TITLE: The Struggle Within

Scriptures:: Romans 7:14-24; Romans 8:1-11

 This morning I want to talk about the struggle that lies within!

 The struggle that often lies within the heart of man.

 Example: One summer we took our granddaughters to see the movie Hulk that was based on old TV series…David Brenner had this incredible struggle within himself whenever he got angry…Often he would try to stop it but when he became angry he just couldn't control himself and the beast inside would come out and he would go through a metamorphosis that would change him from a nice quiet guy into an ugly green monster that was capable of doing all kinds of things that the nice quiet guy wouldn't do.

  Well, there is a little hulk in all of us! All of us also have the capacity to be transformed from the nice quiet person that we are into a horrific green monster.

 Do things that normally we would never do! Say things that we would normally never say! Sometimes even surprise ourselves by what we end up doing or saying.

 How many of you would agree with me, from what we know about the Apostle Paul from Scripture that he was a pretty righteous man?

 Paul was 110% sold out to God! He was 110% committed to Jesus Christ! If any Christian has ever come close to sanctification while yet in this life Paul was the man!

 I want to go to a portion of Scripture that this powerful man of God wrote concerning himself…

**Rom. 7:14 through Rom. 8:11 (NIV)
We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.**

**I 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.**

**For 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. Now 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.**

**So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but 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. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?**

Be honest---have you ever experienced this dilemma in your life?

**I 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.**

**For 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.**

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

 I wouldn't be surprised if this is where they came up with the plot for the old TV series and movie the Incredible Hulk!

 In the movie Hulk, it all started with a laboratory experiment that blew up in a man named David Brenner’s face and the little green monster that lies within was born.

 But in reality, for us it began clear back in the Garden of Eden when an experiment blew up in the face of  the first man and woman. Created in the image and likeness and glory of God, created a perfect creation, they experimented with sin and it blew up in their face and the little green monster within was born.

A sinful nature. A nature that would forever-more be prone to sin.

 Since each creature begets creatures of its own kind, dogs beget dogs, cats beget cats, human beings beget human beings, and sinful human beings beget sinful human beings.

 From Adam and Eve the seed of sin was passed on to the entire human race.

 All of us have this beast that lives within us ready to come out at the slightest provocation!

 So, we too often find ourselves facing this struggle that lies within…

**I 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.**

**For 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.**

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

Example: At a men’s meeting one time one of the guys shared how that week he got cut off in traffic and found himself saying something that he normally wouldn't say.

And then thought, where did that come from?

 Ever been there? Ever had that happen? Someone does something that you perceive as stupid, something that has the potential to harm you or mess up your day, or inconvenience you in some way and you lash out and say or do something that you normally wouldn't say or do and as soon as you say or do it you think or say to yourself, where did that come from?

 The answer to that question is quite simple! It came from our sinful nature.

 When our pride is wounded or our self-attacked the little green monster within can come out and we find ourselves not doing the good that we want to do, but instead doing the bad that we don’t want to do and it causes a struggle within that leaves us disappointed in ourselves when it happens.

 We too can find ourselves feeling like Paul did when he cried out **What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?**

Now if Scripture would leave off right here, we would be left in a miserable state without hope.

 But Paul doesn't leave it off here but goes on to answer the question that he has just raised.

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

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

 Who will rescue me from this body of death---Thanks be to God---through Christ Jesus my 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.**

Paul here defines the battleground. The battle is found between the mind and the flesh.

**Mind: nous**

***nooce***

**the *intellect*, that is, *mind*; in thought, feeling, or will); by implication:—mind, understanding.**

A form of  the word , *psoo-khay'*

 *breath*, or (by implication) *spirit*, abstractly or concretely, the rational and immortal *soul*;

  Mind and heart are synonymous in Greek thought.

 It is a word that speaks of the innermost part of man!

 The seat of our thoughts, emotions and will!

**Flesh: sarx**

***flesh* (as *stripped* of the skin), that is,
(strictly) the *meat* of an animal, or (by extension) the *body* (as opposed to the soul (or spirit)**

 What Paul is in essence saying here is that in my mind, in my spirit, my soul I desire to en-slave myself to God and Gods law but in my body, my flesh,  I am a slave to my sinful nature that wants to sin, so I must choose to live according to what my spirit desires and not live according what my sinful nature desires and through Christ Jesus I can do just that.

Then Paul tells us the practical application of this truth.

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

**Romans 8**

**Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For 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, in 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.**

**Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.**

**You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.**

**Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.**

 **therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!**

The word for condemnation that is used here in the Greek is:

***kat-ak'-ree-mah***

**an *adverse* *sentence* (the verdict):—condemnation.**

Come from its root..

***kat-ak-ree'-no***

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

 What this verse is telling us is that if we are in Christ Jesus there is no judgment of condemnation against us.

 And if there is no judgment of condemnation against us then our conscious will be clear before God.

 If our conscious is clear before God then we will not experience things such as guilt and shame.

 But this is a conditional promise of Scripture.

 Before this promise will become a reality in our life we mush meet the condition of placing ourselves “In Christ Jesus!”

**Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!**

 The term “in Christ Jesus” in Greek is:  En Christos Ieôsous!

Christos= anointed one.

Ieôsous comes from the Hebrew word that

means Jehovah saves.

