

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 25TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

IT'S SIMILAR (ROMANS 7:1-6)

A wake-up call of sorts

Chapter 7 is a sobering reminder that the Christian life is not always easy and fun. Paul both testifies to a life of victory and of great conflict. He also teaches us that one of the hardest parts is conforming the hand (what we do) to the heart (what we want to do).

- In other words, we're free from sin, but we still fight with its presence.

AND WE WILL FIGHT UNTIL WE DIE

Paul says that we're bound to the Law (what is right and wrong) as long as we live, meaning sin will always be tempting. This fight will end when we either die, or Jesus returns for us.

- The allegiance we have to Jesus and abstaining from sin is similar to the bond one has with a spouse. **Though we may struggle, we're to remain faithful until death.**

"...SHE WILL BE CALLED AN ADULTERESS."

V3 tells us that if we're with someone other than our spouse when we're married, we're sinning. The analogy uses a woman as an example because Christians are the bride of Christ.

- The same goes with our spiritual "Husband," Jesus. **When we put things above Him or don't work to uphold His teachings, we are committing spiritual adultery.**

THE GOTCHA MOMENT (V4-6)

Though we will struggle to flee from sin and live by the 10 C's, we're set free from the guilt of not being able to be perfect because we've died to the Law through following Christ and baptism (ch. 6) and no longer feel the weight of being saved by our works.

- **This doesn't allow us to sin. It allows us to live in God's grace and mercy.**

"THAT WE MAY SERVE IN A NEWNESS OF THE SPIRIT."

This phrase from V6 sets up the rest of the chapter. Because Jesus has died, rose again, and forgave our debt to God, we are now able to live and love in a new way.

- The Law defines the lane, but the cross Jesus bore gives us the ability to drive in that lane. **It is no longer by our works, but His that we accomplish anything good.**

DIRECTION (ROMANS 7:7-13)

WAIT, NOW HE'S DEFENDING THE LAW?

Romans can be a little hard to understand because Paul teaches that we live above the Law because of grace, but that we are to still honor it because it defines right and wrong.

- Paul wants us to know that **the 10 C's do not cause sin and they are not discarded in light of what Jesus has done for us.**

THE 10 COMMANDMENTS DEFINE SIN

Paul says, "I would not have known sin if it were not for the law." Without a clear definition of what is right, we would be unsure of what is wrong. He uses "Do not covet" as an example.

- **Because morality is clearly defined through the 10 C's, we have a responsibility to live in accordance to them to the best of our abilities even though we fall short.**

THERE'S NO SALVATION WITHOUT RECOGNITION OF SIN

Until we realize that we have done wrong and need help, we cannot be saved. Once we have realized this, we continually rely on Jesus and His grace because we will make more mistakes.

- This is our culture's hang up: **we don't think we are doing anything wrong, therefore there is no need for a Savior.**

"...WAS PRODUCING DEATH IN ME?"

We don't need to overcomplicate what Paul is saying. He is simply saying that the 10 C's not only teaches us what sin is, but they constantly push us to be closer to God.

- **The teachings of Jesus not only save us, they save us more and more as time goes on. This is called sanctification, Christians evolving to be more like God.**

NOT PERFECTION, DIRECTION

The law reveals what sin is, but we're not capable of completely following God's laws. This isn't bad news, because if we understand that it is by God's grace that we're saved, we're free.

- **So, it is not about us being perfect, it is about us moving towards the One that is. When we do that, we will sin less and grow in holiness (living by God's standard).**

OUR SIN (ROMANS 7:14-25)

It is always going to be a fight

Paul's major point for this section is that sin will always be a conflict until we die or Jesus returns. This goes along with Gal. 5:17, "For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit."

- On some level, every Christian will struggle with sin. **We must be honest and open about our struggles.**

BUT, I THOUGHT WE WERE FREE OF SIN'S CLAIM?

In ch. 6 Paul said we were free from sin, but here he admits he fights against it. Freedom from sin means that we have an Advocate Who not only says we are clean, but when we do mess up He forgives us. We are also free from the wrath of God.

- This tension exists until this life is over. **We can make it, but we must obey Jesus.**

Paul had been a Christian for 25 years

Paul was a mature believer that still had temptations that would arise in his daily life.

- As we grow closer to Jesus through prayer, the Bible, and church community, we will also move further from sin. We may still fight at times, but **the struggle becomes less frequent and the sins become less "severe."**

"...NOTHING GOOD LIVES IN ME"

The dependency we must have on Jesus is further illuminated by the fact that **apart from God, there is nothing good in us.** Paul even says that the "desire to do what is good is with me, but there is no ability to do it."

- This completely flies in the face of our current culture that tells us we are all ok. If that is the case, we don't need a Savior.

TWO "LAWS" AT WAR WITH EACH OTHER

Paul mentions the "law of the mind" and the "law of sin" that battle inside him. The "law of the mind" is the desire to follow God's teachings and the "law of sin" is the evil that wars against the goodness God puts in us.

- **Sometimes the battle gets overwhelming (as we see in Paul's response in v24), but we can make it with God's grace.**

IT ALL POINTS BACK TO JESUS

V25 simply means that we will all struggle with the temptation to sin, but "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ" because we can live free of the condemnation and enslavement of a sinful lifestyle.

- **This is why we must be full of and dependent on the Holy Spirit, praying, reading, and fellowshiping.**

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

- If we choose a life of following Jesus we must be committed to His teachings through the Bible for life (similar to a marriage).
- The 10 Commandments (Ex. 20) show us the path we should strive to travel on.
- We will fail at upholding the 10 C's, and the devil loves this. Fortunately, Jesus is gracious and helps us when we repent.

Sanctification (changing over time to act more like God) is always a struggle because we will always have temptations. But, Jesus is with us and will give us the power to live righteously.

- So, it all goes back to faith and dependency on Jesus to help us because "nothing good" is in us apart from Him.

LET'S TAKE AN HONEST INVENTORY

- Can we say we're committed to Jesus in prayer, Bible reading, and church? Do we have a relationship with Him?
- Do we know the commands of God?
- Are we honest with God and others about our struggles with sin and temptation?
- Do we repent for sin and thank God for His grace and mercy?

Do we know that even though we will fall short and struggle, we can go to Jesus and He will sanctify us, if we are willing, and we can grow to be more like Him?

- God loves us and He has proven that through Jesus. If we choose to, we can not only be saved but changed. It is not easy, but it is worth it.