

The Book of Romans: 7:1-25

Main Idea

We often know what God desires and still discover that knowledge, rules, and willpower cannot transform a sinful heart. We need rescue, and that rescue comes through Jesus Christ.

THE STORY OF ROMANS SO FAR

- Jews and Gentiles are in the same condition: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23
- Sin brings death and separation from God.
- Possessing God’s law did not give Israel the power to obey it perfectly.
- We are made right with God through faith in Jesus, not through our ability to keep the law.
- Romans 7 answers the question: If the law came from God, what place does it have now?

1. THROUGH CHRIST, WE HAVE BEEN RELEASED FROM THE LAW TO BELONG TO JESUS

“You also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.” Romans 7:4

- Death changes a legal relationship.
- Through Christ’s death, we died to the law as the way we become righteous before God.
- We have not been released so that we can live however we want. We have been released so that we may belong to Christ.
- We now serve God in the new way of the Spirit rather than relying on the written code to make us righteous.

“But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit.” Romans 7:6

2. THE LAW REVEALS OUR SIN, BUT IT CANNOT FREE US FROM SIN

“What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not!” Romans 7:7

- The law is holy, righteous, and good.
- The law shows us what holiness looks like and exposes the sin already present within us.
- Like a button marked “Do not push,” a command can reveal the rebellion in our hearts.
- The problem is not God’s command. The problem is the sinful nature that resists it.

“I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, ‘You shall not covet.’” Romans 7:7

Knowing better does not always mean doing better.

“For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.” Romans 7:15

“For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.”
Romans 7:19

- Rules can identify sin, but they cannot transform the heart.
- Willpower alone cannot rescue us from the power of sin.
- Grace does not mean we stop fighting sin. It means we stop pretending that our effort can save us.

3. THE ANSWER IS NOT GREATER EFFORT, BUT A GREATER SAVIOR

“What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?”
Romans 7:24

Paul does not ask, “What rule will rescue me?” He asks, “Who will rescue me?”

“Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Romans 7:25

- The law can reveal our guilt, but Jesus bore our guilt.
- The law can show us our need, but Jesus meets our need.
- The law cannot rescue us, but Jesus can.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
Romans 6:23