

Romans 7:7-25

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles and turn with me to the book of Romans, Romans chapter 7, Romans chapter 7, starting in verse 7. I'm going to the end of the chapter, which will get us to verse 25, Romans 7, verses 7 through 25.

As you're turning there, I want to encourage you to be in prayer about your involvement in the missions work. A lot of missions opportunities before us, a lot of things that the missions team will be discussing tonight.

If you want to have a part in missions activity, you want to be the hands and feet of Christ either here or in other places, we have opportunities for that. We're always trying to seek to do that.

One of the things that we will be doing this year that we already have on the schedule is going to Utah to try to finish up our work with First Baptist Provo in Utah. Last week of June is usually our missions emphasis week.

So if you want to go on that trip, you'd like to go on that trip, please, in the fellowship hall, if you haven't figured it out, on the board in the fellowship hall, you can sign up for anything. Okay, so it's out there. There's a sheet out there.

[1 : 02] We're kind of at that process where we need to start looking at, if we're getting plane tickets, how many are going to be going and trying to figure out our costs for all those things too. If you have any questions about what we're doing out there, there are a number of us that have been.

You can speak to me, you can speak with Brother Josh, you can speak with Brother Chad, Brother Ronnie, any of those who have been. So I encourage you, if you want to go serve in an area in our own homeland that is just as unreached as many portions of foreign lands, then here's your opportunity.

Okay, it's almost like doing international missions with the cost of doing it nationally. So I encourage you to be a part of that, and if there's something else on your heart or mind, please let us know, and we'll see what we can do to help you get on the mission field as well.

Romans 7, starting in verse 7. If you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm asking you to join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God. Found in Romans 7, starting in verse 7 and going to the end of the chapter, that is verse 25.

Paul writes for us, Verse 25.

[3 : 36] For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

Wretched man that I am, who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then on the one hand, I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but then on the other with my flesh, the law of sin.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. And God, we rejoice in the opportunity we have had to come and to worship, to set our hearts and minds upon you.

Lord, I pray as we come to the time of the reading and the hearing of your word, that your word would grip us at our very core. Lord, that we would see things which we had never seen, not only in your word, but we would see things about ourselves which we had never seen.

[4 : 49] We open up our lives, our heart, our soul, our mind to you, and say, here we are, oh Lord, search us, try us, know us. Show us the things that we need to correct. Show us the things that we need to be encouraged by.

God, I pray that your spirit would move. Lord, help us to understand it not as the words of man, but as the very word of God. We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen.

You may be seated. We've come to a very difficult portion of the book of Romans. Many would count it as probably the most difficult portion of the book of Romans, if not one of the most difficult portions in all of the New Testament.

It is a portion of Scripture that is often, I don't want to say argued, because arguing is such a strong word, but it is discussed very heatedly, the origination and the meaning of this passage.

Is Paul writing this passage as an unsaved, unregenerated individual, as who he was in the past, or is Paul writing this passage as a saved individual, struggling with things that he struggled with before?

[5 : 55] And I will say yes to both of those. He is not writing this passage to be pigeonholed and defined in one individual. Rather, he is writing this passage so that we may see not the problem of man, but the glory of Christ.

And we'll get to that in just a moment. Paul has been laying out for us some of the great doctrines of our faith. He has been very clearly defining for us how it is a man can be redeemed, and how it is a man can be saved, though that man may be living in the most awful of conditions, that is, the condition of sin that has ever plagued mankind.

And it deserves none of it on his own, but rather God gives it to him freely through grace and through grace alone. I just, in my own personal reading this week, had an opportunity to read some of the works of Martin Luther.

I've pointed you to him many times as we've looked at the book of Romans. And I read the letter that Martin Luther wrote to the emperor of his day when he was being put on trial for his great confession of justification by faith alone, knowing that the organized church of his day thought that there were certain works that you must do.

And Luther would repeatedly point back to the passages in the book of Romans that there are no works which a man can do, no efforts, no good deeds, no activity, nothing that he can do that would ever remove him from his condition, but he is justified by faith alone.

[7 : 22] But then Luther had to answer the same question that Paul had to answer was, well, then what shall we do about works? If we are saved through faith and faith alone, then it doesn't matter what we can do.

We can live how we want to live, right? And he made a very good argument about that. But that is essentially what Paul has been doing the last few chapters, speaking of the fact that we are not saved through anything which we have done or which we can do.

