

Conquering the Spiritual Tug of War

Part 2

Transition

- In order to collect leaves, you use a rake.
- But diamonds are found using a shovel
- Romans 7 has diamonds in it.
- If you use a rake on Romans 7 you will miss the diamonds.

Romans 7:14-25

¹⁴ We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. ¹⁵ I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. ²¹ So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Last Week Summarize

- This is one of the most controversial scriptures in the Bible.
- It is one of great debate and controversy.
- What is Paul talking about here?
- I thought he was a mighty man of God?

Transition

- To understand Romans 7 you have to understand the context in which it was written.

Romans Main Point

- All sinful human beings have fallen short of the glory of God and bring daily dishonor to God and are under the wrath of God righteously.
- We are deserving of the wrath of God.
- It is just of God to pour out his wrath on sinners who bring daily dishonor to him.
- Yet he is wildly merciful and it is therefore possible for us sinners to be set right by God – because of Jesus' our faith in him and him alone for our salvation brings undeserved **FAVOR!!!**

- **Trust Christ and you get FAVOR!**

Illustration

- Instead of wrath you get **FAVOR**
- Instead of punishment you get **BLESSING**
- Instead of damnation you get an **INHERITANCE**
- Instead of separation you get **UNION**
- Instead of being on the outside you are **brought inside**
- Inside to the **Banquet table of the King**

My goal here today is to do two things.

1. Help Christians to love God's law and lean on God's grace to deal with their indwelling sin.
2. Show you from scripture how the grace of God will lead you...
 - a. To love the Law.
 - b. To radically against the powerful pull of sin in your life.
 - c. To a life filled with continual repentance.
 - d. To more joy in your flawed Christian Walk.

I. Delight in God's law

- A. Paul's goal in Romans 7 is to support the teaching, up to this point in the book, that the Law of Moses - or the law written on the heart of all men - is powerless to declare us righteous before God.
 1. It is powerless to make us righteous before God.
 2. We are sinners by nature and by action.
 3. Therefore the Law condemns us and stirs up rebellion within us.
 4. It doesn't justify and it doesn't sanctify.
 5. Therefore God, in his mercy, has made his righteousness available for us another way, apart from the Law.
 - 6. God made righteousness available through Jesus Christ his Son.**
 7. So to be declared righteous (to be justified) we must turn from *our* law-keeping to *Christ's* law-keeping.
 8. We must receive Christ as our treasure, and be declared righteous because of our union with him by faith.
 9. Not because of any righteousness in us.
 10. That's how we are *declared* perfectly righteous before God.
 11. Then to *become* righteous (to be sanctified) we must also turn from law-keeping.

Romans 7:4

Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.

12. So *justification* is by faith in union with Christ.

13. *Sanctification* is by faith in union with Christ.

14. And both involve turning away from the Law as the decisive means of *getting right* with God and *becoming like* God.

B. The law is spiritual

Vs. 14

We know that the law is spiritual

1. What does that mean.
2. It means that the root of it is a spiritual one.
3. It has a spiritual effect.
4. It's purpose is for the spirit part of us.

C. **The law is good**

Vs. 16

And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good

1. The law is good because it shows me my sinfulness.

Romans 7:7

Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."

2. How do you know you are a sinner unless you know what you are doing is sin?
3. Well good – then I am a sinner.
4. How does that help me?
5. That helps me because if I am a sinner and sin separates from God the Law tells me that I am separated from God.
6. That is a good thing because now I know I have offended God and will suffer the consequences of offending a perfect God.

D. The law does not justify or sanctify us.

1. You cannot obey enough laws to be justified by God.
2. You cannot undo what you have already done by doing better.
3. Knowing that leads you to the one who kept God's law.
4. Jesus Christ – the sinless one.

Romans 7:8-12

⁸ But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead.

⁹ I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. ¹⁰ The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. ¹¹ For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. ¹² So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

Illustration

- Isn't this the fear we have for our physical health.
- I have some kind of disease that I don't know about.
- If I don't know about it then it is going to kill me and I'll never know I have it.
- One day I will get horribly sick and die a painful horrible death.
- If I know about it then I can do something about it.
- Can you imagine having a deadly disease that is curable and not know about it.
- Now imagine having a disease that if gone undetected leads to a horribly long drawn out painful death but it is completely curable.
- All you have to do is be properly diagnosed.
- Once you are properly diagnosed the Dr. is able to administer medicine that will cure the disease.
- No more pain, No more suffering, No more death.
- Only living!!!
- You just need the right diagnosis.

Application

- Don't hate the law.
- Rejoice in the law
- Be a law lover
- Don't be a law hater.

Love God's Law

- What does God's law do?

