

Romans 7 • The Law of Sin and Death

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · July 26, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

This is a challenging chapter, I'll just tell you that ahead of time. There's a lot in this chapter, there's a lot of, this is deep stuff. This is not Christianity 101, this is something like 507 or something, I don't know where this would land on the chart, but this is difficult stuff. I want to start by talking a little bit about the questions I get fairly often about the subject of heaven. You know, people ask a lot of questions about heaven, which is really interesting for someone like me as a pastor who fields a lot of questions from people, because if there's one thing God tells us very little about, it's heaven.

He just doesn't, we are, there's a great deal that we just take, you know, by faith and we make assumptions based on the character of God and so forth. But people want to know, you know, I get a lot of questions, are we going to know each other in heaven? Yeah, of course we're going to know each other, we're not, you know, nothing in heaven is going to be less than what it is right now. And as Paul said in 1 Corinthians, you know, now we see through a mirror dimly, but then we're going to see face to face, he says, I'm going to know as I am known. And we're known pretty well by God, and so we're going to know in that sense.

So yeah, of course we're going to know each other. You know, people have a lot of those questions, what are we going to be doing in heaven? I don't know, you know, because when we talk about heaven, we know that heaven and earth are going to come together and be merged. There's a new heaven and a new earth, they come together, God's, you know, throne will be with man. You know, there's a lot, we just, we don't have any frame of reference, frankly, for much of what people ask about.

But there's one particular question about heaven that I get from time to time that is a very challenging one, and I'm going to put it up on the screen for you so we can look at it together. It's the question, will it be possible for us to sin in heaven? And this one came to me just recently here in the last week again. It wasn't worded just like this, but this is the basic premise behind it. And I usually answer this by saying the short answer is no, we're not going to have even the possibility of sinning, you know, after this life.

The short answer, or the long answer rather, is much more involved. But the reason that I bring up even this question tonight is because the long answer to this question is buried in the full understanding of what the Apostle Paul is writing in Romans chapter 11, or 7, excuse me, which is where we are, Romans 7. So we're going to go through the chapter. We're going to do our best to get through the whole chapter tonight, and then we're going to revisit this question again at the end, and we're going to see what we've learned. So let's go ahead and read the chapter, and then we're going to open up in prayer and get into it.

It goes like this. 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 would 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.

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. 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. And 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. 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. But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. 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. 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. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. 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. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 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. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep undoing.

Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. 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, wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

You can see why we need to pray, can't you? Let's do that. Father God, open our hearts. Open our hearts tonight as we dig into your word, as we unpack these verses, and as we talk about what they mean, Lord guide us. Through your Holy Spirit bring light, revelation, and understanding.

We come to you, Lord, in humility because we recognize and acknowledge that without you it is impossible for us to lay hold of what is being shared here. Lord, you gifted your servant, the Apostle Paul, with such incredible insights, and we're still working on understanding them today. Help us, we pray, guide us, and help us, Lord, to apply what we learn, for we ask it in the name of our Savior, in the authority of his name, the name of Jesus, amen, amen, amen. All right, here we go, guys. Chapter 7.

The Apostle Paul begins by saying, or do you not know, brothers, in verse 1, for I'm speaking to those who know the law, that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives. And this is an important verse to stop and just think about for a moment because it sets the stage for what we're going to be hearing and for the basic understanding of what Paul is wanting to communicate with us, and it's a very simple sort of a thing. He's simply saying the laws, or all laws, are meant for the living. They're not meant for the dead. You know, the laws don't apply to the dead.

There's a law that says here in the country you've got to pay your taxes. Well, guess what? When you die you're released from that law. There's a law that, you know, well, you know, all the laws, and he brings up some here. So it sounds like kind of a no-brainer, but it's important for understanding the analogy that he is going to use here, and it's a somewhat imperfect analogy concerning marriage.

And in this analogy, he wants us to understand what he is sharing about sin's grip on our lives. And he says in verse 2, if you look with me again in your Bible, he says for a married woman is bound by law to

her husband while he lives, right? But if her husband dies, she's released from that law. In other words, she's no longer considered married. If her husband passes away, and she's free then to remarry.