Rather, we are saved through grace and through faith alone. It is justification by faith. And then he has been answering this issue of the law. Well, what about the law?

And he comes here in the seventh chapter, and he really addresses the law in the life of the believer. This morning, I want you to see from a believer's perspective, and I hope that maybe if you haven't put your hope and faith in Jesus Christ, that you'll see through that this application to you as well.

But I want you to see how we are stuck between law and grace. Oftentimes, as believers in Jesus Christ, nodding our head and in absolute agreement that we are saved by faith and faith alone, that is nothing of ourselves, that we have done no good deeds, that it is through his grace, it is through his mercy, it is through his free offer of forgiveness, that we have come to him and accepted him as our Lord and Savior.

[8 : 38] Now, all of a sudden, we have this quandary or this issue, and we get caught between law and grace. Do we live on the very end of the spectrum with grace?

And do we live as if nothing matters? It doesn't matter what we do, because grace is greater than our greatest sin. And we can go out and live as if tomorrow brings nothing with it, and we can throw all cares to the wind, and we can do whatever we want to do, because he has forgiven us freely in spite of us.

And even if we've accepted him, we can live however we want to and do whatever we want to. Do we live on that end of the spectrum? Or do we come to him, as Paul would write in one of his letters, having begun in faith, in faith alone, then all of a sudden try to live obediently through the law?

Do we say, well, now that I've been saved by faith, I must do this, I must do that, I must do this, I must do this, and we begin to put a list of checklists in our lives that we have to do in order to be pleasing to God.

But friend, listen to me. If you don't get anything else from today, listen, you are pleasing to him because he set his love upon you because of who you are, not what you have done. He has redeemed you in grace through faith alone, and you stay in relationship with him through grace and in faith alone.

[9 : 50] You did nothing to earn his love, and you can do nothing to keep his love. It is through grace and grace alone. So I want us to see in our own lives the same thing, the same issue that Paul is wrestling with, being caught between law and grace.

Number one, I want you to see the grand perfection of the law. Because if we don't really understand it, we have to start where the Bible starts, and that is with the law.

Now, when Paul would reference the law, he is referencing more than just the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are kind of the pinnacle of the law, the tip of the iceberg, if you will.

They show us the grand scheme of the law, and we can find all of the holiness and the glorious expectations of God in those Ten Commandments. But Paul was really referring to more than just the Ten Commandments, or the Decalogue.

He was referring to the entirety of the Old Testament. He was referring to everything that was laid out throughout the Old Testament, all the standards, all of the expectations of God's people.

[10 : 53] For those who have been going through the daily Bible reading plan, and you have stuck with it, and I hope that you have. You've been reading through the book of Nehemiah, and you came yesterday to Nehemiah 9, where they make this covenant with God, and they agree with God that what they have done wasn't wrong.

But now from this point on, they're going to do what God wants them to do. Today we read in Nehemiah 10, through that yearly Bible reading thing, that since God has saved us and forgiven us, now we're going to do it.

Well, I'm going to let you in on a secret. They don't do it. That even though they sign a covenant, even though they sign an agreement, even though they say that God has given us a second chance, and now we're going to make it right, they mess up again.

But they don't ever discount God's expectations. But the first thing we must understand is the grand perfection of the law. Paul starts out, What shall we say then is the law sin?

May it never be. Here is something that we have to balance. There is this great balance in the Christian life, and really it is the balance that we have to express to the world, and it is something that we have to be very clear about.

[12 : 00] Now, if I am saved by grace and by grace alone, if it is through faith and faith alone, and not because of anything I do, then what good is the law? Why do I need the law?

I mean, let me just forget about the law. I mean, that means if this is true, then we can take the Old Testament, we can take Genesis to Malachi and throw it out the window, because we don't need Genesis to Malachi, because we find all we need in Matthew through Revelations, right?

We can discount a whole half of the 66 books of the Bible, and we can throw it out the window, because the law did us no good. But wait a minute, my friend. The law came from God.

And we must be very careful throwing something that God handed us out the window. What shall we say then is the law sin? Paul says, May it never be.

He says, Wait a minute. We can't just forget about it. And I tell you, that even as a great redeemed child of the King, freely forgiven in spite of your works, we are still in desperate need of the law.

[13 : 09] This is why I find that we really begin to understand our salvation, and we really begin to understand ourselves, the more we look at the Old Testament, as compared to what we find given to us in the New Testament.

