

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 8/17/2025

Brad Brandt

Romans 7:7-13 “*Dealing with the Objections of a Legalistic Heart*”^{**1}

Series: “*The Struggle Within – An Exposition of Romans 7*”

Main Idea: Legalism is no match for the struggle within. There are two questions in the mind of the legalist which God's Word answers for us in Romans 7:7-13.

- I. The first question a legalist must address – Is the law sin? (7-12)
 - A. Our problem is sin, not the law (7-11).
 1. The law reveals (7).
 2. The law provokes (8).
 3. The law condemns (9).
 4. The law kills (10-11).
 - B. Our problem is us, not the law (12).
 1. It is holy.
 2. It is just.
 3. It is good.
 - II. The second question a legalist must address – Did the law fail? (13)
 - A. The law reveals the sinfulness of sin.
 - B. The law brings us to despair.
 - C. The law prepares us for new life in Christ.
- Make It Personal: What should we do with the law?
1. Know it.
 2. Realize we have died to it.
 3. Put your total trust in Christ who has fulfilled it.

Scripture Memory Song: Psalm 9:10

Current Series: “*The Struggle Within – An Exposition of Romans 7*”

I read an interesting confession this week from a man who said, “*I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.*” If you didn’t know better, you might think that the person who said those words was sitting in an AA meeting, and that he was frustrated and hopeless. Not so. This person was an apostle who happened to be penning one of the most important letters in the New Testament. And he wasn’t frustrated either, nor hopeless, for he was one of the most joyful people you’d ever meet. But his joy was rooted in reality, not fantasy.

Why is it that we so often fail to do the good things we intend to do in a day and end up doing the bad things we didn’t intend to do? Some people play vocabulary games at this point. Like the man I worked with on the sub-assembly line at the Honda motorcycle factory in Marysville, Ohio.

I was about twenty years old, working a summer job to make enough money to return to Cedarville in the fall, and met this man who told me he hadn’t sinned in seven years. When I asked for clarification, he repeated. Not one sin in seven years. Maybe a mistake now and then, but no sins.

This man didn’t have a struggle within, like I did and still do. That’s what he told me. He no longer sinned. It’s interesting that our co-workers in the factory didn’t agree with his self-assessment.

This was my first encounter with perfectionism, a belief held by several denominations in the “holiness” movement. There are variations of this theology, but basically it says that receiving Christ isn’t enough. We need a second work of grace

^{**}Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a look at a parallel passage, see Mark 4:1-20 in the Mark series in 2004 and in 2022.

which occurs when we receive the Holy Spirit, usually accompanied by tongues-speaking, and when that occurs, we move to a higher level of spirituality.

But the theology just isn't true. How do I know that? Because the man who wrote half of the books in the New Testament says it isn't true. He is the one who penned the passage before us about the struggle within.

The Struggle Within. That's what we're calling our series this month. Our text is Romans 7 which addresses this powerful, universal struggle, first theologically, and then personally.

To begin, let's go back to the foundation we laid last week in a message entitled "*Legalism Is No Match for the Struggle Within.*" We learned from Romans 7:1-6 that we must think carefully about three subjects pertaining to the law, and if we do, it will prevent us from moving into legalism and more importantly, enable us to experience the power of the gospel in our daily struggle.

First, according to verse 1 we must think carefully about the believer's relationship to the law. For centuries God's chosen people lived according to the law that God had given them at Sinai. Must we? Do we need to abstain from pork, and never mix fabrics in our clothes, and sacrifice animals on an altar in Jerusalem, as God's law stipulates? No. Why not? Because the law no longer binds us if we're in Christ. Why not? Because a death has occurred, and death cancels all contracts.

How do we know that? Here's how. Secondly, in verses 2-3 we are encouraged to think carefully about marriage. Why marriage? Because marriage is a perfect illustration of this reality. Marriage is for life. Till death do us part, says the law. But if a woman's spouse dies, is she still bound by the marriage law? No. She is free to remarry if she so chooses.

This brings us to Paul's third point in verses 4-6. We must think carefully about the implications that pertain to legalism. Legalism says that we still need the law. Do we? Paul says, no. A death has occurred. Verse 4 says, "You have died to the law through the body of Christ." Verse 6 says we are "released from the law, having died to that which held us captive." To put it simply, we are in a new relationship now.

