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Here's Hope

By Rev. Jerry Rea

A War Within

In Romans 7 Paul is very transparent about the war within himself. He mentions two “laws” that struggle. He knows what to do, but he finds himself (often) not able to do it. Have you ever been there? Knowing to do right you find yourself drifting toward doing wrong. The good news is that you are not alone. Most have similar struggles. Jesus in Gethsemane told His disciples, “The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.” There are two parts of mankind that war against one another. If you get into worrying about these things you wind up hopeless. We say “I can never win.” I’m torn within. What if I depart from the problem and deal with a remedy? What if at our local church we had the option of just saying out loud, “This has been a terrible week, I did not follow Jesus well at all this week”? What if we could be (at all places) down to earth honest, instead of playing the “church game”? We are all quick to say “I sin all the time.” Then we laugh and move on, to something more “positive.” You know church is supposed to be “positive.” Heaven help the attendee who dares to be real, or honest.

Once or twice in my ministry I’ve experienced this type of honesty at church. When someone stands up during “testimony time” (where have those gone) and says “I need to confess,” it has always been the prelude to a domino affect of confession. Before prayer, it helps to confess. Before seeking God it always helps to confess. Before we look into and learn the Scriptures (and their principles), it always helps to confess. I can testify from my own experience that current sin in my own life is a horrible obstacle to closeness with God. So, Paul was simply testifying and teaching the principle that within us all (as believers) there is often a war.

Paul does go further in chapter 8 to talk about “victory” in Jesus. I call chapter 8 a chapter of “daily deliverance.” We know about being eternally saved, but chapter 8 of Romans teaches about winning the daily civil war within. I want to recommend chapter 8.

Let me move further. In chapter 12 Paul talks about the process of transformation all we believers are involved in. He admonishes there don’t be “conformed” to this world, but be “transformed” by the renewing of your mind. There is in verses 1 and 2 a “don’t” and a “do.” Don’t be conformed. In other words don’t let the world squeeze you into its mold. The drift of human nature is to simply adjust and conform to our surroundings. This world is greatly influenced by the evil one. He is actively striving to take us down or to get us to bow to the pressure of our environment. There is, however, another push within us. The word “transformed” is used. Instead of being conformed, be transformed by renewing your mind. There is to be, according to God’s plan, a transformation process going on within us. That’s right; all this is “within.” Pointedly, according to Romans 12:1-2, the transforming transpires within our minds. As we yield to Jesus, and follow His lead, we are transformed. Like an unfolding flower, we become what we were saved to be. Like an unfolding butterfly, we have

within us the potential of becoming like Jesus. We have the “DNA” to be a son of God. We were made to be different from the world and unfold into the image of the Father. God wants us to look like Jesus. He was the firstborn “among many brethren.” We have been “born again” to a new kind of life!

Follow Jesus and “Transform”

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