

Sin That Dwelleth in Me

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Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

[0 : 0 0] Welcome to our service this morning as we come together to worship God. We look to Him to place our time together. For those who are visitors with us, we sing from the metrical version of the service. And we're going to begin our service singing from Psalm 32. Psalm 32. We're singing from the beginning to the double verse marked 5. Psalm 32. O blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned. All the transgression he hath done whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin, and in his spirit there is no guile nor fraud is found therein. But as I did refrain my speech, and silent was my tongue, my bones then walked stoned, because I roared all day long. For upon me both day and night thine hand did heavy lie, so that my moisture turned days in summer's drought therein. I thereupon have unto thee my sin acknowledged, and likewise mine iniquity I have not covered. I will confess unto the Lord my trespasses, said I, and of my sin, though freely didst, forgive the iniquity. Psalm 32, verses 1 to 5. O blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned. O blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned. O blessed is the man to whom be forgiven. O blessed is the man to whom is freely pardoned. O blessed is the man to whom is

Amen. And in your spirit, you guide, Nor through the sun, and then, When, as I did, repay my seat, And silence was my turn,

My bones and hearts alone, Because I wrote it not to you long, Father, Paul, we would be at night, Dein Hand get there in line, So that my moisture-carbages And summer's flood thereby, I then upon the heart unto thee,

My sense of knowledge is dead, And light was mine in equity, I have not covered it, I will confess unto the Lord, My trespass is said I, And of my sin the disobedience, Forgive the iniquity.

Let us join together in prayer. Let us pray. Ever-blessed God, As we come into your presence, With the voices raised in unison, Praising your name, And seeking your face and favour, As you are the hearer of our worship, You are the hearer and answerer Of our prayers, As they are offered publicly, Collectively, And secretly.

[6 : 0 4] We are in your sight always, There is not a moment of our human experience, Where the eye of the all-seeing God is upon us, Is not upon us, And yet, Not only is your eye upon us, As to our external activities, But also, You are the God who looks upon us, So as to look upon our very soul, Your eye is able to search the heart, And you are able to discern The workings of our innermost beings, The thoughts and the intents, We can hide these from others, And very often,

This is the kind of lives that we lead, And we see it demonstrated, In the public domain, Where in politics, And in the affairs of men in general, They speak some truth, Or some words that are projected as truth, And yet their purposes are very much different, To what they declare openly, They have machinations, That are hidden from the sight of others, And yet, They are not hidden from your sight, And we do well to remember, That such a God is our God, A God who is so gracious to us, Despite the way we deport ourselves,

So we come with confession, As your servant of old, Came with confession, He confessed his sin, And he believed that, With confession, Came forgiveness, And we do confess our sins, As we should, Always do, When we come before you, That we would acknowledge, That our fallenness, Means that we cannot escape, From the sinfulness, That marks us out, As the race of Adam, We acknowledge our guilt, Because your servant of old, Described to us, The extent of, Of the fall, That affected, All areas of our lives, From our first parents,

To the present day, So we remember, Our needs in your presence, And seek your help, In order to help us overcome, Whatever our circumstances, May be, As we confess our sins, We give thanks, That through your word, We are directed to Christ, Who is one, Who came into the world, To deal with sin, He is described in your word, As the sin bearer, The one who offered, A sacrifice for sin, And we give thanks, For the perfections, Of that sacrifice, That his sacrifice, That his sacrifice, Was willingly given, And that his obedience, Was perfect, And that you acknowledge that, Even in taking him, To be at your right hand, Where he continues, To intercede for his people, As their great high priest, We commit to you,

All who are, Of that number today, Not only those, Who are present here, For whom we are thankful, For all who have come to, Experience what it is, To believe, In the Lord Jesus Christ, To the saving, Of their soul, Those who have discovered, Their need of him, And who apply to him, And by reason, Of that application, They experienced, The cleansing power, Of the blood of Christ, Touching every aspect, Of their experience, And they apply, Constantly to that Christ, Even though they have, In their first, Engagement with and by faith, Experienced forgiveness, For sin, Assured that that forgiveness, Is complete, And yet they, Feel the need to come, With their sin, To the same,

[11 : 11] Christ, And to seek, Deliverance from it, So that it won't be, A hindrance to them, In the life that they live, In this world, Seeking to live, For his glory, And we give thanks, That the day will come, When that number, Of, Saints, Will be one, In your presence, And their voice, Will be, In unison, Praising the name, Of the one, Who sits, Upon the throne, As the lamb, That was slain, Before whom, The saints, Will pour out, Their praises, And offer, Their worship, Without any fear, That, They will bring, Into that worship, Anything, That will, That will, Be, Of shame, To them, We, Remember, The church of Christ, Worldwide, And we pray, For all, Who belong to it, Remembering, Especially, Those who are, Persecuted, For their faith,

