**"What to Do, What to Do?"**

**Psalm 119: 45** *I will walk in freedom, for I have devoted myself to your commandments.*

“Why do I do the things I do"?

Do you ever ask yourself that question?

We don't do what we intend to do, we end up doing things that we don't want to do at all.

In our passage this morning Paul shares God's Word, His plan to guide us in our struggle with sin.

God gave us these words through Paul in Romans chapter 7:14-25

*14 So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin.*

*15 I do not really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I do not do it. Instead, I do what I hate.*

*16 But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good.*

*17 So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.*

*18 And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I cannot.*

*19 I want to do what is good, but I do not. I do not want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.*

*20 But if I do what I do not want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.*

*21 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 Christ Jesus our Lord. So, you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God’s law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.*

This is more than the cry of one desperate man. It describes the experience of anyone struggling against sin or trying to please God by keeping rules and laws without God's Spirit’s help.

Paul has been emphasizing God's plan since the beginning of this letter, no one in the world is innocent; no one deserves to be saved not the pagan who does not know God’s laws, not the person who knows them and tries to keep them. All of us must depend totally on the work of Christ for our salvation. We cannot earn it by our good behavior.

We must never underestimate the power of sin. We must never attempt to fight it in our own strength.

Satan is a crafty tempter, and we have an amazing ability to make excuses. One of Satan’s greatest deceptions is to get us to think of sin as something good that an unpleasant God wants to deprive us of or that this isn't going to hurt anyone.

Instead of trying to overcome sin with human willpower, we must take hold of the tremendous power of Christ that is available to us.

This is God’s provision for victory over sin: He sends the Holy Spirit to live in us and give us power. And when we fall, He lovingly reaches out to help us up.

Paul shares three lessons that he learned in trying to deal with his sinful desires:

(1) (V 14-15) Knowledge of the rules is not the answer. Paul felt fine as long as he did not understand what the law required. When he learned the truth, he knew he was doomed.

(2) (V 18-19) Self-determination, struggling in one’s own strength does not succeed. Paul found himself sinning in ways that were not even attractive to him.

(3) (V 24-25) Becoming a Christian does not stamp out all sin and temptation from a person’s life. Being born again takes a moment of faithful surrender but becoming like Christ is a lifelong process.

Sometimes it could feel like a scene out of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Robert Louis Stevenson’s classic novella about right and wrong, joy and despair, the struggle of good and evil, natural man vs spiritual man.

Stevenson, was asked “Where did you get the model of your character of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde? He answered, "I found it in my own nature".

People hate their sin and love it at the same time. It really boils down to struggling with sin.

The battle between two selves. Anyone who has tried to do good is aware of this struggle. We never know how hard it is to stop sinning until we try. C. S. Lewis said it this way “No man knows how bad he is until he has tried to be good.”

In Romans 7:11 Paul talking about the law says, “*11 Sin took advantage of those commands* (Meaning the 10 Commandments) *and deceived me; it used the commands to kill me."*

Sin, when it wins the battle within us deceives us into thinking we have won, we have gotten away with something, pleasure without cost, but it deceives us.

In our text this morning, Paul talks about the law the 10 Commandments being good. But the law only shows us that we cannot possibly please God by trying to obey the commandments.

The Forbidden is always tempting!

We saw that with Adam and Eve. They could not stand that God said leave that tree alone. In the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3), the serpent deceived Eve by taking her focus off the freedom she had and putting it on the one restriction God had made.

We see it with kids “Do not touch”! “Do not go into that cookie jar!”

We see it with adults. Who can pass a “Wet paint” sign without having to touch it to see if the paint is still really wet?

Sin or struggling with sin can take something good and lovely and corrupt and pollute it.

There is a saying- “A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step”

So, what does God's Word say we need to do to conquer this battle that rages within us?

How do we have a change of allegiance?

The solution to the problem is faith in **Christ Jesus!**

Christ Jesus offers salvation He offers to give us victory and freedom in our lives as believers!

Salvation of Christ is 2-fold.

First is the Born-again experience. Accepting Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord, His redemption, His forgiveness, His justification, His regeneration, and our adoption into the family of God.

The second part is being filled with His Spirit. No one outside of the family of God can be filled with the Spirit of God. Which includes the Sanctified experience, Heart purity, and Holiness. Our sin nature taken and eradicated by our total surrender to Christ Jesus as Lord of our life.

We all need the in filling of the Spirit of God for the empowerment to live a free victorious life in Christ Jesus while we live in this fallen world.

You see where I am going with this? Christ has to do it. You cannot do this for yourself.

