TITLE: Natural Instincts

TEXT: Ro. 7:14-25; Jn. 3:2-6; Ro. 8:1-4; 1 Jn. 4:4;

2nd Co. 5:17; Jn. 15:3-4

INTRODUCTION: This morning I want to talk about natural instincts. Do you realize that each of us have them? Instincts that are natural to our nature?

I believe that in order for us to grow as a Christian, to become the men and women and children of God that God has called us to be, one thing that we must first do is take a look and see what instincts are natural to us by nature….Come to have a basic understanding of our humanity, our humanness. This will help us understand better why we do what we do and, why we often don’t do what we don’t.

EXAMPLE:

Two brothers wished very much to receive a generous inheritance from their grandfather. Both spent many, many hours tending to his every whim in order to gain his favor and have the inside track.

One day, the old man, a bit weary of the whole thing, asked them a question: “Is a child born well mannered and considerate, or is that something that must be taught?”

As chance would have it, each brother took opposite sides of the argument, hoping that would be the opinion of the grandfather. The two brothers began to argue and debate, and this went on for days, loudly and insistently.

Finally, their grandfather said: bring me proof to back up your argument. One year from today, I will give the larger inheritance to the one of you who can bring me positive proof to back up your point of view on this issue.”

One year later to the day, the two brothers returned. Both claimed to have proof. The first brother barked out this command: please bring my dear grandfather a cup of coffee.” To the amazement of the elderly gentleman, a cat wearing a tiny apron walked in from the kitchen carrying a steaming cup of coffee, a creamer, and sugar on a silver tray.

The cat was something else! This brother had trained his cat to walk on hind legs and balance the tray with the front paws. After placing the tray on the coffee table this cat bowed low and then stood at full attention!

The grandfather said: Never have I seen anything like that!”

The implication was obvious….If you can train a cat like that, then a person can be trained to behave respectfully. The grandfather was about to promise this grandson a huge inheritance.

Just wait a minute, Grandpa, protested the other brother, you have not given me my opportunity to present my proof.

This brother had been aware of the extraordinary cat his brother had trained and for months he was in deep despair fearing that he would lose his inheritance to a trained cat. What should he do? On this day he was ready. From his pocket he produced a small box and said, “In this box I have proof that one cannot change the way one is born.”

With a quick motion he placed the box on the floor, tapped on the top of the box, and opened the lid. Out popped one small mouse which scampered across the floor in front of the cat. The cat forgot all of his training, and still dressed in the small apron took out after the mouse in hot pursuit.

At the moment of crisis, natural instincts surfaced…the cat was not a trained butler. It was still a cat.

In order for the cat to truly change, what was really needed was not butler training, but a new nature…

The same is true with each of us… We cannot train ourselves to be who God wants us to be and do what God wants us to do, because many times, if not most of the time, that will be against our nature.

**Romans 7:14 -25 (NIV)**

**14We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.****15I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.****16And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.**

**17As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.****18I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.****19For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.****20Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.**

**21. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.****22For in my inner being I delight in God’s law;****23but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.****24What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?**

What is Paul taking about here? He is talking about natural instincts!

Particularly the natural instinct that we all have to sin.. To not do the good that we ought to do but to do the evil that we don’t want to do…

Paul here describes this human tendency as a law. **So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.**

What is Paul saying by calling this tendency to not do the good that we know we should but instead do the bad which we know that we shouldn’t, a law?

The word Paul uses for law here is:

***nom'-os***

**(*regulation*), (a *principle*):—law.**

What kind of law, what kind of principle, what kind of regulation is Scripture referring to here? A law of what?

It is the law, the principle of nature! It is the law of human nature!

He is talking about natural human instinct….

How many of you this morning have ever felt just like this?

**15I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.**

**------ For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.**

**So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.**

Have you ever heard the old saying: you can’t teach an old dog new tricks?

