

Me, Myself & I

The Struggle Within

1For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

¹⁵For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

¹⁶If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good.

¹⁷Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

¹⁸For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

¹⁹For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

²⁰Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

²¹I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

²²For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

²³But 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.

²⁴O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

²⁵I 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.² Romans 7:14-25

While very popular among the common people, Jesus constantly found himself challenged by those who had the most to lose by his increasing popularity. Among those were the Scribes, Pharisees, and the Sadducees. One day in an unsuccessful attempt at tripping Jesus up, one of the Sadducees, a lawyer, approached Jesus and said:

³⁶Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law?

³⁷ Jesus said unto him, **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.**

³⁸**This is the first and great commandment.**

³⁹**And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.** Matthew 22:36-39

I know what you're thinking, the fundamental question here is if loving my neighbor as my self is so important then who is my neighbor? Good question. And for those of you with that question, Jesus defines neighbor as anyone who has a need, friend or foe, in your neighborhood or anywhere else in the world. But

there is something even more basic here, more fundamental and even more critically important to our spiritual welfare than defining who our neighbor is, that must needs be addressed in this Scripture. For the identification of who my neighbor is for the sake of loving thy neighbor as thyself, presupposes that I have the capacity to first love myself. It is very difficult to love my neighbor when I don't like me.

One of the most serious problems facing humanity today is the growing concern over those who suffer from severe cases of depression. It is estimated that three out of every five people suffer from some form of depression and it is the leading cause of suicide worldwide. Now truthfully speaking there is enough mess going on in the world for all of us to feel a little depressed from time to time. The economy is still sagging, unemployment is still high, the middle east is still in turmoil, The White House is in constant chaos and has forgotten about the poor in our population, divorce, murder, rape and other violent crimes are getting out of control. It is a wonder that any of us has

any degree of sanity left. All of the previously mentioned social conditions are just symptoms of the fundamental problem. Too many people simply don't like themselves and because they don't, they don't care about anybody else.

Am I saying to you that all of these problems can be blamed on depression? No. Depression may be used by some as an excuse for their less than humane behavior, but depression is not the smoking gun. Depression is a chemical imbalance that can be treated. And while not liking one's self can be depressing it is not depression.

Well, if Depression is not the cause for what ill the world, then what is? Ethical ineptitude, Inner turmoil, Carnal mindedness, Moral deprivation, Spiritual wickedness, In a nut shell: Sin!

The struggle between good and evil has plagued every generation of man, from Adam down to me. It is a battle that, improperly equipped for, leads to the social ills that we previously described. Paul shares with us in today's scripture text his struggle with sin, its effect

on him and how he overcomes it. Let us for a moment look at Paul's battle and if you will, put yourself in Paul's shoes and see if you can identify with him. If you do, then know that there is hope for you, that you too can be victorious in your battle with **Me, My self & I.**

3For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

I however am a creature of flesh, . . .
— Rhm

but for me, I am carnal, a slave sold into the captivity of sin — Con
but I am unspiritual, sold to sin — Wey

15For that which I do I allow not:

. . . I know not — ASV
For that which I am working out I do not approve — Rhm
I do not understand my own actions — TCNT

for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

for I do not what I would, but what I hate — Con
For I am so far from habitually doing what I want to do that I find myself doing the very thing that I hate — TCNT
I do not act as I desire to act; on the contrary, I do what I detest — Mof
I do not act as I would, but I do what I loathe — Wey

16If then I do that which I would not,

But if I am always doing what I do not want to do — Wms
But if my will is against my deeds — Con
Now when I act against my wishes — Mof

I consent unto the law that *it is* good.

This means I agree that the Law is right — Mof

17Now then it is no more I that do it,

This being so, the action is no longer my own — TCNT

but sin that dwelleth in me.

but that of Sin which is within me — TCNT
it is sin, which has possession of me — Gspd
but it is sin which has its home in me — Mon
but sin which dominates me — Lam

18For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing:

Of this I am certain, that no principle

of good dwells in me, that is, in my natural self — Knox

I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned — Tay

for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

I can will, but I cannot do, what is right — Gspd
for the wish to do right is there but not the power — Wey
No matter which way I turn I can't make myself do right. I want to but I can't — Tay

19For the good that I would I do not:

I do not do the good things that I want to do — Gspd

but the evil which I would not, that I do.

but the evil which I do not intend to do, that I am ever practising—Mon

20Now if I do that I would not.

