

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Turn your bible with me to Romans 7

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this amazing letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Rome and to us today - about the Gospel of Grace.

And we currently find ourselves in the portion of Paul's letter where he focuses on the struggles of the believer with the things of the flesh.

Every single one of us is facing a constant battle with our flesh.

We may not want to admit it – but we all have our struggles.

Even though we have studied that we are no longer a slave to sin.

Despite the fact that the death and resurrection of Jesus has given us victory over the penalty of sin and the power of sin – we all still in a constant war with our flesh.

Our old nature and our new nature

We want to please God

We have a desire to do God's will

We want to do what is good

But then our old habits resurface

I struggle with my flesh – it is a daily battle.

That shiny thing above my head is not a halo – it is just the reflection of the light on my bald head.

And it is very important that we grasp this because there are believers that have the misconception that Christians are not supposed to struggle with the flesh.

And sometimes that battle becomes so fierce – that we may begin to question whether we are really saved.

I may not be a true Christian.

I may not be a true believer.

Because true believers don't struggle the way I struggle.

Therefore – nobody knows the struggle I am going through.

We all struggle – you know who else struggled?

Paul

The person that God used to write half the New Testament –

He struggled with his flesh.

And that is what we are going to be looking at this morning – as Paul gives us a candid look at his struggle –

The good news in all of this struggle is Ch 8 – that starts next week.

The top of the mountain in the book of Romans is chapter 8 –

But to get there – we have to finish ch 7

And what Paul is going to tell us in our text is that the answer to our dilemma is not adhering to the law, it is not simply trying harder, the answer is Jesus!!!

Let's pray...

Read Text

In our study last week – Paul spoke about the law – and our relationship with the law.

The Law, given to Israel thru Moses, is a picture of the holiness of God.

The law reveals the righteous standard of a holy and perfect God.

It is the straight edge that reveals just how crooked we are.

But God did not give it as a way to make people holy.

Remember, the law could not save us and the law could not make us holy.

The law was meant to reveal our spiritual inability; to diagnose our brokenness –

And to move us to seek the mercy & grace God offers, in Christ.

The law is holy, just, and good

Because God who gave us the law is holy, just and good.

So Paul anticipates the reader asking the question – is the problem “the law”

And so he asks and answers the question in verse 13

**[Rom 7:13-25 NKJV] 13 Has then what is good (this is in reference to the law) become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.**

Paul is asking the question -

“Are you saying that this good thing, the law, has been the thing that has brought me death?”

“Has this good thing been bad for me?”

If after church today – I drive up I19 and I get pulled over for going 20 mph higher than the speed limit.

Who is to blame?

Is it the signs' fault? Or is it my fault?

It's my fault.

Paul was struggling with covetousness – his outward appearance was good – however, his inward – his heart was broken.

The law revealed to Paul that he was a sinner.

Is the law to blame or Paul? Paul

The law is perfect –

But Paul,

you and I – we are not perfect. That's the problem.

The law simply shines light on the sin.

It throws gas on the fire. For Paul – covetousness was already there.

Turn to Joshua 6

Here we find Joshua giving the Children of Israel final instructions before God gives them the victory over Jericho.

**[Jos 6:18-19 NKJV] 18 "And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. 19 "But all the silver and gold, and vessels**

**of bronze and iron, [are] consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD."**

They had one rule – the spoils of victory belong to God. He gets the first fruits.

As they continued to take steps of faith, they were going to get the spoils of the battles as God promised to give them victory over the other ites – but Jericho belonged to God

Achan hears this command / he knew what was right and wrong – and what does he do?

After the walls fall down - I am just going to take a little gold here, a few garments here.

It's just a little.

Did Achan know he was doing wrong – absolutely

How do we know?

because he buried the items when he got back to his tent.

And death came upon him and his family –

When our rebellion meets up with God's word / the law – it produces death.

Because the law says – don't do this –

And our response is – "You are not telling me what to do"

The result – death

Because the wages of sin is death – always.

So it is not the laws fault – it is our fault.

And for the believer, this death that Paul speaks of is this strong conviction that tells us that we have utterly failed.

And the more time we spend in God's Word, the more aware we are of how sinful sin really is.

