

Romans 7:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing—Ouk oikei (οὐκ οἰκεῖ, "does not dwell") indicates permanent absence. En emoi, tout' estin en tē sarki mou (ἐν ἐμοί, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου)—Paul's parenthetical clarification is vital: "in me, that is, in my flesh." He doesn't say nothing good dwells in him absolutely, but qualifies: nothing good in sarx (σάρξ, "flesh")—the remaining sin nature.

For to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.—To thelein parakeitai moi (τὸ θέλειν παράκειται μοι, "the willing is present with me") versus to katergadzesthai to kalon ouch heuriskō (τὸ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὐχ εὕρισκω, "the accomplishing of good I don't find"). Regeneration renewed the will; sanctification progressively empowers performance. This gap between renewed desire and imperfect execution characterizes Christian life pre-glorification.

Historical Context

Paul's careful distinction between 'me' and 'my flesh' reflects his understanding of union with Christ creating new identity while remaining corruption lingers. This isn't Greek dualism (body bad, spirit good) but redemptive-historical realism: believers are 'in Christ' (new) while still 'in Adam's legacy' (flesh). Complete deliverance awaits resurrection.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing that regeneration renews the will while sanctification progressively empowers performance help you persevere?
2. What evidence do you see of 'willing' being present even when 'performing' falls short?
3. How might confusing identity ('in Christ') with experience ('in flesh') lead to false guilt or false confidence?

Interlinear Text

οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι οὐχ οἴκεῖ ἐν ἐμοί τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἐν τῇ
I know For that no dwelleth in me G5124 G2076 **in** G3588
G1492 G1063 G3754 G3756 G3611 G1722 G1698 G1722

σαρκί μου ἀγαθόν· τὸ γὰρ θέλειν παράκειται μοι
flesh my good thing G3588 **For to will is present with me**
G4561 G3450 G18 G1063 G2309 G3873 G3427

τὸ δὲ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν οὐχ εὕρισκω
G3588 **but how to perform** G3588 **that which is good no I find**
G1161 G2716 G2570 G3756 G2147

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 51:5 (Parallel theme): Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

John 3:6 (Parallel theme): That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Romans 7:25 (Parallel theme): I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Galatians 5:17 (Parallel theme): For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Job 14:4 (Parallel theme): Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.

Genesis 6:5 (Parallel theme): And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Galatians 5:24 (Parallel theme): And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Titus 3:3 (Parallel theme): For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

Philippians 2:13 (Good): For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Romans 7:19 (Good): For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.