Illustration-

Close your eyes. Do not think of chocolate cake. Do not think of that delicious looking piece of cake. (Hard to do on your own, right?)

Jesus is the one that changes our allegiance.

We struggle with sin because more often than not we try to make this change in our own strength, and we fall short.

Some writers think Paul is schizophrenic. His dual nature.

“I don't understand what I do. For what I want to do, I don't do, but what I hate I do.”

Paul is telling us that the 10 commandments are good, but they cannot break the power of sin in our lives.

God's Word is telling us that there is a carnal side of us a fleshly self-destructive side that is in rebellion against the things of God.

There are consequences of us claiming to be in Christ Jesus but trying to live in our own strength.

**1.** when we attempt, that is what it is… a bad attempt to live by God’s standards on our own, we will find ourselves **inwardly torn**.

Our nature fights against the things of God.

The only way that decreases if we **allow** God to take control of our nature and replace it with His nature.

No matter how hard you try to do the right things, evil is right there, doing their best to take our focus away from Christ Jesus.

Here is what Christian singer Keith Greene says about this passage. “I don’t know if Paul is talking about his life before he is saved or his life after he is saved, all I know is that sounds like my life.”

**2.** The second consequence when we attempt to live by God’s standards in our own way is – we find ourselves **lacking the power to change.**

In our strength we fall short we may have good intentions, but we fall short.

Kind of like your New Year's resolutions abandoned by the end of January.

For the believer to stop doing what he or she does not want to do, we need to surrender control to Christ Jesus. As Paul writes in Romans 7: 18 *"And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I cannot."*

Pleasing God is not a matter of trying harder. It is a matter of having the Holy Spirit of God empower us.

The mission of the church is not to tell people to try harder to live better lives. The mission of the church is to share the gospel of the good news of Christ Jesus. Because Jesus is the only one who can liberate people from the power of sin.

**3.** The third consequence of our attempting to live by God’s standards in our own power is – **we will be miserable!**

To live without condemnation, but with the power of Christ only comes when we know who we are in Christ.

Romans 8: 1 – 2; *1 So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.*

*2 And because you belong to Him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.*

Satan “The accuser” torments Christians today.

As Jesus says, in John 10:10 *"The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life."*

For those who are in Christ Jesus there is victory and freedom! As Jesus said in John 8: 36 *So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.*

Paul writes in Romans 8: 12 – 14 *12 Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do.*

*13 For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.*

Dr. J. Vernon McGee a 20th Century Pastor, Theologian, and Bible Teacher wrote about the prodigal son; “Do you know the difference between the son in that pig pen and the pigs? The difference is that no pig has ever said to himself I will arise and go to my father. But the child of God can do that. God can change our thoughts, and our circumstances."

We have an obligation to live what we profess. We can only do that by the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Led by the Spirit we are the sons/daughter of God

We call Him Abba Father, Daddy

We are joint heirs with Christ Jesus

We will show in His glory (as children of God)

Our spirit will bear witness to His Spirit

The same Christ that was raised from the dead, will rise His followers to new life, that is His promise.

Maybe you’re here this morning, and your saying to yourself I am miserable after I do these things, I beat myself up and promise God that I won’t do it again, only to let God and myself down yet again.

I would like to close with this passage from

1 John 5: 4 – 5, *4 For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. 5 And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.*

Let us pray;

Father God, Christ Jesus

There is no greater feeling of liberty than to experience freedom from [sin](https://www.learnreligions.com/what-is-sin-700703) and death that you provided for us through [Christ](https://www.learnreligions.com/profile-of-jesus-christ-701089) Jesus. Today our hearts and our souls are free to praise you. For this, we are very [thankful](https://www.learnreligions.com/thanksgiving-bible-verses-701484).

On this Independence Day Sunday, we are reminded of all those who have sacrificed for our freedom, following the example of your [Son, Christ](https://www.learnreligions.com/origin-of-the-son-of-god-700710) Jesus.

Let us not take our freedoms, both physical and spiritual, for granted. May we always remember that a remarkably high price was paid for our freedom.

Lord, today, bless those who have served and continue to give their lives for our freedom. With favor and bounty, meet their needs and watch over their families.

Dear Father, we are so thankful for this nation. For all the sacrifices made to build and defend this country. Thank you for the opportunities and freedoms we have in the United States of America. Help us never to take these blessings for granted.

Help us to live our lives in a way that glorifies you, Lord. Give us the strength to be a blessing in someone's life today, and grant us the opportunity to lead others into the freedom that can only be found in [knowing Christ](https://www.learnreligions.com/how-to-become-a-christian-701019) Jesus as Savior and Lord.

In Jesus' name, I pray.

Amen.