

The Flesh vs The Spirit

Epistle to the Romans

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Today we continue our study in Romans 7. The last time we considered together the difference between the law and Grace, and that was from verse 1 down to verse 6, but today we want to pick up with verse 7 and prayerfully go all the way through the end of the chapter and what I'd like us to consider is "The Flesh vs The Spirit."

So this is a study in contrast between the law of God and the Grace of God. We know that God does not set aside His law in order to show His Grace to any sinner. This is the mystery of the Gospel that God without diminishing in any way His law and justice, saves sinners by His Grace and He does it through the work of the LORD Jesus Christ, and as we saw last time, because of that work that he accomplished at the cross, the imagery that's given here is that that first husband now is dead, in other words, the law is dead, we saw it in verse 4, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." When Christ fulfilled the law in His life and paid the penalty in His death, the law has no more power or authority over any for whom Christ died.

So the picture there is of a husband having died, now that wife being free to marry another, and that so long as that first husband is alive, then there can be no other marriage to another without it being adultery, and I liken that to people spiritually that still, even though they say, "Well, Christ died for me," they still hold on to the law as if there's some value to that first husband, and in so doing, they demonstrate, then, that that husband's not dead for them, and in trying to mix their attachment to the law, the first husband, with Christ, in reality and I know this sounds brutal, but they are adulterers because Christ will not be served by any other than Himself and those for whom He paid the debt, they are dead to that first husband, they are dead to the law. That's why we're going to see here in Romans 8:1 which is a continuation of this whole subject, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." We're married to another, to the LORD Jesus Christ. We don't jump back and forth between husbands. We're married to Him.

So that's the picture that we saw last time, the law and Grace. It's not that the law is set aside, but it's been fulfilled and therefore those for whom Christ paid the debt have become dead to the law that they should be married to another, and that's why the picture of Christ as the Husband and the church as the bride. We're not under the law but we're under the headship of Christ. So now comes a very important question because there are

some who will take that Grace and abuse it, and there again, I will tell you that such that do know nothing of Christ. They're not attached to another. What they are is attached to themselves. They say, "Well, I'm dead to the law so now I can live however I want to," and boy, do they. They go out and live like the devil and take no thought as to what it is to be married to Christ.

Now having said that, here is the conflict with any of us because we are, if we're the LORD's, we're dead to the law but we're not dead to this flesh. This flesh is very much alive and well and if we were left to ourselves, we would certainly go the way of all flesh, in other words, right out there in the world, living like the world and not caring. I know that there are some that go to that extent of saying it doesn't matter how much we sin; we sin that the Grace of God might abound. And I've heard even some say that as much as David was the LORD's in Bathsheba's arms, so we are, it doesn't make any difference. Well, I'll tell you what, it was true that David sinned with Bathsheba, but the LORD didn't leave him rejoicing in that. You can read in the Psalms, particularly Psalm 32, how the Spirit of God troubled David's heart to cause him to cry out to the LORD for repentance and such is our case. We don't make light of our sin.

We don't make light of this flesh when it comes to honoring and glorifying the LORD Jesus Christ, and yet there's the conflict. Some call it the Christian struggle, it depends on what title you have in your Bible. Some will call it the conflict between two natures, and I'll tell you right up front, we don't have two natures. When the Scriptures speak of this flesh, it is the flesh versus the Spirit. This flesh is not getting any better at conversion, God doesn't take and put a new nature, like some are preaching, a new sinless nature in the child of God so that now there's one nature that is sinful and another that is not sinful. No, the nature, the human nature is a fallen nature and it continues to be until we die. What God does is give us His Spirit, the Spirit of Christ indwells those for whom Christ paid the debt, and where there is a conflict, it's between the flesh, which is always going to be at enmity with the Spirit, and the Spirit of God.

So that's the introduction of what we're about to see here. So, let's begin, verse 7, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin?" You see, the fact that we're dead to the law doesn't mean that the law therefore is evil. I hear some preaching against the law as if it's evil. No, the law was given for three reasons. 1. To reveal the holiness of God, so that means when we study through the Scriptures and we read the law, we see, by God's Grace in that, a revelation of the holiness of God and that's necessary because God does not lower His standard at all to save sinners such as we are, we continue to be confronted with the holiness of God. But secondly, the law was given to reveal what we are as sinners, not just this sin and that but our sinfulness, and so the more we read the law, the more we should by God's Grace be asking the question, "Why me? How is it that God could ever save a sinner such as I am?" I don't believe we ever get over that. If someone does, it's probably because they were never lost to begin with. We continue to marvel at how God can be holy and just and knowing myself to be as sinful as I am. Yet that's the third reason why God gave the law, it was to drive sinners to Christ and that's the only way that the Spirit works through the law today because if Christ fulfilled it, yet the Spirit is

still going to show us our condemnation, but we're not gonna go back to the law to try to fix anything.