And even if you can the old dog is still going to be an old dog when you get done..

Even if very well trained, a dog is going to ultimately remain true to its nature…

Our dog, Scotty, we can give him some of the best dog food around, say Blue Buffalo at 35.00 for a 16 lb. bag, yet when he is outside and there is something disgusting on the ground he will go over and chow down like he has never eaten before!

Why? Because that is what is within his nature!

I have seen some very well behaved dogs that have been very well trained ( I am not speaking of my own)…..But what happens when a strange cat gets too close… The dog will suddenly remember that it is a dog and chases the cat..

We often find ourselves not doing the good that we want to do but end up doing the bad things that we don’t want to do simply because that is what is in our nature..

We are sinners! We have a nature that is prone to sin! Sin has become a natural instinct for homo-sapiens-- For human beings…

And no amount of training, in and of itself, will subdue our human nature, subdue our natural instincts.

We cannot train ourselves to always do the good that we know that we ought to do. All too often we will end up doing the bad that we know that we shouldn’t do..

This can be Frustrating can’t it?

Paul expresses a great deal of frustration with this dilemma of human nature..

**21. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; 23but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. 24What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?**

Paul found that it was a natural instinct for him, not to do the good that he wanted to do but it was more natural for him to do the bad that he didn’t want to do

So his frustration culminates….

**24What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?**

But Paul doesn’t leave it there, does he?

He goes on to answer his own question..

**24What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?**

**Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

**So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin**

What was Paul telling us here? What is the answer to our problem?

More Church? More Sunday School? More religious training? More fellowship?

These things are all important! These things are all imperative in our Christian growth, but they will mean little to nothing if they are not first preceded by a change in our human nature.

There was a man in Jesus day who was a pretty religious man. He knew the Law of Moses inside and out. He, himself was a teacher of the law to the people. His name was Nicodemus.

Nicodemus was a Godly man by the standard of his world.

I believe he truly desired to live a life pleasing to God. I believe that he was sincere in his faith. I believe that it was that sincerity that brought him to Jesus.

**John 3:1 - 3 (NIV) 1Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.”**

**3In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”**

Notice anything unusual here? Jesus answers a question that He was never asked…

Nicodemus never asked Jesus how one could enter the Kingdom of God…

Nicodemus never asked the question but that was the question that was on Nicodemus heart..

Jesus read what was on the heart of Nicodemus and answered the question before Nicodemus got around to verbally asking it!

Jesus cut right to the heart of the matter.

**“I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”**

What was Jesus talking about?

Jesus was talking about the need for a new nature..

One that would have a new set of natural instincts..

Instincts that would be natural to that new nature..

**“I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”**

**John 3:4 - 6 (NIV)**

**4“How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!”**

**5Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.****6Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.**

If religious training in and of itself could do it, Nicodemus would have been OK..He was a very religiously trained man.

He knew all the right stuff. But there was evidently something that all of his religious training and knowledge couldn’t provide him with--- and that was the ability to actually live a Godly life.

Jesus said that flesh gives birth to flesh..

Example: things beget things of their own kind. Dogs beget dogs, cats beget cats, human beings beget human beings—sinful human beings beget sinful human beings..

It is in the very nature of a sinful human being to sin. We can’t help it. Sin is in our nature. Sin has become a natural instinct to us. Our natural instinct is to often not do the good that we know that we should but do the bad that we know that we shouldn’t..

That is why Jesus said we must be born again if we are to enter the Kingdom of God..

We must receive a new nature.. A nature where sin is not a natural instinct. Something that we have to obey…

**6Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.**

So let’s get back to Paul’s discourse on the subject….

**15I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.**

**18I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. for I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.**

**24What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?**

**Ro. 7:25 Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

**So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin ….**

Then Paul keeps right on going on the subject in Chapter 8…..

**Romans 8:1 - 4 (NIV)**

**1Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,****2because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.****3For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,****4in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.**

What has Paul just revealed to us here?

