

Title: In Me, In My Flesh  
Text: Rom 7: 18  
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**Romans 7: 18: For 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.**

The apostle Paul is writing under the direct power of God the Holy Spirit. That which Paul wrote here is of God. It is God speaking through his messenger.

2 Corinthians 5:20: Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us:

God is using Paul to declare how the law is good in that God blesses it to declare us guilty.

Romans 7: 16: If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. 17: Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

What does God mean when he makes Paul say that it is no more Paul that does it, but sin that dwells in him?

As God moved Paul to write that “*no good thing dwelled in him*”, God moved him to restrict and qualify what he meant. He said, “*that is in my flesh*”. It means in that part of him which is born of flesh of Adam dwells no good thing, only sin.

Paul is a regenerated believer or else he would not have known this about himself. Therefore, what God declares here through Paul is true of every regenerated believer, “*In our flesh dwells no good thing.*”

But why this qualification?

Here is the point of the text. The reason Paul qualified that it was in our flesh that no good thing dwells is because in the regenerated believer there is an inward man which is the creation of Christ and everything God creates is good.

Understand, this distinction is not to encourage men to look to the new man within us. We look only to Christ. But it is to make certain we do not deny the glory of God or the work of Christ or the Spirit of God who is creates a new man in righteousness and holiness within the believer.

My outline is very simple: 1) In our flesh dwells no good thing 2) In order for us to know this, God must create a new inward man within us 3) God made Paul qualify his statement because that which Christ creates is good like Christ.

## **IN OUR FLESH IS NO GOOD THING**

Understand that in every believer (that is in our flesh) dwells no good thing. The flesh is the natural part of the believer which is born of Adam.

In the context, the flesh is not that part of the believer which has a new will to obey God—**v18:...for to will is present with me.** No natural man has a will to serve God. We do not have a will until Christ makes us willing in the day of his power. This he does in the new man.

“The flesh” is that natural-born corrupt nature in the believer in which sin dwells—**v20: Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.**

“The flesh” is that part in the believer in which evil dwells—**v21: I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.**

“The flesh” is not the part of the believer that delights in the law of God—**v22: For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.**

“The flesh” is “*my members*” in which sin is always actively opposing the mind of Christ given to us in the inward man—**v23: 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.**

“The flesh” is called a “the body of death.”—**v24: O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?**

The conclusion is that Christ must deliver me—by his work on the cross as well as *by renewing the inward man day by day*. **v25: I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.** So then there is a difference and distinction between the inward man and the flesh—**v25...So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.**

This is why God made Paul distinguish between the flesh, and the new spirit put in us by the Holy Spirit of God. Every child Adam conceives is only corrupt flesh. Scripture says,

Concerning the fleshly mind?—*Ephesians 4: 18: Having the understanding darkened...*

Concerning fleshly knowledge?—*1 Corinthians 2:14: The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

Concerning the fleshly heart of stone?—*Ecclesiastes 9:3: The heart of the sons of men is full of evil.*

Concerning love toward God?—*Romans 8:7: The carnal mind is enmity against God.*

Concerning fleshly ability to believe?—*John 12:39: They could not believe.*

Concerning fleshly power to acknowledge Christ?—*1 Corinthians 12:3: No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.*

Not only does the flesh not cooperate with God the Holy, the flesh opposes the Spirit of God with constant active resistance *Galatians 5:17: For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other:—*

So get this point. In our flesh dwells nothing good: not life, not a spark of spiritual life, not faith, not repentance, not love, nor any of fruit of the Spirit. It will always be so until the flesh returns to the dust, even in the believer. God does not put anything in our flesh. God does not use the fleshly man in us at all. God does not amend it or erect something from it. So if we were left in the flesh, with nothing but a fleshly man, we would never and could never believe on Christ, though every man is responsible and without excuse for not doing so.

**A NEW MAN MUST BE CREATED**

**Romans 7: 18: For 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.**

In order for us to know that in our flesh is nothing good, a new inward man must be created in us by God. The apostle Paul could never make this statement unless he was born of God.

1 Corinthians 2: 14: For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. 15: But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16: For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

God made the apostle Paul clearly state that God had put a new spirit in him and as well as in all who are born of God.

Romans 7: 5: For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 6: But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

The same power of God that spoke creation into existence from nothing speaks the new spiritual creation into existence within his child.

2 Corinthians 4: 6: For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Be sure to get this. Until this work is performed we will plead that our flesh is used in some way. Until a new spirit is put in us by God we will claim that there is a will for God in our flesh or a spark of life in our flesh. Until renewed in knowledge after the image of God in the new man a sinner will argue that God reforms or renews our flesh or that God creates fruit in our flesh. Until born and created anew by God, we will deny this necessary work of Christ while claiming we do so for God's glory like the Pharisee's crucified Christ crying glory to God. The Lord Jesus said, "*the flesh profiteth nothing.*" But we must be quickened in spirit by Christ to know that! (Jn 6: 63)

## **CHRIST'S CREATION IS GOOD**

**Romans 7: 18: For 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.**

God made this distinction through Paul because everything Christ creates in the new creation is very good. Be sure to remember: this new man is by Christ through God the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 65: 17: For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18: But be ye glad and rejoice for ever *in that* which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19: And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

This is the work of regeneration. The apostle calls this *a good work* begun in us, "*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*" (Phil. 1:6).