We all were raised, at least here in the United States, with that little kids' rhyme, "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. All the king's horses and all the king's men, couldn't put Humpty together again." We violated the law from birth. David said we come out of the womb speaking lies. So there's no fixing our flesh by the law. I'll tell you, the only solution to the law, and this is where Paul is driving home by the Spirit of God all through the book of Romans, this very matter that there's no justification before God by this flesh, even our best righteousnesses are nothing but filthy rags before Him. So if you find anybody that says they're a child of God and yet they're still going back and they're trying to fix their life or either to gain salvation or maintain it, that individual there has never been taught of Christ and they're still blind.

So by saying that, though, we're not saying that the law is evil. That's what Paul is asking the question when he says, "God forbid," actually in the original Greek, that literally says, "May it never be so." It's a double negative: no, never so, but they've translated it here, "God forbid."

"Nay," he says, "I had not known sin, but by the law." So for us even us that are the LORD's today, when we consider the law of God, we're thankful for that law because it is that light that shines upon who we are as sinners and that's what he said, "Nay, I had not known sin." Another way of translating that is, "I had not known what it is to be a sinner." Not just this sin and that sin, "but by the law."

"For I had not known lust," he's talking there not just about a sexual lust but he's talking about covetousness. Think of just that alone, how much we covet. To covet is to desire something that God hasn't given you and yet we want it anyway. I had a friend one time that asked me, he said, "Are you satisfied with what you have and what you earn?" And I just kind of lightly answered, "Yeah, I think so. I'm pretty happy with it." He said, "Well, so if you found a \$20 bill in the parking lot, would you just step over it and leave it to the next person?" I thought, "No, I'd probably pick it up." He said, "Well, why?" It's because we always think we need something more and I'll tell you, when we complain, you see, you don't have to be an ax-murderer, you don't have to go out there and visit the brothels and the bars to be called a sinner, all you have to do is desire something and complain about it because God hasn't given it to you. Whether you say it or not, to be a sinner, that's what the law condemns. It's not just the words we say, it's not just the deeds we do, it's the thoughts, and that's why David said if the LORD should mark iniquity in Psalm 130, who could stand?

So this is what Paul is discussing or writing here, "for I had not known lust," think of any sort of covetousness in the flesh, "except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." And I will tell you, if you're like I am right now, you go back down through the law and read just the 10 Commandments, because here when he's talking about the law, he's not just talking about the 10 Commandments, it's the whole of God's Word. But just stop and think, "Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not covet." The

"thou shalt nots," just hearing those words, it's like telling a child, "You can't have candy." As soon as you say you can't have candy, that child is already in his mind thinking about where the candy is, in the cupboard, and how when mom's not looking, dad's not there, he's gonna go find it, and that's where we get the expression got caught with the hand in the cookie jar.

It doesn't make us less covetous, you see, so this is a thing about the law, it is there to show us just how covetous we are because all you have to say is, "Thou shalt not covet," and I'll guarantee you, if you're honest right now and took out a piece of paper, you could write down, you could fill an entire piece of paper with all the things that you covet and just don't want to say so, and I would say start with your complaints. Put every complaint down. The weather's too hot. The weather's too... That, you're coveting something that God hasn't given. But that's the nature of our flesh to be unhappy with what we have or how God has ordained our lives, and in that we prove all the more the law is just and righteous in condemning us. There's not a one of us that could say, "Well, I think that the law can't condemn me here." If you do, it means you're blind. In every way we have to plead guilty before God.

But he says here in verse 8, so you've got the law which is holy and just, but then you've got the sin, you can see it in verse 8, "But sin," that's what's in the flesh, "taking occasion by the commandment." I'll tell you that if all I did was stand up and preach law every week, there'd be no Remedy. All there would be is a stirring up in people, "Okay, I can at least fix this."

