

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Understanding the Believer's Battle with Sin

Scripture: Romans 7:14-25

Code: 90-306

Thank you for coming tonight. I know there were a lot of things working against it. This is an oddball weekend with all the things that are happening and then freeway traffic and then rain but we're so glad that you're here. And I'm going to do what I've...was...when I was young told not to do. I was told a story by my own father who...who said that a rainy day came on a Sunday and only two people showed up at church. And the pastor went ahead and preached his full hour sermon and gave an invitation to the two people and at the end he said, "This is what I had prepared to do," and he said, "I hope it was all right with you." He said, "Well," he said, "I...I can only say I'm a farmer and if only two cows show up, I don't make them eat all the hay." So I think I'll make you eat some of it, but not all of it tonight as we talk about this matter of sanctification and look at Romans chapter 7 and the battle in which we are engaged in the process of being conformed to the image of Christ, being sanctified, Romans 7.

We're all aware of a warfare in our lives. We know it. We know it well. We are intimately acquainted with it, a raging conflict that never existed before we came to Christ and never ceased since. All Christians are in the battle, don't feel alone, you're not alone, everybody's there. And the most magnificent and, of course, inspired articulation of this battle, of this struggle is given here in Romans chapter 7 in the words of the Apostle Paul. And I want to read verses 14 to 25...Romans 7:14 to 25, and then for a couple of Sunday nights, anyway, I want to talk our way through this.

Verse 14, "For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. For that which I am doing, I do not understand for I am not practicing what I would like to do but I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good. So now no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is in my flesh, for the wishing is present in me but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I wish I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I'm no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good, for I joyfully concur with the Law of God in the inner man 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 a law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am, who will set me free from the body of this death? 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."

This is real schizophrenia, isn't it? The real deal. This is not psychological, it's not artificial, it's not trumped up, it's not imaginary, it's reality. This is a very poignant description of somebody who cares deeply about the Word of God, cares deeply about Scripture, who cares deeply about God's righteous Law. This is about somebody who desires greatly to obey that Law, live that Law. But is disappointed with himself or herself because in spite of what this person desires, he is pulled and pushed away from that he wants to do into the very thing he hates. It is the personal conflict of a soul in turmoil. And the conflict is real. It is so intense and so strong that it dominates the life of Paul and it dominates our lives also.

We as believers are not any longer dominated by sin. Nor are we in all honesty dominated by righteousness. We are rather dominated by a conflict...a very intense one. And even the text itself has been a battleground for interpreters and theologians and expositors of Scripture. Some say that these are the musings, these are the expressions of a non-Christian. Others say they are the expressions of a Christian.

Well, you say, "Paul wrote this." Yes, but some say he is reflecting on his life before Christ when he had some regard for the Law of God but couldn't fulfill it, not on his life after Christ. One says there's too much bondage to sin here for this to be the testimony of a Christian. And the other says there's too much desire for obedience here for this to be the testimony of a non-Christian. Those who would say this is a non-Christian, this is Paul looking at himself before Christ, seek to support that with statements such as in verse 14, "I am of the flesh, sold into bondage to sin," literally, sold under sin. Verse 18, "I know that nothing good dwells in me." Verse 24, "Wretched man that I am." And so they conclude this is a man who is under the power of sin, operating in the flesh, sees nothing good in himself, only recognizes his own wretchedness. Can't be a believer, they say because this is all past tense. Verse 5, "We were in the flesh." Verse 6, "But now we have been released from the Law having died to that which we were bound so that we serve in newness of the Spirit." Or in chapter 6 verse 14, "Sin shall not be master over you." If sin is no longer our master, if sin no longer dominates us, if we have been released from the Law having died to that which we were bound and now serve in the newness of the Spirit, how can this describe a believer? Where's the fruit of the Spirit? No one in Christ should be so impotent. No one in Christ should be so powerless.

It seems to be very far from where we are to understand salvation. According to chapter 6, for example, chapter 2, we have died to sin. Verse 6, the old self was crucified, the body of sin done away with, no longer are we slaves of sin. Verse 7, we've died and are freed from sin. Verse 11, dead to sin. Verse 12, no need to let sin reign in our mortal bodies. Verse 13, no need to go on presenting the members of our body as instruments of unrighteousness. And verse 17, you were the slaves of sin, you've become obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed and you've been freed from sin and become slaves of righteousness. Verse 22, having been freed from sin, enslaved to God.