And nobody would say anything about it, because she's free. There's absolutely no issues there, and he's using this analogy to speak to you and me about what Jesus did in our lives, and he's going to get into it here. And he says here in verse 4, likewise, my brothers, and that means I'm going to connect this now to what I just said. You also died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who's been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God. And you can see how critical this verse is, can't you?

Because in it he says, this is the whole reason I've given you this rather imperfect analogy related to marriage, it's because I want you to understand that when you came to Jesus, when you accepted him as your savior, that you entered into his death. And in so doing, you died to the law. And the law that held you captive is no longer holding you in that way. You died to it through the body of Christ. In fact, that's the key phrase of that verse.

You died to the law through the body of Christ. Now, this is not a new concept for those of you that have been following our study in Romans up to this point. This is something that the Apostle Paul introduced in the last chapter, this whole idea of being joined with Jesus in his death. It's not something people talk about. You don't hear even people teaching about it very often.

But it is critical to our understanding our current relationship to sin and our remaining sinful nature. And I'm going to put up the key verse that we looked at in the last chapter up on the screen so we can see it together. It's from Romans 6, verse 6, and this is where Paul said, We know that our old self, and that means the old man, literally in the Greek means old man, was crucified with him. Why? In order that the body of sin, he's talking about your sinful nature, might be brought to nothing so that you would no longer be enslaved to sin.

So this is the concept we looked at, studied, and saw in the previous chapter. Now, the Apostle Paul is going to expand the idea of what the death of Jesus has produced or made as a benefit, I guess I should say maybe, in our lives. And here he tells us we actually died to the law. This is the message of chapter 7. He tells us in chapter 6 we entered into his death that sin might not have a grip on us any longer.

Now he tells us we have actually died to the law. So here's the question that naturally comes from, I guess, our study thus far. And that is, what's the benefit? He says that we've died to the law. What does that mean?

And what is the benefit of dying to the law? Well, Paul, he kind of goes on to answer that in verse 5, so look with me in your Bible here as we go on. Verse 5, he says, For while we were living in the flesh, and that just refers to before we came to Jesus. It doesn't mean that after you come to Jesus you never struggle with the flesh. But you were living in the flesh before that.

He says when we were doing that, our sinful passions, look at this, aroused by the law, were at work in our members. And by the way, remember I told you the word members just means our bodies, our physical, fleshly bodies. You could even insert the word bodies there. He says our sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies to bear fruit for death. And I want you to come back to that phrase, aroused by the law.

If that isn't underlined or highlighted in your Bible, you should consider doing it. Because it is something very important to take note of, and we're going to come back to it in just a moment. So I want you to keep that on the front burner of your brain there. But suffice it to say, all the things that the law told us not to do, we were tempted to do, and we in fact did. And that's just kind of the way it goes.

And he says the result bore fruit in our lives for death. We'll talk more about that in just a little bit. But first, verse 6. He says, but now, and those words mean now that you have come to Jesus. Now that you're a born-again, washed-in-the-blood believer.

But now, we, and that speaks of all believers, are, look at this, released from the law. Why? He says we're released from the law because the law only has jurisdiction over a person as long as they're alive. You get it? You died with Christ when you joined with him.

You experienced a true death. You didn't physically die. You joined him in his death. In the last chapter, we learned that it meant sin no longer has dominion. In this chapter, we learned that you died to the law, and what the law does is it sentences you.

It brings a curse, and it sentences you, and it says, you're dead. You are dead because you can't keep me. That's what the law says to you. You can't possibly live a life good enough because I am perfect. I am the expression of God's righteousness and holiness.

And so the law condemns you and me. Well, guess what? That condemnation is gone. Why? Because you died.

The law only has jurisdiction over a living person. You died. Now, here's the good news. You didn't stay dead. And that's, you know, these are the things that we show, you know, we depict in water baptism, right?

We depict this process that Paul is talking about here in Romans 6 and 7, where we lay someone back into the water. That's a picture of joining in the death of Jesus Christ. But they don't stay there. We bring them immediately up out of the water, and they are resurrected through the power of the Spirit, cleansed by the water. That shows a cleansing which takes place in a spiritual sense when we come to Jesus Christ, put our faith in him, and now we're a new living person.

But the old man has died. And that's what water baptism is a picture of. The old man, right? Dying. And the new man coming alive, right?