But in reality, "sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." If you look that word up, that just means it just stirred up covetousness all the more. That happens to you when you're driving down the road or to some of us maybe, your vehicle's fine but you pull up to a light and you look over there and there's that brand spanking new vehicle, you've got signs advertising, flashing all over, and all of a sudden you start seeing everything that's wrong with your vehicle and you're thinking in your mind, "It'd be nice to have that." But how long does that glitter last?

So Paul is saying here that just that command not to covet stirred up in him all manner of concupiscence. "For without the law sin was dead." In other words, had it not been for the law of God, we would not even know our own sinfulness. You see, it's the revelation of God's holiness and justice and it's the light that shines upon our own sinfulness that when the Spirit of God opens our eyes, we see it all the more. That's why you've often heard me say that I see myself more as a sinner today than I did when the LORD first opened my eyes, and believe me, He laid me low, showed me my lost estate, but it wasn't just a one-time experience. From there forward, the Spirit of God continues to shine that light of the law upon my heart lest in any way I should boast.

So this is what Paul is describing here. He says, "For I was alive without the law." When he says alive, it means he was ignorant of his own condemnation; not aware of it. "I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came," he says, "sin revived, and I died." I believe he's describing there the experience of every person that the LORD has

redeemed and God has chosen. When the Spirit of God brings home to their heart the reality of what it is to be a sinner, we died. In fact, Christ said that, "Unless a man renounce himself and take up his cross, he cannot be my disciple." To renounce yourself is to kill yourself; it's to be dead to yourself. I believe that's what it is to be made to be lost. Anybody that has not had sin revive and die, in other words, made to be lost, has never seen Christ. And you have a bunch of people today that are trying to do patchwork; they take their life and then they add their profession to it, and now they're going down trying to please Christ and try to avoid sin. This is what's in their mind. They've never been lost.

But here Paul is talking about what the Spirit of God does when He brings home the very law of God, the revelation of God in His holiness and justice. And you've heard me refer often to how the LORD dealt in my own heart because this is my testimony. I was a lie up until the LORD by His Spirit brought home Isaiah 6 and I saw the LORD high and lifted up in His holiness and justice, and I cried out like Isaiah, "Woe is me! I am undone!" One who has never been brought to cry out in that manner has never been found by the LORD.

He says, "And the commandment," he says, "which was ordained to life," This is important to see. The law kills but it's ordained to life. In other words, it's designed to shut us up and to lay us low.

But "the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." Now there's two ways you can understand that. Unto the death of ourselves, that's true, it condemns us to death, but it was also a commandment unto the death of Christ. You see, this law requires death for disobedience and if Christ is to be that Representative in the face of God's law and justice, it required not only that He live a perfect life before God the Father, but that also He die the death that was necessary to pay the sin debt of His people.

But with regard to how the law pertains to any one of us, and it's true, we're getting to the point where we see that Christ fulfilled the law, so we're not under that husband, but we have to see how God dealt with that husband in the law. It says, "For sin," verse 11, "taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." You see, there was a time where we thought we were doing pretty good. I remember this as a kid, growing up and being taught the 10 Commandments. That was one of the first memory portions of Scripture for which I got a little pin for memorizing Scripture, and it was, "Good job, Kenny! And you're doing good, now just go out and do your best." That's the way that I grew up, but at the same time they would say, "But you need Jesus," and so you're there looking at the law, looking at this Jesus that I'd been taught which was not the Christ, but when it pleased God to reveal Christ in me and shown the Light of God's holiness in my heart through His Word, "sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." In other words, the very thing that I thought I, at least in those areas, was going okay, now I realized it was my death because even though I wasn't a murderer outwardly and I wasn't an adulterer outwardly, I wasn't a thief outwardly, yet

the law condemned me as a murderer, as a thief, and as an adulterer because of my nature, the lust of this flesh.

That's why Paul said in verse 12, "Wherefore the law is holy." You see, I hear some wannabe Grace preachers, I'll just call them that, they call themselves Grace preachers that can't say enough bad about the law, and they do it to encourage their own lasciviousness. In other words, they don't want any accountability in any way, but Paul says, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." I thank God for His law as He has now revealed it in me and to me, because when I read it, it causes me to take my place bowed before God as that guilty sinner even to this day, and that had God been pleased to not through His Son pay my sin debt, that law would condemn me forever.

