

12. Romans 7: I Will Wrestle

We are in the home stretch of wrapping up the six arguments that Paul lays out in defence of a changed heart and mind and life after accepting Christ as your Lord and Savior. (I will do a quick review before heading into Romans 8 next time.) It is here that Paul makes one more (again, not so perfect) analogy to the defeat of sin in your life. Out of these arguments, Paul opens his heart up to the reader and exposes himself that even this great Apostle who probably walked in more power of God than any other human in history (other than Christ himself) struggles with sin. In Paul's honesty, gives us hope and encouragement that we, too, are not failures just because we are not super-duper Christians on this earth.

Previously, Paul tries to explain our former life which is death as to our lives now which is true eternal life with Jesus Christ and using the context of slavery (not the immoral, wicked human trafficking that our country is so familiar with) do so. Even Paul admits that wasn't the most perfect analogy and he is going to give another angle that is not perfect either but put them together and see if you get a revelation out of them.

Let's go.

I. Once Bonded, Once Married, Death Takes Care of That

Romans 7:1-3 (ESV) Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

A.

Romans 7:1 (ESV) Or do you not know, brothers--for I am speaking to those who know the law--that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives?

1. Speaking to all those who knew the Mosaic Law (mostly Jews)

B. Divorce

Romans 7:2-3 (ESV) For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

1. God equates divorce to violence and in some translations, God proclaims His hatred of divorce
Malachi 2:16a (NKJV) "For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence,"

2. Rightfully so, since Jesus takes origin of marriage in Genesis 2 and says this:
Mark 10:6-10 (ESV) But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

3. God is not oppose to violence. Because God is holy, just, righteous, loving, in the end, He used violence as God the Father poured His wrath that was meant for us sinners upon His Son, Jesus Christ, who knew no sin but became sin so that we might be made right standing with God forever.

4. But something like marriage that was deemed good and holy by God, for us to undo marriage is taking one person's body and ripping it two. That is why many who go through divorce explain that they are just a walking corpse.

C. When you were married, in bondage to sin, you chased after this spouse who treated you like a whore.

1. Women, you go after the guy who gives you no respect and uses your body for his pleasure and joy and

will use you up until you die

2. Men, you go after the really hot girl who would do nothing but cut you down, emasculate you (**Judges 15**) and nag you until you died (**Job 2:9**)

3. Running after that friend, boyfriend, girlfriend that are no good for you

4. Keep getting back into those bad habits or habitual sins that you just can't seem to shake

D. When you are alive in Christ, that john, that whore are dead.

Romans 7:4 (ESV) 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.

Because of the life, death, burial of Christ, your sins stay buried. Because of His resurrection, Christ completely champions and conquers Satan, sin, demons, hell and death.

E. Working more godlier, not harder

Romans 7:5 (ESV) For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.

cf. **Romans 5:20a (ESV) Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased...**

Romans 7:6 (ESV) But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

cf. **Romans 5:20-21 (ESV) ... grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

It wasn't purpose and design of the law (we will get in just one moment), i.e. the standard of God which is perfection, but because of our nature, it produced two things

1. For those of us who were able to follow the law of the letter and was able to beat our own sins, pride and arrogance increased that made you feel like not only you didn't need God but if others were struggling with what you have "beaten", you had no heart or compassion for them "why can't they just do what I have done"

a. Right there, you have just broken the first two commandments "Love God" & "Love your neighbors"

2. For the rest of us who couldn't beat sin on our own, we just gave up believing lies like "this is just the way I am" "I'm lustful because I burn with passion" etc., etc.. and we just sin all the more hardcore thus breaking any of the other commandments.

3. That is the thing, this was a good word for Christians of the OT and NT.

a. Salvation through faith

b. Believed in the coming Messiah

c. Even through the OT saints had to go through the ceremonial laws

d. They did this with joy and gladness because the law was written upon their hearts and transformed their minds

e. They waited upon the Messiah that rescued them from death to release them from the bondage of the law

f. Just as we wait upon the Messiah to completely fix us all and to release us from the bondage that is the brokenness of this world

II. Law Produces More Sin Doesn't Make Law Sinful

A. Scriptures exposes your sin

Romans 7:7-8a (ESV) What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! 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." 8 But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment,

produced in me all kinds of covetousness.

1. God says don't covet your neighbor's wife but you try to argue "He isn't really my neighbor... he lives in a whole other zip code"
2. Yea, it is okay to sleep with this person I am not married to because in God's eyes, we are married.
3. That is how God's Word exposes your sin and you can respond two ways: let it change your heart or try to harden your heart

B. Satan seizing the moment

Romans 7:8b-12 (ESV) For apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

Read back over **Genesis 2:16-17** and then **Genesis 3:1-7**.

