

Deliverance From Self and Sin

We are continuing in our study in Romans. Today we will be looking at the second part or the second two thirds of Romans chapter 7. This is from verses 7 to 25. Now this is a very important section of Romans. Much of the evangelical church does not understand what these verses are about. They somehow think this is the unredeemed Apostle Paul, and he was looking back to when he was unredeemed and seeing what was wrong with himself. But it is quite the contrary. Here is the saved man; here is the redeemed man; here is the man that has come to a righteousness in Christ, the justified man, and here he discovers there is some very real problems about serving the Lord that we cannot do.

Every Christian has to come to grips with Romans 7. It is for you; it is not for the unbeliever. Paul has gone through Romans 1 through verse 5 dealing with justification. He comes now to Romans 6,7,8 dealing with sanctification, and sanctification means being made holy. We said that again and again.

Justification, as our brother said, "These are pretty big words." Justification means "being accounted righteous." It is not your righteousness; it is righteousness that is ours in Christ Jesus. But when you come to chapters 6,7,8, we have a very remarkable change in the book. And you need to understand that this is dealing with believers, and how they live the Christian life. So, I hope you understand this. Do not make the mistake that much of the evangelical church does and think this was the unsaved Paul. No, this was the saved Paul; this was the Paul that struggled in agony and found out in his own strength and by his own life he could not serve the Lord and was actually under bondage.

Now I know you do not think that about Christians, but Christians can be under bondage. Here we see one that was still under bondage to the law, and that full break from it. And here we see one that was under bondage to self, and here we see one that was under bondage to sin, singular, and how he overcame. It is a wonderful chapter, and until you get to this point in your Christian life, you can never be sanctified. I hope I do not offend too many believers this morning. I hope all will begin to understand the depth of this chapter and the help that it brings to us in full deliverance. So, after saying that, you probably think that is quite enough. We ought to read the verses at least.

Verse 7-13: "What shall we say then? is the law sin? Far be the thought. But I had not known sin, unless by law: for I had not had conscience also of lust unless the law had said, Thou shalt not lust; but sin, getting a point of attack by the commandment, wrought in me every lust; for without law sin was dead. But I was alive without law once; but the commandment having come, sin revived, but I died. And the commandment, which was for life, was found, as to me, itself to be unto death: for sin, getting a point of attack by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. So that the law indeed is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Did then that which is good become death to me? Far be the thought. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death to me by that which is good; in order *that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.*" (I say that with emphasis, hoping that you will remember it.)

Verse 14-25: “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am fleshly, sold under sin. For that which I do, I do not own: for not what I will, this I do; but what I hate, this I practise. But if what I do not will, this I practise, I consent to the law that it is right. Now then it is no longer I that do it, but the sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, good does not dwell: for to will is there with me, but to do right I find not. For I do not practise the good that I will; but the evil I do not will, that I do. But if what I do not will, this I practise, it is no longer I that do it, but the sin that dwells in me. I find then the law upon me who will to practise what is right, that with me evil is there. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring in opposition to the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which exists in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of this body of death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I myself with the mind serve God’s law; but with the flesh sin’s law.”

Let us pray:

Lord, now we know these words are vitally important to our sanctification. We have at least an impression of that. But we are asking You by Your Holy Spirit to make Your words alive. Breathe upon them for You alone have the words of eternal life. And we look to the Holy Spirit to quicken us today to have understanding, to have revelation, to have a real sense of what the Word of God is telling us, to have those ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. How we ask You to make it known to us. In Jesus’ precious name. Amen.

Introduction

The title today is, “Deliverance from Self and Sin.” And this is very important. Today we are going to look at just three things. I like simple outlines; I do not like to be so complicated that we cannot understand the basic things. If you put things in a simple outline when you read and study the Word of God, it will help you.

I will never forget, Brother Kaung told us when we were young brothers, “Read the Word of God.” Now I know that is not new news; I have said that before. Read the Word of God, read the Word of God over and over, and do not let your first impulse be to go to some grand man of God and his own books. Learn by reading and then outline. What are the important words? Where do they break down? How can you see the flow of the Holy Spirit’s thought in the Word of God? When you do that, the Word will become Rhema to you. Rhema in Greek means “living Word.” Otherwise, it will just be Logos which is “objective word,” very important. Read it over and over; make it your discipline. But one day, light comes through that Word. The Holy Spirit breathes upon that Word, and when the Holy Spirit breathes upon that Word, it becomes that living word, Rhema.