So it's holy and the commandment holy and just and good, but then he asks this question. You can see how Paul is expressing here the Spirit of God directing him in what he wrote to give us an inside view of some of the struggles of his own flesh as the LORD first began to deal with his heart, and I'm thankful for this because I know when He first began to deal in my heart, I was out in the middle of Africa and I was out there to serve the LORD, and all of a sudden the LORD laid me low. I had no one to consult. I had no one that was there to whom I could turn and compare notes, so to speak. The LORD had me shut up to Himself. But I'll tell you, it was a comfort to me as I read through the Scriptures to read this portion and all of a sudden realize, "Hey, here's a brother, Brother Paul," because he's expressing exactly how the Spirit of God dealt in my heart, and I'll tell you, this is not unique to Paul. There's some that when they preach through Romans 7, they try to preach, "Well, this was Paul and this was unique to him." No, I believe what we're reading here is exactly how the Spirit of God deals in the heart of any one of His children.

He says, "Was then that which is good made death unto me?" In other words, did it ultimately lead to my condemnation? "God forbid." Well, the revelation, the turning of the Light on, it was for the exposing of sin but it wasn't to, it wasn't to kill him, it wasn't to condemn him or to cast him off.

He said, "But sin," notice, "that it might appear sin." This is the thing that the LORD by His Spirit continues to show us. We can say, and this is what's different between how the Spirit works and the religious world because the religious world says, "Well, once you've made your profession of faith, you've drive your stake, now all you need to worry about is just victory over sin." And they spend their whole time talking about what they were, not what they are. What they were.

Here Paul is describing what he is and I'll tell you, this is as a converted sinner. There are a bunch of people that because they're ignorant of how the Spirit of God works, they look at this and say, "Well, this is Paul's struggles before he was converted." No, he's describing this as he was as an apostle of the LORD Jesus Christ and one taught of the Spirit.

But he says, "But sin, that it might appear sin." Is there any one of us that can say we have seen our sin as we ought? That's why the LORD continues to expose it, because we'd be proud children running around thinking, "I'm not a sinner like the others." Oh, yes, you are and so am I.

"Sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good." That's why I say when you go back and read the law in the Old Testament, thankfully it continues to work death in us. It continues by God's Grace to cause us to see that we are nothing before a Holy God, in and of ourselves. And it's by that which is good because the law is good because it reveals the very character of God in his holiness and justice and goodness. I thank God for His goodness in not leaving me to my blindness and making me think that somehow I was doing okay in view of His law. Now even preaching for you now the law of God, there are arrows going through my own heart that show me my sin and my condemnation, but that's good because that tells me, then, that God hasn't left me to myself. If you find anybody that can make an excuse for their sin and say, "Well, it's all under the blood of Jesus, brother," like I've heard some boast of their sin as if somehow it doesn't matter, no, they've never seen God in His holiness as revealed in the law.

But it says, "that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." The more we read of God and the more we see of His law and if you want a good dose of it, just go back and start in Genesis and read through the law, if anybody comes away from that even as a Spirit-taught sinner, comes back and comes away feeling good about themselves, then they're blind because the whole reason for this is that the sinfulness of sin might become exceedingly sinful. That's what he's talking about there. The closer I get to the Light, if my eyes are opened by God, the more I'm gonna see my sinfulness and confess it and declare it before the LORD. Where you don't see that in an individual, then you're talking to a blind person. They're blind.

And Paul says in verse 14, "For we know that the law is spiritual." This would be a good thing to do, take out a piece of paper and put "law" over here on the left, and put "the Spirit" over on the right, and all that the Spirit of God has to say through the law concerning our sinfulness. But even with regard, because remember I said that the law was given for three reasons, the holiness of God, the more we study it and read the holiness of God, my mouth is shut and then the sinfulness of this flesh, but then think about it, the glory of Christ in having fulfilled the law not just in word and deed but in thought, the very Spirit of the law.

None of us can do that, so that's why he said, "we know that the law is Spiritual: but," what? "I am carnal." That word "carnal" means "fleshly." People talk about carnal thinking. It, again, I come back to the fact some of us have been preserved from a life of outward sin, we're not known in the community as somebody that did some evil deed, maybe some of us are, and even that, the LORD purposed. But nonetheless, we are all carnal, we're fleshly, we're "sold under sin." Do you see that in verse 14? He's not talking about his former life here, he's talking about who he is even as a preacher of the Gospel, sold under sin.