You might remember Pastor Chuck used to tell a story about when they were doing water baptisms, mass water baptisms in the ocean, how he was sharing this with one of the hippies, you know, that was getting dunked in the ocean, getting baptized. He'd come to Christ, and Chuck was telling him how, you know, he says, you ready to say goodbye to the old man? And the guy said to Chuck, you might want to keep me under. There's a lot to die. And, you know, that's sometimes the way we feel, you know.

But the Bible tells us here, what Paul is telling us here in Romans 7, is that we died to what held us captive, and that's the law. The law held us captive. The law condemned us, and we were captive. So let me explain some things here. You know, we all know that sin is the problem in the world and in our personal lives.

We also know that sin kills. We've talked about this. The wages of sin is death. You know, sin puts to death. And because mankind is under the sentence of death, which we talked about in Romans chapter 1, God sent his only son, of course, to rescue us from the sentence of death and the curse that went along with it because of our condemnation.

But what we don't often think about is the role that the law played in that whole thing. And that's what Paul's trying to make us aware of in this chapter, the role the law played. The law played a role in this whole thing because it is the law, as I said, that condemns people, you know. That's why when you're sharing Christ with somebody, if you're giving them the Ten Commandments, all you're doing is killing them. There's no life in the Ten Commandments.

I mean, there's life if you could keep them, but you can't. That's the problem. You see, that's the paradox of the law. There is life in the law, but only if you can keep it perfectly. That's the whole issue.

And because no one can, the law equals death for, you know, any human being. So we don't stop, you know, we don't just give people the law and tell them, there, you know, you need to keep the law and, you know, yeah, there's no good news in that, right? So all the law basically does is it tells us that our behavior doesn't measure up and that's all it does. And it tells us how much of a sinner we are. By the way, this is kind of an interesting sidebar.

I just thought of this, but most of you know who Sigmund Freud is, you know, psychology guru from, you know, the past years, he believed and told people, practiced in fact, saying that all mental illness and phobias and issues of the emotional self, negative issues, were a by-product of the rules that governed morality. He believed that very strongly. He believed, in fact, if you take away the rules, then people are going to be healthy emotionally. But he said, the reason people are messed up is because we give them all these rules to live by, you know, sort of a thing. In other words, Sigmund Freud's position was blame the law.

It's the law's fault. Just take away the law, you know, to be a healthy, emotionally healthy person, take away all these dumb rules saying, thou shalt not, just get rid of them and then you'll be okay. The reason I bring it up is because this is what Paul goes on to address in verse 7 and following. He says, look at here in your Bible, it says, what then shall we say? That the law is sin?

See, that's what Freud believed. The law was at fault. The law is to blame, right? And that's Paul's way of saying, are we saying now that the law is at fault here? He says, by no means.

Yet, he says, if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I wouldn't have really known. Yes, we have a conscience. We have a vague idea of the things that are right and wrong, but the specifics of sin, like covetousness and so forth, we learn from the law. And that's what Paul goes on to say.

He says, I wouldn't have even known really what the specifics of being covetous were all about unless the law would have said to me, hey, don't covet, which means to want or to desire something that doesn't belong to me, belongs to someone else, right? And so he goes on in verse 8 to say, and this is really interesting, but sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, look at this, produced in me all kinds of covetousness for apart from the law, sin lies dead. Stop there. I want to talk to you about this just a minute. I told you to take note of that phrase earlier, aroused by the law.

This is where Paul elaborates on that a little bit and develops it. He actually admits that the law produced in him all kinds of covetous thoughts by simply telling him, you shall not covet. And you might

think, well, that sounds weird, but it's not weird at all. You know, I worked with a guy many years ago in the ministry. He was actually my assistant for a very short time.

And he admitted to me that when he was in high school, in fact, he was like in junior high, I think, he said, I had never been tempted to mess around with illegal drugs, never, he said, and then they showed us a video in school about the dangers of illegal drugs, he says, I immediately went out and started experimenting, you know, and he was telling me this in light of what we're seeing here in Romans chapter seven, that rules arouse in us, you know, because of our rebellious tendencies to do what we, you know, shouldn't do. Every parent who's raised children knows what this is about. If you don't want your, you know, if you want to see your kid try to do something, just tell them not to do it, you know, and they're going to, they're going to give it a try, depending on your child. Some are a little more rebellious than others, but you know, that just, as soon as you introduce a rule to your child, it's kind of like, oh, I wonder why, I wonder what's behind that door, or in that room that they don't want me to go into, or something like that, you know? So the law has this interesting way of arousing in us the very idea of doing what we're being told not to do.

