

Romans part 23

Good morning, what a fantastic job Tim did last week in our series on the book of Romans, my body has a mind, it is a mind that worriers, gets angry, loves to think and wander into territory it shouldn't, and will replay memories and problems for hours.

My mind will fixate on the negative, it can get me upset about the craziest of things and it will go off before I can even begin to control it. I don't try to think negative or crazy, it just happens.

My mind can wear me out mentally, physically, and spiritually, I can't sleep, eat or get rest.

For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Romans 8:6

But, we do not have to live this way, we don't have to be trapped with this kind of thinking, I like to call it "stinkin-thinkin" when we are born again, God gives us access to an entirely new way of thinking, but it is not automatic!

We have a resource that we can use, but we have to draw on it daily, we have to make a choice to live a new way, it is not an automatic thing, we can go on thinking and reacting the same way everyone else does, or we can use the resources God gives us and change.

We love God, but our flesh still controls us.

So what I want to do today is take a look at how we can live and think differently.

I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.

²² For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. ²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

¹ There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. ¹⁰ And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus

from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

¹² Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. Romans 7:21 - 8:17

I cannot think of a better place in the bible that better describes the process of learning to think differently now that I am a child of God.

Please hear me; the problem with most of us who call ourselves Christians, is NOT that we do not believe, we do, we believe God and His word, but the problem is we have carried our old way of thinking into our new life, we somewhat know what the word says we can do but putting these into practice is another thing and that is what we are going to try to cover here today.

How do I change the way I think?

1. The Foundation of God.

For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. Galatians 5:17

So here is the dilemma, we have an obedient spirit, trapped inside a rebellious body! How did this happen?

To be born again, we must first do two things to receive a third.

a. We must repent.

This means that I not only acknowledge my sin, but it also means I turn away from it.

And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Galatians 5:24

All of our sin is rooted in three things, rebellion, selfishness and pride; all of our sin can be boiled down into those three roots.

When I repent, I am turning my back on those things and bowing my knee to God and His sovereign plan for my life; I choose Him and His plans...

b. I must believe.

If I did not believe in what God says about me, just understanding I am a sinner and lost would lead to despair, if I did not have a savior.

Jesus dying on the cross, fully God, fully man, He was God, the diety, in the flesh and therefore could pay for my sin. I must believe in my heart and speak it with my mouth...

c. I must receive.

Jesus death on the cross not only saves me from the penalty of my sin, but it spiritually cleans my body so the Holy Spirit can live within. I am literally a living temple and all the wisdom, power and goodness of heaven are constantly available for me, because, get this, God Himself, lives in me.

Now everything that Paul is teaching us in the book of Romans assumes that these realities have taken place in me. He is teaching born again people how to live a new life.

2. The problem.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17

When a person is born again, their spirit is made new and they want to please and serve God, their independence and old rebelliousness is gone, they want to serve God. BUT, we quickly learn that we are caught in the middle of a war. Our body is still full of temptations and old attitudes, we are still stubborn, hot headed and selfish...

There is this unseen force constantly whispering in our ear all these crazy stupid ideas and we are confused and frustrated...

3. The reason.

Why is this so? Because your spirit is renewed but NOT your body!

And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. Romans 8:10

Your body has been cleansed so that God's Spirit can live there;

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, Romans 8:3

And He will NOT leave when I sin, but our old bodies are not dead and they do not respect the new choices that we have made, they will try over and over to regain control and we have to forcibly subdue the body.

Now listen, when you try to stop the body you are going to learn that those temptations are stronger than your will to obey. You are going to fail over and over again.

If we do not grab ahold of what the word is trying to teach us, we will stay in a defeated condition.

O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Romans 7:24

4. The solution.

I am so glad that God did not leave us to fight this unwinnable war on our own, He gave us HIMSELF. Because His Spirit lives in each of us, He will never leave us and He is always with us, right there when we are at our weakest moments. As soon as I turn to Him and ask Him to lead me out of temptation or give us the wisdom we need He is there.

Remember, He will not force you to turn to Him, your flesh, your old way of thinking wants to lead you off, get you messed up again and take you where you do not want to go.

How? I deliberately turn my attention to Him; I get in the word, I worship, I call a friend AND I open my spiritual eyes and ears to see and hear what He is trying to tell me and show me. I wait until I know He is there and then I sense the change He is bringing and THEN, I have the power to make my body obey.

I may hear Him tell me what to do, I will sense the oppression lift and the strength returns and I get a sense of humor...

5. The process.

Learning to wait on God and set my mind on the Spirit, is a process that I learn, you will find what works best for you.

But, do not fight with your will or your strength, get in the habit of hearing, sensing, seeing what God is telling you to do...

But we have to deal with our flesh, we need to find a rhythm to live our life out of our spirit not out of our old way of thinking, so here is some ideas, you take these and then find your own rhythm,

- **Start your day.**

Some [people are night owls, when the kids are in bed, the dishes washed... you take the time to sit with the word and Jesus, you read and you think (meditate) on what you have read. Some people are morning people, they get their cup of coffee and sit with the word and Jesus... find your rhythm.

We have a reading plan, it is in our journals and it is on our website, I heard one guy who said, read until you are happy... I am discovering this works best for me, instead of reading for the distance, I read until I think Jesus has given me something and then journal and think about it and talk to God...

- **Come back.**

Change does not last very long if you do not tend it, care for it, things will happen and then I am right back into my old way of thinking and acting... what I do is constantly return to Him, in my thoughts, in my prayers, in my responding, I come back to Him, I make the choice to return to the Father...

I hear His voice, I have laid my thoughts (meditation) before Him and now I keep coming back, I learn to be patient in laying my plans and thoughts before Him, devine appointments then happen, difficult conversations happen with less volatility and I am learning to walk in the spirit.

- Entrust.

***You will keep him in perfect peace,
Whose mind is stayed on You,
Because he trusts in You. Isaiah 26:3***

Learn to put your cares in the hands of Jesus when you go to sleep, when you lay down, turn it all over to Him, if you don't have peace, read the word, tak to Him and then turn it over to Him....