

Just Checking In #112 New Life, New Lord, New Law, New Struggle

August 1, 2011

Psalm 39:12 "Hear my prayer, O Lord... for I am a 'pilgrim' with You..."

Romans 6-7

I am in the middle of a preaching series on the book of Romans. (If you want to hear the messages, you can go to the Bible Baptist website at www.bbcpa.org and click on the sermons link – some are video, some are audio.) It has been a blessing to my own soul as I have spent many hours meditating on the gospel and its application to both the sinner and the saint, the lost and the found, the Jew and the Gentile. These last few weeks I have been dwelling on the newness of the believer as revealed in Romans 6-7.

*The old struggle was for the redemption of the soul, fought and won for us by Christ resulting in justification. Romans 3-5
The new struggle is for the transformation of the soul, fought and won in us by the Spirit resulting in sanctification. Romans 6-8*

Having laid the foundation of the gospel of salvation for sinners with the four cornerstones of Justice, Sin, Atonement, and Grace in chapters 1-5, Paul now moves on to the sanctification of saints who have escaped from sin's penalty to show them the way of escape from sin's power... its former control that has been broken by Christ.

Each section begins with a (1) declaration of gospel truth, followed by a (2) question demonstrating a faulty understanding of that truth, followed by a (3) clarifying question, followed by an (4) illustration that brings the gospel application of the original truth to bear.

New Life Baptism Christ died for us that we be justified. We died with Christ to be sanctified. Romans 6:1-14

- 1) Declaration: 5:20 The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more.
- 2) Wrong Question: 6:1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?
- 3) Clarifying Question: 6:2 By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?
- 4) Illustration: Baptism...Risen to a New Life 6:3-14 Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, **we too may live a new life.**

New Lord Slavery Christ died to free us from sin's slavery so we can be slaves to righteousness. Romans 6:15-23

- 1) Declaration: 6:14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.
- 2) Wrong Question: 6:15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!
- 3) Clarifying Question: 6:16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey-- whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?
- 4) Illustration: Slavery to a New Lord 6:17-23 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. **You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.**

New Law Marriage We died to the old husband (law) in the dying Christ and now live to the new husband, the risen, ever-living Christ. Romans 7:1-12

- 1) Declaration: 7:1 Do you not know, brothers-- for I am speaking to men who know the law-- that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives?

- 2) Wrong Question: 7:7 What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? 7:13 Did that which is good, then, become death to me? (Is the law the problem?)
- 3) Clarification: 7:13 By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful. (The problem is not the external law, it is the internal sinful nature that rages against all restraint and is hostile to God and His righteous requirements. Romans 8:7)
- 4) Illustration: Marriage under a new law 7:4-6 So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

All three of these illustrations are pointing to the same reality. We are new creatures in Christ. He died for us to release us from sin's penalty resulting in justification. We died with Him to release us from sin's power resulting in sanctification. From first to last Paul is declaring that WE ARE NEW! We have a NEW LIFE being raised with Christ, we live under a NEW LORD serving in the new way, and we live under a NEW LAW, the Law of the Spirit, having been joined to our new husband, the risen, reigning Christ. NEW LIFE, NEW LORD, NEW LAW! Glory!

Having declared this glorious reality and illustrated it three ways, he now turns to another reality, the NEW STRUGGLE we face with indwelling sin, the remnant of the curse that still is operative within the old nature that is housed in the unredeemed body. Having exulted in the reality of "The New I", he now brings us face to face with "The Old Me" that must be put to death. It is crucified, and must be mortified. Thus, we who have a new life, a new Lord and a new law, find a new struggle that can only be fought in the realm and power of the Holy Spirit that Christ has given to us.

Romans 7:12-25 We know that the law is spiritual; but I (the old me) am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I (the new I) want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I (the new I) do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I (the new I) myself who do it, but it is sin (the old me) living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me (the old me), that is, in my sinful nature. For I (the new I) have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I (the new I) want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do-- this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I (the new I) who do it, but it is sin living in me (the old me) that does it. So I find this law at work: When I (the new I) want to do good, evil is right there with me (the old me). For in my inner being (the new me) I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in (the old me) 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. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God-- through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself (the new I) in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature (the old me) a slave to the law of sin.

