

The Book of Romans

The Gospel of God

Our Wretched Condition

Romans 7:14-25

¹⁴ For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of fleshly, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I will *to do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ But if I do the very thing I do not will *to do*, I agree with the Law, that is good. ¹⁷ So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. ¹⁸ For I know the 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. ¹⁹ For the good that I will, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not will. ²⁰ But if I am doing the very thing I do not will, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

²¹ Therefore I find this law: that when I will to do good, evil is present with me. ²² For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³ but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ 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 on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

(Romans 7:14-25)

Our Wretched Condition

- Fallen humanity confronted with the law
 - in describing himself, Paul represents all of fallen humanity – Christian and non-Christian
 - our innate rebellion and self-love is exposed by the command “you shall not covet”

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1. Agreement with the law
 - Paul cannot comprehend his actions – he agrees with the law, that it is good, but acts otherwise
 - acting against God, despite knowing better and willing to do good, results in unqualified guilt

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2. Reality of indwelling sin

- sin has possessed his person, identity and self so that Paul is completely enslaved
- Paul does not describe a struggle with sin but a battle that is hopelessly lost – he does not and cannot do what is good

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3. Summary Conclusion

- “law of sin” – the authority or demand of sin which is rooted in him and is unchangeable
- the very self that sees the goodness of the law and agrees with it is overcome by the self which does evil – a continued defeat and captivity

Cry of Despair and Thanksgiving

²⁴ *Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?* ²⁵ *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

³ For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as *an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

(Romans 8:1-3)