All of these passages seem to say that sin is dethroned, it has lost its dominating power, it has lost its ruling force and it cannot therefore remain in such a power posture as is described in the experience of the writer of chapter 7 verses 14 to 25.

But on the other hand, we are very clear that in chapter 6 there is an indication that the battle will still go on. Whatever all of that means, and we've gone through all of that, notice verse 12, "Do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts. Do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin, as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead." Well there is instruction that indicates that even though sin no longer dominates, even though sin is no longer master of you, you still have to make a choice not to let sin reign, not to present the members of your body as instruments of unrighteousness.

In the nineteenth verse of the sixth chapter, again, "Just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness resulting in sanctification." Sanctification isn't automatic in its fullest sense. It comes as a result of you ongoing in the constant obedience presenting of your members as instruments or slaves to righteousness. This implies that there's going to be responsibility to act against the sin that no longer totally dominates you.

Those who say this is a Christian, look at the other side of the issue. Verse 22, Romans 7, "I joyfully concur with the Law of God in the inner man." That is a very, very significant statement. Not externally, not superficially, not on the surface, but down deep in the soul, down deep in the inner man I joyfully concur with the Law of God. This is what's called heart obedience and this reflects a new heart and a new spirit. This is New Covenant talk. This is Ezekiel 37 language, to delight in the Law of God down deep in the inner man. In a sense, this is like Romans 8:7. The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God, it is not subject, it does not subject itself to the Law of God, it is not even able to do so. The man who is still unconverted, still in the flesh, hostile toward God is not able to subject himself to the Law of God, let alone to rejoice in it. In fact, in the original King James of that verse, it says, "The mind of the flesh is enmity with God." That's the opposite of delight and joy. The unregenerate do not delight in the Law of God down deep in the inner man.

In verse 25 he says, "On the one hand, I myself with my mind, that is in the interior, am serving the Law of God." And again indicates a changed heart, a changed inside. This is the service of a will and a heart that is regenerate, that is subject to the Law of God. And whoever is in the flesh cannot be subject to the Law of God, as we read a moment ago in chapter 8. Look again verse 15, he says, "I...I like to do certain things, but I don't do them. I hate to do other things, and I do them." Verse 16, "I agree with the Law, I confess that it is good." He says in verse 19, "The good that I wish I don't do

and I practice the very evil I do not wish." That indicates that down in the inner man is a powerful desire for obedience, to honor God, to obey God, to serve God. These are all beatitudes that arise from a regenerate heart. I am, he says at the end of verse 21, "The one who wishes to do good." That's what I want. Very unlike the non-Christian, the non-Christian lives, verse 5, of Romans 8, according to the flesh, sets his mind on the things of the flesh because that's all he can do, verse 7, because he's hostile toward God. This is very strong language and it presents to us not an easy solution. A case can be made that this is a non-believer by looking at all of those elements of the text. A case can be made that this is a believer by looking at all of the elements that we just looked at. The bottom line is, whoever this is has both elements operating. It is the very conflict itself that defines this soul. The battle here, says Paul, is between what he delights in, what he loves, what he approves of, what he desires and what he does. And this has to be the battle of a transformed soul. These two complexes in him, righteousness on the one hand, sin on the other are contradictory. And the more sensitive he is to the demands of God's Law and the demands of Scripture and the demands of God's holiness and righteousness, the more he will see the contradiction existing in himself. And the more he grows in grace, the more sanctified this person becomes, the more painful it is for him to see what he really is in spite of what he wants. That's why he bursts out in verse 24, "Wretched man that I am." That is an honest expression of pain over this inability to fulfill your deepest longings. This can only occur in a believer. This is the tension that is inevitable and it doesn't help to ignore it or write it off.

Now at this point, some other suggestions enter the discussion. And some people say, "Well yes this is a believer, but this is a Carnal believer," with a big C, capital C upper case, this is a Carnal believer. This is a description of a low-level Christian. This is a Christian who is barely in the door. One writer says, "It describes the abject misery and failure of a Christian who is attempting to please God under the Mosaic system." This is a lowlife Christian. This is a Christian who has never moved to second-level Christianity. This is the carnal Christian. But the problem with that view is, the carnal Christian, the one who is superficial and shallow, whoever this is, this is a fabrication of those theologians, but whoever this carnal Christian is who is saved but has no aspirations toward holiness and no aspirations toward righteousness, he can't be being described here. This has to be a very spiritual man, or woman, who fits into this category. Somebody who understands that the Law is spiritual, who understands what is right, who loves it, longs for it, wills to do it, lives with immense disappointment in regard to his own failure.