It is mighty what we understand. Luther would explain it like this, in the Bible we find two great things. We find the commands of God and the promises of God. Luther would say that the commands of God are there to tell us what God expects.

Unfortunately, every time we read the commands of God, we fall short. And I'll show you why in just a minute. And as we understand that God has given us commands, and we cannot keep His commands, then all of a sudden come the promises of God.

And the promises of God give us what the commands of God can never lead us to. God says, Because you cannot obey my commands, I will make you a promise.

I will give it to you in spite of you. And we're caught between the two. And even in our lives today, we are caught between the two. But Paul says, The law is not sin, may it never be. On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin, except through the law.

[14 : 15] For I would not have known about coveting, if the law had not said, You shall not covet. But so what place does the law, the Old Testament, the Ten Commandments, have in the life of a believer that is completely saved by grace and grace alone?

It is this. It helps you, first of all, to understand the sin that is in your life. Paul says, The law is this great teacher. I would not have known sin if the law had not told me about sin.

I would not have known that this was wrong if the law had not revealed to me that this is wrong. Now, of all the Ten Commandments, I can think of a lot of other ones that I wish Paul would have pointed out, but the one that he pointed out.

You know, I wish Paul would have said, I would not have known about murder if the law had not said, You shall not murder. And that would have been okay. And you would have said, Well, I don't have that problem. Or I would not have known about blasphemy if the law said you shouldn't blaspheme me.

But he says this one. He says, I would not have known about coveting. Coveting. Wait a minute. Some of you in your mind who have read the Old Testament say, Well, the law says that you shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

[15 : 15] Right. But literally, the meaning is there. You shall not covet. That's the law. That's the standard. You shall not covet. Not you just shall not covet your neighbor's wife. Not that you shall not just covet your neighbor's money. Not that you should not covet your neighbor's.

It's just you shall not covet. What is coveting? Coveting is a longing for something that you do not have. Wow. Or a longing to keep something that you already possess.

The rich young ruler that came to Jesus and came to him and said, Jesus, what must I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus says, Well, first of all, he says, Why do you call me good? He says, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

He says, Why do you call me good? Knowing that there's only one good, and that is God. You shall keep the Ten Commandments. And you remember this rich young ruler. He said, I've done all of that. I've kept all of these Ten Commandments. I've done every one of them. And then Jesus tells him this thing, which to us seems kind of contrary, because it is backed by this.

Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and then told him to go sell all that he had and give it away and follow him. I mean, it's amazing, isn't it? Jesus loved him so much, he told him to give everything away. Wow.

[16 : 15] I mean, if Jesus loves you, our theology today, well, if Jesus loves me, he's going to give me stuff and not require stuff, right? If Jesus loves me, he's going to pour it out upon me. He'll never love me so much to make me go broke.

So Jesus loved him so much, says, Go sell everything you have, give it away, and come follow me. You know, the one who doesn't have a pillow to lay his head on, the one that doesn't have a house to call home, the one that doesn't have anywhere that belongs to him, come hang out with me.

I'm going to be dying in a couple of years, but it's okay, just sell everything you have, bet all of your life on me and follow me. Now, he went away upset because he was a man of great possessions. You know what we find out?

He coveted. What was the great sin of the rich young ruler? He coveted. He coveted the things that belonged to him more than he coveted a relationship with God.

And my friend, I'm just going to be honest with you and just lay it out there as it is. If there is anything in your life that is more important than a relationship with Jesus Christ, anything, time, money, activities, relationships, anything, we are in danger of coveting.

[17 : 23] How do we know that? Because the law tells us that. Paul says, I wouldn't have known to covet if the law hadn't told me to covet, but as soon as the law told me not to covet, all of a sudden, I found myself coveting.

It's the principle we've talked about. Reality, the law is there as a great tutor, as a teacher, to show us this issue that we have within us. The surest way to ensure that man will do something he is not supposed to do is to tell him not to do something that you don't want him to do.

There is, and we would all have to admit it, we've seen it in our children, we've even seen it in ourselves, if we were to be honest, there is this innate desire to do the forbidden in our lives.

There is within every one of us to do the very thing we know we're not supposed to do. Maybe not all things, but just some things. I remember when I was a kid, I used to like to go out wandering around, and our farm would back up to other farms, and there was about four other farms that would kind of come back, and I loved to go to those places where, you know, I had free range on this farm because a friend of mine had that farm, and I would actually, you know, I had a gate to it, so I could go all over, and this farm over here used to belong to us, but we sold it to our neighbors, so I had free range on that creek, but once I got past that one, there was another farm, and they were notorious for not wanting anybody on their land, so you know what I did?