We used to be married to the law, but now we are married to Christ and belong to Him. We used to be in the flesh and produced fruit unto death, but now we're in Christ and He enables us to bear fruit for God. We used to be under the law's authority, but now we're under the Lordship of the One who said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me," and who then said, "Go make disciples, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (Matthew 28:18-20)."

So we no longer live under the written code of old covenant laws. Christ fulfilled that law. Christ bore the penalty we deserve to pay for our violation of that law. Christ delivered us from the bondage of those laws. Christ set us free to serve in His Spirit, to keep His commands. Yes, we are free to serve, not sin.

It matters how we think. Now if you're thinking carefully, you might be asking some questions. Such as, so is the law bad? Is that why it's no longer necessary? It's this very question that Paul addresses in today's text. Let's read it and ponder it in a message entitled, "*Dealing with the Objections of a Legalistic Heart.*"

Scripture Reading: Romans 7:7-12

In his book *Seasons of Life* Chuck Swindoll tells the story about two congregations that were located only a few blocks from each other in a small community.

They thought it might be better if they would merge and become one united body, rather than two struggling churches. The idea had merit, but they couldn't pull it off. Why not? They couldn't agree on how they would recite the Lord's Prayer. One group wanted "forgive us our trespasses" while the other demanded "forgive us our debts." So the newspaper reported that one church went back to its trespasses while the other returned to its debts!

Then Swindoll observed, "Such silly skirmishes would be hilarious if they weren't so prevalent--and damaging. It's one thing to stand firm in major issues clearly set forth in Scriptures. It's another thing to pick fights over jots and tittles. I never cease to be amazed at how petty we Christians can be over things that really don't amount to a hill of beans in the final analysis."²

Nit-picking is a problem for many of us, but especially for the legalist. Legalism is the belief that I can become holy and please God by obeying laws. Legalism measures spirituality by a list of do's and don'ts (and the list is very subjective). Frankly, I admire the motivation of the legalist (at least many of them). Many are motivated by a desire to please God, and to get rid of sin that displeases God. To accomplish this, however, they add their own laws to God's in order to produce godliness.

For instance, God says that we are to abstain from sexual immorality (1 Thes 4:3). But that's too vague for a legalist so he adds to it. "Good Christians must never own a television, nor go to movies in the theater, and should never wear shorts in public. Why not? Because these actions may contribute to sexual immorality."

The aim of the rules is to produce godliness. Will it work? It will not. Why not? Because such an approach to the Christian life is based on an inaccurate view of the law.

At this point, a person who is a legalist is ready to jump up and object to this "Christian" approach to the law. Paul knows that. That's why under the Holy Spirit's direction he raised and addresses two questions in verses 7-13.

I. The first question a legalist must address – Is the law sin? (7-12)

Why would that question need attention? It's obvious, isn't it? It goes back to what we just saw in verses 1-6. We just learned something very radical about the law, namely that we have died to the Mosaic Law (the "written code" or AV "letter" as Paul refers to it in verse 6). How can this be? For fourteen centuries, ever since God gave the law to Moses at Sinai, the Israelites had lived under its jurisdiction. But then Christ made the staggering claim that He had fulfilled the law (Matthew 5:17), and later He gave His followers a *new* commandment in John 13:34, to "love one another". Now in Romans 7:4 Paul goes so far as to say that Christians have become dead to the law through Christ.

In fact, the point of Romans 1-5 is that we are justified apart from the law, and Romans 6-8 reveals we are sanctified apart from the law too. Does that mean there was something wrong with the Law?

Consider something else. In Romans 6, we learn that the believer has died to sin (6:2), and in Romans 7 we learn the believer has died to the law (7:4). Does that mean that sin and the law are equal? Is the law sin?

We find the answer in verse 7. Paul begins, "What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means!" As the AV puts it, God forbid." Paul says, "If you think I'm implying there's something wrong with the law, you've missed my point. The law is not

² *Seasons of Life*, p. 286.

our problem.” As he’ll say later, the law is good. What then is our problem? Our problem is twofold according to verses 7-12.

A. Our problem is sin, not the Law (7-11). In fact, Paul is careful to show us in verses 7-11 that the law is very efficient in what it does. It accomplishes exactly what God designed it to do, namely four activities.

1. *The Law reveals (7).* Notice the next statement in verse 7, “Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin.” Stop there. That’s interesting. The law makes sin known.

But wait. We have a conscience, don’t we? And doesn’t our conscience tell us when something is sinful? It can. But a conscience must be trained.