No, the only way to understand this is that this is a believer, this is every believer, this is every believer who is truly regenerated, who feels the agony of the struggle. And, in fact, this is Paul...this is Paul, who when he wrote this was mature. He is in Christ, strong in the faith and never got over his sinfulness. First Corinthians 15:9, he said, "I'm the least of the Apostles, I'm not even fit to be an Apostle." In Ephesians 3:8 he says about himself, "To me, the very least of all saints, was grace given to preach." First Timothy 1, he says, "I was shown mercy and the grace of God, grace of our

Lord is more abundant to me and Christ came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost." In his maturity at the end of his life, 1 Timothy, at the end of all of his years of walking with Christ, nothing had changed about how he had viewed himself. He was a massive disappointment to himself. He was the foremost sinner that he knew. The person speaking here hates sin, according to verse 15. The person here loves righteousness, according to verses 19 and 21. The person speaking here in his inner being delights in God's Law, verse 22, finds joy in it. The person speaking here deeply regrets his sins, and that's strong through the whole text. And the person speaking here thanks God that ultimately there will be a deliverance, verse 25, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Even though it hasn't come yet, and that's why he says, "So I go on on the one hand with my mind serving the Law of God, with my flesh, the law of sin." This is a very mature Christian. This is as mature as you can get and see yourself as a Christian really is. Don't try to kid anybody, this is you, this is me, we're all here. We live in two extremes. They're held in tension in our lives. Temporally we live in this world as people of flesh and blood and we're subject to all the conditions of mortal life. We are sons of Adam, by our first birth. Spiritually by our second birth, however, we have passed from death into a new realm, a realm not of darkness but a realm of light, a realm not of sin but a realm of righteousness. We now walk in newness of life. We are new creations. We are no longer in Adam, we are in Christ. And yet the flesh remains. Here then is the self-portrait of a man who is conscious of the presence and power of indwelling sin in his life and he sees it as there still dictating things opposite of his own desires. And he will struggle all his life against this power and in this life never overcome it finally or fully.

Paul's words in Galatians 5 sum it up. "The flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh and these are contrary the one to the other so that you can't do the things you desire." That's the Christian life. This mature spiritual Apostle fought the battle just the way you do and I do and everybody does.

Now there are some keys to this interpretation in the text. The first one is a change in the verb tense. Verses 7 through 13 is past tense emphasis. And all of a sudden in verse 14 changes into a present tense. When he was talking about himself before his conversion it was past tense. Verse 9, "I was once alive." This is in the past. "And then I died when I truly saw myself in the Law as a sinner, crushed under the weight of the Law," of course that's what led him to salvation. He's describing how it was in the past in verses 7 to 13 and all of a sudden the verbs come into the present tense. I am...verse 14, I do not, I am, I am doing, I do, I agree, I am the one doing it, I know, I wish, I'm doing, I find, I joyfully concur, I see...all present tense. This is post-conversion in the immediate presence. And there's a change also in the circumstance. Verses 7 to 13, "Sin killed him." Here he is pictured fighting with sin and refusing to give in. There's a sense in which our sin does kill us at our salvation. We die in Christ to rise in newness of life. And yet there's a sense in which even now in our new life we go on fighting with sin, refusing to give in.

So this is Paul's testimony as a Christian. And it's very, very important for us to understand that because what's here is what we live with every day...every day. Now I want you to understand the sort of spiritual pathology of all of this. So let me see if I can at least tonight in the next few minutes tell you some things that may at first startle you. What I am going to say may be at first a little startling and then I hope it will eventually transition into something encouraging and then something liberating and then something joyful. And it's based essentially on two great realities that we've been carefully considering in our doctrinal series which has been going on for months, and I'm going to have you reach back a little bit.