But he says, "For that which I do I allow not." What he's saying is the very thing I tell other people not to do, that I'm doing. I'll tell you, that's one of the consternations that I have as a preacher of the Gospel because I don't ever want to give the idea that I'm preaching at somebody as if somehow I'm not part of what I'm preaching. No, I have to tell people constantly and I tell you now, that the very things that I do are those things that I don't allow in others, when he says, "I allow not." You know how that is, even as a parent. You'll correct your child for lying and yet you know yourself to be a liar. You'll correct your child for cheating and yet you know yourself to be a cheater and if you ever get heady about it, all the LORD has to do is hang you out there to dry a little bit, could be at work, could be in some situation, and the next thing you know, you're gonna come back and think, "You know, the very thing I'm correcting my child on is the very thing that I do. We tell them not to talk that way, don't talk that way, it's not respectful, and then what do we do when we're not in their presence? We turn around and talk exactly the way we tell them not to talk." That's all evidence that we're sold under sin. We can't escape that in this flesh but we own it. We don't excuse it but we own it.

He says, "for what I would, that do I not." You know, I'm the first to tell you I would love to live a sinless life but what I would, that I do not. There's nothing in me in this flesh ever to make me think that somehow that's even a reality or possibility in this flesh because of the flesh.

He says, "what I hate, that do I." We're creatures in conflict, those that are the LORD's.

"If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good." What it's saying is, "I am justly condemned." And that's one thing you'll hear a child of God continually saying, "I am justly condemned." That's why John wrote there in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sin, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." You break that down, what it's saying is if I continue, because that word "confess" is in the present tense, if I continue to confess, and that word "confess" means "to say the same thing as God does about my sin, my sinfulness." So as I confess and where does that come from? It comes from the Spirit of God. My sin, He's faithful and just to forgive, and there again it's in the present tense so to continue to forgive, because forgiveness is in the blood and righteousness of the LORD Jesus Christ alone. But what His Spirit does is brings me out to confess, continue to confess that that just judgment that my LORD endured on my behalf was justly mine, and that's not just a slogan, that is something the LORD continues to bring home to the heart of one of His children and so they confess, they say the same thing as God about their sin, and rejoice in the fact that God is faithful. He's faithful to God through His Son. He's faithful to that work that His Son accomplished. He's faithful and just to continue to forgive that sin, but I don't use that forgiveness as a reason to go out there and live against the law or live against God's character. He's faithful and just and forgive and to continue to cleanse, notice, from all unrighteousness. You realize in Scripture unrighteousness is any work that I perform or do thinking that somehow that is going to be what gives me right standing before God. That's unrighteousness. Christ says, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity. I never knew you."

So what that verse is expressing and this is what Paul is describing here, that the law is good, we consent under the law that it is good. We realize that we deserve nothing but condemnation but then again, we see the goodness of God in the law in that He sent His Son to fulfill it on behalf of such wretched sinners as we are.

So then verse 17, "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Here again, some would pull this card out of the deck and say, "Okay, I do what I do because I can't help it." But that's not what Paul is saying. He's saying, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." What he's acknowledging is that every thought, every word, every deed that is in us regardless of what we think should be the result of saying it, it's all due to sin that's in us. This is the true definition here in verse 17 of depravity. Depravity does not mean that we are necessarily as evil as we could be, otherwise we would all go out there and be serial killers or we would be just living it up in the world, just prostitution and everything else that the world condemns as evil. Depravity simply means that even my best resolutions to do good are motivated by sin that dwells in me. There's not one good thing that I can offer up even in the good things that the world considers good, but what is motivated by sin.

If you don't believe it when people compliment you about something good that you did, I know what you're gonna say because you know as well as I do what we should say, "Well, it's the LORD and, you know, I give Him the glory." But down in your heart, you're still thinking, "I'm glad somebody finally recognized something in me I'm doing for good." Don't tell me it's not that way. I'm just telling you how it is with me. We, our flesh, is so tied to even the good things that the world considers good. I've likened before, if you don't believe it, do this experiment, send somebody a gift and put your name on it. That's number 1, why do you put your name on it? Because you want them to know that you did it. But send them the gift and then let some time go by and they don't thank you for it, what goes on in your mind? Pretty soon you start thinking evil of that person. "What kind of person is it when I went out of my way to do some good for them and now they're not even thanking me." Then what do you do? You start talking to everybody else about it. That's that sin that dwells in you. It's no more I, but sin. There's nothing that begins with "I" that isn't sin dwelling in me. That's what Paul's saying.

