

# “Not I, but sin”

By: Sylvia Pearce

This is a chapter from, (“The Treasures of Darkness.”)

“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”

(Romans 7:22&17)

It is obvious that the Christian cannot produce good, but it is not so obvious that the Christian cannot produce evil. Most Christians would say that the good I do is Christ, but the evil I do is my sinful flesh. If human flesh can produce evil of itself, then the implication is that flesh can produce good of itself! That is the subtle sin of self-righteousness. That is why this lie had be exposed. Paul discovers in Romans 7:17 that the evil he did was Satan disguised as him and operating in him. Satan had his hold on him, simply because Paul was deluded to think that he was the one who ought to have the power, and ought to overcome his coveting by self-effort.

Self-righteousness and Self-effort are his hidden sins.

I would like to reenact Paul’s agony in Romans 7:7-25. He opens by asking this all pervasive question, (I will paraphrase):

What is wrong with me? I can’t stop coveting other people’s possessions. I’m trying like all good Christians should, but I’m not getting anywhere. Why can’t I stop? What is wrong with me?

Is my problem God’s law? The more I try to keep it the more I fail and end up doing the opposite. Did

God give it to me just to torment me? Because the more I try to keep it, the more sinful I become. If the law wasn't there torturing me I would be much better off. Yet, I know better than that, the law is a picture of God's holiness. How can I blame God for giving us this standard?

God certainly used the law to break me in the beginning when I was first saved. It showed me how utterly hopeless and sinful I was without Christ. I consider it my best teacher. Could God be using it a second time to show me something else? Anyway, I can't blame the law, or God, for I am the one to blame, it is me that is unable to perform it. I love to keep the law, because I love to do what God wants me to do. Yes that is right, the law is not my problem for I know it is Holy, Just and Good. I am so frustrated, and then what is it?

Here I am again back to me--all roads end up here with me the guilty person, full of condemnation. But let me look deeper into myself and my motives. If I'm really honest with myself, I don't want to do the things that I end up doing--I even agree with the law that I shouldn't. For I know I should not covet, but how to have the power to stop is beyond me. There is a me that does not want to sin. Oh, then I see, that me must be right. Well then what is it, what is wrong with me? Please God tell me.

But wait a minute! Is there something, or someone else inside me using me, or should I say, misusing me? Now, I see it is not me producing my sins. It is sin (Satan) still dwelling in my flesh members. He is deceiving me to make me think that I am the one producing sin, when it is he disguised as me. What a deceiver! All this time he was talking to me in first person. He was telling me that I should try harder, and then accusing me for not being able to do it. He is a liar, and the Father of this lie.

Now I see, the human self cannot produce sins. I knew that I couldn't produce righteousness, but I thought I could produce sins. That is why I condemned

myself so much. That is a lie. If there is a possibility of me producing evil, then I have the ability to produce good. I know better than that, because that is self-righteousness. But thinking that I could do the evil is just as prideful.

This lie was set in motion because the law shouted at me to not covet, and self-sufficient-self, which is Satan, automatically operated in me trying hard not to covet. Now how can I stop trying when it is so easy? There I am again trying to stop trying. This is a real death! How do I get out of this? I'm trapped! Who can deliver me from this body of death? Oh, God please help me.

Wait a minute, "trying" is works, and I am a faith person. All I can do is leap into the person of Christ in me, and trust him to produce His righteousness as me. This "striving me," that tries so hard, died with Christ two thousand years ago. Yes, I am still alive, humanly speaking, but my life is not me living; it is Christ living in me. All I can do is live by faith and not even by my faith, but this I do by the faith of the Son of God.

As for Satan, he was defeated at the Cross and faith renders him powerless in me right now. The Cross is the power of God unto completed Salvation, and our word of faith is the powerful sword of the Spirit. My true identity is Christ as me and I no longer have a life of my own.

Now I see clearly that the one and only function of the Christian is to believe. Jesus himself said, "Of myself I can do nothing". Yet I think I tried to make myself greater than Jesus, by thinking that I could do good. What pride!

I am so thankful to my Savior for setting me free from this lie. I surrender my whole being to Him who raised me with Jesus two thousand years ago, and will now cause me to know this power of His resurrected life. I will agree with him that I am already raised with him no matter how I look, or how long it takes to appear. In this transformation I will not lift one finger to make this happen; as a matter of fact I am going to just

be myself, whatever that means. I've been so phony in my trying, that I wonder what I'm really like. It will be wonderful finding out. I can now accept myself as a right self.

To Paul, as well as us, the expectation for performance has always been the responsibility of the human self. Paul completely misunderstood how he functioned as a human receiver. He mistakenly thought that he was the producer of his own life, and ought to have the power to control himself. Operating in this lie causes us to do the very thing that we don't want to do, and traps us in the try and fail bondage of sin. This trap leaves us with an overwhelming sense of condemnation, failure, guilt and most of all self-hatred. We end up loving the Savior and hating the human he saved. Something is deadly wrong with this picture.

When Paul discovered it was ("not I, but sin") that dwelled in him, he was finally free, because his real problem was exposed. He finally rightly understood the human I. The human self cannot produce good or evil, for the human I is nothing but the neutral container that holds the content of the deity. Vessels are not producers of their own life, but simple receivers of the life of another. We humans are somewhat like a computer with wonderful capacities and faculties, but like the computer, we cannot operate without a programmer. We were wrongly programmed by Satan, and now through Christ, we are rightly programmed. The Bible definition of us is: vessels, branches, temples, slaves, wives, and bodies.

The good news was that Paul was not the wretch he thought--the sin in him was not him, it was Satan. Therefore he had the authority of faith to say, "get behind me Satan." By a leap of faith, Paul went back to the Cross, and put the sin-spirit that indwelt and operated him on Jesus. For Jesus became that sin-Satan at the Cross. Then in Christ's resurrection, righteousness, which is the life of Christ, was transferred back into Paul as if it were his life. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21).

Louis Tucker, a good friend of mine, asked me one time: "How do I get Christ who is in me, to express Himself out of me?" I simply answered, "Say it is already done." Say what God says about you, not what you think, or feel, or see. Say, "I am resurrected with him, and I am whole complete lacking nothing!" **DARE TO BE BOLD, AND SAY IT.** Later Louis wrote in a letter, "No longer do we have to stand on Jordan's stormy banks and cast a wishful eye into Canaan's fair land. Now we can get across."