So again, someone might even hear what, you know, Paul is saying when he says, I was, my sinful tendencies were aroused by the law, and they might say, well, yeah, see, Paul, you're saying right there that the law is the problem. You admitted it. So that's why Paul goes on to say, verse nine, he says, I was once alive apart from the law, and this is a difficult thing to understand. You and I wouldn't say it this way today. What he's saying is, I didn't know what was wrong, so I was alive in my ignorance.

Okay? I was alive in my ignorance, because I didn't know, and you know how they say ignorance is bliss, and that's kind of true, you know, you're doing something until you find out that you shouldn't be doing it, and then you realize, oh, well, I guess I've been messing up, right? And that's what he meant, he means when he says, I was once alive apart from the law, then he goes on to say, middle of verse nine, but when the commandment came, sin came alive, and that simply, it doesn't mean sin wasn't there before, it was, he means, I understood what sin now really was, I understood how sinful sin really was, and he says, and I died. Why? Because the law condemns.

It sentences us, and it condemns us. Okay? And so he, that's where he goes on in verse 10 to say, the very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me, and again, like I said, the only promise that the law can give you of life is if you can keep it perfectly, otherwise it just sentences you to death. Verse 11, he gets even further in this whole idea, he says, for sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it, killed me. And what Paul is saying in verse 11 is that sin

actually incited him to do what the commandment prohibited, and sin deceives us into thinking that we're going to be okay.

It's going to be, it's not really, it's not that big of a deal. Have you ever done something like that and had the Holy Spirit, you know, convict you later on? We have this way of justifying ourselves when we're doing things that we know later on, perhaps, that we shouldn't, but we can actually tell ourselves for a period of time, it's not that big of a, I mean, people are doing worse, okay? There's a lot of people on this, on God's green earth, that are doing a whole lot worse than I'm doing. So it's really not that big of a, that's the deception of sin, and that's what Paul's talking about.

Nothing bad's going to happen. Sin deceived me. I'll get away with it. Sin deceived me. He says, and through that deception, I died, right?

So it's not the law that's the problem. Sin is the problem. Specifically, our sinful nature is the problem. The law, therefore, is exonerated, and that's the point Paul is making. The law is not the problem.

Yes, it kills you, but that's your fault, not the law's fault, okay? And that's why he writes in verse 12, so the law is holy, the commandment is holy and righteous and good. Okay, so he just made a conclusion statement there, right? Well, every statement of conclusion always brings up another question. And so this is the next logical question in verse 13, so did that which is good, referring to the law, then bring death to me?

He says, by no means, no, no, no, no, no. It was sin that brought death. Sin produced death in me through what is good, the law. In order that sin might be shown to be sin and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure or as some Bibles say that it might be shown as exceedingly sinful. All right.

I think that's the new King James rendering in fact. So the law helps you and me to understand just how rotten we are and how serious you know sin is. That's what the law does and it does a good job but it can't save anybody. It never could. The law was never given as a mechanism to save people even in the Old Testament.

God didn't give the Jews the law to live by so they would be saved. Salvation didn't enter into the equation. People have always been saved the same way by grace through faith even in the Old Testament. They were simply looking forward to the final sacrifice. We're looking backward at what Jesus did on the cross but it's always been faith.

The law as Paul says here was given to highlight how sinful we really are. Now as we get into the final verses of this chapter the Apostle Paul is going to go on and he's going to start talking about the daily challenge that we all face as it relates to living for the Lord and we all struggle you know and the reason we struggle is because we who are born again Christians have two natures living inside of us. We have the nature of God now through the Holy Spirit who indwells us ever since we came to faith in Jesus but we still have this remnant of the sinful nature. Now it's the same sinful nature that we've heard about, read about, studied here in this book that has been, I was going to say neutered, I'm not sure that's a good term, it has been rendered unable to dominate. Let's say that it's still there though and you can still choose it and Paul's going to even talk about that here at the conclusion of this chapter.

