

Romans 7:7-25

The Problem I Have

Image Church // Romans 8 // Week 1

Intro:

Image family, what an incredible weekend last weekend!

- Lots of new folks
- Lots of people were back for the second or 3rd time on Easter with us, which is incredible!
- We baptized 2 people...
- And we had several Salvations that happened last weekend!
- *Can we celebrate that?!?*

Last week we finished our journey through the **Gospel of Luke**, where we saw who Jesus is and what He came to do...

The question is, *now what?!? What does the work of Jesus really mean for my life? What are the implications? How does it actually change me? How does it affect me in everyday life?*

We say this often, but the gospel isn't the start of the Christian life, it's the essence of the Christian life, but *what does actually mean? And how does that play out in my life?*

Because the reality is sometimes it feels hard to see... *Can we be honest about that?*

- **Example:** argue on the way here, argue on the way home...
 - The same voice you come in here and worship Jesus with is the same voice you use to yell at your spouse or your kids...
 - The same voice you use to talk about other people...
 - Smile and nice here, but at work you're short and rude...

Or how about this: Have ever had one of those moments when you knew the right thing to do, you even down deep wanted to do the right thing, but you ended up doing the wrong thing???

Examples...

What do we do with that?!?

The thing is that it can leave us feeling

- Discouraged...
 - Not good enough...
 - Feel defeated...
 - Feel like a hypocrite...
- Isolated- I'm the only one...

We are consistently inconsistent in the way that we live our lives...

Romans 7 is written for the person that asks **WHY?!?**

And this is how we're going to kick off our **new series** this morning that's going to be grounded in **Romans 8**- *which is where we're going to spend the next 5 weeks...* But to see the beauty of **Romans 8**, we have to see the problem we face in **Romans 7**...

The book of **Romans** was written by Paul to the church in Rome...

- Writing this letter to prepare the way for his visit...
- The first 5 books are all about what Christ has done to declare us righteous...
 - This is called **Justification**... You are justified before God because of the work of Jesus...
- And **chapters 6-8** are about the **sanctification** that comes after **justification**...
 - **Sanctification** is just a fancy way of talking about the transformation that the gospel brings in you!

- Walking in new life, bearing fruit, and fighting sin: **vivification** and **mortification...** And it all happens through the power of the gospel!
- And so this is where we're going to be picking up in the middle of Paul talking about the this

Let's jump in...

Romans 7:7-25

⁷What should we say then? Is the law sin? Absolutely not!

Real quick context: Leading up to this statement, Paul's been pretty hard on the law- specifically, the law of Moses is what he's referencing here...

- He's talked about the bad things that it brings out in people and how it doesn't have the ability to save...
- He's been railing it, and so here he deals with an objection...
- Is the law that God gave a bad thing, *is it sinful?* And He's saying *absolutely not!*

Here's why, look at what He says next:

But, I would not have known sin if it were not for the law. For example, I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, Do not covet.

Coveting: exposes it all... wanting what someone else has... Under all of the other commandments...

- *Present everywhere... body type... Cupcake and Abs!*

Paul is saying here that the law exposes sin, it reveals what sin is and what is sinful...

And here's the thing to understand in this... The purpose of the law that was given by God to the people of Israel is that it was never to be a means for salvation, its purpose was to serve as a **mirror** to show how humanity looks before God...

- It revealed all the gaps that exist because of sin...

- In fact, this is really the point of the whole **OT**- to show the state of humanity and our need for deliverance...

The law was designed to show us that we have a deep problem... It's not a little problem, Paul's about to show us how deep it is too...

Verse 8:

⁸And sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind. For apart from the law sin is dead. ⁹Once I was alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life again ¹⁰and I died. The commandment that was meant for life resulted in death for me. ¹¹For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.

And here's another key part of this, not only does the law reveal sin, but it does more than that, it also exposes the **power** of sin and the **depths** of sin in our lives...

- **IOW:** the law also revealed the true nature of our hearts and how depraved we truly are...

Paul's like, I thought I was good, I was alive- but then through the law, I realized the sin in my life...