Turn with me to Isaiah 6

As one reads the first 5 chapters of Isaiah – we find several woes that God has given him to pronounce against the nation

But here in ch 6 as Isaiah is in the presence of the glory of God -

**[Isa 6:5 NKJV] 5 So I said: "Woe [is] me, for I am undone! Because I [am] a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."**

As he is standing in the presence of God, God reveals in his heart how unclean he is.

How filthy he is

How he needs the Lord

Church, God doesn't reveal things in our hearts in order to crush us or to condemn us or to beat us up over it.

Notice God's grace here.

This was the purpose of the revelation

**[Isa 6:6-7 NKJV] 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal [which] he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth [with it], and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; **Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged.**"**

Our iniquity is taken away in Jesus Christ

Your sin, my sin has been purged

Just like Isaiah experiencing this touch of heaven

By faith in Jesus Christ that same touch is ours today as our iniquity has been removed.

That is what the law does – reveals to us that we need to depend on God to do the work.

**14 For we know that the law is spiritual, **but I am carnal**, sold under sin.**

This is Paul's way of saying –



The law cannot change you

The law cannot set you free from the bondage of sin

How does Paul know this?

Because he was someone who lived his life believing he was keeping the law -

He was a Pharisee – so the focus was on the physical / on the outward

I don't murder, I don't commit adultery – I am good. People can see that.

But Jesus said that if we lust – we have already committed adultery, if we hate, we have already committed murder.

So the law – as we have studied that last two weeks revealed to Paul that – it has to do with attitude – because it is spiritual.

It deals with the inner me

It deals with the invisible me

It is making me conform on the outside, it is inviting me to do what is right n the inside.

Now – I had you make a note that Paul shares with us “I am carnal” not – I was carnal, I am carnal.

Now, don't think of the word “carnal” here as Paul partying all night – that is not what he is saying.

He uses the word carnal to give us a clue for the cause of his struggles.

You see, the bible speaks of three different types of men and women

1. **Natural man or woman** – this is the unbeliever. Those that are living their lives apart from Christ. The person who has no spiritual life in them. Paul describes them in Ephesians 2 – as those who were dead in trespasses and sins. The person that Paul has already described for us in Romans 1-3 (all of us before we were saved)
2. **Spiritual man or woman** – this is the born again believer who is walking in the Spirit – this is the believer who Paul is going to describe for us next week in Romans 8.

This is the believer who trusts in the Lord with all his/her heart and leans not on their own understanding and in all their ways acknowledge Him and allow God to direct their path (Proverbs 3:5-6) – led by the Spirit

3. **Carnal man or woman** – this is the born again Christian – but not living in the Spirit.

It is the believer who is trying to attain holiness through the power of the flesh.

Paul is describing the person who still believes that they can live a Christian life and obey God in their own strength, in their own power, with their own ability.

The carnal man doesn't trust in the Lord with all their heart.

The carnal man leans on his own understanding.

The carnal man turns to trying to live under the law – and as we just read, the law only activates the old nature –

And our old nature is so sinful that it cannot be changed or controlled by the law.

Now – in these next few verses – Paul invites us into his internal struggle.

**15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. 16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that [it is] good. 17 But now, [it is] no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) **nothing good dwells;** for to will is present with me, but [how] to perform what is good I do not find. 19 For the good that I will [to do], I do not do; but the evil I will not [to do], that I practice. 20 Now if I do what I will not [to do], it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.**

Is Paul a genuine believer? Yes

Does Paul want to stop sinning? Yes

Does Paul continue to struggle with the flesh? Yes

Is his struggle because he has taken his eyes off of Jesus or because he refuses to focus on Jesus or refuses to walk with Jesus? No

That doesn't sound like the Paul we know from all his other letters -

**[1Co 2:2 NKJV] 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.**

**[Gal 2:20 NKJV] 20 "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the [life] which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.**

Paul struggle is not with the law –

Paul struggle is not because of God

Paul's struggle and our struggle is with "me"

The problem in the equation is = Self.

Paul doesn't understand self.

And Paul knows that he can't help self.

This inner battle between doing what is right and doing what is wrong.

Again – this is Paul we are talking about here.

This is not a new believer

I had you make a note in verse 18 - For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells.

