

SERMON BASED ON

7.7.14

Romans 7:15-25

Matthew 11:16-end

'I DON'T KNOW WHY I DID IT!'

A child does something that they've been told again and again not to do. The parent asks 'Why did you do it?' and the answer is 'I don't know.'

If we're honest, aren't we all in that same position?

"I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out." says Paul (Romans 7:17b). It's the age old problem. If we've had decent parents, reasonable teachers and we've got a conscience in us, we know what is right a lot of the time. But still we don't do it.

I will make a confession: I saw someone the other day walking just ahead of me, who I've not spoken to in a long time. I knew they had had a tricky time. I knew they would value a chat. I also knew that a chat would take more than a couple of minutes and that I had had a long morning and had a big afternoon to come. Here's the confession. I slowed down so I wouldn't catch them up until they had turned into their pathway.

I knew the good I should do but didn't do it. Friends, it's not the only time! It's not the worst avoidance! I'm really hoping that you know what I mean!

Paul says it's as if there's a constant battle going on. He knows what's right but it's the wrong things he does instead. It's as if something has

taken over. That 'thing' of course, is sin- the self-centred attitude that means we're more bothered about ourselves too much of the time, instead of being bothered about what God wants or, when we *are bothered*, being able to do it. *'..it is sin living in me' (7:20)*

Left to our own devices he describes the situation as 'wretched' (v.24). But, thankfully, Jesus Christ can help us. So we do find that sometimes we can overcome the battle and do good; sometimes we are really good people and even when we're not, if we put ourselves in God's hands, we can be saved.

The one thing that matters is that we realise it. We need to be coming to God day by day and recognising – I can't do good things without your help. I can't save myself. Help me.

That's when the grace kicks in. The parent of the child is sad at the wrong things done. The child is bewildered when forced to be honest: "I don't know why I did it". But the gracious parent saves the child and sets them off again, just as God does to us.

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Hilary Edgerton – 6.7.14