The outline today is, number one, The Purpose of the Law; that is very clear. If you have never understood the purpose of the law, you will begin to understand the purpose of the law in Paul’s agony as he shares it. These are verses 7-13. Then you will understand there is, The Problem with the Flesh. So, the second thing you need to see is the problem of the flesh. Many believers do not know what the flesh means. I hope you have a better understanding. That is verses 14-23. And then there is this wonderful proclamation of deliverance, Deliverance only in Christ, verse 24 and

25. Paul, at last, gets delivered. And when you go into chapter 8, it is even more grand, and that is the finish of sanctification. Well, without understanding this, you will never be sanctified.

The Purpose of the Law

So, let us begin with those first verses, the purpose of the law. Romans 7:7-25 is the agonizing (I am using that adjective with emphasis on purpose). It is the agonizing experience of Paul who was a redeemed man who tried to live according to the law and according to his own strength. That is Romans 7 in a nutshell. We see that he is so transparent; he is so candid, this great man of God about his struggle to live the Christian life, and then his revelation that began to open to us God's way for us. I hope that helps. I have already mentioned to you the different way evangelical Christianity looks at it, but this is a justified man. This is a saved man. This is a redeemed man, and he is having these struggles that every Christian should have, and when they discover God's way through, they will discover full deliverance in Christ, deliverance from self, deliverance from sin. So that is the whole of it.

So, when we look at this first part, we begin to see the purpose of the law. There are two things. In verses 7-11 we understand something clear about the purpose of the law. It brings us into a real consciousness of sin. Without understanding that, we will never come into sanctification. It is an unveiling of sin, and then even more than that, in verses 12-13 it goes deeper, and it shows us the exceeding sinfulness of sin. You have to see those two things. This is what Paul experienced. You know, if anybody could live the Christian life it was the Apostle Paul. Here was the Pharisee of Pharisees, here was this student of Gamaliel, here was this gifted man. He said even in his own testimony in the book of Acts, "far advanced beyond my contemporaries." Now I never said that about my profession; I would not dare say that. But this man could say that. Surely, he could live the Christian life, but here we see the undoing of Paul, and we need to see the undoing of ourselves, and the control of sin to such a degree that we, like the Apostle Paul, would cry out for deliverance and find it only in Christ Jesus.

In verses 7-11, we see how Paul's conscience was awakened to the reality of sin through the commandments, through the law. In verses 12-13, we see the second purpose of the law, and that was the law with this light that cast the true light on the nature of sin which can only be described in Paul's two words: "exceedingly sinful." This is important. Do not think that this chapter is not important. I beg you to learn what it means.

The first one of the purposes of the law is the consciousness of sin.

Verse 7a: "What shall we say then? is the law sin? Far be the thought."

Now those of you that are familiar with the book of Romans know that this question is a common question of the Apostle Paul's. He often would say at very important transitions in this book, "What shall we say then?" Mark those as you read the book of Romans. It will give you insight into what it means. But then he said, "Is the law sin? (the second question). And then he said his common divine reaction to wrong thinking: "far be the thought." It is impossible that something God gave, wrote with His own finger on the stone tablets, could be sin. It is wrong thinking. So, if you read the book of Romans, you will notice ten times that it says, "Far be the

thought.” He gave that wrong thinking, and then He gave the divine reaction to that wrong thinking.

You also see in verse 7 the continuation of the problem. It says, “But (This is always an important word. I do appreciate the way Brother Sparks used to say that. He often told us to notice the ‘buts’ in the Word of God. Now I do not know what that is in other languages, “but God” is very important if you look in Ephesians). “But I had not known sin, unless by law: (very important point) for I had not had conscience also of lust unless the law had said, Thou shalt not lust.” The law found out this great man of God. The more he tried to live the Christian life as a redeemed man, the more he found that he had a problem. And that problem was that he lusted.

Now do not think you are any different than Paul? You may not have discovered it yet, but in the light of God’s glory, he discovered how the purpose of the law was to reveal the absolute consciousness of sin. Understand that! That is the first point. You cannot go on into the rest of this chapter unless you understand this. The purpose of the law was to awaken our consciousness to sin. The purpose of the law was never that we keep the law. I want you to be clear about that. We spent some time talking about it. You cannot keep the law. It is impossible for you to keep the law. You do not have the capacity to keep the law. The law was given to show what holiness is really like, not telling us to keep it, but He brought it to awaken our conscious to sin. That is a very important verse. Then he shows the agonizing effect of being awakened to the consciousness of sin.