 Christos Ieôsous, Christ Jesus is the anointed one who saves!

The promise of no condemnation is for those who have placed themselves “IN” Him!

 "In" in Greek is a preposition that means to take up a fixed position! It was often used in a military sense. Take the hill and hold it at all cost! No retreat, no withdrawal! Hold it whatever the cost.

  To place oneself in Christ Jesus is to take up a fixed position in Jesus Christ.  Hold on to him at all cost! No withdrawal, No retreat! Hold that position whatever the cost.

 Do you understand that placing oneself “In Christ” is not a completed work at salvation? When we ask Jesus into our heart it doesn't necessarily place us “in Christ” forever but our inviting Jesus into our heart as Lord and Savior of our life is what makes our taking up a fixed position in Christ possible.

  As a believer we can be in Christ one moment and we still have the free will to step outside of Christ the next depending on the choices that we make.

 Placing oneself in Christ is synonymous with Lordship!

 Lordship is defined by advocating control of one’s life to someone else! In this case advocating control of one’s life to Jesus!

 To do the good I want to do and not do the bad that I don’t want to do will require me to take up a fixed position in Christ! Surrender control of my will to Him! Allow Him to lead as I surrender my will to Him and follow His leading.

EXAMPLE:  Jesus has told us what His will for our life is in the Word of God. God’s word says that as a Christian, as a Christ-like one we are to love our enemies. If we don’t obey that command, then we step outside of the will of Christ. Christ says that as a Christian that we are to forgive others just as we have been forgiven by God! If we don’t forgive just as we have been forgiven, then we have stepped outside of Christ will for our life.

 Whenever we place ourselves outside of the will of God, we are not allowing Christ Lordship of our life and we are, for that moment anyway, taking ourselves outside of Christ and placing ourselves in a place of condemnation.

A place where we will feel guilt and shame and the heavy hand of God’s conviction!

 Does that mean that we have lost our salvation? No, It simply means that we have placed ourselves outside of the promise of not feeling condemnation.

  But even if our salvation remains intact we will be miserable in that state of disobedience to God that we have placed ourselves in by stepping outside of Christ will for our life!

**Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life**(the Holy Spirit)**set me free from the law of sin and death.**

**For 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**( He judged sin)**in sinful man,**( and in and through Christ that judgment is -not guilty) **in 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.**

Living according to the spirit is not hard to understand.

 It is as simple as asking our-self, what would Jesus do in a given situation and then doing it.

 Would Jesus not forgive what this man has done to me if the man had done it to Jesus?  This is a no brainer! Just reflect upon the cross! As Jesus is hanging there looking out upon the crowd, many of whom were the ones who had earlier cried out crucify Him, Crucify Him, ---tilts His head toward Heaven and with some of His dying breath cries out to His Father--- Father forgive them because they don’t know what they do!

 Joseph Damien was a nineteenth-century missionary who ministered to people with leprosy on one of the Hawaiian Islands. Those suffering with leprosy grew to love him and revered the sacrificial life he lived before them.

   One morning before Damien was to lead daily worship, he was pouring some hot water into a cup when the water swirled out and fell onto his bare foot. It took him a moment to realize that he had not felt any sensation. Gripped by the sudden fear of what this could mean, he poured more hot water on the same spot. No feeling whatsoever.

   Damien immediately knew what had happened. As he walked tearfully to deliver his sermon, no one at first noticed the difference in his opening line. He normally began every sermon with, "My fellow believers." But that morning he began with, "My fellow lepers."

   In a greater measure Jesus came into this world knowing what it would cost him. He bore in his pure being the marks of evil; he bore our sins that we might be made pure. Jesus said in (John 18:37).**"For this I came into the world,"**

 Folks, we live according to the Spirit by obeying what the Spirit of Christ within us directs us to do!

 Notice the promise for all those who live according to the Spirit and do what the Spirit desires!

**the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us!**

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

 We can live a sanctified life in Christ.

 We can live a life that is free from the feelings of guilt and condemnation that sin brings!

  Ludwig Nommensen, a pioneer missionary to the Batak people of Indonesia, spent two years living with them and studying their traditions.

  At the end of that time, the chief asked him if the Christian faith differed from Batak traditions.  "We, too, have laws that say we must not steal, nor take our neighbor's wife, nor bear false witness," the chief said.

   The missionary answered, "My Master gives the power to keep His laws."

   The chief was startled.  "Can you teach my people that?"

   "God can give them that power if they ask for it and listen to His word."  So for six months Nommensen taught the Batak people about the power of God.  At the end of that time the chief said, "Stay, your law is better than ours.  Ours tells us what we ought to do.  Your God says, 'Come, I will walk with you and give you strength to do the good thing.'"

 This morning have you discovered the strength to do the good thing?

Has the struggle that lies within your heart truly been put at rest or does that little green monster still raise its ugly head at times?

           Saint Athanasius in speaking about Jesus said: He became what we are that He might make us what He is.

 Through total and complete surrender of our life and our will to Christ are we allowing Him to make us what He is?

 Are we living our life, not doing the bad that we don’t want to do but are we living our life doing the good that we know that we should?

 Are we living our life “In Christ Jesus”?

 Have we placed and are we continuing to place ourself in Him?

 Have we taken up a fixed position in Jesus this morning?

This is the only way to put an end to the struggle that lies within!