

– “Who will deliver me...Thanks be to God though Jesus Christ our Lord!” –  
– July 5-6, 2008 – 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – Romans 7:14-25a – Pastor Scott Hirssig –

Romans 7:14-25a (ESV)

<sup>14</sup> For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. <sup>15</sup> I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. <sup>16</sup> Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. <sup>17</sup> So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do

what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. <sup>21</sup> So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. <sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, <sup>23</sup> but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. <sup>24</sup> Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

I greet you with, grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Risen Lord and the Holy Spirit who lives within us as believers, and empowering us.

Today is the 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, Pentecost being the visible coming and filling of the Holy Spirit. This week also is when our nation, celebrates the birth of our country, July 4<sup>th</sup> 1776, and today we remember the hand of God in our beginning and as we continue as a nation. We thank those in the past and present who defend our freedom. America, at 232 years, God has indeed shed His grace on thee. Today though, we face peril, peril from within and peril from without. Sadly like the nation of Israel in the Old Testament times, we have been drifting from dependence on God to a self sufficiency that forgets and leaves God out. We do so at our own peril. Proverbs 14, “**Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.**” (Prov 14:34 ESV) and in Psalm 127, “**...Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.**” (Psalm 127:1 ESV) We pray and long for, a national turning to the Lord Jesus, a spiritual awaking, for only the Lord can deliver, who brings prosperity. That concept of deliverance is found in our lessons.

In Zechariah, “<sup>9</sup> **Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.** (Zechariah. 9:9-12 ESV) This is our King Jesus, righteous, bringing salvation through the cross. He is our deliverer. In our lesson from Matthew, “<sup>29</sup> **...you will find rest for your souls...my burden is light.**” Matthew 11:25-30 (ESV) Jesus gives this rest, the rest of eternal life in Him. There is no burden of trying to pleasing God and earning a place in heaven. He has done this for us! Receive His gift of salvation by grace through faith and His gift of living by faith as He delivers.

That same concept of deliverance from the Lord is spoken of in our lesson from Romans, both daily and eternal, from the Lord Jesus, as Paul states, “<sup>24</sup> **Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?**” <sup>25</sup> **Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!** (Romans 7:24-25a ESV) That is truly good news. We are going to look at this closer, the struggle in our life, may we hear, trusting in Him.

To understand this lesson from Romans 7, it is imperative to discover first who Paul is talking about. Is this struggle in the life of a believer, or a non-believer? Is his use of the singular a reference to himself or just a literary device? The answer must be of a Christian and what Paul experienced since this kind of understanding only comes from the Spirit. The spiritual is foolish to an unbeliever. (1 Cor 2:14) This person described here, hates sin and desires God’s will (v15,19,21) is humble (v18), also there is a new person there, (v17,20-22), and serves Jesus in his mind. (v25) This must be a believer and is about Paul and hopefully you. Some have also said though, yes a believer, but about legalistic Christians, someone trying to live by their own power, or those Christians, that are “**of the flesh, as infants in Christ**” (1 Cor 3:1 ESV) Both of those seem doubtful as well, since legalists are typically satisfied with their own efforts to please God, and those in the flesh indifferent and weak spiritually. This lesson conveys a believer maturing in Christ, and the struggle that Jesus desires in our lives as a believers, that you would grasp how important it is to live for Christ, looking to Lord Jesus for deliverance in the daily battle against sin that is to be ongoing in our life in Christ, and the final deliverance when we leave this life for the next. Paul tells the Philippians, “**For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**” (Phil 1:21 ESV) What is happening in our lesson is the Lord’s desire for you. May we respond to this call on our life as believers, resting in the Spirit in this struggle, living for Him.

Paul begins with, “<sup>14</sup> **For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.**” (Romans 7:14 ESV) The law is holy, reflecting God’s character. We are sinners. Yet the sin, the flesh, is not in total control like with unbelievers. (Romans 6:6) But there is a frustration with a desire to obey the will of God that opposes the will of the flesh. That tension and struggle is found in the next verse, Paul says, “<sup>15</sup> **I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.**” (Romans 7:15 ESV) The understanding goes beyond the factual to the spiritual, in his relationship with Jesus. This tension or struggle is good, it drives you to the Lord. Paul continues, “<sup>16</sup> **Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good.**” (Romans 7:16 ESV) Even in the rebellious and disobedience of sin, the Holy Spirit reveals what is good, the new self longs to honor and do God’s will. Paul continues, “<sup>17</sup> **So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.**” (Romans 7:17 ESV) Here the new I, the new man in Christ, does not approve of the old I, the flesh. Paul is not trying to escape personal responsibility here, like with the teaching Gnostic dualism, the body evil, the mind good, so it does not matter what you do in the body, the mind is unaffected. No, No, No! This desire to sin is from the flesh, and is corrupting the new

person, and is acting outside God's will. There is a tension and a struggle, with the new and the old. The new person in Christ is enticed, and sins. We see that in the next verses, <sup>18</sup> **For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.** <sup>19</sup> **For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.** <sup>20</sup> **Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.** (Romans 7:18-20 ESV) See the tension and struggle, sin from the flesh, no power in the flesh to control the flesh. Paul continues, <sup>21</sup> **So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.** (Romans 7:21 ESV) The law here is the principle of living for Christ by faith. (Rom 3:27), that is the desire of the new person in Christ. Paul says, <sup>22</sup> **For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,** (Romans 7:22 ESV) The new person in Christ joyfully agrees with the law and desires to serve Christ. Paul continues, <sup>23</sup> **but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.** <sup>24</sup> **Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"** This body of death is figuratively the body of sin, the flesh. Who could possibly deliver me? Who has power over sin? Certainly not the old person, the flesh, nor the new person in their own power. Paul answers that question, <sup>25</sup> **Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"** (Romans 7:25 ESV) It is Jesus who delivers. That deliverance happens through resting in Him, as the Holy Spirit works through the word. You are surrendering to Him through prayer, and allowing the Spirit to bring you power and understanding through the word, just like you are receiving now. Finally our lesson again closes with that struggle, **"...So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin."** (Romans 7:25 ESV) You are in a battle every day. The war is raging. You are a Christian soldier for Christ. Paul told the Ephesians, <sup>11</sup> **put on the whole armor of God...** (Ephesians 6:11 ESV) and spoke of a spiritual battle (Eph 6:11-12) The spiritual battle every day. Paul tells us to stand firm, and have the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, shoes ready with the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying always. (Eph 6:14-18) This effects you, your family, and your nation. It is not a spiritual life you produce; it is the Spirit's work. May you hear and live by the faith that He provides, knowing that your deliver, King Jesus, is there – trust in Him. May God grant this to us all

In His name we pray, AMEN May the peace of God that passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. AMEN.