Right next to verse 18 – mark down John 6:63

And in John 6:63 – you can write down Romans 7:18

Some of the best cross references are the ones that we make.

**[Jhn 6:63 NKJV] 63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and [they] are life.**

Paul says in my flesh – nothing good dwells

Jesus says – the flesh profits nothing

Our struggle is – we really don't believe that

Because we want to believe that there is tiny lit bit of our flesh that is good and a tiny little bit of our flesh that profits

Can't there be just a little bit good in my flesh?

Can't a little bit of my efforts be good for the Lord?

By the way – you want to know what is the one sign that will tell us whether or not we have been leaning on our flesh????

Disappointment

We beat ourselves up.

Because disappointment expects more from our flesh.

I can do this on my own – and then when we stumble and fall, we feel so bad.

We become disappointed with ourselves

You know who isn't disappointed with you – God

**[Psa 103:14 NKJV] 14 For He knows our frame; He remembers that we [are] dust.**

We lean on our flesh far too much that we begin to beat ourselves up

By the way – at end of verse 15 – Paul uses the word hate.

He is disappointed

He already said that he is carnal

For the Spiritual man – the one who is led by the Spirit – Paul will tell us next week in Romans 8:1 –

**[Rom 8:1 NKJV] 1 [There is] therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**

No disappointment.

**21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.**

In verse 21, Paul restates the conflict that he has been describing in verses 14-20. The conflict is that there are two powers pulling Paul in polar opposite directions.

You have this principle of life – at the beginning of verse 21 – this evil that is laying in wait – ready to spring at any moment – ready to come out from within.

Like a lion lying in the tall weeds ready to devour someone as they walk by.

Think of the warning that God gave Cain when he was dejected because God accepted Abel's gift and not Cain's in Gen 4

I am reading from the NLT -

**[Gen 4:7 NLT] 7 You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master."**

The sin that was crouching at the door for Cain is still crouching at the door for you and me.

This is one power that is pulling-

The other power is at the end of verse 21

The one who wants to do good.

There is a part of Paul that wants to pursue holiness, deny self, take up a cross and follow Jesus.

So Paul is saying there is this civil war inside me.

This same conflict between good and evil that is being played out in the lives of every Christian today.

