

Sermon delivered by
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"Can't Get Right" (Romans 7: 14-25)

It doesn't matter if you are Asian, Caucasian, Indian, African American, or Native American; every culture and sub culture uses slang. We used it growing up and we might still use it now. I think the most used slang word is "man." I mean think about it. What I love is slang phrases. For example, "by the skin of my teeth", "Piece of cake", "Spill the beans", "shoot the breeze. There was one I grew up on, "You wanna to go." Another one was "Fin to Go." One of my favorite ones was my college roommate used to say... "You are E.T-ing." And the title of this sermon "Can't Get Right" is a negative slang phrase that means a person that keeps messing up and creating messy situation no matter what they do and no matter how much they try to alleviate any situation, they mess up. This slang term can be coined a person's name or he or she's situation. Paul in this text is saying we are both. We are Mr. and Ms. "Can't Get Right." And with these points we will find out that the only way we can "Get Right," is only through Jesus Christ.

- *The Law is Good*
- *We Are Not Good*
- *Christ is Better*

1. *The Law is Good*

EXPLANATION

Romans 7: 14-17

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 who do it, but it is sin living in me.

Through this entire text Paul is showing a dichotomy between two natures. And he starts off like that in verse 14, he says that the Law or Ten Commandments is spiritual, it is holy, perfect, not of man, but of God. It

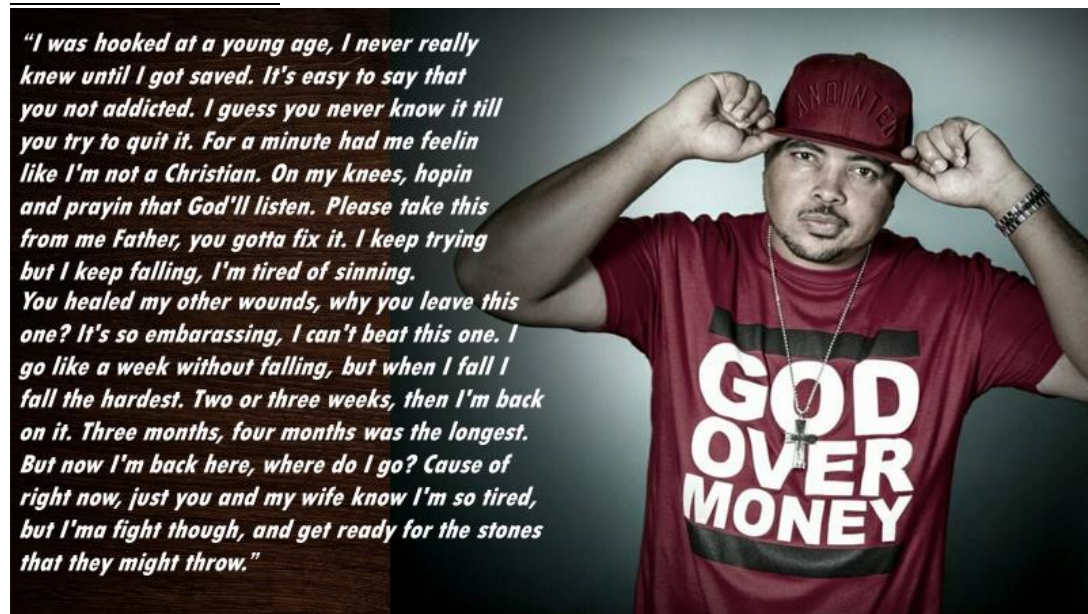
is God's character, his will. Yet Paul is saying that he is not spiritual, he is not holy, not perfect, he is of flesh, by nature he is not of God. He is a slave to sin, he gives in to his master which is his sinful nature. And because Paul can't live up to the Law that is spiritual, it is simple. Paul "*Can't Get Right.*" And this is what he means when he says the law is good. Because the Ten Commandments shows our brokenness. It lets us know that we are sinful. Check this out...

Romans 7:7

Well then, am I suggesting that the law of God is sinful? Of course not! In fact, it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said, "You must not covet."

It just like carbon-monoxide you don't know it in the air until a detector goes off. Sin is the same and the law is the detector. People who don't know Christ do not have an understanding of sin. They think they are good. But anyway, Paul is saying I can't get right and according to God's law I never will. And Paul says it is sin living in dwelling in him.