I would follow the creek, and I would always see how far I could get on their land. Why? I wasn't doing anything wrong. I wasn't. I always stayed in the creeks. I loved the creeks. I just wanted to get over there because I wasn't supposed to be over there.

[18 : 54] Now, when Dad honked the horn, and it was dinner time, and it took me longer to get home, I had some explaining to do when I got there, but I always wanted to see how close. I had horse barns, and I wanted to see how close I could get to that barn without getting caught because, well, that's just because I wasn't supposed to be there, and every one of us have within us an innate desire to do that which is forbidden, and what shows us that?

The law. The lands that they told me I could go on, I didn't go on much. I had free reign over there, but the one that had the signs everywhere, don't come on here, like, I'm going there.

That's what the law does in the believer's life, and it shows us the problems that we have, okay? We'll get to those in just a minute, but Paul says this law is not a bad thing because he goes on, and he is explaining it to us.

He says that the law of God, in verse 12, so then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and righteous, and good. This is what I want you to understand. Is the law sin? Has it become sin?

Is there something wrong with the law of God? May it never be. It is the grand perfection of the law. What you find in the Old Testament is this, perfection, okay?

[20 : 05] It is perfect. There was once this culture, and I can't remember, my mind escapes me, there was, during one of the grand missionary campaigns and one of the unreached people groups, and this was many years ago, I think it was in the late 1800s, a missionary came to society, and these people had never heard the word of God, never saw the word of God, so he gave them a Bible.

He didn't have long to stay there, and this people group, I mean, they were just horrendous. They were, you know, they were cannibalistic. They had all these issues going on, and he translated the Bible in their native tongue. He gave it to them, and he said, I'll be back in a couple of years.

I mean, travel wasn't as fast as it is today, and he left the Bible there, and then he went. Now, when he came back, all of a sudden, I mean, the society had changed. Everything was different. There was no more cannibalism.

There was no more hatred. There was no more animosity, and he asked them, he said, what has happened? What's changed this, you know? But he'd only had the time to translate the Old Testament. Well, it was astounding what happened to him.

The people told him, said, well, we took that book you gave us, and we just started doing everything the book told us to do. And if you ever find a society that can do everything the book tells them to do, you know what you find?

[21 : 12] A perfect world. Now, it didn't last, but for a time it did. Because the Old Testament, the law is perfect. It is perfect.

It is holy. It is righteous. It comes from a holy God, and a holy God cannot give an imperfect, an imperfect thing. He cannot make something messed up.

He makes it absolutely accurate. And this is what I want you to understand. The problem is not with the law, because the law is perfect. The issue is, is that we are imperfect.

The standard is right. God says, this is what it takes to be acceptable to me. This is what it takes to be welcomed in my presence. This is what you have to have.

This is how you must live. And it is absolutely perfect. Perfect. But we can't be perfect. And we can't live that way.

[22 : 14] And that leads us to the second thing. Not only is there the grand perfections of the law, there is, number two, the great problem of man. Paul says, then what shall I say?

If the law is perfect, as an unbeliever, the law is perfect. As a believer, the law is perfect. This is why, let me pause right here. This is why, if you're ever talking to someone who hasn't trusted in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and this is why I speak so much to this, even in my preaching and all, is the first place I want to point you is not to the cross.

Because a man or a woman who doesn't know they have a problem doesn't need someone hanging on a cross. Okay? I always point you to the Old Testament and show you the standard. Because not until you see the standard and you realize, I can't live up to that standard, then do you need a Savior.

Okay? We need to know what we're being saved from in order so that we can know what we are being saved to. We do a great injustice to our fellow man. We will want to lead them to Jesus without first leading them through the law.

Okay? Because you have to show them their problem. If you're just trying to add something to their life, I want to give you a little bit of Jesus to what you got going on, then it's never anything wrong with it.

[23 : 22] There's nothing like that. I believe it was Martin Lloyd-Jones who once said, we're not trying to lead men to Jesus, we want men and women to run to Jesus. Seeing their disparity and seeing the problems, seeing everything that they have done wrong, seeing the way they have fallen short, I don't want them to walk up to Jesus and choose him amongst a bunch of other people.