God is good AND from God comes every good and perfect gift. And God is the Creator of this creation called the new man within us.

Isaiah 43: 7: *Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.*

Colossians 3: 10:...the new *man*, is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

When God created the first creation, scripture says,

Genesis 1:31: And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good.

Likewise, the new creation, including the inward man made by God in the new birth, is also very good because it is entirely of God.

The new creation is by the word of God. God says *“Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth.”* (Jam. 1:18). *“The word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.”* (1 Jn 2: 14) Is the word of God good? Of course! And the word of God creates the new man and abides in the believer in the new man!

The Spirit of God himself abides in the inward man. Christ is formed in the new man. Is God our Savior very good! Of course! He abides in the new man. (Col 1: 27; Gal 4: 19) *“The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you.”* (1 Jn 2: 27) Is God’s anointing good? Of course!

The effectual work of God within his child is always good. David asked God, *“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”* (Ps 51: 10) A clean heart and right spirit is of God and it is good.

In the new heart God creates faith, hope and love. *“love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.”* (1 Jn 4: 7) God gives *“Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.”* God said, *“I will put my fear in their hearts* (Jer. 33:40). This things are of God and they are very good.

New desires, new affections, a new motive—*is in the new heart*—created of God.

2 Corinthians 5: 14: the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge,...

There is only spiritual discernment in the spirit given by God. It is good work of God because we discern this:

2 Corinthians 5: 14:... that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

Only in the new man do we glorify Christ giving God all the glory for righteousness, redemption, forgiveness, adoption and all things. This is good fruit produced in the new spirit by the Spirit of God. No believer would ever call this new creation made by Christ’s hand *“no good thing.”* Due to this new creation, in the inward man the old fleshly, sinful ways of knowing men is passed away nor does the believer even know men with our flesh anymore. This knowing is in our new man,

2 Corinthians 5: 16: Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. 17: Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

This work in us is performed in us because Christ justified his people and reconciled us to God on the cross. It is *“the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.”* (Ti 3: 5)

Romans 5: 19: For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous...21: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

So because all God’s elect were in Christ when he died and rose again, the Holy Spirit enters us in time and creates a new man through Christ’s justifying work. The Spirit of God has made us *“put on the new man.”* (Col 3: 10) It is only in the new man that we are made to behold we were in Christ when he redeemed us, it is only in the new man that we know no man after the flesh, it is only in the new man that Christ is now all so that these old things have passed away and this has become new, *“Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.”* (Col 3: 11)

Christ said, *“make the tree good and his fruit will be good....A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.”* (Mt 12: 33, 35)

Some have charged me with preaching self-righteousness by preaching these scriptures. Is Christ self-righteous for saying what he said? No, self-righteousness is making yourself righteous or holy by your self! Self-righteousness is saying the believer only has sinful flesh in which he believes God. This new heart and its fruit is produced by the *“sanctification of the Spirit, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”* (1 Cor. 6:11). But to deny the work of the Holy Spirit through the blood and righteousness of Christ is to blaspheme the Holy Ghost.

Yet, the apostle speaks of some that had *“a form of godliness,”* that is, the outward form, but *“deny the power”* (2 Tim. 3:5); that is, the inward power which creates and works in the new heart. This power is not external in form or in the flesh or by our works, this is all only in the new man created of God.

For us who have partaken of this first resurrection, one day our bodies, too, shall be quickened and resurrected. Then we shall be perfectly righteous and holy inside and out. We will not be self-righteous when we are perfectly conformed to Christ’s image. There is not now any self-righteousness in the new man God has created within us.

Notice this, the new birth is called the first resurrection. And we get a hint of how the new man is created by looking at how God says our bodies shall be raised in the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15: 42...it is raised in incorruption: 43...it is raised in glory:...it is raised in power:

Our new man born of incorruptible seed is incorruptible just as our bodies will be in the resurrection. The new man is raised in glory by Christ. It is raised in power by the same power by which Christ was raised from the dead. This work is entirely the handywork of God.

2 Corinthians 3:3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

1 Peter 3:4...the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

This pulpit was made by Adam. Scott and Christine stained it. I am standing in it and preaching from it. But when I speak of how well it is made and how beautiful it is, I am not bragging on myself or the pulpit itself. I am boasting in those three who made it. Likewise, when we speak of the new man within us, we are not bragging on ourselves. We are boasting and glorying in our triune God who made it. We are his workmanship.

So God says through Paul that in our flesh there is no good thing. The flesh in the believer produces nothing but sin. But the distinction is made because whatever is created within by our triune God in Christ can only be good. That is why Paul said, "*I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.*"

Romans 2: 28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

**Amen!**