I saw an example of this Wednesday evening. Sherry and I were sitting in Bob Evans and noticed a piece of paper on the wall right by our table that said, “Do not write on the wall.” Interesting, I thought. I wonder why that sign is there. And as I looked more closely at the wall, I understood. I could see faint scribble marks that someone had tried to remove. Doesn’t a child know that he’s not supposed to write on walls in restaurants? Apparently, he didn’t. But now he does. If he can read.

The law puts sin in black and white terms. It defines sin. Take it a step further. The law reveals sin, but that doesn’t make it sin. Do we say that an x-ray machine is diseased just because it reveals disease inside the body? No, that would be illogical, as Harrison points out.³ So it is with the law. God’s law is like a mirror that reveals the inner man and shows each of us how dirty we really are on the inside.

To make this point even clearer, Paul picks one particular law to show how the law reveals sin. He says at the end of verse 7, “For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, ‘You shall not covet.’”

Paul is quoting the last of the ten commandments which are recorded in Exodus 20:17 and repeated in Deuteronomy 5:21. Don’t miss this. Paul is quoting the centerpiece of the law, the decalogue itself. Why did he choose the tenth commandment? Why not the one dealing with murder or adultery or bearing false witness? Because this commandment is different from the other nine in that it deals, not just with an external action, but with an internal action, something that’s happening in the heart.⁴

The AV says, “For I had not known lust.” Can you see lust? No. You can see what it produces. You can see the man staring at his phone, or the woman at the fashion magazine, or the teen at his friend’s car. But you can’t see the heart. The word means “passionate longing.” That’s what coveting is. A longing in one’s heart for something.

Fame. Money. Sex. A wife that respects me. A husband that appreciates me. Parents who listen to me. A boss that acknowledges the work I do. Nothing wrong with any of these desires. Until the line is crossed. As has been said, “When a good thing becomes a god thing, that’s a bad thing.”

Think of it this way. Coveting is one sin that other people can’t see in us, but God can. And He wants us to see it, for our own good. That’s why He gave the law. The law exposes the dangers of a covetous heart.

Think of the rich young ruler in Mark 10. Here is a man who was very moral outwardly, but he is ignoring his sinful condition on the inside. What does Jesus do? He used the law to reveal the man’s true condition. After the man had boasted that he had

³ See Harrison, p. 78.

⁴ Observation by Wiersbe, p. 535, and others.

obeyed all kinds of laws since childhood, Jesus told him to go sell his goods and share with the poor. Why? Because that would save him? No way. Jesus used the law to reveal to this man his sinfulness. Here was a man who could say, "I've never stolen. I've never committed adultery. I've never dishonored my parents." Yet the command "You shall not covet" revealed to him what a sinner he really was. Sadly, instead of admitting his sin and repenting, he left the Savior more lost in his sins than ever.

This is the first function of the law. The law reveals our sinfulness.

2. *The Law provokes* (8). Verse 8 says, "But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead."

I need to point out something at this point. What type of pronoun is Paul using here? Up until now in Romans, the apostle has mainly used third person and second person pronouns ("they, he, you") and occasionally a first person plural ("we"). But beginning in verse 7 to the end of the chapter, he uses the first person singular ("I, me"). Don't miss this.

There is considerable debate as to who Paul has in mind when he uses the first person singular. There are seven different interpretations in Cranfield's commentary!⁵ Is he talking about his present Christian experience? Is he describing his pre-Christian life? Is he using "I" in the general sense to refer to a typical Jewish person, or in the general sense to refer to the typical Christian?

I think Paul is describing his own present experience, but we'll address that question more next time. For now, notice how intense Paul's language is. He says that sin *produced in me all kinds of covetousness*. This is a personal battle. Paul personifies sin and says that sin produced coveting inside of him by means of the law.

Wait a minute. How does the law provoke us to commit sin? Think of it this way. Do you want to know a sure way to get spots on a mirror? Take that mirror, put it in the hallway next to the children's Sunday School classes, with a sign next to it that says, "Do not touch this mirror if you are under 12 years of age."

A rule is merely an invitation for a most children. And for adults too.

If I posted a rule this morning that said, "All members of WBC must attend our Wednesday evening service," you'd rightfully say, "That's going too far. What if the Lord gives me an opportunity to share the gospel with my neighbor on Wednesday evening? Or if I'm working overtime, or I'm sick?"