Now if my own will is against my deeds — Con
Well, if I act against my wishes—Mof

it is no more I that do it,

it is no more I myself who do them — Con
the action is no longer my own—TCNT
clearly it is no longer I who am the agent — NEB
it is not I that am acting — Gspd

but sin that dwelleth in me

it is sin, which has possession of me — Gspd
but sin which has its home in me — Mon
it must be the sinful principle that dwells in me — Knox

21I find then a law,

So this is my experience of the Law:
— Mof

that, when I would do good, evil is present with me
I desire to do what is right, but wrong is all that I can manage — Mof

When I want to do right, the wrong is always in my way — Wms

22For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

I love to do God's will so far as my new nature is concerned — Tay
My inner nature agrees with the divine law — Gspd
For in my inmost self all my sympathy is with the law of God — Wey

23But I see another law in my members,

but I see another power operating in my lower nature — Wms
But there is something else deep within me, in my lower nature — Tay

warring against the law of my mind,

waging war with the law of my will — Mon
in conflict with the law of my reason — Gspd
which wages war against the disposition of my conscience — Knox
battling against the principles which my reason dictates — Ber

and bringing me into captivity

which makes me a prisoner — Gspd
and so I am handed over as a captive — Knox

to the law of sin which is in my members.

to the power of sin which is operating
in my lower nature — Wms
to that disposition towards sin which
my lower self contains — Knox

²⁴O wretched man that I am!

Pitiable creature that I am — Knox
It is an agonizing situation — Phi

who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

who is to set me free from a nature
thus doomed to death — Knox
and who on earth can set me free from
the clutches of my own sinful na-
ture — Phi

Paul's struggle within himself is an excellent example of the struggle that goes on within each of us. It is hard to like one's self when he knows that his lower nature is constantly warring with his mind. It is for some a hopeless dilemma. When people get to the state of hopelessness that is when they are most dangerous to themselves and anybody else. Paul cries "**O wretched man that I am, who can deliver me from the body of this death?**" He clearly

expressed a depth of frustration that revealed someone very unhappy and enjoyed no inner peace. For the individual who has no relationship with Christ, this cry of wretchedness would be one of frustration, powerlessness, and hopelessness. One can be frustrated without becoming hopeless. One can even experience a sense of powerlessness without losing hope, but when one has no inner peace, he loses hope. The weight that frustration and powerlessness, and no peace brings to bear can be more than an unanchored man can handle. Paul had Christ! And having Christ enabled him to realize that no matter how bad he may have appeared to himself, he wasn't too bad for Christ.

²⁵I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I thank God [that He has now delivered me] through Jesus Christ our Lord — Con
Thank God, there is deliverance through Jesus Christ, our Lord! — TCNT
Thank God! it is done through Jesus Christ our Lord! — Gspd
God! to whom be thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord! — Wey
Nothing else than the grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord — Knox
Thank God — He has done it through our Lord Jesus Christ! — Beck
O thank God! — He will! through Jesus Christ, the Anointed One, our Lord! — Amp

So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of Sin.

So in my higher nature . . . in my lower nature . . . — Wms
So mentally I am a slave to God's law, but physically to the law of sin — Gspd
If I am left to myself, my conscience is at God's disposition, but my natural powers are at the disposition of sin — Knox
In a word then, I myself, subject to God's law as a rational being, am yet, in my unspiritual nature, a slave to the law of sin — NEB
So you see how it is: my new life tells me to do right, but the old nature that is still inside me loves to sin — Tay

Finally, let us put this in its proper perspective; the most prolific writer in the New Testament shares with us his most intimate portrait of his struggle with Me Myself & I. Paul is victorious not because of his heighten state of spirituality, not because of his power to choose between right and wrong, and not because of his strength of will, but simply because of Christ. His relationship with Jesus is what saved him. Not power, not might, not strength, just Jesus. He lets us know that the struggle doesn't go away. Paul says "I die daily". Everyday the battle is on. But when Jesus is your Peace, like Paul, you too can fight the good fight and keep the faith, with Christ you too can have abundant peace, that peace that passeth all understanding. With Jesus, you can be troubled on every side, but not distressed, perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed. With Christ you can win the inner struggle with ME, MYSELF & I.

Me, Myself & I



The Struggle Within

By W.E. Thrasher, Jr