I want them to fly to Jesus knowing they have no other hope but Jesus. That's what the law shows us because this perfect law shows us the problem of man. Paul says, I would not know sin but through the law because I didn't know anything about coveting until the law said don't covet.

And then he says, and this sin within me taking opportunity through the law produced death in me. Man has two great problems in existence. The first of those great problems is sin.

It is not sins or activities. It's your problem and I know you say, Pastor, you're beating a dead horse. Well, we're only going to beat this horse as long as Paul beats this horse, okay? And if Paul needed to keep bringing you up as many times as he brought it up in one letter, then it would be very becoming of us at least to be reminded every week just as Paul reminded them in one letter.

The problem is not the things we do. It is not that you need to clean up your act. It's not that you need to quit doing this, that, or the other. It's not that you have a lot of issues going on. We all have issues. We all do.

[24 : 41] We all have problems. But the issue is it is not the problems you do. It is the root. It is not your sins. It is your sin. And Paul says, this sin that is naturally within me because I am of the nature of Adam, when it read the law, it read the holy standard, here it is, that innate desire, it just started doing what the law told me not to do.

It took opportunity. You want to know how bad sin is in you? It takes something holy, that is the law, the Old Testament, and it leads you to death. Because the wages of sin is death.

That's exactly what we read. And when we read the holy standard of God, and we are told over and over to be pleasing to God, we have to do this, we have to do this, we have to do this, then that nature within us says, well, I know what I should do, I know this is the standard, but you know what?

I don't want to do that standard, and I'm going to live this way anyhow, and I'm going to do this, and I'm going to covet, and I'm going to hate, and I'm going to be angry, and I'm just going to take God's law, and I'm going to kind of spit in his face, and then the Bible says that leads us to death.

It says sin took opportunity through the law. You know, if we don't really believe that Jesus is the answer to all of man's problems, then we don't need to tell man their problems.

[25 : 58] We don't. We scratch our heads over here, and we wonder, just a minute ago, when I was speaking of a cannibalistic group of people, we go, man, how in the world can that happen? I mean, how?

That's a messed up people group, right? I mean, those things are still going on today, and we look at it, but here's the thing, and when you live in a society that there are no standards, that nothing is messed up.

Nothing is. It's only messed up when a standard is set, but when there are no right and wrongs, and we need to pay attention to this because we're living in a world which is trying to remove this thing called absolute truth, and you may confront people who tell you that there's no such thing as right and wrong.

You can't tell me what's wrong, and I can't tell you what's wrong. You can't tell me what's right, and it's kind of this whatever. That may be true for you, but it's not true for me.

We're on dangerous ground here, people, because when there is no standard, then there is no wrong because the law sets the standard and shows us the wrong, and what we find is something inside of us takes that holy standard and plunges us straight to death.

[27 : 17] Paul says that problem is sin. He says, verse 13, Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be. Rather, it was sin in order that it might be shown to be sin by affecting my death through that which is good so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

Listen, friends, we have a problem far greater than cancer that is always embedded in us from the womb. It is there and it is sin. And the only thing that reveals that is the law.

You may think that you're okay and you may think that you're fine, but I would probably say that you haven't read the standard of God very often. You know why many of us don't like the Old Testament? You know why?

I'm just going to speak about it. I'll use myself in this example. You know why I used to not like the Old Testament? I loved the letters of Paul. When I came to Christ, I stayed in the letters of Paul. Man, I would just live in the letters of Paul.

The Bible I had when I came to Christ, you could literally take from Romans all the way to the book of Hebrews and it would come out of my Bible because I just literally wore out the letters of Paul.

[28 : 25] I mean, I loved them. You know why? Because Paul speaks of grace and forgiveness and mercy and are you not saved by works or saved by faith and all those things and it's great and it was good to be there while I was a babe in Christ and I needed that reassurance it's grace and it's grace and it's grace and it's mercy and it's mercy and now I have come to, as Paul says, feast on some of the meat of the word and that is in the Old Testament and even some of the parts of the New Testament and to get into some of those things that make me uncomfortable but you know why so many of us shy away from the Old Testament?

It's not because we find the names confusing. I mean, really, I don't understand why they named people the way they named them back then. You ever read those lists of names and then all of a sudden in the middle of it would be Daniel. I'm like, how come Daniel had a normal name but the guy right next to him had a name nobody in the world can pronounce?

