

Tuesday's Touch ...#37

...from Pastor Ed ...October 06, 2009

Who's Driving?

And everyone who competes for the prize exercises self restraint in all things... 1 Corinth 9:25

But I beat down my body, bringing it into subjection, lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be disapproved. 1 Corinth 9:27

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Galatians 5:16

Last week, in considering the *flesh*, we said that (1) the human body is as integral to being human as is the spirit; (2) as a result of sin this *flesh* has become corrupted along with all of its current physiological life processes, and will not be perfected until the resurrection at the return of Christ; and (3) the Christian, having become a new creation in the spirit, must restrain the sinful motions of the flesh so that its base desires are not allowed to be fulfilled to completion and dominate his life.

Much like animals (no evolutionary nuances intended), the flesh has life and a will distinct from the spirit, which, in the “natural man,” dominate his thoughts and actions. His fallen spirit is in complete compliance with this fleshly will. Only common grace and external pressures restrain it. When the new birth takes place, the spirit is recreated after the image of Christ and the heart’s desires are transformed. But the flesh still carries the remnants of sin and is contrary to the spirit. By abiding in Christ and walking in accordance with the Holy Spirit, the flesh is subdued, and the will becomes more controlled by the Christian’s spirit than his flesh.

With a caution to remember the limitations of illustration, the following might depict the basic dynamic between the spirit and the flesh. Consider an automobile “indwelt” by a “wicked” driver. The car and driver act together as a unit. Now, this guy drives fast and reckless, often crashing into things. He burns up the tires, never changes the oil, and allows the interior to become a trash heap. One day this wicked driver dies and a new driver takes over. He is a good driver and has none of the desires and characteristics of the old driver. He does his best to clean up the car and make it at least somewhat presentable. But the car “fights” him all the way as he endeavors to drive well. It constantly pulls to the left. So in order to compensate and remain in the correct lane he must be always pulling to the right. When he desires to stop the brakes perform badly. He must anticipate and begin to slow down and pump the breaks ahead of time. He presses on the gas and the engine sputters and very slowly begins to accelerate. The driver is good and his desires are right, but the vehicle is always fighting against him.

A friend hears of his plight and generously offers to completely restore the car to “better than new” condition. The only problem is that he won’t be able to do it until next year. Since this is the driver’s only car he can’t just park it for a year. So he struggles on, knowing that each day he is closer to the day of restoration. In the mean time, he makes whatever temporary fixes he can and continues to

compensate as best he can. Being good, he continues to desire to drive well and longs for the day when he will cruise effortlessly in a perfectly restored vehicle.

Now the question is, in your “heart of hearts,” who’s driving? Do you honestly and earnestly *desire* to do what is right and pleasing in the Father’s sight as you are following Jesus? Do you desire to be perfectly pure in flesh and spirit (2 Corinth 7:1)? Does it grieve you when you grieve Him? Then take heart and look to that perfect, active obedience of Christ as being both your present righteousness and your future reality. As you struggle in the flesh know that His grace is sufficient and He will keep you pressing on toward the day of redemption (Phil 1:6; 2:13). To be perfectly holy in flesh and spirit, free from every remnant of sin forever, is among the greatest anticipations for the child of God awaiting the consummation of glory at the return of Christ.

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it is not yet apparent what we shall be, but we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. 1 John 3:2-3 ... We ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. Rom 8:23

On the other hand, if doing right seems unreasonably restrictive to your own desires, and all those inner desires “have their portion in this life” (Psalm 17:14), you might reconsider the road on which you are traveling. It comes to a dead end. It’s time to kick out the old driver and let Jesus take the steering wheel of your life.

Holy Father,

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I’m constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness like a fetter
Bind my wand’ring heart to Thee;
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here’s my heart – O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above. – R. Robinson

Eagerly waiting for the adoption- the redemption of the body (Rom 8:23),
Amen

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