

Preaching Christ...
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God

Date: 28 June 2026
Services: 9am
Series: God's Gospel – The big picture in Romans
Title: Why the struggle?
Passage: Romans 7

Bible reading for church: all of Romans 7 – *you may like to cut out one of the other readings*

OUTLINE

1. **Crossing the gang plank** vv1–6 (Freed from the law's hold)
2. **Wet paint – don't touch** vv7–13 (The good law vs living still in fallen world with imperfect heart)
3. **The struggle not to touch** vv14–25 (The Bible's realistic view of the struggle with sin + the promise of final delivery)

INTRODUCTION

Do you ever **struggle** with **sin**? //

Do you ever find — in the words of Romans 7:21 — that although you **want** to do good, **evil** is right there **with** you? //

Or in the words of v15:

“What I **want** to do I do **not** do, but what I **hate** // I **do**.” //

Friends – if you **CAN'T** relate at all to this struggle, I want to say lovingly and gently – either – you are **WAY** more godly than me

OR you have **not yet** come to **know** and **serve** the **Lord Jesus**. //

In looking at Romans 6 we spoke about **crossing** the **gang plank**... //

leaving the **pirate ship**... //

this was an analogy of **dying** to the **old life**... // and coming **alive** in **Christ**. //

Old life **buried** with Jesus in **baptism**;

new life // **now** lived for **God**... ////

So **why** does the **struggle** with sin still feel so **real**? // - if we have decisively **swapped kingdoms** – **changed** our **allegiance**? //

I thought we were meant to be **done** with **sin!!!** – indeed – to have **died** to **sin!!** //

Well, there's **much** to help us here in ch 7...

Romans 7 is a **reality** check...

because it tells us that **having** died to sin and having been **raised** in **Christ**

...does **NOT** mean we've entered some sort of **sin-free** Christian **experience**.

We've **not** been perfected /// **YET!**

NO – we are still **waiting** for the end – the **return** of Jesus – the **renewal** of **creation** – the **remaking** of Christians **perfectly** in the **likeness** of **Jesus**...

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

AND although the **war** is **won** /// we **still** do **battle** with **sin**!

Let's **explore** the chapter by **analogy**:

1. **Crossing the gang plank** vv1–6
2. **Wet paint – don't touch** vv7–13
3. **The struggle *not* to touch** vv14–25

My aim this morning is to show you how **passage that appears complicated** is actually very **clear**.

You can tell me if I've succeeded!

1. CROSSING THE GANG PLANK vv 1-6

I'm sure if you were here last week, you'll **remember** that illustration of the **king** looking over his kingdom and finding a **pirate** ship in his **harbour**.

He comes alongside, **lowers** a gang plank and invites **anyone onboard** to cross **over** and serve him as King

And if they do, they would receive a king's **pardon** and live **with** and **for** the **king**. //

And as we explored Romans 6, there were two clear things we saw....

If you are a **Christian**, there has been a total **regime change**... we've **crossed** over from where the **pirate ruled** to where the **king** rules.

From where **sin ruled** to where King **Jesus rules**!

As a result, sin no longer feels **right**. //

It feels **wrong**. //

And **second**, so **radical** is this regime change, that we can say that instead of being **enslaved** to **sin**,

we're **enslaved instead** to **righteousness**... or – everything that is **right**!

As a result, we learnt last week that we are to **count** ourselves — **live** like – we're **dead** to **sin** // but **alive** in **Christ**.

Now – the start of ch 7 – brings this home with a **further analogy**. //

The analogy of **marriage**. //

Have a look with me at v2 - *For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law that binds her to him.*

So we all understand this.

If you're **married** – there is a **covenant** in place – **unbreakable** – until your **spouse** – sadly – **dies**.

When **that** happens, you're free to **remarry**.

That's **God's** design... that's his **plan**... (even if sadly, it doesn't always work out that way.)

And God in Romans 7, uses that analogy which everyone would have understood - as an illustration of our definitive release from the **law**.

Have a look at v4 - *So, my brothers and sisters, you also **died** to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to **another**, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.*

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

When we became Christians, we **died** to the **law**.

That is, its **hold** on us was **broken**.

Hence v6 - *by dying to what once bound us, we have been **released** from the **law** so that we serve in the new **way** of the **Spirit**, and not in the **old way** of the **written code**.*

But... **But!!!** /// there's something **about** the law which still plays **havoc within** us...

And I can show you by an easy example... When you see a sign saying, 'wet paint – don't touch', what do you **normally want to do**?

Touch it to see if it is **dry**!

Thereby **disobeying** the **sign**.

So, our second point which unpacks this today:

2. 'WET PAINT – DON'T TOUCH' – vv7-13

We saw last week just how **good** this Epistle is in **imagining questions** people might have...

And **so** in v7 – he poses **another** hypothetical:... if we died to the law – and **sin's hold** on us has been **broken** –

...does that mean that the law itself is somehow // **sinful**?

And his answer is full of **insight** into the way the human heart works...

Have a look v7 - *What shall we say, then? Is the **law** // **sinful**? Certainly not! Nevertheless, I would not have known what **sin** **was** had it not been for the **law**. For I would not have known what **coveting** really was if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."^[b] ⁸ But sin, **seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment**, produced in me **every kind of coveting**.*

So – the law's **hold** on us has been **broken**.

But that doesn't mean the **law** was **broken**!