There are two foundational doctrines that we have repeatedly talked about specifically and as a whole in single messages and multiple messages and gone back to. Those two great foundational doctrines...the doctrine of human depravity and divine regeneration. Or to put it another way, the doctrines of our two births. Our first birth was into sin, our second birth into righteousness. Our first birth was physical, our second birth spiritual. Our first birth made us sinners until we leave this world. Our second birth makes us righteous and fit for the world to come. We are then the product of these two births. We live two lives melded into one. And that is the source of our conflict. All the faculties that come out of that first birth wage war against all the faculties that come out of that second birth. And though we may not understand the theological elements that are going on, we really do understand the conflict. We understand the effects, the relentless power and influence of our righteous longings and desires and we also understand the relentless power and influence of our sin. We go from high to low. We come to church, we hear the Word of God, we worship God, we go home, we read our Bibles, we read a good book, we do ministry and we feel like we're on top and then we find ourselves saying things or doing things or thinking things that plunge us into despair. And we're very much aware of the battle that we fight.

We live trapped somewhere between our highs and our lows, our profound joys of spiritual heights and sinful depths. It was Martin Luther who certainly understood this and he said, "Not reading or speculating but living, dying and being condemned makes a real theologian." You want to be a real theologian? Then you've got to go through this, you can't stand outside and be a speculative theologian. You live and you die and you feel the condemnation of your violated conscience and the disappointment of sin breaching your holy desires. And it's in that war you really become a real theologian, you sort out the truth.

Luther was very vivid, and very verbal. His sin was a struggle for him that was constant, it was even tormenting to him, as to many others. And we understand that. I mean, I don't need to say a lot about that because it's our experience. And because it is such a common experience to live in disappointment, because it is such a common experience for us to desire heaven just so we can get rid of the bad that's in us that debilitates the good that we long for, we know that, we feel that, we experience that. I don't need to spend a lot of time rehearsing again how wretched we are.

I want to talk about the other side of it. It is crucial and it is certainly at least equally crucial, if not as it is in my mind more crucial that you understand your righteousness. You need to understand your newness of life. You need to understand the divine nature that is in you. You need to understand this, you have been regenerated, you have been born again. You have died and come to life. You now walk in newness of life. You are a new creation. You have eternal life. You are now made fit for the presence of God. You possess a holy and divine nature. It is from that that all those holy longings come.

A good place for us to grasp this and I think this will help us is in 1 Peter 1. Turn to 1 Peter 1 to the end of the chapter. This is very insightful when you look at it perhaps a little more technically, a little more closely than you might normally. Verse 22, I don't know if you ever sort of let this phrase pop out at you. He's writing to believers and he says, "Since you have an obedience to the truth," that is you obey the gospel, you believe, you repented, you embraced Christ. And what happened? "In obedience to the truth you have purified your souls." Wow! That is a...that is a shocking statement. You have purified your souls, *hagnotes*, perfect tense, past action with continuing results. You were purified with continuing results. You now possess a purified soul. That's pretty shocking.

See, we're much more familiar with the flesh than we are with the new life. In James 4:8 James says, "Draw near to God and He'll draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts." God offers you heart purification. God offers you soul purification. This again is the regeneration of New Covenant life. This is the new heart, the new spirit. This is the washing of regeneration. This is the new birth. And the language of the New Testament is...is magnificent when it comes to this. We are washed, we are cleansed, we are purified, we are given new life. We could go through many Scriptures, I'll resist the impulse. But this is what it says. "Your souls have been purified." How in the world did that happen? How did it happen? Verse 23, "For you have been born again." How did this purification take place? You were born again, the work of regeneration. Another perfect participle, past action with continuing results. This is your spiritual birth. When you had your spiritual birth, your soul was cleansed, your soul was purged, your soul was purified. Wow. You have been born again, monogistic(???), solely the work of the Holy Spirit. You didn't cooperate in your physical birth and you didn't cooperate in your spiritual birth. The Holy Spirit moves where He will and does what He will in regeneration, as John 3:8 says. It is the sovereign work of God.

