

Providence Presbyterian Church
Men's Bible Study and Fellowship
October 30, 2008

Sanctification: Fighting, Flourishing, Finishing in the Christian Life

Knowing the Sin that Remains

Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. – Romans 7:16-25

Review

Sin and evil live on in us and it never ceases even being at its “worst” when we are at our best.

1/ Being aware of the pains and pleasures of sin

By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

-- Hebrews 11:24-26

What were the potential pleasures of sin for Moses?

What were the threatened pains for not sinning?

Look at Hebrews 12:4. Is there a limit to what the believer may endure in the striving with sin?

2/ Being aware of the territory and strategies of sin

The law of sin doesn't work on us from the outside. We carry it in us. It's not written law, simply directing us by decree. It is inbred – working, compelling, and urging us from the shadows of our hearts. Paul call it “sin living in me” (Romans 7:17)... - The Enemy Within, Kris Lundgaard

What else does Paul call it?

Look at Deuteronomy 30:6 and Jeremiah 31:31-33. What has God done to counteract this?

3/ The nagging problems of indwelling sin

- It won't leave you alone (Romans 7:17, 20).
- It won't give you a rest (Romans 7:18, 21; Galatians 5:17).
- It does what it does with seeming ease (Hebrews 12:1).

Some questions for reflection and discussion

1. Is a study like this helpful or necessary? If so, why?
2. What do you think is necessary to combat this enemy within?
3. Make a list of some of the rewards/pleasures offered by sin. What are some of the burdens and displeasures that the follower of Christ must endure and suffer?

Now, more about the battleground—the heart

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to fruit of his deeds. – Jeremiah 17:9-10

This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that the same event happens to all. Also, the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead. – Ecclesiastes 9:3

Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled but what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone. – Matthew 15:17

From the verses above, what do we learn about the condition and motions of the heart.

1\ A description of the heart

Look at Romans 10:10; Ephesians 1:18; 6:6; 2 Corinthians 9:7; 2:4 and Hebrews 4:12 and comment on some of the functions of the heart.

- the mind
- the will
- the affections
- the conscience

2\ The heart of a believer

- a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26)
- a new mind (Romans 7:25; 8:26; 1 Corinthians 2:16)
- new affections (Romans 7:18; 2 Corinthians 5:2; Hebrews 10:22)
- not yet finished (1 John 3:2; 1 Corinthians 13:9,12; Galatians 5:17)

3/ Encouragements and warnings concerning the heart

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood. – Hebrews 12:1-4

- Never think that the battle is over
- Consider King David
- Stay in the fight
- Consider Jesus
- Other exhortations – Matthew 26:41; Ephesians 6:10-20; Luke 12:15; 1 Corinthians 16:13

4\ Opening your heart to the Lord

We may not know our hearts very well, but the Lord does.

*Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!*

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. Do you think you know your heart? How have you been shown that you don't?
2. What are some ways that you can heed the warnings?
3. How do you think you might see Psalm 139 applied more in your life?