IOW: What Paul's saying here is that there are some things in me that I didn't even know were there until I was told not to do them... ¹

- **Example:** *Do not touch signs...*
 - When you see it, what do you really want to do down deep? *And some of you do it!*
 - Now, I know some of you are like, *well I'm a rule follower- well, the thing in you is pride- there you go!*

Paul's saying that the thing that was supposed to point me in the right direction reveals how much I want to go in the wrong direction...

What was meant for good to point me to **life** served as something that revealed the **bad** in me, proving that my heart is **dead...**

¹ Joby Martin, *What's Wrong with me?*

And there's nothing I could do about it... See, here's what we want to do... When the gaps are exposed in our life we do think the answer is? ***We think, well, try harder...***

This is where Paul says the law ***deceived*** him... And this deception that he's talking about has to do with ***perception...***

A perception that if work harder at being better, then we can fix the problem...

- ***Press against works-based salvation...***

Paul says, in my attempts to find life through it, only brought death...

- The harder I tried, the more I saw how unable I was...

We need a solution that's different than the law...

We have a problem... And it's one that we can't fix...

Verse 12:

¹²So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good. ¹³Therefore, did what is good become death to me? Absolutely not! But, sin, in order to be recognized as sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that through the commandment, sin might become sinful beyond measure.

Paul's saying we can't blame the law for the state that we're in, this isn't on anyone other than ourselves...

- *It's me hi, I'm the problem it's me!*

The law exposes and diagnoses sin, but it's not responsible for it...

Ex: EMT shows up in response to a person having a heart attack, and they find he person is dead... They didn't kill them, they aren't charged with murder, they just pronounced them dead... This is what the law does...²

² Tery-Lee Kirkland, *A war against sin*.

Verse 14:

¹⁴For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold as a slave under sin.

Paul makes a shift to the first person here... Has been talking about himself in the past tense, ***now it is the present...***

Paul struggles with sin- you are not alone!

- We see the tension of an everyday Christian...
- *Apply...*

What Paul's saying is that the law was from God, and yet, Paul is sinful, and oftentimes he still lives as though sin is his master...

- Man, how true is that of us?!?
 - Come to a situation where sin wins the battle in us...

We have a problem...

And then he says this in **verse 15:**

¹⁵For I do not understand what I am doing, because I do not practice what I want to do, but I do what I hate.

Paul presses deeper into the struggle that's happening inside of himself...

And he's like, *WHY is this the case?!?*

I think for many people they assume that when they come to Christ, sin just goes away... And if it doesn't, they feel discouraged...

Illustration: When I was in college, there were some people that would come on campus and preach...

- Funny, pit preachers...
- Another group that was saying that if you sin after you're saved, then you're not really saved and they went to a passage in first John...

Paul's saying that's just not true...

Which, **BTW:** should help us feel the freedom to, like Paul, confess our sin!

I think the reason why we don't confess sin is that we have a wrong view of it... We think that it will go away, and since it hasn't, we are ashamed...

- *Press in...*
- Cat's out of the bag- we all have this same struggle inside of us...

We have a problem...

Verse 16:

¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want to do, I agree with the law that it is good. ¹⁷ So now I am no longer the one doing it, but it is sin living in me.

Paul says that my awareness of the gaps in my life proves that the law is a good thing because it's the one that showed me...

And then Paul keeps diving deeper into the problem...

- He shows the pervasiveness of sin in his life, that there's a power attached to sin...

*He's not saying that he's not responsible, he's saying that there's this power at work in him that **impacts** and **interferes** with his desire to honor God...

And here's how this plays out inside of himself, verse 18

¹⁸ For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do what is good is with me, but there is no ability to do it. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good that I want to do, but I practice the evil that I do not want to do. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, I am no longer the one that does it, but it is the sin that lives in me.

I know nothing good lives in me- in my flesh...

- There is nothing good in our flesh nature...
- And there is no **power** to overcome that which is bad on our own...
- There is no ability on our own to overcome the sin in our lives...

PROOF: *The desire to honor God is in me, but I can't do it!*

- ***I don't do what I want, and the things I don't want to do, I do!***

This is evidence of the state of where we are... Shows our hearts, and proves ***the lack of power we have to overcome sin and live how God has called us to live...***

This is what Paul is getting at when he says that he's not the one who does it...

- He's not saying He's not abdicating responsibility...
- He's showing the power of sin inside of himself and how sin often wins over in his life...

