

Entangled in Sin # 22

Romans 7: 7-13

Our text today reveals the benefit of verse by verse exposition through particular passages or books in the Bible. This is a passage that would easily be passed over if we were not committed to looking at the book of Romans in a complete study. Although these are challenging verses to discern, they will prove beneficial in our spiritual lives.

Paul begins to discuss, from a very personal perspective, his spiritual journey. The passage we have read today deals with his life prior to salvation, and the remainder of the chapter addresses the struggles he continues to face even though he has been born again. Prior to meeting Christ on the Damascus Road and being converted from sin, Paul sought to obtain salvation through adhering to the law and the strict lifestyle of the Pharisees. His efforts were unsuccessful because the law only served to condemn his sin, not provide atonement and reconciliation. Paul had to come to the end of himself and trust the Lord alone for salvation.

I am sure each of us can relate to the experiences of Paul in the text. I want to examine the [truths](#) he shares as we consider: [Entangled in Sin](#).

I. The Exposure of Sin (7) – [What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.](#) Paul had spent much time revealing the inadequacy of the law to save. He taught that sin was not atoned by the law, but that men are condemned by the law. Apart from a saving relationship in Christ, we remain dead in our sin, condemned of God according to the law.

- Since the law could not save, but served to reveal and condemn sin, some assumed the law itself was sinful or evil. They saw no benefit in the law whatsoever. Paul reveals that such thinking and doctrine is nonsense to be refuted. [God forbid!](#) May it never be said that the law of God is sinful.
- Paul continues by revealing the actual benefit of the law: [it exposes our sin and reveals the need for salvation](#). Paul was thankful for the law even though it condemned him. He declares he would never have known sin or realized his sinful condition had it not been for the law. He would never have known lust was sinful if the law had not commanded us not to covet.
- Many today seek to ignore sin, or rationalize it because so many embrace it, but God has not changed His mind or His holy standard. As we learned in Chapter one, we are without excuse. God has revealed Himself to us through His grand creation and the written Word. The Word of God exposes sin in the hearts of men! None can claim ignorance regarding sin.

II. The Enticement of Sin (8) – *But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.* Here we find an interesting thought concerning the law of God and sin. We must never forget the subtle nature of Satan and his determination to use any means to entice us in sin. Sin takes *occasion* by the commandments. This is better understood when we realize the word *occasion* literally means “*an opportunity*.” It has the idea of “*a starting or reference point in an expedition*.” Sin seeks to distort the law in an effort to create an opportunity for us to sin. The enemy tries to use the very tool by which God reveals our sin to entice us to engage in sin.

- As we look further in the text, we discover the damage that results from the enticement to sin. Through the opportunities sin presented, Paul admits he engaged in all manner of concupiscence. This is an interesting word that means “*to long for that which is forbidden; to desire of lust after*.” Paul shares that Satan uses that which is forbidden, or off limits to us, to create a desire in us for that which we should not partake.
- When we consider it, this makes perfect sense. What is the easiest way to get a child to do something? Tell them not to and they will be determined to do so. How many times have children been burned immediately after being instructed not to touch something that was hot? Something in our nature compels us to see for ourselves, mainly because we were told not to. Have you ever seen a sign: WET PAINT, DO NOT TOUCH? How many of you just had to touch it and see? The same is true within our sinful nature spiritually. There is an inward desire, obtained through our sinful birth that desires that which is forbidden.
- *For without the law sin was dead.* Let’s consider this statement before we move on. This does not imply that sin was nonexistent prior to the giving of the law. We know sin was in the world since Adam sinned in the garden. This further confirms what Paul has been saying. Prior to his knowledge of the law, he did not fully understand the depth of his sin. He did not realize the magnitude of his sin or his need for salvation until it was revealed by the law.

III. The Entrapment of Sin (9-11) – Paul speaks of the dangers of following the desires of the flesh and actively engaging in sin. Sooner than later, you will become entrapped by your sin.