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing," he said, "for to will is present with me." He's talking here now even as a Spirit-born child of God, "the will is present with me." Do I desire to glorify Christ? Yes, "but how to perform that which is good I find not." In other words, depart from Christ and His substitution, His death, there is nothing good in this flesh. That verse right there puts away any notion of some kind of sinless nature that God gives to sinners upon conversion, that regeneration. It isn't. I know that in me, Paul is speaking now as a regenerated sinner, that in me, in this flesh, the goodness is in the Spirit of God, that's true, but in this flesh, this flesh isn't getting any better.

You see, I lived for years under that delusion of progressive sanctification until it pleased God to reveal Christ in me. I thought that I was getting better and better. I really did.

Such was the delusion and it took someone asking me that question, "Do you see yourself as more holy now than you did the day that you believed?" And to my shame I answered, "Yeah." I thought that that was what I was thinking, and I remember this individual saying to me, "Well, if that's the case, I must not even know God, know salvation." And when they said that, I was shocked but it was the initial seed that the LORD used to cause me to reflect and see wherein I was blind, and I have to say this to this day and so does any child of God, I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.

"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." Can you imagine filling out an application for an employment and they asked you some of these questions and if you had anything else to add, and you wrote exactly what Paul did here, do you think you'd get hired? The good I would, I don't do, and the evil that I would not, that I do. Somebody that would see that on an application are gonna go, "Whoa! I don't think we'd better..." But they're just being honest.

We had a young man in our congregation here a number of years ago that went to fill out an application and, of course, you know how it is, they ask you, "Have you ever thought about stealing?" Well, he's not gonna lie, he put yes to everything they asked down there, and they denied him, and when he went back and asked, "Well, what was the problem?" They said, "Well, we didn't like your answers." And he said, "Well, did you want me to be dishonest?" They're hiring exactly the ones they don't want to hire because they're dishonest. If that's on an application, we'd have to say yes. Have you ever been tempted to steal? Yes. There's not one of these that we can answer honestly.

He says in verse 20, "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." The whole thing is he's not making an excuse for it, he's just saying even the good that I would do, sin remains attached to it. I think about that. It's a good thing to come together for worship and you come and you think, "Oh, all is gonna be well. I'm gonna be able to sit and just take a deep breath and be able to hear the Gospel and worship." And you no sooner say that than all of a sudden, your mind and heart are just filled with all kinds of worry and thoughts and that's sin that dwells in us.

So he says, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me." That's depravity. That's the law of the flesh. It is a law that continues to be so, and I know people will say, "Well, why didn't Christ just get rid of it?" Well, that's what we await in the final day, but as long as we're in this flesh, anything that's in us, evil is present with us. Just mark it down. The LORD has purposed that for His children lest we should put any confidence in the flesh. You know, if things were perfect here, you'd never want to leave. What causes us to long for that day, final day of redemption when mortality will take on immortality, corruption, incorruption in the final resurrection, what is now causes us all the more to yearn for that day that we would be delivered.

And he says, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." That Inward Man is the Spirit of God having revived the soul and given Life to the soul. So that's where the hunger and the thirst and desire. As a friend of mine said when they read the 10 Commandments now and it says, "Thou shalt have no other god before me," they read it

as a promise that the day is coming when there will be no other god before us but Christ. We'll see Him as He is. So those commandments really are promises and we delight after that in the Inward Man.

"But I see another law in my members," again it's still the same law, "warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." This, face it, we're dying creatures and we're under the sentence of death, that is, physical death, and spiritually we have nothing in us to commend us to God and that's why he cries out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He says, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our LORD." We've been delivered from the curse of sin by His death. We have been delivered from the power of sin and ignorance by the Spirit of Life. But thank God we are yet to be delivered from the very presence of sin when we're taken out of this flesh, when we see Him as He is. So I thank God through Jesus Christ our LORD. If you've ever traveled to a far country away from all the amenities of life and every day that you're there you think it's one day closer to getting home, I believe that's the sense in which we live our lives on this earth. Every day is one day closer to this reality when I'll no longer have to struggle in this flesh with this sin.

"So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God." We don't look upon the law as evil or bad or not important anymore because Christ paid it. No, we serve. That word "serve" means, "I own everything that God says in His law against me, I serve the law of God as having been fulfilled by Christ. You see, I'm married to Another but with the flesh, the law of sin." In other words, that law of sin in the flesh is ever present with me.

Well, I hope that's helpful. I pray the LORD will bless this to our hearing.