Illustration - "Foreign Righteousness"

(Not our righteousness)

Borrowed Wedding Clothes

- In ancient weddings, kings sometimes provided wedding garments for guests.

- Imagine showing up in filthy clothes.
The king says:
- “You cannot enter dressed like that.”
- Then he hands you royal garments.
- You enter the banquet not because of your clothes, but because of the king’s provision.
- The righteousness you wear before God is not homemade. It is Christ’s righteousness placed on you.

Isaiah 61:10-11

¹⁰ I delight greatly in the LORD;
my soul rejoices in my God.

For he has clothed me with garments of salvation
and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹ For as the soil makes the sprout come up
and a garden causes seeds to grow,
so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness
and praise spring up before all nations.

Delight in God’s law

II. Sin rots me to the core.

If you read Paul’s letters in chronological order you will notice something.

- Early on he calls himself “**Paul and Apostle**”
- Years later – “**the least of the apostles**”
- Later still – “**the very least of all the saints**”
- In his last letter to Timothy he writes...
“**Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners whom he is the worst.**”
- The longer Paul walked with Christ.
 1. The smaller he became in his own estimation.
 2. The larger Christ became.
- We tend to think that Christian maturity means having your act together.
- Paul says otherwise.
- The saints are not the ones who finally stop struggling.
- They are the ones who finally stop pretending.

- A. Romans 7 strips away the pretending.
1. Sold as a slave to sin
 2. I do not understand what I do.
 3. For what I want to do I do not do it.
 4. But what I hate I do.
 5. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing
 6. What a wretched man I am!
 7. Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?

Straw Man

- Are you saying that you want a church filled with people who are so aware of their sinfulness that they always think... What a wretched sinner I am.
- I am more concerned about having a church that always has a fake smile on like everything is ok.
- How are you? Fine? How are you? Fine?
- Truth is neither of us are really fine but God forbid we actually say something and do something about it.
- That is what I don't want.

Illustration - John Newton

- Once a slaver owner and slave trader.
- John Newton repented and became one of the leading voices to abolish slave trade.
- He authored the great hymn "Amazing Grace".
- Near the end of his life when his eyes were failing and his memory had nearly gone John Newton said there were two things that he still remembered.

1. He was a great sinner.
2. Christ was a great savior.

- That was it.
- When nearly everything else had slipped his mind.

1. He was a great sinner.
2. Christ was a great savior.

Romans 7 emphasizes both of these truths.

- We are great sinners.
- Christ is a great savior.

Illustration

- **Robert Louis Stevenson** was raised in 19th-century Scotland within a strict Presbyterian environment.
 - He grew up with strong teachings about sin and moral accountability.
 - The doctrine of human depravity.
 - The conflict between outward respectability and inward corruption.
 - Fear of judgment and hypocrisy.
 - Serious reflection on conscience and temptation.
- Stevensons, childhood caregiver Alison Cunningham was especially influential.
 - She filled his childhood with Bible stories, warnings about sin, eternal judgment, and spiritual warfare.
 - These themes stayed with Stevenson even after he distanced himself from rigid religious formalism as an adult.
- Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (originally titled Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde) was written by the Scottish author **Robert Louis Stevenson** and published in 1886.
 - **Summary of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde***
 - Dr. Henry Jekyll is a respected London physician who becomes obsessed with the duality of human nature.
 - The idea that every person contains both good and evil impulses.
 - Through scientific experimentation, he creates a potion that separates these aspects of himself.
 - When he drinks it, he transforms into Edward Hyde, a smaller, darker, cruel figure who embodies his sinful desires without restraint or conscience.
 - At first, Jekyll enjoys the freedom Hyde provides.
 - Hyde allows him to indulge secret passions while preserving Jekyll's respectable reputation.
 - But Hyde grows **increasingly violent** and **uncontrollable**, eventually **murdering a man named Sir Danvers Carew**.
 - As the story progresses, Jekyll loses mastery over the transformation.
 - He begins turning into Hyde involuntarily.
 - The evil side becomes stronger while the good side weakens.
 - Realizing he can no longer suppress Hyde, Jekyll ultimately takes his own life to prevent Hyde from continuing his reign of terror.

His conclusion evil cannot safely be **isolated**, **managed**, or **indulged** **without consuming the whole person**.

Application

- Stephenson was right.
- Sin is like a stray dog that you put food out for until it goes away.
- It doesn't work like that.
- Sin that is indulged cannot be contained.
- It corrupts the whole person
- And takes over.

B. Indwelling sin

Romans 7:17

As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.

C.S. Lewis – Chronicles of Narnia, Screwtape Letters and Mere Christianity.
Brother Ass

Indwelling Sin

- War with sin.
- Not peace with sin.
- Get up