Verses 8-11: “But sin, getting a point of attack by the commandment, wrought in me every lust; for without law sin was dead. But I was alive without law once; but the commandment having come, sin revived, but I died. And the commandment, which was for life, was found, as to me, itself to be unto death: for sin, getting a point of attack by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.”

Now those are strong words! *Those are strong words!* We need to recognize how strong these words are. He finally saw in the light of God the purpose of the law. Sometimes when we use big words or Biblical words, we lose people. Let me give you a simple little illustration; I hope it helps.

The law is like a mirror, and most of us probably have a mirror. Some people may not have mirrors, but most of us have mirrors. But if you have an awful blemish on your nose, like a big wart, and you are walking around, you do not know it. You are not aware of the blemish. You are not aware of the fault, but the moment you walk up to one of those mirrors, you say, “Oh my, look at that blemish!” That is what the law does; it awakens our conscience. We see sin as sin. It is through the commandment that sin was made manifest. That is what it means in I Corinthians 15:56 when Paul said, “The law is the strength of sin.” The law shows us the very nature of sin. So, I hope that illustration helps. The law is the thing through which we see the reality and the purpose of the law. We see what we are really like, and that is what Paul is saying.

Twice he uses this phrase, “but sin, getting a point of attack in me by the commandment wrought in me every lust.”

I think for a Pharisee of Pharisees to be awakened to that moment and to be able to say, "His life was the commandments. His life was the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament." But to come to the point that he realized the commandment, taking advantage of me, killed me and slew me," was great revelation. That was the purpose.

The commandment was not meant to be kept; the commandment was meant to convict! The commandment was not meant to be rules to live by; the commandment was to be the thing that made us draw to Christ to have a solution that was not in us. Do you understand the difference?

In Galatians 3:24, we find that the commandment was our tutor to lead us to Christ. I have told you this story before. The Jews had this problem; the commandment was given on those tablets of stone from the finger of God, and it was brought down, and they said this profound thing which they said twice. Once was bad enough; but they did not learn. They said it twice; "All that God has said, we will do." There you go; talk about taking on the curse of the law, they did in full, but it was never the purpose. Its purpose was to shine the light on a Holy God. Its purpose was to reveal a holiness, a requirement of sanctification. Its purpose was to unveil what God was like and to expose what we are like. Do you get the difference? There is a huge difference. So that is what he said, and those are strong words about the commandment. The commandment, taking advantage of me, came in and killed me and slew me. He says, "It wrought in me every lust for without law sin was dead."

Verses 9-11 summarizes: Sin revived when the law came, but I died. For sin deceived me and by it slew me. These are words that are very important for us to understand. The purpose of the law is not to be kept but to convict. This is important. It was meant to expose sin.

A second thing in verse 13b that Paul said is this, "In order that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."

That was the second purpose of the law. Sometimes we are so casual with sin. We talk about white lies. Now what is a white lie? A white lie is supposed to be sort of this innocent little lie that you tell, and you sort of do it to protect people. You do not want them to know the hard reality of the truth, so we develop this phrase "white lies." But according to the commandment there is no white lie. It says, "Thou shalt not lie." The next time you confess, "Oh, it is just a little white lie because I love my sister so much, I did not want to tell her the truth." Well, you need to be awakened in your conscience.

Dear brothers and sisters, how we need to see this purpose of the law, that it was to show sin as exceedingly sinful. Do we see it that way? Do we abhor sin? Do we hate sin? Do we detest sin? I cannot tell you how many meetings I have been in with the brothers counseling people, and the first thing you realize for someone to get really helped and delivered from the power of sin and self is that they need to see the ugliness of sin. And the purpose of the law was to expose the ugliness of sin, sin that was exceedingly sinful. I cannot think of a better adjective there than exceedingly. That is quite strong, and I think that makes the point very well. This is how we need to see that. And we need to see that the law is holy and just and good. Do not make that mistake to think something is wrong with the law. The law will never disappear. The Lord said, "I have come to fulfill the law." He said in that most famous message ever spoken, the Sermon on the

Mount, “not one jot or tittle shall disappear from the law.” No, it cannot because the law is holy. The law is good, the law is righteous; the problem is us. Do you understand? That is Romans 7. If you have an understanding of that, it will help.

