Spirit (who seals upon salvation) = life in Christ Jesus
 - 1. *"free from the law of sin and death"* = we are dead with him
 - 2. He died for my sins (penalty), and rose again to give life (power)
 - iii. 8:3 - Our failure to perform resolved through Christ's performance
 - iv. 8:4 - Righteousness fulfilled through the gospel of grace through faith
 - v. 8:5 – Things of the flesh = performance – Things of the Spirit = faith/Christ
- d. Romans 8 introduces the Spirit, but not the first time for faith and gospel of Christ
 - i. Sin and its consequences are real to the Christian.
 - ii. Victory in Christ over sin and its consequences are just as real. 8:14-16
 - iii. Walk after the Spirit's witness, you in Christ, there is no condemnation. 8:34