Not only do we have this tug of war inside of us

But we have two laws that are in conflict with one another

The law of God and the law of sin

He delights in the law of God

Paul is born again

Paul is a Christian

Paul loves Jesus

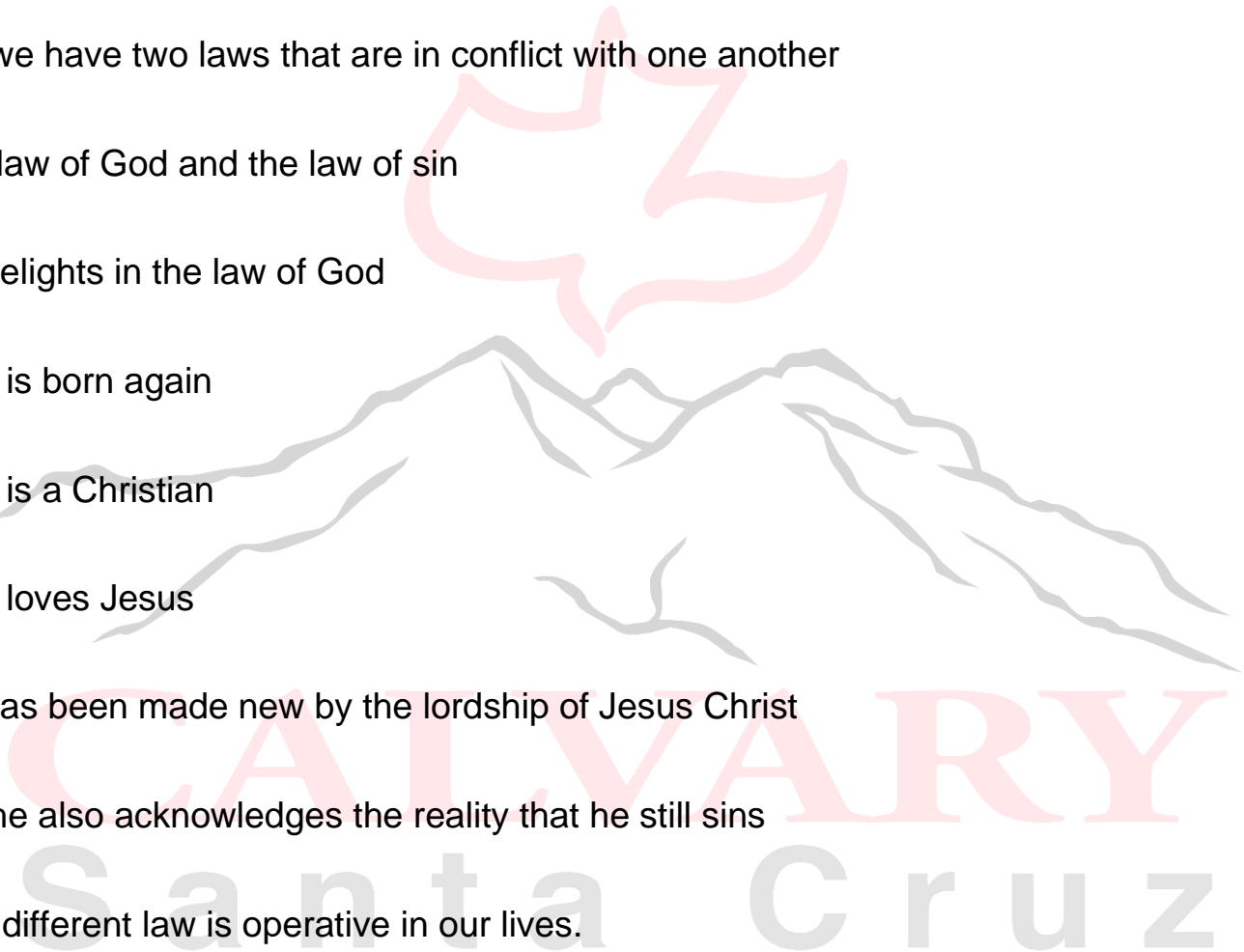
He has been made new by the lordship of Jesus Christ

But he also acknowledges the reality that he still sins

This different law is operative in our lives.

It has not gone away and it does not asleep.

It never backs off.





It is an ongoing battle within us until the day we step out of this world and into the very presence of Jesus Christ.

That is why we still sin

**24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?**

Roman citizens who were charged with a capital offense – were not allowed to be crucified.

However, there were other punishments that were developed.

And one of the punishments involved strapping a dead body to the back of the person that was convicted.

And as the dead body began to decay – the rotting corpse would become the instrument of the execution

the person strapped to the dead body would get sick and eventually it will kill that person.

And many people believe that this is what Paul is referring to when he says – who will deliver me from this body of death.

Now right before that – I had you make a note of the phrase - **O wretched man that I am**

The Greek word that is used for wretched is a word that means exhausted from battle.

It carries that connotation of being exhausted from a great conflict.

Think of two boxers after a 15 round heavyweight fight

Like the old Rocky movies.

Left everything in the ring – can barely stand up – on the verge of collapsing.

That is how Paul is feeling

And that is how many Christians feel – they are living an exhausted Christian life because they are trying to be good people.

And it is not until we come to the same conclusion that Paul did – and we understand our true wretchedness that we will ask the question that Paul asks.

Who will deliver me from this body of death?

By the way – in our text today, this is going to blow your mind -

Paul has not mentioned Jesus or God once –

It all been about Paul

I counted at least 33 times when Paul use the word I, me or my

Paul is making the point that if we depend on our own power and our own strength, in our own ability – there is no hope – we are wretched

We come to terms with the fact that I can't do it, I can't fix it –

Who is going to do it?

Who is going to deliver me?

No longer about me.

**25 I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.**

Just as eternal life is through Jesus

Escape from the flesh is through Jesus

Church -

Victory always comes by looking past self and finding those things through the person of Jesus Christ.

How is my marriage ever going to change?

I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord

How am I going to survive all the things that I am going through right now?

I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

How am I ever going to break free from this sin that has a hold on me?

I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

It always come down to Jesus

And Paul finishes the end of the chapter with a sobering reality.

We know the answer – Jesus

But here is what Paul is saying.