When sinners come to Christ they often assume the battle is over and life will now be easy and free of conflict. How shocked they are to discover a new battle raging within, unceasingly, and with a vengeance and force never before known. In our lost condition, the old nature, unopposed, sought sin and enjoyed it, but not its bitter fruits. The only thing we hated about sin in our sinful natures was being caught, exposed, shamed or hurt by its consequences. Remove the bitter consequences and we'd choose sin every time, all the time. But now in Christ, we not only despise the consequences of sin, but we despise sin itself. This is the essence of genuine repentance... a complete change of mind about sin, self, and God. We are new in Christ. We have new desires and passions for holiness. But glorification is not yet our present possession. Our souls and bodies still bear the reality of the curse. The old nature within (the old me) is still as corrupt and rebellious as it was when we were lost. But as a believer, we have a new nature, that Paul emphatically states is the real us in the deepest sense... "I myself." In the most definite sense Paul declares we are really, actually, and substantively changed into new creatures in Christ. But the old nature, the "old me", remains, like a man crucified but not yet dead... as a man dying but not expired. Thus we see two laws described here. The law of sin and death from which we have been freed, and the law of the operating principle of the old nature that though crucified, still has passions and desires, without the essential power to act on them unless we yield, and offer ourselves to sin.

Paul's point is critical to understand. We really are "the new I." But "the old me" will remain rebelling and longing for the old lusts and must be, through Jesus Christ, conquered and put to death in the life-long new struggle to KNOW the truth of the gospel, COUNT on it to be true by preaching to ourselves daily, and OFFER ourselves as slaves to righteousness, seeking to make the next right decision as Christ's new creation, new slave, and new bride.

Self Check:

1. Am I struggling against sin, or simply making excuses, blame shifting, and minimizing the seriousness of sin?
2. Am I passionate about holiness, truth, righteousness, and honoring Christ in mind, motive, word and deed?
3. Am I quick to recognize temptation and discern sin before yielding, or only after having yielded to its wickedness and rebellion?
4. Do I hate all sin, or only those sins that bring me the most shame or pain or dishonor or hurt?

For Further Study:

Paul takes Romans 6-8, three entire chapters, and puts them all in a few verses in Galatians 5:13-25. As a matter of fact, the whole thing is neatly summarized in 5:16-18. *So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.*

Take the verses on the works of the sinful nature and the fruit of the Spirit and place them in two columns and think about the contrasts Paul sets up by way of comparison. They really do track together... love versus lust, fear based paganism versus joy.. etc. They are as widely separated as heaven is from hell.

Review Romans 8 and note how Paul demonstrated how “Jesus Christ gives us the victory” over sin’s penalty and its power. The illustrations of life, law, lord and struggle are explained in glorious terms as we see that we, as believers need the gospel just as much as unbelievers do. Salvation and sanctification are both found in the gospel of Christ. Don’t ever stop preaching the gospel to yourself!

"Lord God, You have given me the victory over sin, self, death and hell in Your blessed Son. He is my Lord. He is my Liberator. He is my Husband. He is my Victor. He is my Salvation. He is my Redeemer. He is my Righteousness. He is my Rescuer. He is my Restorer. He is my Master. He is my Savior. He is my Sovereign. He is my Desire. He is my Delight. He is my Hope. He is my Life. O Father, apart from Your Son I am wretched and worse. But in Your Son I am Your child, restored in Your image, and empowered to reflect Your glory by the Spirit of Your Son that You gave to live within me. Teach me to know this truth. Remind me to count it as true today in my present battle against sin. And teach me to offer myself moment by moment as Your love slave to be Your instrument for Your glory and the good of those You sent Your Son to save. I bless You that Your salvation is a complete salvation, and You will present me holy in spirit, soul and body on that great day. In the Name of Your Risen Son that gives me this victory I pray, Amen."

Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.

Living with leaving in view.... Jn 9:4 Ron & Val

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable, changed by The Immutable,
running after The Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows,
spending our time on eternity, owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts.
We are Pilgrims in Paradox. Welcome to THE JOURNEY.