You can still choose the sinful nature but it's just a remnant. Jesus did a number on your sinful nature and on mine when we came to him by faith and so he's going to talk about the challenge that we all deal with from that perspective and more than that what we're going to see Paul saying in these verses is once again the law provides no solution to the sinfulness of mankind. It clarifies sin but it does not bring a solution, right. Again as I've said many many times it's the law is like your bathroom scale, it tells you what the problem is, it doesn't provide solutions, you've got to figure those out for yourself. All the bathroom scale does is go, oh mercy what are we going to do about this?

Well you've got to work that out but the scale doesn't get up and say alright here's what you're going to do and that's just like the law, the law doesn't stand up and say here's what you need to do. Now some people think that that's the case, I just need to work harder, I need to be a better Christian, yeah that's not going to work, not by keeping the law, right. So Paul goes on here in verse 14, check this out, he says, for we know that the law is spiritual but I am of the flesh and if you have a different Bible translation in your lap your Bible may say carnal, I am carnal, they mean the same thing. In fact Paul goes on to say I've been sold under sin, the NIV says sold as a slave to sin and he's talking about the condition of all of mankind, we are sold into slavery to our sinful flesh, our sinful desires and that's just the way we're born and that's the world we live in. And by the way if you've been watching the news lately and scratching your head and saying how can this world be so whacked out, crazy, insane, then just remember this, you're reading about people who are sold into sin, how can they be other than what they are, they don't have the ability to be other than they are.

You do as a believer, they don't, right, they're sold as the NIV says as a slave to sin. Now Paul's going to go on to describe what that slavery to sin is like, verse 15 he says, I don't get it, he says I don't understand even my own actions for I do not do what I want but I do the very thing that I hate. Now Paul is beginning to admit he's talking to you and me now from the perspective as a believer, he's made the

point that all mankind is sold as a slave under sin but we know that that slavery has been broken through Jesus Christ, that was what chapter 6 was all about. So now as a believer how am I to understand this propensity that I still have within me to sin, how am I supposed to acknowledge that and make sense of that? I'm a believer and you know I get notes from people and they don't understand this concept at all and so they'll write to me and say Pastor Paul I have just the sins that I have been committing since I gave my life to Jesus make me wonder if I've truly got saved.

You see that is a lack of understanding about what role the sinful nature still continues to play in the life even of a born again Christian and somehow some way these Christians came under the impression that once they got saved they should stop sinning, you know, it's all over. Well no, we talked about this in previous studies, the last two studies that we did through chapter 6 that sin has been rendered or the sinful nature has been rendered ineffective but you can still choose to go back there and that's the point. We still choose as believers to sin or we choose to follow God either one. But Paul is admitting here in verse 15 something that we all need to understand and embrace and that he's saying that it is not in the power of our fallen human nature to conquer sin and live a life pleasing to God. He says what I don't want to do that's what I end up doing.

So what is he saying? What is he saying to you and me? You can't do it, you don't have the power. In the flesh you cannot conquer the flesh, you cannot by setting your will be a good Christian, you can't do it, it is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that we can live the life that we are called to live as believers. You cannot put out a fire by throwing fire at it and that's what you're doing when you try to conquer the flesh with the flesh, you're just feeding the flames.

Okay so I really want to get that through your hearts that changing yourself is not what God is asking you to do. Okay very important, God is not looking to you and saying clean yourself up, in fact he is making it very clear to you, you cannot do that, you are unable to clean yourself up. So Paul writes verse 16, now if I do what I do not want I agree with the law that it's good so my lack of ability to change myself actually shows that what the law is saying is good, I'm not. Verse 17, so now and again this is spoken from the perspective of a believer, so now it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me and Paul is showing here in this simple verse that the source of our sinful behavior is the sinful nature, your sinful nature that still does dwell in you, it's been limited, it's been conquered but it's still there, it hasn't been eradicated yet. Okay now when Paul says it's not me it's sin he's not excusing himself, he's not saying to us you know well you know I'm not at fault it's this dumb sinful nature that's in me that's what the problem is, that's still you and again the reason he's not excusing himself is we know that.

We've already been told that the sinful nature was conquered through the death of Jesus Christ. It wasn't eradicated, but it was conquered. But it's still there. And so that means when you sin, you choose to do that. And again, I've told you guys this before, and I've told you it's a very unpopular thing for me to say.