And you're right. A rule isn't the best approach. Not only does it not work, it just provokes. The better approach is a question. Everyone, answer this. What am I *wanting* on Wednesday evenings? If I'm wanting to please the Lord, to learn about Him, to grow in Him, to pray for His people and encourage His people, then I'll probably want to give serious thought to leaving my comfortable house and heading to the church house on Wednesday evenings at seven. Unless He gives me a better way to glorify Him on Wednesday evenings, which I should obviously *want to do*.

The point is, the law (a rule) provokes. Paul uses an interesting word here. The word "opportunity" in the ESV and NIV in verses 8 and 11 [AV "occasion"]. In the original this is a military term meaning "base of operations." That's what the law is, a base, a springboard from which sin is ready to take off (as Harrison puts it)⁶. Interesting,

⁵ See Cranfield, p. 156.

⁶ Harrison, p. 80.

isn't it? Do you know where sin sets up camp in its war against us? In the plot of land known as the law.

The law provokes sin, again not just for children either. As an adult driving down the road in your car, what's your first reaction when you see a sign that says, "Reduce speed to 45 mph"? My first thought is, "Why should I? That's for those careless drivers. I'm a careful driver at 55 mph."

Why do we instinctively resist the law? According to Romans 8:7, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be (AV)."

Warren Wiersbe is right when he says, "Believers who try to live by rules and regulations discover that their legalistic system only arouses more sin and creates more problems."⁷ Case in point, the Galatian church. Some of the members were very legalistic, and it caused all sorts of internal problems, so much so that Paul warned them in Galatians 5:15, "But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another."

Their legalism didn't make them more spiritual. It made them more sinful. Do you know why? Because the law provokes. It arouses sin, but lacks the power to cure its problem.

Listen to the St Helens Bishopsgate commentator, "Although the Law and sin are different things, sin makes use of the Law. But apart from the Law, sin is powerless; Paul even describes it as dead. When sin is confronted with God's Law, however, it revives. It now knows which laws to break, which lines to cross, and so produces every kind of rebellious inclination in the individual."⁸

This is what God intends the law to do. Four activities. We've seen the first two thus far. The Law reveals our sinfulness, and it also provokes sin.

3. *The Law condemns* (9). In verse 9 Paul says, "I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died."

When Paul? When did this happen? Some feel Paul is thinking back to his childhood days before his Jewish bar mitzvah, before he was aware of the full sway of God's commands. But when the commandment came, when he learned what God's law said, sin revived. Sin came to life, and then he died. Oh, he was dead, but now he felt dead.

R. C. Sproul preached on this passage and I find his explanation helpful.⁹ He says, "We were amateurs in sin. Sin, for the most part, was sleeping until the law came along and awakened that sleeping giant and filled us with the horrible resolve of wickedness."

Sproul continues, "Paul is using difficult metaphors: 'I was at peace. I was happy. I was getting along fine without the law. When the law was asleep, my conscience was clear. I was having a good time. I was being one of the guys. I didn't go to sleep at night wallowing in guilt. I was happy. As long as the law was kept away from me, I was alive. I was having a great time. But when the law came, sin was revived, and I died.'"

Then Sproul brings home the point, "When the law came, Paul says, that joyous living without guilt, without remorse, without ruining my behavior—I was feeling great,

⁷ Warren Wiersbe, p. 536.

⁸ St Helens Bishopsgate, *Romans: Read, Mark, Learn*, p. 135.

⁹ <https://learn.ligonier.org/sermons/sins-advantage-law>

and then I died when the law revived sin in me.” Do you relate to that? Think back to your pre-Christian days. Were you overburdened by a sense of sin and guilt? Not until the Holy Ghost brought His conviction on you, quickened your conscience, and made you alive to the law did you feel for the first time in your life the weight of your guilt. That is what drove you to Christ. That is what gave you a new life, a life of the Spirit.¹⁰

Look closely at that final statement in verse 8 which says, “Apart from the law, sin lies dead.” That sounds strange, doesn't it, to say that apart from the law, sin is dead. Then why did God give it? If sin is dead without the law, wouldn't we be better off if God had not given it? The answer is no. Why not? Because without the law we still would have been condemned, but we would have been ignorant of our condition.