1. God lays down one commandment to mankind (keepers of the law): don't eat of this one tree in the middle of the garden **Genesis 2:16-17**
2. Mankind, in his nature to do everything of his own power like keep the laws, adds by-laws and subcommittees to God's one commandment **Genesis 3:2-3**
3. Satan overhears this and because our religion was successfully able to tempt us **Genesis 3:4-7**
4. Is religion a sin?

Question: How many of you in reading your Bible came into a revelation that some of the things you did were a sin? Not even the obvious ones like murder, lying, stealing but to even look lustfully upon a woman, woman nagging their husbands or gossiping or busybodies or idlehands or etc., etc.?

C. God's law is not what separates us from God

Romans 7:12-14 (ESV) So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

1. God is holy (set apart), righteous and alone is good.
2. It's not the law but what sin (going against the will of God) separates us from God
3. The Scriptures (the Law) tell us just how exactly God is holy, righteous and good.
4. If God allows one of his commandments to be broken and allowing that sinner to enter into a relationship with Him, then God ceases to be true, just, righteous, holy and good.
5. By His standards, we have broken at least one of the laws, therefore we have broken them all
James 2:10 (ESV) For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.
6. Sanctification is never: "I am doing better than the week before" or "I am doing better than that guy"
7. Sanctification is: "how is my mind and heart like Christ" "am I closer to Christ" "am I praying and reading the bible so that my heart is like His"

III. I Am Just Like You, No Better

Ephesians 2:1-3 (ESV) And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

A. I am still a human

Romans 7:14 (ESV) For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.

1. Not a super-Christian
2. So long as I am on this broken earth in this broken world, I am still going to mess up
3. Complete salvation (glorification) is never here but there when we are face to face with Christ Jesus

Psalm 17:15 (ESV) As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness.

B. Now that you are of Christ

Romans 7:15-16 (ESV) For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good.

1. "I" is not only Paul (obviously) but Paul is speaking from his broken, sinful flesh
2. I want is I want to sin as I want to have sex, I want to be judgmental, I want to do this on my own without God so I can give myself all the credit and the glory and the praise
3. When I don't do those sinful things, I start agreeing with law.
4. With Christ, more and more, you find yourself (with all the resources of the kingdom of God i.e. Holy Spirit, reading the word, praying, fellowship, etc.) still wanting to do those old things but that urge is has been pressed down and beaten down by the power of Holy Spirit and your faith and obedience in God
5. Every day, His mercies renew, His faithfulness is great, His strength is given to you and you and God walk this path out in righteousness and holiness because the sacrifice and bloodshed of Jesus Christ made you righteous and holy.

C. Sin is still powerful

Romans 7:17 (ESV) So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

1. Sin might no longer reign in your life but we can all agree with the Apostle Paul that it is still quite powerful
2. So long as we are on this earth...

D. Flesh has no good

Romans 7:18 (ESV) For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.

1. Wants to sin
2. Desires to do good
3. With your own power, you will not have the ability to carry out what is good
4. You might be able to do things that seem good under your own power but that leads to pride
5. For the rest of us who will fail under our own power, that leads to despair

Question: How many of us have experienced the desire to do good but want to keep on sinning and it the power of your own flesh that seems to scream just a little bit louder than the Spirit?

E. Paul hits the point once more

Romans 7:19-20 (ESV) For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

1. I still struggle with not doing the things I should be doing (sins of omission)
2. I still struggle with doing the things I should not be doing (sins of commission)

F. Even if I find something I'm good at

Romans 7:21 (ESV) So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.

1. If I am really good at proclaiming the gospel or not cheating on my wife or being a good parent or tithing and giving generously
2. Spiritual forces of evil are going to try to trip me up all the more
3. This is why we don't do this alone.
4. Sure we do it with God but God meant to do this in fellowship and with godly accountability
5. People who you honestly and sincerely love you so much that they will speak up when they see you drowning and you don't have the sense to ask for help

Question: Who do you say keeps you accountable in your life? Men, do you have a godly man in your life that can call out your junk? Women, do you have godly women in your life that can counsel you?

G. Still at war

Romans 7:22-23 (ESV) For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

1. Paul is unpacking his own walk with Christ
2. Now he is at a point where he delights in the law of God
3. Yet the battle wages on
4. Yet the sins that you thought you had no issues with, Christ walks with you, reveals it and works to get it off of your heart

H. Chief of Sinners

Romans 7:24-25a (ESV) *Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

cf. **Ephesians 2:4-9 (ESV) *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.***

Romans 7:25b (ESV) *So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.*

Question: Is there still sin in your life? Do you struggle with not doing the things that you should do and doing the things you should not do? What is the answer?

1. Our hope, faith and utter dependence lies upon Christ Jesus alone.
2. It is why, every single day, we worship Him in our prayers, reading the Bible, kicking it with one another and getting together in "gathered" worship to sing songs and praises to Him, hear the Word of the Lord spoken and taught and give and pray to one other.
3. We worship on a continuous basis so that we will always depend and lean on Him and not ourselves