Paul says in Ephesians 4:24 that when this happened, this is so amazing, you put on the new man, listen to this, which was created according to God in true righteousness and holiness. Staggering words. You have a purified soul, the New Testament says. You have a purified heart. You are a new person, created by God in true righteousness and holiness, Ephesians 4:24. Wow. You know, from the standpoint of our experience, that just seems so overstated because we are so used to our sin, so used to our failings, to used to being disappointed. We, and justifiably so, hammer on

ourselves as did the Apostle Paul, we're the chief, we're the worst, we're the foremost, we're unworthy. It's true. But it's equally true we need to understand the other reality that we have been made new creations and that that new life is pure and righteous and holy. And it is the result of regeneration by, verse 23, not a seed which is perishable, but imperishable. That is just another powerful reality. We have been born again not by a seed which is perishable, human seed, human birth, but by a seed which is imperishable, that is the seed of God, if you will, that comes through the living and abiding Word of God. God by His Word creates that life. And we are, in essence, a different kind of creature. If you're a believer, you're a completely different creature than non-believers. They don't see it yet, as Romans 8 says, the glorious manifestation of the children of God hasn't happened. They think they're looking at ordinary people, they're not.

We're a different kind of being. This new nature is the result of a seed that cannot perish. It is an incorruptible seed. It is the creation of God and whatever God creates is perfect. Follow me. Whatever He creates is perfect, whatever He creates is pure, whatever He creates is holy, whatever He creates is righteous, whatever He creates can only be holy and do what is holy. You were saved, it doesn't mean your fallen heart was tweaked a little bit to make it better. You were made new and God did it and God doesn't create anything unholy. As the Father lives in His children, physically, so God lives in His children spiritually. You possess in you the physical life of your parents and the spiritual life of God. You are a partaker of the divine nature just as much as you are a partaker of human nature. And as there are faculties and characteristics of life that come from our first birth, there are faculties and characteristics of life that come from our second birth and each case consistent with our nature. From our parents we received a nature that is sinful, from God we receive a nature that is sinless. That new life which God creates which is imperishable, incorruptible is holy, righteous, pure. It cannot decay. It is free from sin. It has to be because it is eternal. And sin always produces...what?...death. Peter is saying amazing things, the living and abiding Word of God has given you a life that is holy, incorruptible, imperishable. It can only love God. It can only serve God. It can only honor Christ. It can only follow the Spirit. It can only obey the Word. It's very different than our physical life.

Our physical life he describes in verse 24. "All flesh is like grass, all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, the flower falls off." Our human life is subject to death. Our divine life is not. Our human life is subject to death because it is infected with sin. Our divine life is not subject to death, therefore it cannot be affected by sin. The Word of the Lord, the created Word of God that has begotten you again abides forever. And it was that Word, that gospel Word, that gospel seed that regenerated you that was preached and you heard and it did its work.

Now some of you may say, "Wow, this is something I haven't heard much." Well, this isn't new. Charles Spurgeon June 30, 1861 says this of the new nature. "It has aspirations which time cannot satisfy, desires which earth cannot satisfy, longings which heaven itself alone can gratify." He goes

on in that sermon to say this, "No sin exists in the newborn nature. It cannot sin because it is from God Himself. It is as impossible for that new nature to sin as for the deity Himself to be defiled." Then he says, "In the first birth, partakers of corruption. In the next, heirs of incorruption. In the first, depravity. In the second, perfection."

He's reading the same Bible I'm reading. In the new creation there's no taint of sin. In the new creation there is no transgression for what comes down from God created by His incorruptible Word is holy. It is like Him. It is pure, undefiled and separate from sin. And what is the proof? That the new life never dies, it is eternal life. This is the truest and purest part of us.

So when you think about yourself and when you get caught up in all the agonies of your failures, turn a corner somewhere and remember that your disappointment is coming cause there is an incorruptible life in you that has such pure, holy, longings that no sin exists there. And that life is eternal. In James 1:18, "In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the Word of truth so that we might be, as it were, the firstfruits among His creatures." We are God's creation. We are new creations. By His will He gave us birth, brought us into existence. We are different kind of creatures. Physical life, verses 24 and 25, tell us in 1 Peter, like grass, withers and falls off. The life which we have in regeneration abides forever.

If I could sum it up I would say this, every true Christian, every person who has been genuinely saved has been given an imperishable, incorruptible new life by the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God which itself cannot die. Not only can it not die, but all its impulses and all its longings and all its desires are holy and righteous and pure. We're not talking now about imputed righteousness, that's a different issue. We're talking about real righteousness. We are both of these. We are sons of Adam and sons of God. Both births are at work in us and we live in the tension of that conflict, but only believers live in that conflict because only believers have holy longings.

