



The New Life 5: Struggling with Sin

Romans 7:13-25

Rev. Fred Greco

This morning we will be looking at the last half of Romans 7, a complicated text which has been the source of much controversy over the centuries. Please give attention to the reading of God's Holy Word. For the Word of the Lord is completely without error, the Word of the Lord is completely authoritative, and the Word of the Lord is completely sufficient. Romans, chapter 7, beginning at verse 13:

"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 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. 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."

Thus far the reading of God's Holy Word. Let's pray for his blessing upon it. Heavenly Father, we come into your presence and we ask, O Lord, that you would reveal to us the truth of your Word, that by the power of your Holy Spirit you would illuminate our minds, that we might see and hear and understand your Word. This we ask in Christ's precious name, amen.

We have been looking the past few weeks at Romans, chapter 7, in which we have seen that Paul treats with a variety of subjects that are difficult for us to understand about how we are dead to the law, about how we must become slaves to righteousness to be freed from sin. Now here, at the last half of Romans 7, Paul is going to describe for us the struggle the Christian has with sin. If we would seek holiness, if we would seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, then we must understand our own sin.

That great evangelical bishop J.C. Ryle wrote this at the very beginning of his book on holiness: "He that wishes to attain right views about Christian holiness must begin by examining the vast and solemn subject of

sin. He must dig down very low if he would build high. A mistake here is most mischievous. Wrong views about holiness are generally traceable to wrong views about human corruption."

So we must approach this text with a sense of fear and trembling, hoping to understand by the illumination of the Holy Spirit what Paul is teaching us in this text. What I would like us to do is to ask and answer three questions from this text.

First... *Who is the man who is speaking?* I don't mean in the easy sense of the word where you answer me, "Paul." I mean in what state does Paul find himself as he writes this section of Romans 7? Secondly... *What is Paul teaching us from this material?* What does Paul want us to know? Then thirdly... *How does this apply to life?* Because theology is not just something we learn; theology is something we are to apply to our lives. It should change the way we live. It should point us toward worship. Who is the man, what is Paul teaching us, and how does this apply to life?

Who is the Man?

Well, let's begin by looking at who the man is. Throughout the centuries, there have been many answers given to this question. We'll look first at some of the *flawed answers*, and then we will look at an *encouraging answer*, an answer that brings to us encouragement and hope. This is a very difficult passage. We have said this over and over again in Romans, and it's because in the book of Romans Paul is dealing with important subjects in a very condensed way. Paul is also in the book of Romans seeking to correct our preconceived notions of the world, of God, and of ourselves.

What we have here is not only the problem, "What does the text say?" We also have the problem of, "What do I *want* it to say?" You see, the perspective we bring to the text can change the way we interpret it. This may well be the most controversial text in all of the letter to the Romans, and that is saying a lot when you consider we have Romans 9 and Romans 11 still to get to. This is a good example of how theology has consequences, because how we view this passage will affect how we think about living the Christian life.

We start with some flawed answers. The first view of this text is that Paul is describing someone, likely himself, before conversion. It's not surprising that this view has supporters. After all, that is whom Paul is describing in the previous passage in verses 7-12. He had described himself as someone who had been ignorant of his own sin. He described himself as someone who was righteous before God because of what he had done.

Until the law had come and had done its work, Paul realized he thought he had no need at all for Jesus. He had thought everything was fine. This was the dominant view in the early church, and it seems that there are elements in the passage that point to this. For example, Paul contrasts himself with the law in verse 14. He talks about the law being good, but he talks about himself being evil. He talks about the law being spiritual, but he talks about himself being in the flesh.

He says in verse 14 he is sold under sin. This has the idea of being captive to sin. It especially seems to contradict what Paul has just said in Romans 6:17-18. If you set your eyes there, you'll see that Paul says the believer is set free from sin. Well, if the believer has been set free from sin, how then can Paul talk about himself as being sold under sin? That's a challenge. Paul also says in verse 18 that there is nothing good dwelling in him. Then finally, in verse 24, he cries out as someone without hope, "O wretched man that I am! Who can deliver me from this body of death?"

