

PRAYER MEETING
"O WRETCHED MAN!"

Introduction

A man groaning is a moving sight: David for Absalom: Isaiah in the temple; Christ over Jerusalem. Sin has filled this world with groans.

1. Paul here is groaning for deliverance – he is in downright earnest. Why should he be?
 - 1) NOT because unconverted – some have thought Paul's ref. is to an unconverted state (v.14). But, surely not – see v.22 – not the cry of an ungodly man!
 - 2) NOT because Paul in a backslidden or "defeated" state. (The argument from Rom. 8).
 - 3) I understand this text to be the cry of a man whose soul is in a healthy state.
DOCTRINE: The soul of a diligent Christian groans. He yearns for deliverance.
2. But why should Paul, a saved man + apostle, groan for deliverance in this way? He is:
 - 1) delivered from his former blindness (v.9)
 - 2) delivered from condemnation (8:1)
 - 3) delivered from a host of dangers (2 Cor. 11)
DOCTRINE: A saved man may + must groan.
3. The deliverance Paul seeks is from some thing in himself, which he experiences keenly:
 - 1) v.14: "carnal, sold under sin"
 - 2) a frustration: v.15, 18, 19, 21.
4. This frustration arises because there are two forces / "laws" at work in his life: v.22, 23:
 - 1) One law is the Law of God: v.22
 - 2) The other is that of Sin: v.23
5. Results:
 - 1) frustration in his desires

- 2) failure to do what he wishes
DOCTRINE: The text describes the believer in conflict with indwelling sin.
6. So he cries out in anguish (not despair) because he laments his condition:
 - 1) He longs to be perfectly holy
 - 2) He discovers that he cannot reach it
NOTE: This is a perfectly healthy + normal experience for a converted person. It is not "obsession with sin" / "guilt mania..."
7. But why should Paul so cry out? After all, he is
 - 1) saved + justified in Christ
 - 2) not without full assurance, as we so often read (e.g. Eph. 3:16-19)
 Could not Paul say, "I am saved + I can't expect to be perfect in this life"? Why this distress, this devout groaning?
8. ANSWER: Because:
 - 1) he hated sin and hated it in himself
 - 2) he longed for absolute perfection
APPLICATION: We must never condone the fact that there is indwelling sin in us, as if that were a light thing.
9. So, the more sanctified a Christian becomes the more he groans against his bondage, that is the experience of his own imperfection.
10. When a Christian can live wholly at ease with his own sinful heart it is a sign that "the salt has lost its savour".
11. But, how can the Christian get any comfort in this groaning state? It is in v.25: "Who shall deliver me?"
 God, thankfully, will, when we arrive at our final state.

CONCLUSION

The fourfold state.

PSALM

6: 1 – 6

38: 1 – 6

73: 25 – 28