Christians don't like to hear me say it. It just bothers them. But there's no other explanation for why we sin as Christians. Because we've learned that the sinful nature has been conquered. It's been rendered ineffective.

You have to go back and choose. In other words, somebody cuts me off in traffic or shows me a dirty sign or yells at me, and I get all upset and I yell back something equally abusive and vulgar. That's on me. I chose to do that. I allowed the emotion to well up and overwhelm me, and I just said, I'm going to do this.

I don't care. Why? Because it feels good. Because make no mistake about it, it does. But that's me.

That's me. I can't say the devil made me do it. I can't say that other driver made me do it. It's me. I chose.

My sinful nature tempted me, but I gave in to the temptation. So when Paul makes the statement here in verse 17, it's no longer I who do it. Now he's talking about, he's saying as a Christian who has the Holy Spirit living in me. It's not the Holy Spirit living, because that's the new me. The Holy Spirit living in me is the new me, and that's what we have to start getting used to.

Calling ourselves the new me. The new you has been made in the image of Jesus. Okay? I know you don't see him show up a whole lot sometimes, but he's there. We all need to learn to yield more to him on a day-to-day basis, but that's the new you.

The new you is Jesus living in you. The power of the Holy Spirit. And so when Paul says it's no longer I who do it, he's saying it's not the Holy Spirit, that new me that does it. It's the old me and the sinful nature that dwells within me, tempting me, and I give in to the temptation. Right?

That's what is guilty of sin. Verse 18 now. For I know that nothing good dwells in me that is in my flesh. So, right? This is the paradox of Christianity and the born-again believer.

It really is something that I struggle to lay hold of, but I agree with what Paul's saying here. Nothing good lives in me that is in my flesh. Nothing good. Except, wait a minute. Does Jesus live in me?

He's separating the two. In my flesh, there's nothing good. Right? But that's not the new me. That's the old me.

He says, for I have, and I'm still in the middle of verse 18, for I have the desire to do what is right now. Where does that desire come from? For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Right? Isn't that what your Bible says?

Not here in Romans, but elsewhere. It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. So, that desire that's in you, that's God. He's working in you to do right. Paul says, I have that desire, but I don't have the ability to carry it out.

In my flesh, I don't have the ability to do what God wants me to do or to live the way he wants me to live. I don't have the ability in my flesh. All right? Verse 19, 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.

Again, he's speaking as a born-again Christian. It's not the new me, but it's that sin nature that dwells within me. And so, here comes Paul's conclusion, and this is the struggle that we all deal with. Verse 21, so I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, this thing, this evil, lies close at hand, and it's there tempting me. For I delight in the law of God in my inner being.

That's in my spirit. Because remember, when you got saved, God wrote his law on your heart. And so, now in the inner person, I'm like, I want to do what's right. I want to be a godly man, but I recognize I don't have the ability to carry it out. He says in verse 23, but I see in my members, again, that means my body, my flesh, another law waging war against the law of my mind, and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my body.

So, I want you to take note of that phrase, waging war against the law of my mind, which he's talking about the new him, the new man, the new man who's created in the image of Jesus. So, now there's this war going on, and you thought you were schizophrenic. No, you're just a Christian, and you've got this war going on. There's this battle going on. And so, when that person cuts you off in traffic and says mean things, or your boss gets in your face and says vulgar, obscene things to you, there's now this war.

How am I going to respond? How am I going to react to this now? And there's the new man that wants to come out, you know, and there's the old man. And we're kind of used to following the old man, by the way. We're pretty accustomed to him.

We know how he responds, we know how he acts, and we know how it makes us feel when we act that way. Good for a moment, and then we feel horrible. So, which one are we going to choose? There's a war. There's a war going on, and that's what Paul's saying here.

There's a law that's waging war inside of every born-again Christian. And that's why Paul starts the next verse by saying, wretched man that I am. You know, it's like, how are we going to do this? How am I going to possibly do this? Live for Jesus.

When I got this war going on inside of me, how am I going to do this? Wretched man that I am. And by the way, the Greek word that is rendered here, wretched, in this passage carries the idea of wretchedness through the exhaustion of hard labor. It's a wretchedness that comes about by trying to fix the problem in my own strength. You know, I have to admit something to you.