We can never be justified by the law. It says in Romans 3:20: “Wherefore by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified before Him, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Consciousness, and that is what the point was. This is so important.

I Corinthians 15:56: “The strength of the sin is the law.”

Brothers and sisters, it was to show something so ugly in the sight of God, so repulsive in the sight of God, so exceedingly sinful in the sight of God that we His followers would see it abhorrent, even when we discover it in ourselves.

I will quote Griffin Thomas who said something so extraordinarily clear and profound about this. He said, “This passage (the ones we just read) describes a man who is in real earnest to be holy in his own efforts. But law apart from grace the passage teaches the powerlessness of the law for salvation (justification) and sanctification.” How true this is.

The Problem of the Flesh

There is another thing we need to see when we look at these verses. We need to see the problem of the flesh. There is a real problem with the flesh. In Jude 23 it says, “Hate even the garments spotted by the flesh.”

These were strong words that Jude brought out. What is the flesh? The flesh is when self and sin merge in an explosion that becomes the flesh. That is the simple way to explain it. It is the conjoined twins. You know what a conjoined twin is. I know you do not need an engineer to explain to you medical stuff. But it is when two babies are born and they cannot be separated. You remember the two famous Ringling brothers, the two cojoined twins, who were in Barnum and Bailey Circus. They could not be separated, so they put them in this theatre or circus, and they were shown to everybody. But there are worse cases of cojoined twins; there is the self-life. How we need deliverance from the self-life. The sin there does not mean that white lie, it certainly does not mean sins of the past because they are already dealt with by the cross, they are sins plural. It means indwelling sin. Paul discovered two problems with the flesh. One was self-life, and one was indwelling sin. These are major problems. If you do not understand these two problems and find God’s resolution, you will never enter into the full experience of sanctification. That is as simple as it is.

He said in verse 14: “For we know that the law is spiritual: (that is another truth), but I am fleshly.”

Now if I called you freshly, you would get mad at me; you might storm the lectern. My sister surely would throw me down in a toehold if I said that, but you know, you are fleshly; I am fleshly. Paul’s agony was that he discovered he was fleshly. Now if you read the Corinthian letter, you begin to understand that fleshly means “carnal.” It is very clear what flesh is, but I am telling you flesh has two elements that make it what it is, and that is self-life and indwelling sin. And when you put those two together, you have a spiritual explosion. We talked about the bathrooms and

now it is humored by the announcement that apparently the sisters and brothers who were cleaning the bathrooms were mixing chemicals. “No, no, do not do that, you are going to have hydrochloric acid, and before you know it, you will be passed out on the floor.”

Well, there is a worst explosion than that. It is what makes us carnal. It is when we live by the self-life. It is when indwelling sin, (those are the words Paul used) takes us over, and we cannot fight. We cannot get liberty from it. We struggle with it; we agonize over it. Those two things are what it means.

Verse 14: “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am fleshly, sold under sin.”

Now that is a strong word. Do you think Paul had a little bit too much of the communion wine and was exaggerating here? He was not exaggerating. We are sold under sin when we are fleshly. As a matter of fact, one of the writers I deeply respect, said, “That is slavery market language.” We are sold on the block; we are not own. We are controlled by sin, indwelling sin. These are the two problems. It is toxic and crippling, and it makes sanctification impossible.

In I Corinthians 3:1-3, Paul had the delight of telling those Corinthian believers that he loved, “You are carnal; you are fleshly.” So do not think this is talking about the unredeemed Paul. Here, he is saying to the church, “I cannot tell you what I want to tell you.” Then he said, “I was with you eighteen months, and I could only talk about Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” Why? “Because you are carnal.”

Dear brothers and sisters, we need to be delivered from self. It is so important. Now how do you know he is talking about self? This is why I say, “Read the Word; read the Word over and over until you get what it is saying. The word ‘I’ occurs thirty times in Romans 7. Did you know that? If you did not discover the word ‘I’ in these verses that occurs thirty times, I am going to use terrible English. “I” is the problem. You can correct me later, but “I” is the problem. Believers do not understand this.