So is this view correct? Is Paul describing the life of an unregenerate, pre-converted man? I don't think so. We could see a few things that tell us this that we'll look at in some more detail in just a few minutes, but first, let's see that the passage shows us that Paul delights in God's law. He has a delight in God's law, which unbelievers do not have.

Look at verse 16. He says, "Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good." The law's opinion is good, according to Paul. The law is good, according to Paul. Then, of course, in verse 22 he says, "I delight in the law of God, in my inner being..." What this passage describes is a man disturbed by his inability to fulfill the demands of the law. It's actually the exact opposite of what we saw earlier in this chapter and Paul's view in Philippians, chapter 3.

You remember there Paul believed he was fine, that he was perfectly right with God, that he had done everything he needed to do, that the law posed no threat to him. Here we see a different picture. We see a man who is wracked with difficulty and pain because he cannot keep the law of God. He sees how far he falls short. This wouldn't seem to describe someone who is unconverted and not pricked in the conscience.

Finally, there is something that I think is very helpful to us and needs to be pointed out for more than just the grammarians amongst us. You will see in verse 14 that Paul moves from the past tense to the present tense. He stops talking about the things that *had* happened in verses 7-12 and starts talking about his state right now. He says, "I *am*. I *do*." So here we have Paul's present state described. The grammar means something as we interpret this text. So it doesn't seem that this is a man who is unsaved.

Well, there's a second view, and that view describes a man who is in kind of a waiting period before conversion. That is, a man who is under conviction. Some say this passage describes someone who has been woken up to his lawbreaking and his spiritual inability. His conscience is awake, but this man has not yet become a believer. He is not yet participating in the new life in Christ. He still feels trapped.

This was the view of the great preacher Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, but there are problems here also. Again, this change in tense needs to be accounted for. Paul is speaking in the here and now in the present tense. He's not living in the past. More importantly, as we look at this text, the man knows who can deliver him. He's not struggling with what the answer is in verse 25. He's struggling with sin, but he answers that cry from his heart, "Who can deliver me?" with "Thanks be to God! Through our Lord Jesus Christ."

That doesn't describe someone who is not yet converted, who still feels trapped, who doesn't know the answer, so I think we need to discount the second view. The third view is a view that is well represented today by theologians. It is that this is a carnal or a weak Christian. This view contrasts the Christian, supposedly, that is found in Romans 7 with the Christian of Romans 8. The carnal Christian... This language is brought up by Paul's use of the term the *flesh*. *Carnal* means fleshly. The carnal Christian is one who has not yet embraced the victory in Jesus.

Fundamentally, this view says there are two stages of the Christian life, that first you can come to accept Jesus as Savior, and then at some later point in your life come to accept Jesus as Lord. There are two stages to the Christian life. The problem, we're told, is that Christians don't progress to the fullness of faith. If they only had more faith, if they only built faith on faith, God would reward them with this second stage of life, with confidence, with hope. This struggle would go behind them. All you need to do is have faith. This argument usually goes something like this: "How can I get rid of the struggle with sin?"

"Well, you have to do it."

"Okay. How do I do it?"

"Well, you know, you just do it. You just make your mind up and do it. You just have more faith on top of faith."

"But what steps do I take?"

"Aren't you listening to me? You do it."

And we wonder what it is we're supposed to do. How do we become this higher level of Christian? Where this comes from is Paul uses the term *flesh* in verse 14, in verse 18, and in verse 25. Those who espouse this theory say Paul is using it in the same way he uses a similar term (it's not the exact word, but it's very close) in 1 Corinthians 3.

He says, "But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not ready, for you are still of the flesh." What this theory posits is to be fleshly is to be an infant in Christ, to be a babe, to be immature. It's the immature Christian who struggles with sin.

Do you remember how I said theology has consequences? Here's your first lesson. If this is true and you struggle with sin, what do you think your problem is? Well, you're just immature. You need to get with the program. You need to get going in Jesus. You need to roll up your sleeves. You need to do more. This is *your*

fault. If you just had more maturity, if you just had more learning, you could put these struggles behind you. You could be sinless. You could achieve complete holiness.

