

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mrs. Calvert, Mr. Dowling, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Kelly Hall, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Ms. Kim (Ashley Law's mother), Lamar Mathis, Ms. Cindy Newsome, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mrs. Sowder, Ms. Ward, Mr. Winns.
Out of Town: The Dowlings

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website: www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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“Sin That Dwells in Me”

By Derek Long

The phrase used in the title of our article occurs two times in Romans 7. Romans 7:17 says, “But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me” (NKJV). Romans 7:20 says, “Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me” (NKJV). What do these statements mean? What is Paul meaning when he speaks of sin dwelling in him?

Romans 7:13-25 is a passage of Scripture depicting a struggle faced by an individual. The individual desires to do what is right but finds himself not living up to the standard he wished to live by. The context appears to describe the struggle a person who tried to live by the Old Testament would face after he ends up sinning (Romans 7:1-12). Romans 8:1-4 would speak of how a person can be set free from the dominion of sin pictured in the end of chapter 7 in Christ. It is true a Christian still faces temptation and must resist sin (Galatians 5:16-17). However, in Christ a person can find forgiveness and escape the bondage to sin Romans 7:13-25 seems to depict.

The law clearly identified certain things as sinful (Romans 7:7). A person may desire to keep the law flawlessly but would end up failing. After one sinned, the law did not provide

an adequate means to completely remove the sin of the person until the sacrifice of Christ. As a result, the person continued to struggle against sin without being completely released from its bondage.

If one were to read Romans 7:17, 20 by themselves, it may be tempting to say Paul is trying to excuse himself for sinning. It may appear he is trying to say he cannot be held responsible for his sinful action because he really wanted to do what is right. The fault did not lie in Paul but in the fact sin dwelt in Paul. Is such a view an accurate picture or not? First, we need to recognize Paul is accepting responsibility for his actions in these verses. Romans 7:15-16, 19 says, "For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good ... For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice" (NKJV). Here Paul is admitting he does what he hates (vs. 15), he does what he wills not to do (vs. 16), and the evil he wills not to do he practices (vs. 19). Therefore, Paul is not seeking to excuse himself or not accept personal responsibility for his actions in the statements he makes in Romans 7:17, 20. Second, Paul is not saying he was without the ability to resist temptation to sin. 1 Corinthians 10:13 clearly states a person can resist any temptation which comes one's way. Paul was not without the ability to resist the temptations he describes for us in Romans 7:13-25.

Paul does say about himself in the condition he describes in Romans 7:13-25 that, "sin dwells in me." Anytime a person gives into sin for that moment at least what dwells in the individual is sin. Sin dwelling in a person does not mean a per-

son has lost their free will. For example, Galatians 2:20 speaks about Christ living in us. Yet the person who has Christ living in them does not mean they have lost their free will. Instead, Christ lives in them because they allow Christ to dominate and direct their life. Romans 8:9-11 speaks about the Spirit dwelling in us. The Holy Spirit dwelling in us does not remove our free will. The Holy Spirit dwells in us because we allow Him to dominate and direct our life through the instruction He gives in His word. If sin dwells in someone, it does not mean they have lost their free will. Rather, it simply indicates they are allowing sin to dominate and direct their life. In reality, we all have a choice to make as to whether to let sin dwell in us or allow God to dwell in us. God dwells in us when we follow His word. Sin dwells in us when we fail to follow God's word.

Jesus provides us a way of escape from bondage to sin (Romans 7:24-25). We do not have to remain under the dominion and influence of sin throughout our lives. We can have our sins forgiven. We can rise from the grave of baptism to walk in newness of life and become a slave of righteousness instead of a slave of sin (Romans 6). What a wonderful blessing it is to be set free from the dominion of sin! Will we do our part to make sure we do not walk in sin but rather be led by the Spirit (Romans 8:12-14) as we listen to and obey His teachings contained in the word of God?