We get people saved, then we think they are holy, so now they can serve, and they can work. Hey, a little suggestion. Just understand what I am trying to say. Paul went into the desert for three years. Now I am not telling you to go into the desert for three years; I do not even know where you can find a desert around here. But the point is, he saw himself in the reflection of the Word of God, and he was never the same.

We take people when they are saved, and we send them out right away. You are a missionary for the world. I think there needs to be some dealing first. This is what Romans 7 is talking about—I thirty times. Can you imagine? Look at verse 15 just for an example.

“For that which I do, I do not own: for not what I will, this I do; but what I hate, this I practise.”

That is pretty profound, isn’t it? I used to love when dear old Lance with his perfect Queen’s English used to talk about Jacob mostly—I, I, I, six times. He had an eye problem. You know, I had an eye problem, and I had to get surgery. So, the tent was taken back, now I can see all of you; it is wonderful.

But he had a real “I” problem; he had a spiritual “I” problem. He also had a physical eye problem, and you can read about it. Some people believe II Corinthians 12:7, the thorn in the flesh, is talking about that eye problem, and you can see it very clearly when you come into Galatians. Paul normally dictated his letters, and basically, he dictated and Sosthenes was writing. But if you read I Corinthians, at the end of the letter, he said his salutation in verse 16:21: “By my own hand,” because he could not see and could only write the salutation. But when you go to Galatians, this point of being not under the law but being under grace was so important that he said, “See what big letters I have written to you with my own hand.” No longer was he dictating the word; he was writing. I can imagine it took a lot of parchment to put that on so Paul could see it. He had an “I” problem, and he had a real eye problem.

Even in Galatians, I love it when Brother Kumar talked about “blessedness” in an opening. He said, “The Galatians were willing to tear out their own eyes and give them to Paul.” That is how much they loved him. He had a physical eye problem, but he had a bigger “I” problem.

It was the self-life; it was huge. Somebody says that now; some politician says that, HUGE! What an enormous eye problem he had. I, I, I, thirty times; he could not say enough. He said, “My, my, my, sixteen times, and it still was not enough because he said in verse 25, “*I myself*.” If you come up to me, and say to me, *my, myself*, I am going to look at you over my glasses.

Oh, what a problem! No mention of the Holy Spirit. It was all me trying to live the Christian life. It was all my trying to live; it was all about what I could not do. What I willed to do, what I could not do. I wanted to practise it, but I never found the deliverance and grace to do it. Oh, brothers and sisters, I think we have an ‘I’ problem. Every Christian has an ‘I’ problem, and they do not know it. You can never serve the Lord according to rules, according to law, you can never serve the Lord in the power of your own life. This was the purpose of Romans 7 to the believers.

You know, I like Darby’s Version, and I read it. One of the reasons I read Darby’s Version is his notes. I like his notes; his footnotes are very helpful, and he said something I have never heard anybody else say when he talked about this personal pronoun ‘I’. He said, “I have put *I* in italic when the personal pronoun ‘ego’ is emphatically introduced in Greek, and the emphasis is not otherwise apparent.” That is a pretty important statement. I do not know if you understand the words, but here there are seven words of *I* (Get a Darby Version and look at it), that are italicized, and there the ‘*I*’ has gotten the ‘ego’ attached right to it. And in a sense what Paul said in his confession before he came into some real deliverance was that he was an ego maniac. You may think I am a little too wordy and strong to say Paul was an ego maniac. What would you think if I called you an ego maniac? That is what we are in this self-life.

If you look at the very definition, it is someone who is extremely preoccupied with their ego. It sounds like the modern world. Their identity, oh that is really getting to sound like the modern world. Or self, ego maniac is a combination of the Latin word which means “the self.” Okay? Maybe you can bear it a little better if I explain it this way. The self or *I* and the Greek word maniac means madness or frenzy. If you call me an ego maniac, I am not going to be offended. Or if I call you an ego maniac, for everyone who has not been delivered from the problem of the self-life is an ego maniac, and it is madness to frenzy. If you read chapter 7, Paul was beside himself in madness. He did not know what to do. He was in agony and anxiety.

Dear brothers and sisters, you know the Lord said to His disciples after that great revelation in Caesarea Philippi in chapter 16 of Matthew, "This is what we need to do."

Matthew 16:24: "And Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.'"