When I was a new believer, and I use that term understanding that I came to Christ when I was 15, I didn't start really walking with the Lord until about 24, and that's when I got serious about the Lord, and that's the time period I'm talking to you about. Here I was, no, I knew that I knew that I knew that I'm saved, born again, God loves me, my sins are forgiven. I knew that without a shadow of doubt, and yet I had a terrible obscene mouth. I, and you know, being a younger man, and younger men are younger men, and the stupidity that goes along with youth, I had a short fuse. And when I would get angry, I would let a string of obscenities come out of my mouth, and I hated it.

It made me feel filthy. I never questioned my salvation, I questioned my mouth, and I questioned whether or not I would ever get a hold of it. I really did. It discouraged me for quite a while, but you know, over a period of time, I suddenly realized I'm not using those words anymore, and when I get upset, or frustrated, and when I get upset, or frustrated, or angry, I don't say the things that I used to say. And I realized that completely apart from anything that I had attempted or desired to do to change that in my life, God did a work to clean up my mouth.

And I'm so glad that he did, but it wasn't me. And there was another issue, you know, that frankly what brought me and my wife to the Lord was the first five years of our marriage, we lived in a state of self-denial, in a state of self-doubt, in a state of self-doubt. like atheists. We knew the Lord from the standpoint of knowing the gospel. We never went to church the first five years of our marriage.

I was a rock and roll disc jockey. She worked in a bank in finance. We were living the life that kind of goes along with that. And our marriage failed after the first five years. I mean it was just toast.

And we started talking about divorce. Interestingly enough, we also made a decision for some reason or another. We were living in Montana, Great Falls, Montana at the time. That's where I had been at a radio station. And we were living in the same home as strangers, pondering, you know, how do you go about getting a divorce?

And Sue's reading the paper, and I remember I was sitting on the other side of the living room, and she said, oh there's a concert coming up here this weekend. You want to go? Well, what is it? Well, it was a Christian group. Second chapter of Acts.

Some of you may know the second chapter of Acts. Some of you whose hair is the same color as me, and maybe have been around a while. And I said, yeah, let's go. And at that concert, we both rededicated our lives to the Lord. But we were still a mess.

We made a determination at that point that divorce was off the table. But we were still a mess. I mean, all the things that got us into trouble were still there. You know what I mean? All the things that messed us up and got us to the place where we were, this train wreck of a marriage, were still very much in play.

And so what are we going to do about this, you know? And we had done things to hurt one another, and I won't get into those details, but you know. And there was a lot of hurt going around in our marriage. So here we are, a couple of brand new babies kind of in the Lord. We realize that Jesus doesn't want us to get a divorce, but we really don't want to be together.

Well, how are we going to do this, you know? And there were plenty of times when I just would have a wave of frustration come over me. And I would think to myself, and sometimes even say out loud to the Lord, Lord, I can't do this. I can't do this. I can't put this marriage back together.

And the Lord, in one of those rare times in my life, spoke to me. I remember I was sitting in my car in the parking lot at the Albertson's grocery store, or Safeway or whatever it was. And it was one of those rare times when the Lord just spoke so coherently. And he said, Paul, I'm not asking you to fix it. I'll fix it.

You just be obedient. That's all I'm asking of you. Just put one foot in front of the next and do what I tell you to do each day. Okay, I can do that. Well, what happened over the next period of months and years is God brought a healing into our marriage that we couldn't have begun to anticipate or expect after all of the hurt that we had caused one another in those first five years.

We've been married now for 48 years this month. And the Lord has done just such an incredible thing. But it is not us. It's him. He is the one.

He'll give you the desire, but the last thing he's looking for you to do is fix things yourself. He wants you to give it to him because he's the fixer. He's the one who's going to do the work of repair. And it is an important thing for each and every one of us to come to a point in our lives and to say, like the Apostle Paul, wretched man that I am, who's going to work this thing out? Who's going to fix this thing?

And the answer is, thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. That's it. That's the answer. That's the answer. That's who's going to fix it.

Not you. Him. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. He's done what I cannot do. Right?

And that's the simple reality of what we're saying here. That's what Paul is saying. And so he says here at the latter part of verse 25, so then I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh, there's this issue of the law of sin that I still deal with. And in this final statement, don't think that Paul is giving a resignation like, you know, about the inevitability of sin. He's not saying, so then I'm a Christian but I still mess up and I'm gonna sin and I suppose I should just expect I should.