There are men who teach this, and it's devastating in its consequences to the people of God. The truth is this can't be the answer either, because Paul makes it clear that the law is good, that the law is not to be abandoned, but the carnal Christian theory says the problem with the carnal Christian is he hasn't gotten past the law. He needs to do away with the law and move on to grace. As long as you're thinking about the law, you're a carnal Christian. You need to move on to grace.

Paul says that's not the problem. The law is good. We don't solve our problem by doing away with the law. The other thing is when Paul contrasts the carnal with the spiritual in Romans 8 (we'll get to that in a few weeks), he's describing the difference between unbelievers and believers, not two types of believers. The carnal is unbelieving. The spiritual is believing.

What, then, is the answer? Well, the view of most Reformed theologians, including Augustine, Luther, and Calvin, is that Paul is describing himself in his conflict with sin, that Paul is not looking back to the past but, rather, is describing his present struggle. Now if this is the case, then Paul must be describing a mature believer, because Paul has been a Christian for some time, hasn't he? He's a leader and a teacher in the church. He has founded churches. He's writing the Bible.

This struggle here is not one of the abnormal experience of just *some* Christians, but it is, rather, the normal experience of *all* Christians. Now what causes me to say this? First, Paul intentionally uses the present tense. He says, "I *am*. I *do*. I *find*." Whereas previously, earlier in chapter 7, it was always in the past tense: "I *knew*. I *was*. I *died*. I was *deceived*."

Secondly, Paul also has a very high view of the law of God. He says in verse 13 that the law is good. He says in verse 14 that it is spiritual, and as we have seen, most importantly, he says in verse 22 that he delights in the law of God in his innermost being. That is, in the very core of who he is he delights in the law of God.

Delighting in the law of God is a sign of someone who follows the Lord. If we were to go to Psalm 1, which sets the stage for the entire book of Psalms, it describes the difference between the godly man and the sinner, a theme that runs throughout all of the psalter. What we would read is this: "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but..." What does he do? "...his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night."

In Psalm 119 that we have been using for our affirmation of faith this past month, that longest chapter in the Bible that speaks of the law of God, no less than four times...at verse 70, at verse 77, at verse 92, and at verse 174...no less than four times does the psalmist say, "I delight in your law, and that is proof that not only I

love *you* but that you love *me*, God." That is the sign of someone who is a believer. He delights in the law of God.

Then there is something we absolutely cannot miss. Paul in this passage hates sin and wants to be free from it. None of the other views account for Paul's hatred of sin. Only the believer truly hates sin. Only the believer sees that sin is against God himself. Look at verse 15. He says, "I do the very thing I hate." He may *be* sinning, but he doesn't *want* to sin. Look at verse 19. "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing."

There is a battle that rages within Paul, but it is a battle he is engaged in because of his hatred for sin. Look at verse 23. "...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." The thing is the more mature a Christian is, the more he sees his own sin.

We could see this in the life of Paul himself. Paul describes himself in various ways. As you go autobiographically through his writings, reading the older letters first and the later letters last, you will see that Paul refers to himself as the least of the apostles, and then he begins to describe himself as the least of the saints, and then he describes himself as a sinner, and then at the very end of his life, as he's writing to Timothy in 1 Timothy 1, he says, "I am the foremost sinner."

The more Paul knows himself, the more he sees his sin. Does that mean Paul is acting with the same amount of bravado with his sin that an unbeliever is or that a new believer is? No. What it means is the more mature you are in Christ, the more the Holy Spirit is at work in your life, the more you study the Word of God, the more you see the sin that is resident in your life and your heart.

Paul knows there's deliverance from this struggle. That's why his last thought in verse 25 is of victory in Christ and that he will serve God. Well, if the man here who's being described is Paul as a mature Christian, what is Paul teaching us in this text? I think he's teaching us about at least two things, first about the law and second about ourselves.

What is Paul Teaching Us?

First, *it was not the law of God that brought about death*. He says this very plainly in verse 13. He says, "Did that which is good, then, bring death to me?" That which is good; that is, the law. Is that the cause of my death? We see this what should now become a common Pauline answer for you: "By no means!" "God forbid! Don't even let it enter into your mind. Don't give that a moment's thought." Paul rejects it outright.