How we can actually live our lives doing the good that we want to do and not doing the bad that we don’t!

**2because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. 3For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,4in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.**

Jesus said: **6Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.**

The natural instinct of our flesh is to not do the good that we know that we should do..

The natural instinct of the Spirit is to obey God! It is to do the good that we know that we should…

So, Jesus told Nicodemus you must be born again!

You must be born of the Spirit!

Flesh gives birth to flesh to do what the flesh desires, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit to enable us to do what the spirit desires…

The law of the Spirit of life that sets us free from the law of sin and death, the law of our human nature, the law of our natural human instincts, is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that we receive the moment that we accept Jesus as the Lord and Savior of our life!

**And so (God) condemned sin in sinful man!**

*Greek word for condemned is:* ***kat-ak-ree'-no***

**to *judge* *against*, that is, *sentence:*—condemn, damn.**

When we apply the shed blood of Jesus Christ to our life by accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior God judges our sin within us. And through the applied blood of Jesus that judgment is NOT GUILTY!

**And so He (God) condemned sin in sinful man!**

**4in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.**

Once we have received the Holy Spirit of God into our life then we have the hope of doing what was impossible for us to do before, and that is living up to the righteous requirements of Gods law!

We can actually do the good that we want to do and not do the bad that we don’t…

The potential to live Godly, righteous lives that are free from sin, free from the restrictions of our human nature has become possible…

Possible but not guaranteed…

This is a wonderful promise of scripture but the promise is conditional….

**And so He condemned sin in sinful man**

**4in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.**

Once we accept Christ into our life that doesn’t guarantee us a sinless life free from the bondage of our natural instincts….But It does guarantee us the potential of living a sinless life free from the bondage of our natural human instincts…

God has given us a new nature to reside in the same tent as our old nature but we still retain the choice of what nature we will choose to obey…

But the good news is--we have a choice that we didn’t have before. The very nature of Jesus Christ and the instincts that are natural to Him now reside within us…

And not only reside within us but are of greater power than our own sinful nature. He can actually subdue our own sinful nature if we but allow Him to do so..

**I Jn 4:4 (KJV) becauseG3754 greaterG3187 is he that is in you, thanG2228he that is in the worldG2889.**

It all comes down to abiding. Abiding with Christ..

**2 Cor. 5:17 Therfore if anyone is IN CHRIST he is a new creation, the old has gone the new has come!**

In Christ means to abide!

**John 15:3 -4 (NKJV) 4Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.**

If we are to bear fruit for God, the fruit of a righteous life we must abide in Jesus…

He abides in us and we must make the choice of abiding in Him..

The Greek for Abide=

***men'-o***

**A primary verb; to *stay* (in a given place, state,:—abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand.**

Abiding is staying in a given place and that given place that we are to stay is in Jesus…

I heard someone once say how people who have been married for a long time get so close that they start to even look alike. They start having the same kinds of expressions on their faces.

I didn't think that this could be true. Then I started to look around, and it really is true. I have witnessed some married couples who not only start to have the same characteristics, but they get so they know what the other person is going to say before they say it! It is like they are operating with the same brain…

Have you ever considered why that happens?

Well, that's because people have abided with one another, and they begin to be like one another.

It's the same way with abiding with Christ. As we abide with Christ we will become more and more Christ-like. We will begin to take on the characteristics of Christ as we abide in him.

And when we do it will start to transcend our human natural instincts.. We will start to manifest the instincts of the one we are abiding with..

And if that one we are abiding with is Christ then it will be His instincts that we will start to manifest in our life..

And that is what Paul is talking about when he says that **the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.**

This morning do you have the desire to actually do the good that you want to do and not do the bad that you don’t?

Are you abiding with Christ? Are you growing so close to Him that He is starting to rub off on you?

The more we abide with Jesus the more of Him people will see in us!

Are you truly abiding with Christ?