

ROMANS: TRANSFORMED BY GRACE

(Romans 7:15-25)

Worked hard at something, but never succeeded. '70's – the gym rope climb (never managed to get high); seemed like the harder I worked/strained – the more I could never pull my weight up. Gravity=DOWN frustrated
-Does this seem like your Christian life? Small steps, little victories; BIG SIN; slide; drift; wake-up call? **Pushing a boulder uphill (even when you rest to catch breath u r expending enrgy-slide)**

Sin Cycle Israel: (Blessing; apathy; warning; judgment; repentance; restoration; blessing)

-Who is the holiest person you know? Like the most spiritual? The most in-tune w/God? the most consistent? Parent? Friend? Spouse? Child? Mentor? Pastors? Neighbor? **PAUL?????**

Romans 7:15-25 – after all the teaching; doctrine; sp. encouragement – **Paul=transparent**:

¹⁴ For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, sold into bondage to sin. ¹⁵ For I do not understand what I am doing; for I am not practicing what I want to do, but I do the very thing I hate. Isn't this your experience too? That what I know is right, that what I know is good and godly – these things I know I should be doing: (reading my Bible daily, praying all throughout the day, sharing the gospel with coworkers, neighbors, selflessly serving, working in our children's ministry..., joining/hosting a community group) – we know what is right – and yet we daily fail to do it. (somehow that gives me comfort? Weird?? To think that Paul. **THE** Apostle Paul, the greatest missionary, the Greatest Church Planter, the greatest Theologian ever -he struggled to stay holy; to do the right thing; to keep his heart and mind in check; HUMAN

-Charles Spurgeon (depression) -Charles Stanley (Divorced) -J. Piper (Marriage; wayward kids) **ALL of us have our struggles; none of us is perfect; I blew my marriage up 12 yrs in; I made my ministry a mistress; I poured my life into the Lord's Church and I neglected my own marriage.**

-If you feel broken, tired, spiritually absent, discouraged, unfulfilled, distracted -**GOOD company**

¹⁶ However, if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, that the Law is good.

V17 But now, no longer am I *the one* doing it, but sin that dwells in me.¹⁸ For I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. Though Paul himself has taught that as Christians, those who are IN Christ, we have been released from the curse of the LAW (sin) & released from the condemnation of the LAW (that we will never measure up) =ONLY Jesus perfectly kept the LAW and since we are IN Christ, our perfection, our righteousness, our holiness comes from Jesus' perfect work=**NOT ours**
-But Paul is commiserating that He has not yet been released from the continuation of sin in His life (on this earth, even as a Saved and eternally changed Believer, the existence of sin/drag! **Gnats (harmless) = nuisance; swarming flies (harmless) (maggots)=gross/nuisance v. butterflies**☺

On the Cross, Jesus saved us from:

The **Penalty** (Justification) = no longer guilty before a Holy God (Col. 1:14)

The **Power** Sin (Sanctification) =the Spirit who indwells us empowers us/conquer sin 1C 10:13

BUT... The **Presence** of Sin will only be eradicated in HIS Presence. (Glorification)

V19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. ²⁰ But if I do the very thing I do not want, I am no longer *the one* doing it, but sin that dwells in me.

-1Tim 1:15 Paul: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief"

-Paul is here reminding himself and us, that his sanctification is far from complete:

How about you? Where are you on your journey to Christlikeness? Just beginning? Backslid?

-I found myself the other day confessing to Adam, my accountability partner. Real sin.

-Do you know, the donut shop in Northlake is right next to the Workout gym? *Who does that?*^{devil}

-I despise my own weakness. Yet, it is that constant weakness which drives back to Jesus!

V21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

=Although sin no longer REIGNS in us, it still *remains* in us (battle every day against the flesh)

=**although sin is no longer "President," it is still a resident.** Daily power to battle real tempt./sin

-**God uses our weakness, trials, failures to push us into His arms; reminder-we NEED Him**

-Paul begins to use the LAW (truth of God) as a metaphor for his internal battle for sanctification:

V22 For I joyfully agree with the law of God in the inner person,[I know what is True; I believe what is true] ²³ **but** I see a different law in the parts of my body waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin, *the law which is in my body's parts.*

Paul is saying that he understands as a Believer (who has a renewed mind/heart) who wants to please the Lord – that the battle is real because the fleshly drive within us is self-deceiving

