

Romans: The Crown Jewel of Salvation

27 - *But Why Do I Still Struggle with Sin Now?*

Romans 7:14-25

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / March 23, 2014

Two WARNINGS to keep in mind in your fight against sin.

I. Don't Fool Yourself that the Fight is Over

A. You Will Still Struggle with Sin - until Jesus comes or you die – whichever comes first.

At this point in the book of Romans, we start to get a very clear picture of the normal Christian life.

Ch. 6 tells us that he's not RULED by sin... but Ch. 7 reminds us that he's not altogether FREE from sin yet.

Ch. 6 tells us that sin no longer REIGNS in our life... but Ch. 7 shows us that we'll still struggle with the sin that REMAINS in our life.

Ch. 6 tells us that sin no longer CHARACTERIZES the life of a believer... but Ch. 7 reminds us that sin still DWELLS in the life of a believer.

The Christian is not the same as an unbeliever. The unbeliever is at peace with sin, but we're at war with it. We're characterized by holy desires, but we still struggle with the old flesh.

As much as Paul is amazed by grace in Romans 6, he's amazed by the struggle of remaining sin in his life. Unbelievers don't get torn up over sin the way Paul is here in these verses!

v. 15 "... for what I will to do, that I do not do, but what I hate, that I do."

v. 18-19 "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform 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 to do, that I practice." *NIV & ESV 'keep on doing'*

The principle Paul recognizes is that he is a man with two natures. One delights in the law of God and the things of God, but the other wages war against it. Make no mistake! Every Christian lives with two competing forces that are at work in us simultaneously – so we live in a state of tension. A civil war.

v. 20-21 "Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good."

NIV "When I want to do good evil is right there with me."

v. 23 "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

Galatians 5:17 "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."

That's Paul's spiritual autobiography, but it's also the experience of every Christian. Anyone who has seriously followed Christ has known something of this struggle in Rom. 7:14-25. This is REALITY!

B. Don't Let that Be an Excuse to Give Up Fighting and Make Peace with Sin

There's a big difference between struggling with sin... and agonizing when you fail... and giving up. The fact that these verses are speaking of a Christian does not mean we should SETTLE IN and ACCEPT and just COAST with worldly living and a defeatist mentality.

We shouldn't make peace with our sin; we should MAKE WAR with our sin.

In those MOMENTS and TIMES when we fail to triumph over sin, Romans 7:14-25 is the normal way a healthy Christian should respond.

One of the reasons Romans 7 is so important is because of the practical implications it has for rescuing people from the devastating hopelessness of perfectionism.

There's a hopelessness that comes from rejecting all of God's standards – and saying we can sin all we want. And there's a hopelessness that comes from having perfectionistic standards that don't allow any place in a real life for the sins of true saints.

Paul's teaching in this passage helps us navigate through the tricky waters of these two kinds of hopelessness. And that's where we all live.

There are TWO DITCHES to fall into... one is to make peace with your sin and stop fighting. The other is to pretend that you've reached some higher plane... you're in the 'zone' and you don't sin anymore. Rom. 7:14-25 exposes both of these as a misunderstanding of who you are in Christ now.

II. Don't Lose Heart!

Rom. 7. 24-25 "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

The bottom line is that in our own strength we're helpless to win this battle against sin alone!

3 Steps to Becoming a Christian – Romans 7:24-25

1. "What a wretched man I am!"
2. "Who will rescue me ...?"
3. "Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

Here's the gospel: Jesus Christ came to earth, and he did what you could never do. When he died on the cross and when he lived that life and when he was raised from the dead, the Bible says he didn't just do it as an example; he did it for us.

2 Corinthians 5:21 "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

There's the great exchange. Jesus takes our sin. We get His righteousness!