Verse 21: *He keeps pressing in on this...*

²¹ So I discover this law: [or principal] When I want to do what is good, evil is present with me. ²² For in my inner self I delight in God's law, ²³ but I see a different law in the parts of my body; waging war against the law of my mind and taking me prisoner to the law of sin in the parts of my body.

Think about it like this:

Example: *Dieting...*

- We really want to say no to the cupcake, but we give in...

This is how we are when it comes to the things of God...

- Down deep, we really want to obey God, but there is this war inside of us!!
- We often feel like we can't escape... Our desire appetite for sin, our desire for sin... It just takes over...

This is where we are **we have a problem...**

But look at what Paul says in Verse 24:

²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind I myself am serving the law of God, but with my flesh, the law of sin.

JESUS!!

GOSPEL!

- Life, death, and resurrection of Jesus!!!

The goal in the Christian life isn't to become better it's to rely on the gospel more...

It's not working harder, it's holding onto Jesus...

And transformation will come but it won't be because of you, It will be because of Him!

And the transformation isn't that we become better people on the outside... Will that happen over time, yes, but most of our sin is on the inside and the battle is on the inside... This is what Paul points us to...

The transformation that happens is one where our continual dependence and hope are on Christ!

This is the beauty of the gospel that Paul preaches, ***it's not about behavior modification, it's about heart transformation...***

Conclusion [VAMP]

Has your heart been transformed?!?

Non-Christian: You been like Paul and waged this war but not known the solution??

Christian: Thanks be to God through Jesus!!

- Identity...

Here's the thing I want you to see... God gave us something to show the reality of what Paul is talking about...

Baptism!

- Outward expression of and inward reality...
- It's publicly saying thanks be to God!!
- It's a marker of the new you!
- It's a stake in the ground...
 - Paul says in **Colossians 2:** remember you baptism...

Some of you need to take a next step to do that this morning...

- Text ***saved*** to the number on the screen- select baptism...

Don't be selfish with your salvation...

Pray...

Reflect and Discuss:

- Read Romans 7:7-14, **What does it mean to strive for holiness FROM faith not FOR faith?**
 - (It's not a works-based idea because it is impossible to earn our own righteousness. Striving for holiness is a by-product of a genuine relationship with Jesus and understanding of the Gospel.)
- Read Romans 7:15-25, **How have you experienced God's Word exposing the sin in your heart and pointing you to the hope in Jesus?**
- **Why is the world's belief to "follow your heart" wrong?**
 - Reference: Jeremiah 17:9
 - Matthew 15:19
- John Owen famously said, "be killing sin or sin will be killing you". **How do we kill sin in our lives? How is that different from simply managing sin?**
- **How does the gospel free us to kill sin in our lives?**

Outtakes:

But before we go any further, here's the thing that we have to understand as we read this in order to apply what we're about to walk through rightly in our context...

We don't interact with the Law of Moses as they did in this time and context because we know that Jesus was the fulfillment of all of it... And because of that, we're no longer under the Law of Moses, we're under the Law of Christ...

- **IOW:** He is the one who shapes how we live now, not the Law of Moses...

But here's the thing, what Paul deals with as it related to ***Israel*** ***experience under the Law of Moses*** is relevant for us who are under the Law of Christ...

- **IOW:** In the same way that the Law of Moses showed right and wrong, Jesus shows us right and wrong...
- In the same way that the Law of Moses showed the people how to live, Jesus shows us how to live...
- In the same way that gaps of the human heart were exposed through the Law of Moses, gaps are exposed in us through Christ...
- In the same way that the Law of Moses could not save, works of religion cannot save us...

So the way that we can apply what Paul is talking about here is by seeing the Law as God's commands...

Expansion to the situation of all people comes not through a broadening of the reference to "law," but through the paradigmatic significance of Israel's experience with the Mosaic law. While Paul directly describes only this experience in this chapter, it has application to all people because what is true of Israel under God's law through Moses is true [by the very fact] of all people under "law".³

³ Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, 428.

Romans 2:15: the law of God is written on your heart, what does that look like? You conscious... That thing in you that knows right and wrong...⁴

⁴ Good supporting article, John Piper, *How is the Law Written on our hearts?*