No – the problem with the **law**, was not the **law**

The problem with the **law**, was the **human heart**

The law said 'you shall not covet', and suddenly within us, sin rises up and says: // "Well **now** // I want to **covet**." //

...we're quite attracted to **coveting**... we want **all sorts of things** that belong to **others**!!

Can you **relate**?

'Do not **touch** – **wet paint**!'

There's nothing wrong with the **sign**.

But with **US**!

All we want to do is **touch** the **paint**!

v8 - *But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting...*

It's like a **virus** that waits for a weakness in the immune system before attacking. //

Sin **sees** the **commandment** and **exploits** it. //

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

It hijacks even **good** things — like **God's law** — and turns them toward **rebellion**. ////

So the law **reveals** the **true nature** of sin...

it reveals the true **nature** of our **hearts**.... //

Which leads to our final point this morning

3. THE STRUGGLE NOT TO TOUCH... vv14-25

There are some things here that seem hard to get our **heads around** — to please work **hard** with me.... //

...**for** there seems to be some **contradiction** here — have a look

V14 - *We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, **sold** as a **slave** to sin.*

But — hang on — I thought we'd seen over the last two weeks that we are **NO LONGER SLAVES** to sin...???

What's going on?

Romans 6 says:

- sin's **reign** is **broken**,
- we are no **longer** slaves to **sin**,
- we are now slaves to **righteousness**.

But in **v14** — I am sold as a slave to sin.

That sounds **contradictory**.

Well - in **Romans 6**:

- "slave to sin" refers to:
 - sin as **master**,
 - **ruling power**,

THAT slavery has been decisively **broken** by **Christ**.

But in **Romans 7**: Paul is describing the **ongoing experience** of **weakness** and **conflict** in the **Christian life**.

So when he says:

"sold as a slave to sin," he is saying "I still feel the **awful power** and **pull** of sin **operating within me**."

Or to refer back to the pirate ship analogy:

Romans 6:

You have left the pirate ship. The captain no longer owns you.

Romans 7:

But the old pirate **instincts** still **cling** to you.

And sometimes, to your **horror**, you still **think** and **act** like a **pirate**!

That's the **tension** - the **struggle** - Paul is **describing**.

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

So he says in v15 – and you can hear the frustration – *I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate, I do!*

Or 18b – *For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out v19 For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing! //*

Can you relate?

I **certainly** can!

Now that I belong to the Lord Jesus – I **long** to do what right...

to live a **godly life** – **every** day – loving and serving others, **sharing** Jesus....

NOT sinning... not getting **angry** or using **bad language** or being **impatient**.... Or **lusting**...

But guess what?

Every day – I don't **manage** to live the good life I want to **live!**

WHY is **this??** – when I thought I was meant to have been **set free** from **sin?** //

Vv17 and v20 – speak of **sin living in me**...

And that's our **present reality this** side of **heaven**.

Although we've **crossed** the gang plank and received the king's pardon and been declared **right** with him.... it is as if our old pirate **instincts** have crossed **over with** us... and they still **hang out** and **rear** their ugly **heads**....

So says v21 – *So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me.*

For in my inner being I delight in God's law;

but I see another law at work in me,

waging war against the law of my mind

and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ///

Do **YOU** know that? //

If you **love** the Lord Jesus – I'm absolutely **positive** you do!

It's **frustrating**

It sometimes feels we **never** make progress in the Christian life – that we're still facing the **same** battles – the same **temptations** we did **20** years ago!

We sometimes feel **pathetic**... and **ashamed**....

And that if Jesus turned up... we'd just want him to go **away!**

And so the cry comes in v24 –

What a **wretched man** I am!! ////

WHY does the struggle continue after crossing over?

- **sin's reign** is **broken**,

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

- but sin's **presence** remains,
- and **therefore**, the Christian experiences war.

... and when the passage says:

*"it is no longer I myself who do it, but sin **living in me**,"*

It means something like:

"This sin no longer expresses who I **truly am** in **Christ** // yet it still horribly **operates within me**."

Paul is **devastated** by the sin.

He **hates** the sin.

...longs for **deliverance**. ///

You may have thought "If I still struggle like this, maybe I'm not really converted!"

Romans 7 says:

the very **grief** over sin,
the **hatred** of sin,
the **longing** for **holiness**,
is **evidence** of spiritual life.

Dead won't **fight** sin.

Living people do! ////

So – now – **what** is the **answer**?

– v24 - *What a wretched man I am!*

Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

And I think he means – both – every day in the battle with sin – he is with us to help us say 'no' ...

And

That in the **end** – when creation is **renewed** – when we are taken into **eternity**.... When **evil** and the **evil one** are put **down**... we will be ultimately **delivered** by **Jesus**! ///

Let me **close**

Friends, perhaps this week you've wondered:

"Why do I still **struggle**?"

"Why do I still **fail**?"

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

"Why do I still **battle** the same sins?"

Romans 7 says:

because although sin's **reign** has **ended**, sin's **presence remains**.

The **battle itself** does not mean you've **failed**.

The **battle** itself is **evidence** of **life**.

One day the **battle** will **end**.

One day there'll be no **more** war **within**.

No more **temptation**.

No more **shame**. //

Who will **rescue** me from this body **subject** to **death**?

THANKS BE TO GOD — who **delivers** us through **Jesus Christ** our **Lord**.