Well you can go back to Romans 7, remembering what we just saw in 1 Peter 1. And you come back into verses 14 to 25 and all of a sudden maybe now it begins to make a little more sense. Here is the battle waged between that fallen, temporal death and that eternal heavenly life. And I think it's really healthy and I think it's wholesome for you as a believer to give the weight of consideration as you think about yourself to that which God has wrought in you rather than that which Adam has wrought in you. I'm not saying you shouldn't feel humble about your sin. You do, you will, you must. I'm not saying you shouldn't be aware of your sin and be eager to confess it, I am saying to you that you must come to understand that sin is not the truest you. And you can live in the joy and the exhilaration and the liberation of knowing that you are a new creation incarcerated, yes, in that fallenness but nonetheless the truest and purest you is the new creation and you're already the possessor of the life that will never end because it is unstained and fits you to enter the presence of God.

I don't think most Christians understand that. I...I think it's tragic because I think it steals the great glory of God and the wonder of what He has made us. I choose to live my life not spending all my time saying, "Woe is me, woe is me, woe is me," but rather saying, "Boy, where did that come from? That's not what I desire." I choose to live my life the way Paul does in Romans 7. You know what? I find myself doing things I don't want to do. I find myself doing things that are absolutely inconsistent with who I am. What an outrage that stuff is in my life. This is simply Paul reinforcing the reality of that new life. You must see your sin as an intrusion into who you really are in Christ. You need to do what Paul did. You need to hate the sin you see and you need to treat it as if it were some foreign intruder, as if it were some alien attitude, as if it were some unwelcome guest, or worst, some unexpected invasion by a fierce and threatening enemy. But as a believer, you're never treated as if it's you. I...I want to do what is good, I don't want to do what is evil. I...I...I joyfully concur with the Law of God, I want to serve the Law of God. This is who I am in Christ. Now once all I was was who I was in Adam, there was no battle. But now in Christ that remaining sin, that residual flesh is alien to me.

In fact, in verse 24, I'll give you a hint of what's coming. "Who will set me free from this body of death?" He is like a man who has a corpse strapped to his back. In the ancient times, one of the ways they punished murderers was to take the victim, the dead corpse, and strap them to the back of the murderer. And eventually the rotting body would cause the rotting of the murderer...a horrific way to suffer for your crime. Paul says that's how I feel, here I am this whole healthy, vital, vibrant, living being and there's this alien corpse tied to me. I think if we don't consider this, we underestimate the greatness of the work that God has done.

Another way to say it, and I'll close, is to say you are already fitted for heaven. The big change has already come. Death is a secondary thing. In a sense, the transformation has already happened. What happens at death is just subtraction, separation. Transformation is the big issue, separation is the secondary. And what happens when you die and go to heaven is you are liberated, you are separated from the body, the corpse, the rotting flesh that's tied to you and you are set free to be everything you were created to be when you were created in Christ...unto purity and holiness and righteousness. This is where we live, we live in the conflict. But to engage ourselves in the conflict and to be triumphant in the conflict, we have to understand the glory of the new creation. Believers love God's Law, rejoice in it. Believers desire to serve God, they hate sin, they hate iniquity and mostly in themselves. They see it as foreign and alien and disturbing and invasive and inconsistent because they know who they really are. What a wonder has happened in our lives in regeneration and sets us on a course for triumph in our sanctification. We'll stop there, that was the introduction and we'll actually look at the text itself next Sunday. Let's pray.

It's awesome, our Father, it's just awesome to consider these vast and far-reaching and yet intimate truths. The spiritual wild factor is just over the top. It's incomprehensible that this is who we are, but it's true. Thank You and may we live up to who we are, may we never forget who we are and may we act like it. Thank You for what You've done in us in preparing us to live forever. We thank You that we are already the possessors of a life that will never die because it is pure, our souls have been purified, our hearts have been purified, we are new and that new life that is in us is forever. It can never, ever die. Therein lies our joy, therein lies our sense of self-understanding, and therein lies our security and our assurance and our hope for eternity, that we have a life that can never end. Give us confidence in the power of that righteousness to triumph over the remaining sin in our flesh that we might live to Your glory. Deliver us from that wretched body of death. Give us victory until one day we are set free and we will thank You in Your Son's name. Amen.

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