Why is this? Paul has spoken earlier about sin using the law to bring about condemnation in Paul, and he describes this as well in verse 13. He says, "...sin, producing death in me through what is good..." That is, sin used the law to bring death to me. Why did God allow sin to use the law? That seems like a good question,

doesn't it? Paul answers it for us. In verse 13 he says, "...in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure."

There's a purpose in God allowing sin to use the law. It's so that sin can be seen as bad as it is, because if you are anything like me, you spend your life trying to minimize the sinfulness of sin. You say things like, "Well, that's just a white lie. I'm not even sure that counts. Well, I know I took that, but they're not even going to miss that. That's not really stealing. Well, I know I used certain language, but only adults were around. It's not like there were kids. Yeah, I know there are other things I give my life to that take priority sometimes over God, but there are times when I serve God too."

We tend to minimize sin in our lives, and especially minimize the sinfulness of sin. Sin is so sinful it can use something that is good, like the law, as a weapon against us. Think about that when you play with sin. That's how sinful sin is. One Puritan said we cannot take the fire of sin to our chest and not get burned. I think, perhaps, the starkest statement about the sinfulness of sin is one Reformed divine put it this way: "If you were to put sin in front of me and hell in front of me, I would choose hell, because sin is that sinful." I think we take sin far too lightly. Paul is teaching us about the law and how it is used to remind us of the true nature of sin.

The second thing Paul teaches us about the law is that *the law is spiritual*, that it actually comes from the Holy Spirit. That's what he means in verse 14 when he says the law is spiritual. He doesn't mean the law doesn't deal with physicality. Of course the law deals with physicality. I just saw an article online of a woman who was walking with headphones on. She posted a picture of how a young boy had come up behind her without her knowing it and had smacked her as hard as he could and left a welt on her body and then ran away.

The law certainly speaks to that. That's physical harm. That's wrong. When the law is being described as being spiritual, it means it comes to us from the Holy Spirit, and what that means is the law cannot be our enemy. How could the law be our enemy if it comes from the Spirit of God? Many modern theologians act like the law is bad, that that's the problem. You recall we talked about that with the "carnal Christian" theory, that all we need to do is to get past the law.

There is a theory that goes like *this*: When the Lord gave the Ten Commandments to Israel, Israel made a mistake. What they said was, "We hear what you're saying, God, and we will do it." What they should have said was, "No, no, no. We don't want the law. Take the law away from us. The law is bad. Give us grace." There's a problem with that, because the next verse after the Israelites say, "We will hear what you say and do it," God says, "You have spoken rightly in all that you have said."

Was God lying? Is God going to change his mind about what the law is? No, because the law comes from God. The law is not your enemy. We must understand that we can only understand the law through Jesus Christ. Paul knows he has no ability to keep the law on his own. That's why he's struggling. That's why he

says, "I'm fleshly." That's why he says, "I do what I don't want to do, and the things I'm supposed to do I don't do." Why is it? Because he doesn't have the ability in himself to accomplish this. That's why he cries out to God, because he knows the Lord *can* empower him.

Thirdly, *the law sets forth a proper standard of right and wrong*. We see this in verse 16. He says, "I agree with the law, that it is good." Paul is clear that the law is right when it talks about right and wrong. There is indeed objective truth in the universe. Now I know that nearly 24 hours a day you are inundated with articles and television shows and music and university professors and everything you can get around you that tells you there *is* no objective truth. Right here Paul says there absolutely is.

There is a right and there is a wrong. Do you want to know what the right and the wrong are? Look at the law. It's black and white. It's objective. It's clear. It's expansive. If you don't think the law is expansive, go home and, before you treat yourself to lunch, read the entirety of the book of Leviticus. Maybe you'll get dinner in, because it'll take you a bit of time. Even though we may not like objective truth's results, we can't declare that it just doesn't exist.

Fourthly, *the law is a delight to the believer*. Now why is this? We see that Paul says, "I delight in the law," but that at first glance doesn't make sense, because doesn't the law condemn us? How can you delight in what condemns you? That is because the law comes from God and is an expression of the character of God. The law shows us the character of Jesus.