=**we typically self-sabotage the best parts of our life** b/c we fall for satan's lie: (John 10:10)

-**Facing temptation is not a sin. Having to take a test is not a sin; we are ALL tested/tempt.**

-James 1:12-16 "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved [passed the test], he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him. ¹³ No one is to say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it has run its course, brings forth death. ¹⁶ Do not be deceived [misled], *my beloved brothers and sisters.*"

-Choosing to sin against God (knowing what is right, true, holy, & honorable and failing in it) - this is sin; this is open rebellion against holy God, your God, your Savior, your Lover –

=This hurts Him; this hurts us; Jesus died for us that we could live a better plan/victorious life!

Luther: when we have bad thoughts/anger hearts/lustful ideas -like a bird flies over head & we can't help that, but we don't let 'em build a nest in our hair! God's Spirit in us helps us win!!!

V24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

-Is that you this morning? Heavy laden with unconfessed sin? Hidden sin habit? Pet sin? Idol in your life that you feel you can't live without and b/c of it you are making everyone else's life miserable? Are you miserable this morning? Discouraged? Overwhelmed? Dissatisfied? Angry?

-Ps. 32:1-6 "How blessed is he whose wrongdoing is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!

² How blessed is a person whose guilt the Lord does not take into account, And in whose spirit there is no deceit! ³ When I kept silent *about my sin*, my body wasted away [my bones rotted]

Through my groaning all day long. ⁴ For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;

My vitality failed *as with the dry heat of summer.* [life juices turned into drought of summer]

Selah THEN... ⁵ I acknowledged my sin to You, And I did not hide my guilt; I said, "I will confess my wrongdoings to the Lord"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. *Selah*

⁶ Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to You in a time when You may be found;

-**GOOD NEWS**.... Paul: Who will set me free from the body of this death? =Jesus; He can! He did!

V25 Thanks be to God -**through Jesus Christ our Lord!** -Even though he may not "feel" it, Paul knows what is truest about him, what is most true about him is that He is loved, forgiven, drawn into Christ, embraced in truth, in grace, in mercy – time and time again. =gratitude/wor

APPLICATION:

God in His good plan and mercy has put strife between your old nature and your new nature as a Christian; the fact that you struggle with sin at all is a good sign – it reminds you that you are in a fight for righteousness, to press into **holiness** “**without which no one will see the Lord.**” (Heb. 12:14) – that your daily life is to live out what Christ has **already secured** for you in His perfect work. Paul reminds us in this -Phil 2:12-13 “**work out your own salvation in fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work within you/inside you both to give you the desire** [that’s your NEW Nature] **and to work for His good pleasure.**” Daily sanctification is a spiritual work accomplished by the Spirit’s help; but IT IS WORK! A battle! It’s because we are spiritually alive we have a continual battle in our soul. – So in your life right now, who is winning?

-Who has the loudest voice in your heart right now? The voice that says, keep hiding, keep low, don’t confess, don’t out yourself; you’ll be fine; no one need know what you are doing; the voice that tells you that you don’t need to walk the aisle and ask for prayer; you don’t need to confess to your spouse; you don’t need to own up to your sin and hard-heartedness.

-Who is winning the battle of sin and holiness in your life right now? The Spirit?/Flesh?
= Last night? What did you watch? DO? Say? This past week?

-What do you need to confess to Jesus right now, ask His forgiveness? (1 John 1:9)

-IF you desire earnestly to please God, to glorify Him w/ your thoughts, words, intentions, actions = this is a mercy (unsaved people don’t care about pleasing God, just themselves; they do whatever to make themselves LOOK good/appear righteous); YET...God wants the heart; He wants ALL of your heart!

-What will it take to give Jesus ALL of your heart; to give Him your sin afresh? Your idols? Your brokenness? Your anger? Your unforgiveness? Your hard-heartedness? Your selfishness?

***Prodigal Son -picture of the Lord; an eager Father watching, waiting for His son to return home =He runs after His son; embraces him; celebrates him – his repentance/brokenness/his sonship**

-Jesus stands ready to receive you – what is stopping you right now from running to Him?

Bishop Berkely: I cannot pray, but I can sin; I cannot preach, but I can sin; I cannot administer the Lord’s Supper, but I can sin; My very repentance needs to be repented of; and the tears I shed need washing in the blood of Christ.” (1670)