Let me illustrate. Suppose in the last six weeks I lost thirty pounds, developed sores on my body that didn't heal, and started having severe abdominal pain. If I didn't have a medical book to tell me that those are the symptoms of cancer, would it mean I didn't have cancer? Certainly not. Does not knowing what the book says change the truth of my condition? No.

Does not knowing what God's book says change the truth of my sinful condition? No. As a sinner, I am condemned whether I know what the law says about my condition or not.

By the way, what about the native in Papua New Guinea who has never heard the Word of God? Is he condemned in his sin, or does his ignorance of God's law excuse him? And what about the people that lived on this planet before God gave the law in the fifteenth century BC? Were they guilty of sin? Yes.

Listen to Romans 5:12–13, “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—¹³ for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law.” Sin is not counted, reckoned, considered to be sin by the sinner, not by God. Without the law, he's a sinner and guilty, but he lacks the full understanding of his predicament.

Were people wicked before the Law? Genesis 6:5 says they were. Were they guilty? Yes, that's why God judged the earth with a flood. And they knew they were wicked, too. How? God has given each person a conscience. There's a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man, a voice that gnaws at us and whispers to us that something is wrong. And what our conscience whispers, the law shouts, “You are guilty in the eyes of a holy God!”

One more. The Law reveals, provokes, condemns, and *kills*.

4. *The Law kills (10-11)*. We see this in verses 10-11, “The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me.¹¹ For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.”

It slew me, says the AV. For the wages of sin is death. The soul that sins shall die (Ezekiel 18:20). The law kills.

In his *Confessions*, Augustine shares about an experience in his life which reveals how the Law gives occasion for sin. Barclay relates the account:

There was a pear tree near our vineyard, laden with fruit. One stormy night we rascally youths set out to rob it and carry our spoils away. We took off a huge load of pears--not to feast upon ourselves, but to throw them to the pigs, though

¹⁰ <https://learn.ligonier.org/sermons/sins-advantage-law>

we ate just enough to have the pleasure of forbidden fruit. They were nice pears, but it was not the pears that my wretched soul coveted, for I had plenty better at home. I picked them simply in order to become a thief. The only feast I got was a feast of iniquity, and that I enjoyed to the full. What was it that I loved in that theft? Was it the pleasure of acting against the law, in order that I, a prisoner under rules, might have a maimed counterfeit of freedom by doing what was forbidden, with a dim similitude of importance. The desire to steal was awakened simply by the prohibition of stealing."¹¹

This is what the law does. It reveals, provokes, condemns, and in the end, it kills. But our real problem is not the law. It's sin.

Suppose I went to the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility this morning and asked an inmate, "Why are you here?" If the fellow said, "Because of the Law!" would he be right? In one sense, yes, and in another no. Is the law to blame for his imprisonment? Did the law make him pull out his gun, enter the convenience store, and rob the cashier? No. The law convicted him and sentenced him, so in that sense the law did put him behind bars, but the truth is he is in prison because he committed a crime. He can't blame the law. He has no one to blame but himself for his situation.

And this brings us to Paul's second conclusion. First, our problem is sin, not the law.

B. Our problem is us, not the Law (12). In verse 12 Paul says, "So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good." Verse 12 is actually rather shocking. After learning about the revealing, provoking, condemning work of the law, we may be prone to see it in a negative light. We shouldn't, says Paul, for the fact is that the law is good. Paul uses three adjectives to describe the law in verse 12.

1. *It is holy.* Like God is. It's unique, one of a kind, in a class all by itself. The Law reveals in black and white terms the holy expectations of a holy God. The law is holy, and so is God's commandment.

2. *It is just.* The ESV says "righteous." The law reveals the righteousness of God.

3. *It is good.* That is, it was intended for man's benefit.

Here is a great paradox. On the one hand, the law is a wonderful thing. It is holy, just/righteous, and good. But on the other hand, the law leads to our demise. It's through the same law that we discover what sin is and sin gets the victory over us. How can that be? The problem is not with the law, but with us. God's law says, "Do this and you shall live (Leviticus 18:5)." But that's our problem. We can't keep it. And this is why you and I need a Savior, someone who can keep law for us.

There's another question that needs attention. First, is the law sin?

II. The second question a legalist must address – Did the law fail? (13)

You'll notice that Paul asks and then answers another question in verse 13, "Did that which is good, then, bring death to me?" There's the question. And here's his answer, "By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure [AV 'exceedingly sinful']."

¹¹ Augustine's Confessions, as related by W. Barclay, p. 96.