I mean, I don't know what their reasoning behind their names were but that's okay. I don't have to know that. They were important in God's eyes enough for him to write them down. It is not because we find these accounts of warfare and all these battles because we pay big money to go to movies to read, to see battle scenes that are nothing compared to what you see in the Old Testament.

I mean, just reality. It is not because of a lack of drama and tension or love stories. All those things, all the genres we'll ever want to read are in the Old Testament. The reason we don't like the Old Testament is because when we go to the Old Testament we find a mirror and it's pointing back at us and it shows us more of ourselves than we ever want to see and I've never read the Old Testament where I didn't see a problem that I had that needed to be resolved.

Man, it's a mirror to my soul and it shows me this problem of sin and it's, Adrian Rogers had this great sermon called Dr. Law and Dr. Grace.

[30 : 09] Dr. Law and Dr. Grace and if you've ever, I could never preach it like Adrian Rogers used to but you need to go listen to that sermon but the synopsis is this, he said, you have to go to Dr. Law before you can go to Dr. Grace.

Dr. Law can tell you you've got a heart problem. Dr. Law can tell you there's something wrong going on there. Dr. Law can do that and then you look at the doctor and you're like, well doctor, can you help me? And Dr. Law says, no, I can't do anything for you.

You've got to go down the hall and see Dr. Grace because grace, Dr. Grace is the one who does the heart transplants but you can't get to Dr. Grace until you go to Dr. Law.

It's a great sermon. You need to listen to it someday. But what we find in the Old Testament is Dr. Law showing us who we are, revealing this massive problem called sin, this tumor growing inside of us and every time we read it we're like, I didn't know I wasn't supposed to do that.

I didn't know that if you spoke back to your mom and dad you got stoned. I'm like, man, I would have been dead like pretty young in life. I didn't know that you wasn't supposed to do that. I didn't know that standard was that high.

[31 : 12] Man, and you know what that does? It makes me run more and more back to Dr. Grace and give him a hug and be like, wow, thank you. Thank you, doctor. You took care of that problem I had. So we see here that the first great problem of man is this thing called sin.

But man has a second great problem, okay? First one is sin, and the second one is self. Yourself. Don't trust yourself. I used to tell teenagers whenever we were working with the youth and Carrie and I worked with the youth for a number of years, I used to tell these teenagers, I said, listen, I don't trust any one of you.

And they would always be shocked. You know, and I'd have my own kids in there and they're like, you don't trust me. I don't trust you. And I would tell the teenage girls, I said, listen, girls, don't trust a single one of these boys. And some of you mamas are like, yeah, that's what I'm talking about.

And I would say, don't trust a single one of them. And I'd say, boys, don't trust a single one of those girls. I don't trust you. I don't trust you to be alone. I don't trust you to walk away. I don't trust you. And I would say, this is why, because I don't even trust myself.

I would be foolish to put confidence in you. And since we're being honest, let's just go ahead and say, what I have found a great problem is today is too many parents trust kids too much. But listen, I don't trust myself.

[32 : 22] And the reason I don't trust myself is because Paul says right here that sin is a problem but so is self. He says, I find this battle going on within myself. That the very thing that I want to do, I don't do.

And the very thing that I don't want to do, that's what I find myself doing. He said, there's this battle going on that with my mind, I want to serve God. With my mind, I want to obey God. With my mind, I want to follow God.

But in my flesh, I keep messing up. In my flesh, I keep doing anything that he says, because I know that the law is spiritual. You know, what you find in the Old Testament is this great spiritual truth because God is spirit and he is love and he gave it to it.

It is this great spiritual truth. But he says, but I am flesh sold into bondage to sin. Friend, listen to me. You may be redeemed. You may be forgiven. And I hope you are. If you've trusted in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and he has redeemed you and forgiven you, and you have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless you live and it's no longer you who lives, but Christ who lives inside of you.

Galatians 2.20, that is a hallelujah glorious problem. But here is the issue, okay? Here is what is going on. You have a spiritual new child living inside a flesh body.

[33 : 31] And the flesh, the Bible says the wages of sin is death. I don't know if you realize it or not, but the body is still deteriorating, still wearing out, still dying. And it is not until Paul says, I'm not yet what I should be, but I know I will be one day that someday this tent will be cast off and I'll put on this new body and I'll have this glorified body and this resurrected body, but here he says, the self is a problem.

He says, there are things I want to do. You know, I'm not foolish. I don't think, and maybe I'm wrong, I don't think there is one genuine believer in Jesus Christ who ever intentionally sins.