Do not ever forget that word. The impression is very clear. You cannot follow Him as a disciple unless you deny yourself and take up your cross. It is not an optional thing. One time I spoke on believers and disciples, and this is confession. Brother Kaung thought I got it all wrong, and he came to me with that vein-popping expression. When he saw me, he said, "That is not right!" I will never forget. I did not think I said that, but that is okay; I will take it from my dear brother whom I love. And he said, "You cannot just have believers and disciples." Truly that is the way it is in the world, believe in the Lord Jesus, and you are saved. You love that part, but are you willing to deny yourself and become a disciple? This is what is key. The one thing that the disciple has to do is deny himself and take up the cross and daily follow Him. And when you begin to do that, the problem with self is lessened, and that inward man he spoke about, which is that man in Christ, is strengthened. That is God's way.

We understand the importance of the cross in justification; it is God for us; He died for us. We can get that. We always know the importance of the cross in that work of redemption, but do we understand the importance of the cross in our daily experience in sanctification? If you do not, you will never understand Romans chapter 7.

The secret of sanctification is not I but Christ. That is the cross. It is refusing ourselves, not I but Christ. You know, no one is selfless; not one of us is selfless, but the Lord Jesus is truly selfless. It is remarkable that He was God, and He says, "I do not say what I want to say, only what the Father says. I do not do what I want to do but only what I see the Father doing." He was truly the only selfless Man that ever lived. And brothers and sisters, that Man is in us. This is what we need to understand. The secret of sanctification is Galatians 2:20: "And no longer live I, but Christ lives in me." This is what Paul began to be awakened to in his revelation. This alone will solve the I problem.

The second thing is indwelling sin. It combines with the I problem. This is a chemical combination that will explode in you, and it has for all creation. The second problem with the flesh is indwelling sin. The problem was devastating to the Christian life, making sanctification impossible.

Verse 17: "Now then it is no longer I," (That phrase was in there, and it was not talking about Christ at that point, but that was the seed of His deliverance.) He said, "It is no longer I that do it, but the sin that dwells in me." Those are strong words.

Verse 20: "But if what I do not will, this I practise, it is no longer I that do it, but the sin that dwells in me."

Have you ever experienced an indwelling sin that you could not overcome, wept over it; and prayed that the Lord would deliver you from it. There is something left over from Adam in us that is a problem, and that is indwelling sin. And this problem was not just erased at the cross. As a

matter of fact, when you look at sanctification in Romans chapter 6 you are looking at positional sanctification. Like our brother was saying this morning, "You were put in Christ." You were baptized into Christ, and His death became your death, and it became your burial, and it became your resurrection, and you were raised in newness of life. That is the position we stand in. Now, in Romans 7, this is the practise. Remember that word 'practise' is used again and again in this section. This is living the Christian life. So this goes beyond positional Christianity which is very important. I am not belittling that. You have to see that you are dead in Christ. You have to see globally from the federal headship, all of Adam is dead in Christ, and there is a second Man, Christ. You have to see that.

But here you have to see something else. There is residue from the Adamic nature that God had another way to deliver us from. And the way He delivers us from indwelling sin is Romans chapter 8. It is by the indwelling Holy Spirit. How wonderful! God's ways are perfect. Can you imagine, God keeps being put in you as the indwelling Spirit of God to overcome the power of the residue of the indwelling sin that was left in you? And through the power of His life and the Spirit of God, we are able to overcome.

Now I do not know if I said this, but when you see those thirty *I*'s and those sixteen *Me*'s and that one profound *I, Myself* in Romans 7, the Holy Spirit is never mentioned. If you go over into chapter 8, it is twenty times that the Spirit is mentioned because that is God's deliverance. He puts within us His Holy Spirit, and that indwelling sin is overcome by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Isn't that good news? That is tremendous! It is so genius; it could only be divine. Who would have thought the third person of the Godhead would come and take up permanent residence in us? Who would have thought? Only God could do such an amazing work. That is how we deal with the indwelling sin, and brothers and sisters, we absolutely need to see it.

Verse 18-20a: "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, good does not dwell: for to will is there with me, but to do right I find not. For I do not practise the good that I will; but the evil I do not will, that I do."

I remember a story that I have not told for years, so do not get on me about this one. In the war of 1812, the Brits did not learn from 1776 so there was another war. And there was Admiral Perry, and probably the most famous thing he is known for, other than winning that war over Britain, he said, "We have met the enemy, and they are ours."

