**Spiritual Double-Consciousness**

“For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate to do, that I do...for to will is present in me, but how to preform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not do, I practice...So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”

Romans 7:14-16, 18b-19, 25b

“...double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, – an American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, who dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.”

W.E.B. DuBois, The Souls of Black Folk

As a child of God born in and shaped by sin, I ever feel this spiritual tug of war within my mind and my members. On the one hand I desire to do the will of God and bring glory and honor to His name, yet on the other hand I feel my body and mind crying out to fulfill the lust of the flesh. My sin, ever before me, I wonder if it is truly possible to be of one mind, of one body in the Spirit when the law of God ever stands revealing my flaws and iniquities?

**Spiritual Double-Consciousness**

Like DuBois articulates concerning the African American’s journey on the color line, I too experience a “double-consciousness.” Only my double-consciousness is not restricted to my body. I have found myself living with a spiritual double-consciousness. I ever have the sense of always looking at myself through the eyes of the divine, measuring my soul by the law of a world that looks on in loving compassion, yearning for me to commit to their world and stop traveling in and out on dual-citizenship. I ever feel my two-ness, – a Righteous woman, a sinner; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose faith in the power of God alone keeps me from being torn asunder.

What makes it worse is that my fair ideals show that I am light, allowing me to pass. But true spiritual things are spiritually discerned and the spirit knows my darkness. I can’t pass in heavenly spaces. Places where God sits and clearly sees sin running through the veins of my actions. Running through my thoughts. Passing simply allows me the privilege of walking in earthly spaces and not be judged, because man can’t tell if I’m light or dark.

I think about this often. How these two souls live within me, the righteous man, the sinner. Sometimes I want to only be righteous, and sometimes I wish to only be a sinner.

**Spiritual Identity**

But the Spirit has revealed to me that I am called to find self-hood in the amalgamation of both. It is in my recognition of the sinful man that I understand that I am weak and in need of the strength of God. It is through such self-revelation that I desire to unite with the Spirit of God to be the righteous man. For unless God abide in me and I in Him, I cannot produce spiritual things; I cannot create, articulate, nor postulate of the Spirit.
because the Spirit is not in me. I cannot live and walk in the will and way of God, unless God live in me and walks with me. Just as the black man is not simply American or Negro, he is the American Negro, I am not simply righteous or a sinner. I am a righteous sinner. The Bible says, “For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again” (Proverbs 24:16a). Meaning my righteousness is defined by my rise, not my fall.

**Spiritual Warfare**

These two souls: the righteous, the sinner, living within one human body will ever war against each other, as the ideals of one will ever seek to oppress and suppress the ideals of the other. I cannot seek identity or belonging in one or the other, but must see the salvation that is presented in the fusion of both. I must understand that I can only find my righteousness in the only One who lived a righteous life. Therefore, I cannot settle for an identity based in my fall, for I am determined to continue to rise. It is God living within me that comforts me “because He [God] who is in me is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

I do not look to myself to live a righteous life. For no man other than Jesus Christ has done this. Rather I look to “Jesus, the author and finisher of [my] faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2). He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). It is because of His sacrifice and His spirit living in me that I can boast of my two-ness “[that] the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Corinthians 12:10). For I am a sinner saved by grace strengthened to be a righteous woman.