I don't think that they got up that morning and they said, you know what I'm going to do? I'm just going to completely disobey the one who died for me. I'm just going to, I'm going to look at Jesus and spit on him and go live how I want to do.

What I think happens is that we begin to live in the flesh and not in spirit. And self is a problem. Paul says, I messed up.

I have this battle. It's always going on. Sin causes me to fall. Myself can't be trusted. I can't trust myself. I can't trust him. I'm not belittling us.

[34 : 58] I'm not trying to push us down. I'm just trying to be biblical and to be honest with you. We need to know our own tendencies. We need to know what it is we're in. And he says, my flesh is still sowed into bondage to weakness.

I mean, Paul was kind of given to anger a little bit. You remember, he got mad at Mark one time. John Mark, Barnabas said, well, let's take my cousin Mark along. And Paul says, I'm not taking Mark along. He deserved us on the first missionary journey.

You and Mark go do whatever you want to do, but I'm not. I'm going to take Silas. I don't want anything to do with Mark. He kind of got upset at him, right? Later, they were reconciled and all these things again. He said, you know, Pastor, I have a hard time thinking about Paul getting mad.

Why? Because you're thinking of Paul in the spiritual sense. You're not thinking of Paul in the physical sense. I don't have a hard time thinking about Paul getting mad because he's still in bondage in the flesh.

He's still, he's not perfect. But what we find here is we can't get over this problem. This problem of sin and this problem of self on our own.

[35 : 59] Which leads us to the third thing. Not only do you have the grand perfection of the law and the great problem of man, you have the glorious power of redemption. The glorious power of redemption.

Paul, when talking about these things, and I don't know if he was writing about his pre-salvation time or his after-I'm-saved time, but I know that, I know one thing that I have found in Scripture.

I want you to listen to me. I want you to stay with me on this. I have never found in Scripture where salvation was spoken of in past tense. Now you say, well, he says we are saved through Jesus Christ.

Right, but the wording there is we are being saved. Okay? I've never read in Scripture where salvation is always referred to him past tense. It's kind of contrary to my thinking. Now do I believe that there is a point in time in the past when you can accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?

Yes. I mean, I can take you to the place, I can take you to the address, I can take you to the very bedroom, I can take you to the time, and I can show you the point. But if all I'm pointing back to or all I'm, in my walk with Christ, if all I'm talking about is a point in time that happened at 201 Canova Drive or Canova Park in Shelbyville, Tennessee, then I have an issue because salvation is not a past event only, it is a present state today.

[37 : 19] It is not, were we saved, it is, are we saved? It's not, were we redeemed, it's, are we living out our redemption? Because the greatest way that I can show you that something happened to me in the past is by the way I'm living today.

I really don't care what someone tells me, this great historical thing, somebody can come tell me something, well, let's just use an example that would be good, okay, we were talking about it this morning in our young adult Sunday school class and out in Utah, the church is predominantly, well, the church that's out there is the LDS of the Mormon church and we were speaking about the historical evidence for Christianity versus that of other world religions.

Well, one of the great Mormon doctrines found in the Book of Mormon is that the lost tribe of Israel came to the Americas and that when they came to the Americas, because there seems to be one of the 12 tribes of Israel that falls out in the Old Testament, that's the lost tribe, they came to Americas actually in the B.C.s, okay, and after Christ's death and resurrection, he appeared to the disciples over here in Jerusalem, but then Jesus in about A.D. 33 showed up in the Americas and gave the real truth to the lost tribe of Israel over here and then the Book of Mormon speaks of the great battle scenes where the lost tribe of Israel had horses and carts and guns and all this other stuff and that's their past and they're talking about their past.

The main problem with that is is that when we have put a shovel or a backhoe in the ground, the earliest evidence in our own land that we can find of horses and carts are when the Europeans introduced them when Christopher Columbus came.

So there's somewhere around about a 1,400 plus year gap between what the Book of Mormon says happened and what history says happened. So this is me saying, I don't care what you say happened in the past if you can't show it to me in the present.

[39 : 09] And salvation is the same way. If we point to a past event without showing a present reality, then we're living in limbo. And we see this.

Paul here is speaking of his life. He says, I had this problem. So who's going to set me free? He says, Wretched man that I am, who will set me free from this bondage of sin? It's a great question. I have a major problem.