- *V.9 – For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.* Paul speaks of the time in his life where he sought righteousness through adhering to the law. There could be no doubt Paul was a zealous defender of the law and sought to live in strict adherence to it. He was a Pharisee of Pharisees. None would have been considered more worthy among the devout Jews than Paul. Although Paul was willing to adhere to the law in all manner of outward practice, he never considered the deeds within the heart. Upon realizing that his inward desires were just as condemning as his outward displays of righteousness, he died. In essence he

came to the sobering reality that righteousness was not obtained through works of the flesh or keeping the law of God.

We too need to come to the same realization. Prior to the convicting power of the Spirit, we live our lives to please ourselves. Being honest, the flesh enjoys the pleasure of sin. However, once we are confronted by the Holy Spirit and shown our need, we are devastated. We realize how futile our attempts at obtaining genuine righteousness really are. We feel condemned, alone, and afraid. As uncomfortable as this condition is, it is beneficial. Until we realize our need for Christ, we will never look to Him by faith in salvation.

➤ **V.10 – And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.** Paul had spent years in pride and feeling great accomplishment, but he realized all his efforts were in vain. Rather than being counted righteous through the law, he discovered he was condemned by the law and lost before God. All his works had not accomplished anything of value concerning his spiritual standing with the Lord. **Eph.2:8-9 – For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ^[9] Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

➤ **V.11 – For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.** Satan had used the law of God to entice Paul into sin. He had lived his life believing all was well between him and God, but he came to the startling reality that he was dead in sin. His works had not provided life, but kept him bound in dead religious deeds. All his work had been in vain!

IV. The Evaluation of Sin (12-13) – As Paul concluded sharing the images of his past, he offers an honest evaluation of sin and the futility of seeking righteousness through the law.

➤ **V.12 – Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.** While some argued the law was sinful and evil, Paul argued the opposite is true. God's law, given in His Word, is holy, just, and good. It does serve to condemn our sin, but it also points us to Christ. Many do not like the Word of God because it convicts. It discerns the thoughts and intents of our hearts. It is a two-edged sword that cuts going and coming.

We live in a day where many view the Word as some did in Paul's day. Many claim that God's Word is the problem; that it is outdated and archaic, no longer relevant for our day. The holy standard of God has never been, nor ever will be the problem. The sinful and deceitful hearts of men is where the problem lies. Our society wants to live as they please with no accountability or challenge to their depraved nature! The Word doesn't need to be silenced or hidden, but embraced and proclaimed to a world that desperately needs to hear!

➤ V.13 – Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. Paul refutes the arguments that God’s law and His Word had created a negative impact on his life or hurt him in some way. Just the opposite was true. Although it was uncomfortable to examine his heart as revealed by the law, by doing so Paul realized his need. Satan had used the law to entice Paul to sin, but he was thankful that his eyes were opened to the truth and he saw sin for what it was. The law had exposed his sin, laying bare his iniquity, but it had also pointed him to a loving Savior who purchased his redemption as He bled and died on the cross.

I will admit that conviction is not comfortable, but I am thankful for godly conviction. I am glad the Lord loved me so much that He refused to allow me to continue in sin without confronting sin in my life. Had I never been convicted I would have never realized my need for Christ. Had I never realized my need, I would have never been saved. Through His gracious mercy, God provided the means of my salvation and opened my eyes to the truth!

Conclusion: I am sure that everyone here can relate to the testimony of Paul in this passage. We have all experienced the same issues in our lives. We were all born in sin and stood in need of salvation as he did. In our next study, Paul will deal with the struggles he faces now, after his conversion. He did not live a perfect life, but he did live a forgiven life. I am glad I can identify with that as well.

Have you responded to the call of God in salvation? The truth has been shared today and I am sure if you are unsaved, you are aware of your need. Why not come to Jesus in repentance and faith so that you too can be delivered from sin and death?