Do you want to know what Jesus looks like? You can get a very good picture from looking at the law, because we know that Jesus kept all of the law every single day of his entire life in thought, word, and deed, not just things that were forbidden that he avoided but things that were commanded he did. We can see what love is. We can see what purity is. We can see what honesty is. We see Jesus in the mirror of the law, as it were. Not in the penalties of the law or in the fact that we can't keep the law but in the standards the law sets forth.

The second thing Paul teaches us about is about ourselves. There is a temptation for us to think we have arrived when we believe on Jesus. We think everything is going to get better then. Our marriage will be perfect. Our parenting will be perfect. No one will complain about us. Our lives will be easy. We'll be more efficient. We'll read our Bibles every day without fail. We'll always pray. Everything will be perfect. We've arrived. We'll never struggle with old sins. We'll never be tempted.

What Paul is teaching us here is that we still have the remnants of sin in our lives. We still have a sinful human nature. That's what Paul means when he says, "I am sold under sin." That's what Paul means when he says, "I am of the flesh." He says, "I still have a human nature. I'm a new creation in Christ, but I'm not perfect yet." Beloved, there's a reason we call glory *glory*, and it's because in glory do we put aside all of the remnants of sin.

There are some who claim they can reach a point of never sinning, of perfection, of complete sanctification, but Paul rejects this completely in verse 14. He says, "I am of the flesh, sold under sin." The Christian does not have a wholly wicked nature, but he doesn't have an all holy nature either. It's like the Bible says. I am not now what I *will* be.

The other thing we need to know about ourselves is that when we come to Christ we are given a new heart and a new mind. If this weren't true, there would be no struggle Paul is describing. Unbelievers don't struggle like in Romans 7. They just go on sinning. The only struggle is if someone points out the harm they're doing, and then they try to excuse that harm.

One of the greatest evidences you can have that you are a child of God is the struggle against sin. Pastors hear this all the time. Someone comes into your office and says, "Pastor, I have to confess a sin to you. I have to tell you what I did to my wife or what I did at work or what I watched on television. Pastor, it's so horrible I don't even know if I'm a Christian. It tears me up. I'm a miserable person. I don't know if there's any hope for somebody like me." The answer is there's exactly hope for somebody like you, because if the Spirit of God were not at work in your life you wouldn't care.

You wouldn't weep over sin. You wouldn't want to be free from sin. You wouldn't struggle against sin. Now I am not telling you that you use that as an excuse and say, "Pastor said I can go home and sin because Christians sin. Woo!" Go back and listen to the tape from a couple of weeks ago. Paul tells us we can't do that either. We are to make progress against sin by the power of the Holy Spirit, but we are not to be downtrodden because we're not perfect, because we're not free from sin. That's called the *Christian life*.

We also need to remember about ourselves that we have no ability to defeat sin on our own. Sometimes we think, "Well, now Jesus has saved me, I can take it from here. Jesus, I'll take the wheel." Justification has to be by grace, but sanctification is by work, by faithfulness. Some of you have seen a resurgence of this even in the Reformed world in the last few years.

It goes under the terms the *federal vision* or the *new perspective on Paul*, in which we come into a relationship with God by grace, but we'd golly well better keep ourselves in relationship with God by our works; otherwise, we're done for. Paul says he is unable to do what he knows is right. The law can show us what is right, but it can't give us the power we need to resist sin.

How Does this Apply to Life?

Well, how does this apply to life? How do these theological insights help us as we live? As I think about this, I think of one of my favorite comic strips ever. It's a Peanuts comic strip with Lucy and Linus. They're staring out a window with the rain coming down, and Lucy says, "Oh, look at all this rain. I think there's going to be a flood. What are we going to do if it never stops raining?"

Linus says, "Well, you know, actually in Genesis, chapter 9, God promised never to destroy the world by rain again." Lucy says, "Oh, that's a real comfort for me." Linus says, "Sound theology has a way of doing that." You see, we need to apply what Paul is teaching us here to our lives. This is not Paul's attempt at an autobiography. It's not a dry treatise he's writing. Paul knows we need this truth to live today, because we are struggling more and more to be like Jesus.