That's not what he's saying. Paul is acknowledging the struggle that is inside of every one of us. And guys, if you struggle with sin, I've said this before, if you struggle with sin, that means you're a Christian. Because when I was an unbeliever, I didn't struggle with sin. I just lived in it.

But it's when the Holy Spirit begins to work in you to will and to act according to his good purpose, that's when we struggle because you know that you can do better. And so Paul is acknowledging that. And he's telling you and me that there can be victory, there can be a changed life. You know, there's this wonderful passage, I don't have it on a slide, but I know many of you know it. In fact, I think this was my very first memory verse when I came to the Lord.

1 Corinthians 10.13, no temptation has seized you. And I remember it in the NIV because that's what I had. No temptation has seized you except what is common to man, but God is faithful. He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear. Tempted beyond what you can bear.

But he will also provide a way out. God is there to provide a way out for sin, whatever the temptation of life may be coming your way. He's always there to provide a way out. Do we always take that way out? Heavens no.

But it's there. He's there to provide a way out. That's the promise of that passage in 1 Corinthians 10. So you see, our relationship with sin has changed. And I want you to know that.

Your relationship with sin is not the same relationship you had before you met Jesus. Sin has been rendered ineffective. Now you have to choose to follow sin. We still do that from time to time, but you didn't have to choose it before. You were a slave before.

And that was the point. You were enslaved to sin. Now you're no longer enslaved. Now what happens in you, these temptations that you get to follow the flesh, this is a remnant, you guys. It is a remnant of something that still remains in you, but will not be there forever.

And this goes back to our original question that we asked at the very top. When we get to heaven, are there still going to be a possibility of sin? No. And the reason is, is because that remnant of sin that we call our sinful nature, that remains in us, is connected to this physical body. That's why the Bible refers to it as the flesh.

And there is coming a day when you and I are going to set aside this body of flesh. And it's either going to happen when your body expires or when Jesus comes again. One of those things is going to happen first. And when that happens, as Paul says, if we're still alive when the Lord returns, he says we're going to be transformed in the twinkling of an eye. Transformed.

Do you think that means you're still going to have a sinful nature? No, no, no. That new resurrection body that you and I are going to receive, that's not going to have that same connection to the flesh. Because you see, the law has been severed in your life. And that remnant that is still attached to this body will go away.

It's going to be gone. And so you see, there will be no possibility of sin after either death or the Lord returns. And this is where we come back and we look at the same verse we looked at at the beginning. We'll put it up one more time. Actually Romans 6.

We know that our old self was crucified with him. By the way, crucifixion is a very effective means of putting things to death. And our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing. So that we would no longer be enslaved to it. If you're a Christian tonight, you're no longer enslaved to sin.

It doesn't mean you don't sin, you're just not a slave to it anymore. You can choose to say, nope, not doing that. So this remnant of the sinful nature that you and I still have, it's not going to be sticking around. It's going to go away with these bodies. Because this is the corrupt.

body that you see here and the corruptible body that you're living in is the same. It was never meant to live for eternity. Well, originally it was, but once sin came into the picture that ruined it. And now these corruptible bodies will be replaced with incorruptible bodies that will not have a sinful nature. And so no, sin will not be a possibility.

Amen? There you go. Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for your word. Your word is mind-blowing sometimes when we think about the depth of what you're saying here to us.

And Lord, I thank you for the good news. Well, and I thank you, Lord, also for the bad news. I thank you, Lord, for the bad news that we can't live up to the law and that it condemns us. But I thank you, Lord, for the good news that you bore our condemnation on the cross through Jesus Christ our Lord and that now the sin nature has been dealt a death blow and we are no longer enslaved but we have freedom. Freedom now for the first time in our lives to say no, to walk after the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit, to live the life that you've called us to live.

And Father God, I pray for every person here who's struggling with some area of sin and I ask my Father God that you would speak loudly and clearly to them tonight that it is not an expectation on your heart that they would work to rid themselves of that sin but instead it is your desire that they would surrender it to you, put it on the altar and lay it down and say, Lord, I can't but you can. You are the power. You are the power in my life over sin. Give me the victory, Lord. I wait upon your victory.

We thank you, Father, for the love that you've poured out in our hearts through our Savior for it is in his name that we pray and all God's people said together, Amen.