I had a problem before I knew Jesus Christ. I seem to have this great problem even when I come to Jesus Christ because I have found that even within me I can't trust myself. I still have this sin nature and I still have this natural tendency to rebel.

So who's going to set me free from this wretched man that I am? And I love it when the Bible answers itself. Praise be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Who can set me free from this sinful man, this wretched man that I am?

Power of redemption rest in Jesus Christ our Lord. Who needs to come to Jesus Christ as their Redeemer? Everyone, every day. You don't need to come to Him one time. You don't need to come to Him once for salvation and then maybe every now and then you need to be with Him in a daily, daily walk.

[40 : 17] Something that we understand is that duty cannot bind a man to obedience. It means because you're supposed to it doesn't mean you will.

Devotion alone can and should be the great motivator for an obedient life. Duty can't bind you but devotion can lead you.

I'll use an example of one of our own dear saints who's not here. He's traveling in a lot warmer atmosphere than here.

I don't mind sharing it. Brother Doris a couple of weeks ago may have been about a month ago now. On a Wednesday night he came up to me and he was kind of distraught and he said, Brother, I've done something awful.

I said, Brother Doris says he's done something awful. I always take that in context, right? Some of you could come to me and say I've done something awful and I'd be like, okay, I'm going to embrace myself. But Brother Doris came and he said, I've done something awful and I said, oh no, brother, what's happened?

[41 : 20] He said, I've lost my Bible. He said, I set my Bible. I was helping Miss Labby into the car and I set my Bible on top of my car and I forgot to get it and I drove to church.

He said, on the way home I'm going to look for it. I called him the next morning and I said, have you found it? He said, I haven't found it yet. I was about to phone someone else and Brother Glenn called me and he said, you ready to go looking?

I said, yeah, let's go looking. So we went and we went down the road and sure enough, it was, I mean, God's hand was just there. It was one of those days of rain. The ditch was full of rain not 150 yards from Brother Doris' house.

The Bible had went about eight foot off of the top of his car across the road and landed on the other side of the ditch full of water, untouched. I picked it up and I took it back to him. He said, oh, this Bible, and many of you, you have Bibles.

I mean, my Bible is tore up, you know. He said, I've had this Bible rebound two times. I wore out two covers on it. He said, I was afraid I'd lost it. I'm going to tell you something about Brother Doris, okay, and many of you, you know him much better than I do.

[42 : 22] Last year, he came to me and he asked me for the Robert Murray McShinn reading plan. And he wanted to read the same Bible reading plan I was reading. So I gave it to him and he came back and he asked me this year.

You know, and it hit me and I was talking to him. I said, Brother, how many times have you read the Bible through? He said, I don't know. Friend, I want to ask you something. And I'm just speaking honestly here.

You know why every morning he gets up, he reads those four chapters, he puts a mark on just to do it the next day. It's not because that check mark matters.

He's not doing it out of duty. He gets up every morning wanting to spend time with his Savior and see what it is his Lord has to say to him. Some of you may have fallen short already in your reading plan.

I expect that. I did. But here's the issue. Satan's going to whisper in your ear and he's going to say, I told you you couldn't get all those check marks in there. I told you you couldn't do all that.

[43 : 26] And if you were doing it just to accomplish a task, we were wrong. You can't live obediently to accomplish a task. Duty will never bind you.

But when you can't wait to spend time with your Savior and you can't wait to see what he has to say to you and when you're not doing it because you have to, but you're doing it because you get to, all of a sudden you find Jesus setting you free from yourself.

It's devotion. My exhortation to you is this. every day when you get up fall in love with Jesus all over again.

Just fall in love with him. Look at him and go, man, what a Savior. Man, look how messed up I am. What a Savior. Every day fall in love with Jesus again.

And what you will find is you will no longer be caught between law and grace because you need the law to show you how bad you are but you will thank God for the grace that shows you how good he is.

[44 : 40] And what I have found, that's a good place to be. I am still a wretched man desperately in need of redemption but praise be to God I found a Redeemer who loves me.

And I can't wait to hear what he has to say to me. Let's pray. Lord, I thank you so much for this day. God, I thank you that you love us, you care for us, Lord, you call us to yourself.

And Lord, I don't know what's going on in hearts and minds and homes today, but Lord, I know that you do. So I pray that we would fall in love with you all over again. Lord, maybe some for the first time.

Maybe others for the millionth time. But Lord, it's always a good day to fall in love with you. We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.

[46 : 30] Thank you.