Do you see that throughout this passage Paul is describing his struggle with sin? In virtually every verse he's describing this struggle. The struggle is important, because it's too easy for us to think that the struggle itself is wrong, that if I was a real Christian I wouldn't struggle with sin anymore. I would be past sin. So what we do is we come up with solutions to be free from the struggle.

We might try to avoid the issue. We distract ourselves from the importance of what sin is and holiness is or we might seek after some kind of formula that will solve the problem of sin for us. In this way, it's not unlike diet formulas. You know what diet formulas are like, don't you? It seems to me that there is a very basic and simple principle to a diet. The way you lose weight is you eat less calories than you burn up as you act. Right? It's simple math.

The problem is we don't like that. We want to eat more calories and not burn up much, yet we want to find some secret formula in a book or on TV that will magically cause us to lose weight against the power of math with no effort at all. How many times have you seen that in an advertisement? "No effort at all. Eat whatever you want. Sit on the couch all day long. All you need to do is buy this pill, eat this food, mix these things together, and everything will be perfect."

What does that look like on a spiritual level, when we're not cultivating holiness, when we're not killing sin and we expect some kind of magic mantra or formula to make us holy? Sometimes, though, we're looking for a new spiritual experience, something that will unlock a secret door that only a few select people know about. This is often called a *second work of grace*. This is, again, what the "carnal Christian" theory teaches, that instead of fighting sin what we need to do is find some kind of higher way out, some shortcut, escape route.

What Paul tells us is the struggle is not easy. You can see it in his words. He says, "I don't understand," in verse 15. He says, "I do what I hate." He says, "I don't have the ability to do what I know is right," in verse 18. The struggle is very personal. We might think Paul is actually blaming something else for his sin, because he says in verse 17 it is the sin that dwells in him that does this, and in verse 18 it is his flesh in which there is nothing good, and again, in verse 20, it is the sin that is within him.

But this is not an excuse. It's actually an indictment against himself, because he's characterizing a part of himself as carnal, as fleshly. Notice verse 25. He says, "I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin." It is Paul who is doing it. He doesn't want this in his innermost being. That's why there's the struggle. The struggle is real, but the struggle with sin is not the whole story. It certainly seems

to be here. It occupies our minds all the time, but Paul emphasizes this quite clearly. Do not miss what he is saying.

God has already done a work in you if you have believed on Jesus. You may sin, but now you hate sin. You're no longer complacent about sin. Sin matters. You long to keep the law of God. We desire holiness. We desire closeness to the Lord. That is the fundamental change that happens when we believe in Jesus Christ. The desires of our hearts reveal to us the *state* of our hearts. Paul reminds us that he longs to be free from sin, to do the law. This is the desire of our hearts.

Only someone who loves Jesus could weep over his sin. Take an illustration: David. We read the account of the aftermath of his sin earlier this morning. David sinned horribly. He didn't excuse it. He didn't limit it. He didn't explain it away. He was crushed by it. He had to ask the Lord to take the burden off of him. Do you remember his prayer in the psalm? "Lord, restore unto me the joy of your salvation." He says, "Lord, this sin is crushing me," yet he doesn't say, "Restore to me salvation." He says, "Restore to me the *joy* of salvation." "Lord, I know you can do this."

In conclusion, we must take sin seriously. We must know that evil lies close at hand, as Paul says in verse 21. We must struggle every day to do that which we will and to resist that which we hate, but we must also know that the victory has already been won. It doesn't depend on us. How does Paul end this passage where he pours out his heart about all of his shortcomings and all of his dealings with sin? He ends it with verse 25. The answer to the heart's cry of verse 24, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" is the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Do you long to be free from sin? Do you long to know peace and contentment? There is a way. There's only *one* way. It is by the grace of God in the work of his Son, Jesus Christ, who lived a life without sin, who died on the cross to pay the penalty for sin. Come to him now. Come to him and know the sweetness of forgiveness and grace. Come to him and know the sweetness of hope in the midst of your struggle today. Jesus is enough.