

Christian: You Can Fight Sin Because You're New!

Ryan Fullerton | illbehonest.com

In Hebrews Chapter 8, the writer of Hebrews actually quotes Jeremiah. And he says in Chapter 8 verse 8. "For he", that is God, "finds faults with them..." That is: God finds fault with Israel. He saw they were blind. He saw that they wouldn't obey. "Behold the days are coming..." And now he is quoting the Old Testament.

"Declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant..."

The reason this covenant will be different is that the people who I make this covenant with they'll actually keep obeying me. They will actually keep continuing with me, not like Israel who just flickered around, obeying inconsistently and mostly disobeying.

"For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds..."

I'm going to make them love what I wrote. I'm going to make them want to do it.

"And write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

You know many Christians have this concept that at the bottom of their heart there is sort of this 'yin and yang' between good and evil. That at the core of them is sort of this mixed reality of good and evil. A black dog and a white dog. You're kinda half bad and half good. You used to be all bad, but now you're half good and half bad. I wonder, does that line up with the Scriptures we've just read over and over again? "They will love Him with their whole heart." "They will love Him with their whole mind." "They will see Him." "They will see His glory." "They will know Him!" Beloved, is that describing Christians? You bet it is.

Someone says, "Ryan you must be saying that Christians don't struggle with sin?" Anyone here know me? Christians struggle with sin until they do this: quit breathing and die! But the person struggling with sin is a Christian. They're someone who doesn't want to sin. There is someone whose whole heart loves God. Whose whole mind loves God. Whose whole spirit loves God. And though they battle against the world, and the flesh, and the devil. And they can easily be tricked and deceived and fall – they are new, to the bottom of their being. If God looked over this first creation and said "It is very good!" I'm telling you, when He made Christians He did not say, "It is mostly good." Their greatest reality as a Christian is for you to become you!

This summer, I found myself struggling with anger. And God has granted me a lot of victory in my life regarding anger. But this has been an area that if I'm going to fall, that's where

I'm going to fall. And so I grabbed a Biblical counseling book on anger, it is a very good book. And what I love about Biblical counseling, is Biblical Counseling says; let us define the problem Biblically, and let us solve the problem Biblically. Let us do both of those. That is so good. I love that. And this book really helped me. Probably the number one it helped me is that my wife is like, "I'm so glad you're reading that book." But along the way, and there were so many good things to this book, it's telling me, now here is the reason you have a problem, "Your heart is desperately wicked and evil above all things." That is from the book of Jeremiah 17:9. Really? Really? If my heart is desperately wicked and evil as all things, I have as much chance of obeying as Israel. I need a new heart. And I got news for you: I have one! God made me new. He saved me. He took my heart, that was always bent on evil and only desired evil continually, all the time. He took that heart out of me and He gave me a heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 36:26)

Now I have fallen on my face so many times I wouldn't want to tell you all. Because I still stumble in many ways says the book of James (3:2). If I told you I was without sin I would be deceiving myself and the truth would not be in me (1 John 1:8). But I tell you what, the me who is fighting is new. And I am not helped in the fight by having that called into question.

And so the best biblical counseling will say: Let us define the problem Biblically. Let us solve the problem Biblically. But if we are dealing with a Christian, we need to be telling them, "You can fight this fight because you're new!" "Because you love the LORD your God with all your heart, and all your mind, and all your strength." And seeing you see. That's glorious. That's good.