Then in 1970 (I graduated from high school in 1970 so that shows you how old I am.) there was a pogo cartoon by Walt Kelly. He took that famous, historical quote, and he made a parody of it. He said, "We have met the enemy, and it is us." Do you understand? That is Romans 7: "We have met the enemy, and it is us."

So many people I see are rebuking the devil everywhere, thinking it is all the devil; the devil this and the devil that; the devil is behind every bush. But you know, there might be a bigger problem. The devil was defeated; he was exposed, and he was disarmed, but you have to do some work with self, and the key is by the Holy Spirit in the Lord's life.

Paul used that phrase, "It is no longer *I*," and he used it twice as a matter of fact in these verses. And it shaped his whole teaching of the Christian life. That is where Galatians 2:20 came

from. That is where Philippians 1:23 came from. That is where Colossians came from. This mystery hidden from the ages is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Dear brothers and sisters, he said it twice, "It is no longer I; it is sin." But he discovered in his full deliverance, it is no longer I; it is Christ. That was his whole philosophy. I hope you begin to understand. I am going to finish with just a few words.

Deliverance Only in Christ

Verses 24-25 are the proclamation of deliverance. This is quite a proclamation, but at the highest point of his agony he cried out, and he was finally done with self. By the way, in case you have not got the inference, I think you need to walk with the Lord awhile, and find out how you need to be done with self. I think you will find out how terrible self is, how terrible indwelling sin is, and then hopefully at that desperate stage in your life, you will do what the Apostle Paul did, and you will cry out with abounding agony.

Verse 24-25: "O wretched man that I am! (Have you ever said that? Oh, it is a good cry. It was the beginning of full deliverance for Paul.) "O wretched man that I am!" John has been on me for months to get to verse twenty-four. He said, "tell me, O wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Paul knew what he was saying. The Roman Church knew what he was saying. The Roman Government and judicial system were specialists in cruelty. You may not know that but think of the cross. Is there anything more cruel than the cross? We heard about it from Roger last week. The sufferings of our Lord; what a cruel dragged-out suffering that was!

But they had another way of terrible cruelty. When someone murdered a person, they would take the murdered body of the victim, and they would chain him to the living man. The murderer would be face to face, hands to hands, toes to toes with the dead man. And for the remainder or short period that he lived, that corruption seeped into him, and he died a vicious death.

Do you understand? Paul knew what he was saying. "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" The Roman Church knew what he was saying. They knew exactly what he was saying. Brothers and sisters, when our cry gets to that point, we experience deliverance in Christ, deliverance from self, deliverance from sin. It says in verse 25: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So, then I myself with the mind serve God's law; but with the flesh sin's law."

And then if you do not mind me reading the first two verses in chapter 8:1-2: "There is then now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and of death." That is how that law of indwelling sin is overcome.

Verse 3: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, having sent His own Son, in likeness of flesh of sin and for sin, has condemned sin in the flesh."

Conclusion

Dear brothers and sisters, to me this is Romans, chapter 7. To me this is sanctification. Before we experience full deliverance from self and sin, we need to be awakened in conscience to the witness of law or indwelling sin. It is a made-up phrase, put it down in my column. How horrific indwelling sin is! The power of self that makes you an ego manic and drives you crazy, we need

to be delivered from. We need to see that the law exposes this indwelling sin. The law shows that it is exceeding sinful, and then we discover that the only way we can find liberty is through the life of Another. That is the secret. It is why he could say those words when they began to mean something to him: "It is no longer I." God in the Spirit reminded him that the sure deliverance comes through One, even Christ. Then we have to cry out a desperate cry that will never be unanswered: "O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?" God is faithful, and you will begin to discover life in the Spirit, and be free, fully free for the first time in your life.

Shall we pray:

Lord, I do not know how You can make these words clearer, but I ask You to make them clear where I could not make them clear. Breathe upon Your Word, sow Your Word into our hearts, as You said that famous parable of the sower, it will bear good fruit. Lord, we yield to You. We know that we are not to live according to the law, but we see something and touch something of what it exposes, and we know that we are the problem. Deliver us from self, deliver us from sin, and let us too have that victorious proclamation that I thank God through Jesus Christ to my Lord, the One who is deliverance. And then we will know the way for sanctification. Amen.

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