What's the issue here? It's this. If we are doomed because of God's law, should we conclude that the law failed? Absolutely not. The law didn't fail. Indeed, it actually succeeds in accomplishing three outcomes, just as God intended.

A. The Law reveals the sinfulness of sin. Notice the purpose clause at end of verse 13. What did God's commandment do? The ESV says "sinful beyond measure". The NIV and NASB say "might become utterly sinful." The law is like a neon sign that exposes the sinfulness, the wretchedness of our sin. Far from failing, every time I look into God's law, I see the sinfulness of my sin.

B. The Law brings us to despair. The neon sign of the law flashes constantly, "God is holy, but I am not. God is holy, but I am not." Every time I read a command of God, I shutter when I realize I've missed the mark. As verse 13 puts it, "But sin...works death in me."

Don't misunderstand. The Law didn't fail. God's Law is good. It accomplished the purpose for which God gave it. It revealed the holy standard of a holy God. It drives us to despair. It brings us to the end of our rope. It plunges the dagger through the foolish notion, "I'm OK. I'm a pretty good guy." The Law reveals the tragic truth about us so we'll cry out, "Lord, save me! I'm a sinner!"

C. The law prepares us for new life in Christ. I know it's jumping ahead in the text, but I can't stop at verse 13. We find the solution in Romans 7:24–25, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"²⁵ 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."

Make It Personal: What should we do with the Law?

Does the Law have value? Yes, not to save us, but to lead us to the Savior. So we should do three things with the Law.

1. Know it.

We live in a generation that doesn't know God's Law, and if we don't know God's Law, we won't know why we need a Savior. Today the gospel has been watered down to the least common denominator, and what is commonly called the gospel is little more than a man-centered, easy-believism.

Listen. We need to know the Law. If you are a sinner, the Law is what will bring you to despair and then in turn bring you to Christ. If you are a Christian, the Law will remind you of your own spiritual bankruptcy before God. We need to know the Law.

Question--How much time do you spend studying the Bible? Are you growing in your knowledge of the whole counsel of God's Word, including the Law? Having said that, the next thing we must do will sound contradicting.

2. Realize we have died to it.

That's what v 4 says. We don't live under the Mosaic Law. We live under the new covenant. Thank God for it.

Herein lies the fallacy of the legalist. He wants to go back and live under old covenant terms. Beloved, we have died to the Law. We are free in Christ! Don't go back! Don't reduce the Christian life to a list of rules.

3. Put your total trust in Christ who has fulfilled it.

Being dead to the Law isn't the same thing as lawlessness. We are free from the Law, so that we might follow Christ Who has fulfilled the Law.

There's one more question that needs to be addressed. In light of the fact that the Law condemns us, you might be thinking, "I don't think that's fair and just. Why would God be so harsh to give us a Law, and then condemn us by it?" Listen, the real question isn't, "Why is God harsh?" but "Why is God so patient?" If God did what was fair and just, then one sin committed by one person would give the Holy sinless Creator just cause to destroy His entire creation. If we want to talk about "fairness" and "justice," that's the truth. Thank God He doesn't deal with us solely on the basis of His justice! In His love and mercy, He postpones His judgment. In His grace, He patiently is calling a people out of sin to Himself--not through the Law, but through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Future messages:

7:13-20 "*An Honest Confession about the Struggle Within*"

7:21-25 "*Winning the War Within*"

Closing Song: #404 "*The Solid Rock*" (all four verses)

This evening: Scioto Hills Camp review – celebrating what God has done this summer!

Include this paragraph next time...?

Who is this man in Romans 7 that says *the good I want to do I don't do and the evil I don't want to do I keep doing*? There are many views. Some look at Paul's statement in Romans 6:6 ("We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.") and conclude Paul can't be talking about himself in Romans 7. I read St Helen's Bishopsgate commentary which gives a couple of examples. "Stott's solution is to suggest that Paul is imagining he were an Old Testament believer who is regenerate, but who does not yet know anything of the indwelling Spirit and so struggles as he tries and fails to live according to the Law (Stott, pp. 205-10). Moo concludes that Paul is looking back, with his Christian understanding, upon his own plight and that of the Jews, all of them living under the Law (Moo, pp. 443-51). Neither commentator, however, takes account of the tension that exists between the inner being and the outer flesh."¹²

¹² St Helens Bishopsgate, *Romans: Read, Mark, Learn*, p. 134.