Just because we know the answer – it is not going to take the struggle away.

We are still going to struggle every day – our old self is going to rise up from within and want to be fed.

The good news – we have Romans Ch 8 beginning next week – where we learn to walk according to the Spirit

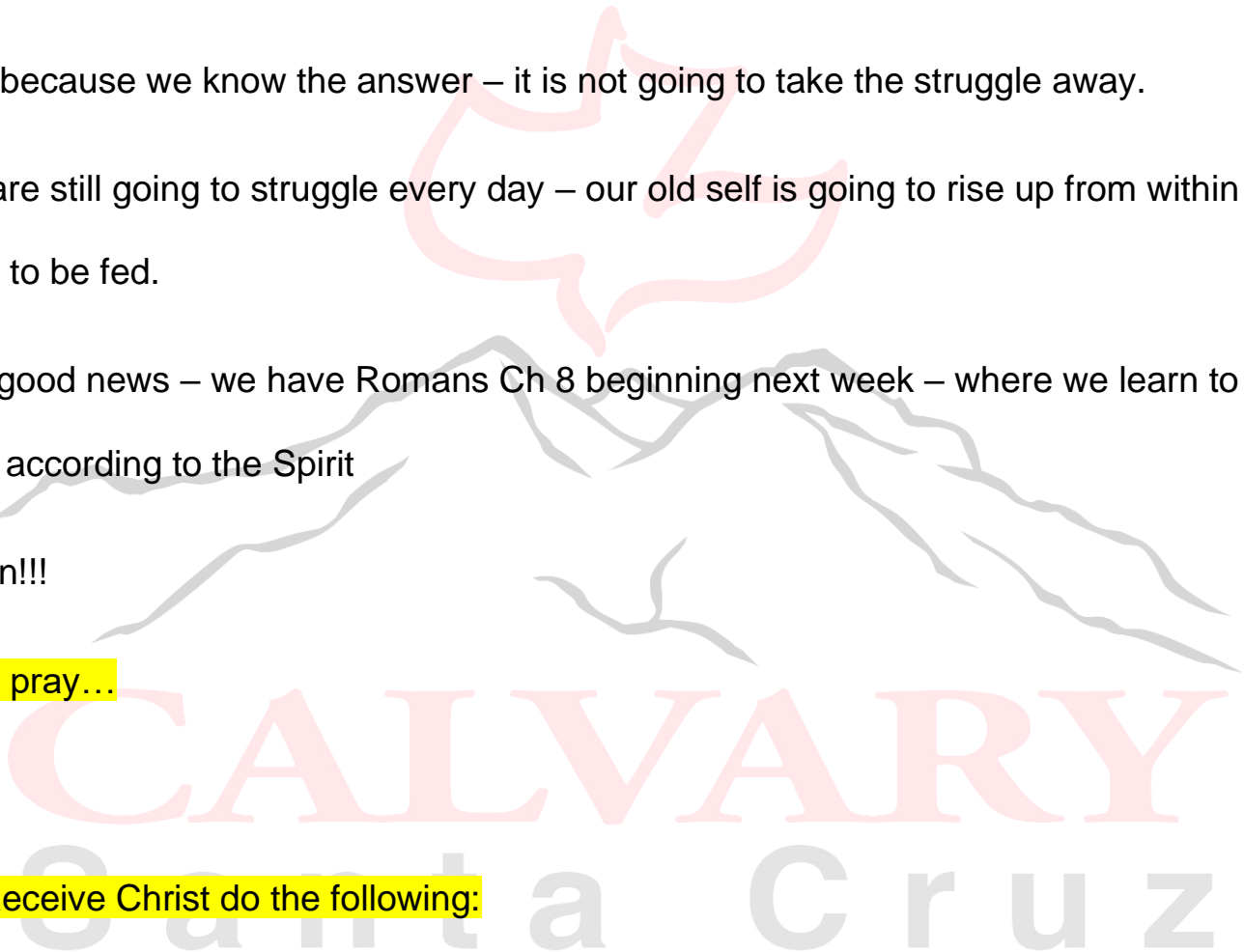
Amen!!!

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.



Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

One of the healthiest things that we can do as a Christian is come to the point where we acknowledge that we are incapable of fixing something and understanding and trusting that God can.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'