ILLUSTRATION



APPLICATION

What about us? Are in you in the same boat. If so don't worry, you are not alone, it is a very big boat. We all struggle to do the right thing every day. Not some days, every day. And the right that we do is by God's grace alone. And those, even here and other places will sit and say, *I am not that bad. I go to work, I do good in school, I come to church, I go to Sunday school.* Some people think I am older therefore I am wiser. One

of the hardest things for Christians to accept that our works and behaviors do not justify salvation.

Many of us base goodness off of behavior because we live in a society that rewards good works and good behavior think about it... (GVE EXPL). What does the bible say about our goodness? Check this out...

Isaiah 64: 6

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;

According to scripture we must admit there is no good in us. Takes me to my next point.

2. We Are Not Good

EXPLANATION

Romans 7: 18-20

For I know that good itself does not dwell 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 I do not do the good I want to do, but 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.

He mentions something that dwells within him and something that doesn't dwell within. Dwells means to live, take up residence. Think about it, who lives and doesn't live in your home. The one who lives in your home effects the entire house rather you know it or not. So, Paul is saying since sins dwells in his house it completely affects him in a negative way simply because goodness doesn't there. But let me say this...sort of a side bar. It seems like Paul is making an excuse for his sin by saying it not him but sin dwelling in me. No, he is simply stating the fact that the evil you do is a sinful nature that dwells in you. Paul is saying that it is something supernatural, it is something that is completely out of your control and Paul is saying due to that you need something outside of yourself to fix that nature. He is saying that this nature will consume you and destroy. He can't do good even though he desires it.

I like this because the conviction of sin should push us to Jesus every day to be more like him. It shouldn't condemn us. But look what he says, this very important, to add injury to harm, check this out...

Romans 7: 19

For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

APPLICATION

Paul is saying not only is sin dwelling within, he says he keeps messing over and over. And Paul doesn't want to do this. He desires to do the work of God but that old nature keeps pulling him back. He wants to stop. That nature too pulls at us every day. It like that God Father movie quote from Al Pacino, "Just when I thought I was out...they pull me back in!"

Is this you today? Are you constantly messing up over and over again? And every time you do it...don't you just hate yourself more and more. And your children, spouse, and friends who you hurt don't want to hear excuse. Let me say this, it might be tough for some but...(PAUSE)There will be some victories and there will be some failure you will live with until glory. And our negative systematic issues and circumstances in our family, cultures, and society stem from one thing, sin. Our society even tries to fix these systematic issues but come to no avail, simply because they don't call it sin and neither are they relying on Christ.

ILLUSTRATION



The question is, is there any hope of change for our condition of sin? No, except one!!! Last Point!!

3. Christ is Better.

EXPLANATION

Romans 7: 21-25

So I find this law at work: Although 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 me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

So, Paul sort of reiterating the text. There are two laws at work. The law of God or ten commandments and the law of sin. I like that he gives a title of sin by calling it a "law." It is almost like Paul is saying that sin has a function or an order of how it works. And that function and order does nothing else but cause destruction and hostility towards God and his church. Anyway, Paul reiterates that he can't keep God's law, even though he wants to and delights in it. It is impossible. It is the greatest war and the only war that has been waging since the beginning of time. And Paul says, "oh what wretched man I am." Who can fix this dilemma, who can fix this twisted dark heart, who change the broken conditions of our society, race, and culture. Who can save me from death? Paul says, "thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! The Greek for "thanks" is "grace!" By his grace and mercy, we are saved through Jesus Christ alone and nothing else!! Paul goes on and he is a slave to God but a slave to sin. This is key, the chapter ends but the context doesn't. Look at this...

Romans 8:1-2

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

And in chapter 8, Paul tells us how Christ due to the cross and the resurrection has set us free from that death and has given us life. What we couldn't do Christ. He fulfilled the law and died for our failure of the law. Through Christ our lives can change. Everything seen and unseen has been nailed to the cross. Yes, Christ says I died for that and that and that too. I want to end this sermon with an illustration curtesy of one of my best friend Antione Bennett who help me grow in Baltimore. When he told this story, it encouraged me and I hope it encourages you to know that Christ is in control.

ILLUSTRATION



Our response is simple...worship and give him glory in every capacity.

Through Christ we can finally get right!!!

To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.