Those who, Are, Met, Perhaps, Today, In secret, Because, For them, To meet openly, Would mean, Certain death, There are, There are parts, Of the world, For whom, That is true, And we pray, That you would, Deliver them, From harm, And that their word, Your word to them, Would be blessed, And that they would be, Encouraged, And we know, That despite that, Persecution, That there are places, Where, The cause of Christ, Is growing, And, Those who are, Professing, The name of, The Lord, And saviour, Are on the increase, Whereas, We find ourselves, With so many, Opportunities, To do, So many things, Openly, And yet, The, Power of the gospel, Seems to be, On the way, And, The effect, Of the preaching, Of the gospel, Seems to be,

Diminishing, To that end, We commit our service, To you, And ask your blessing, Not only upon ourselves, But on the congregations, Of our island, Our nation, And beyond, So that what is done, In your name, Would yield fruit, And we pray for that, Most, Most, Especially, Thankful, That we can, Bring our cares, And concerns, Before you, Remember those, Amongst us, Who have need, Some who have, Illness, To contend with, Some who are, Caring for those, Who are unwell, And, We pray for those, Who are, Of the, Various professions, That are, Engaged in, Making our life, Easier, Those who are, Doctors, And nurses, And, All members, Of the caring, Professions, While they are, Going in and out, Within the community, As carers, Or, Working, Elsewhere,

We pray for them, Remember all that they, Seek to minister to, We pray for the grieving, And the sorrowful, Thankful that we can, Bring them, And leave them, In your care, You are the God, Of all grace, You understand, What it is, For grief to come, You understand, What it is, For the, Son of man, Came into this world, And he was, In the veil of tears, During the, Lifetime, He lived in the world, He encountered, Face to face, What it meant to others, To be sorrowful, And, He, Bore them, Upon his shoulders, And so he does, Even as the, The one who is, The advocate with the father, We pray, For our nation, We pray for, Our king, And the queen, Their families, We pray for their, Parliaments, The parliament,

That represents them, In Holyrood, On Westminster, We remember, All that is done, By them, Even, Though they are, At this time, On holiday, The role, Of government, Still goes on, And we remember, All engaged in it, We pray that you, Would bring light, Into darkness, And that you would, Bring knowledge, Where there is, Ignorance, That you would, Direct eyes, Towards the one, Who is the only, Wise God, In a world, Where there is, A plethora, Of voices, Raised, Claiming deity, And claiming, Claiming the power, That accompanies it, There is but one God, The only living, And true God, Jehovah, Is your name, And to you, We come, And leave, Our cares, And concerns, With you, Grant mercy, For our sins, And bless us, As we, Meet together,

[16 : 15] For good, Soon, In Jesus name, Amen, Amen, We are going, To sing, Now, Some verses, From Psalm, 119, We are singing, From verse 33, To verse 40, The section, Of Psalm, 119, 33 to 40, Teach me, O Lord, The perfect way, Of thy precepts divine, And to observe it, To the end, I shall my heart incline, Give understanding unto me, So keep thy law, Shall I, Yea, Even with my whole heart, I shall observe it carefully, In thy lost path, Make me to go, For I delight therein, My heart, Up to thy testimonies, And not to greed incline, Turn thou away, My sight and eyes, From viewing vanity, And in thy good, And holy way, Be pleased, To quicken me, And so on,

To verse 40, Teach me, O Lord, The perfect way, Of thy precepts, Divine, Teach me, O Lord, Love and we, With all thy peace, Let's be mine, And to observe it, To the end, I shall my heart incline, Give understanding, And to see, So keep thy law, Shall I,

Yea, Even with my whole heart, I shall observe it, There for thee, And thy lost path, Make me to go, For I delight therein, My heart and earth, Like, Like, As morning's, And not to greed incline, Turn thou away,

My sight and eyes, From beauty and vanity, And in thy good and holy way, If his church with enemy, Confident to me, Thy gracious word, Which I did not leave, Into thy fate, Into thy sap, onry, Frederic,

Dimornry, Adonji, Geo- My fear be closed For who thy judgments be No harm lightly Sets I have long And I hid with your name I'm going to read from the scriptures of the New Testament.

[21 : 15] We're reading Paul's epistle to the Romans on the 7th chapter. Paul's epistle to the Romans, chapter 7. We'll read the whole chapter.

Romans 7 Know ye not, brethren, for I speak to them that know the law, how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he lives.

For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he lives. But if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

So then, if while her husband lives, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress. But if her husband be dead, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

[22 : 32] For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. For I have not known sin, but by the law.

For I have not known sin, but by the law.

For what could death in me by that which is good, that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

For that which I do, I allow not. For what I would, that do I not. But what I hate, that do I.

[24 : 28] If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

For I know that in me. For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. For to will is present with me. But how to perform that which is good, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.

For the good that I would, I do not. But the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that, I would not. It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

[25 : 36] O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So then with the mind, I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. Amen.

And may the Lord, that is blessing to this reading of this word. Let us again sing to God's praise. This time singing from Psalm 85, verse 6.

Psalm 85, verse 6 to the end of the psalm. That in thee may thy people joy.

Wilt thou not us revive? Show us thy mercy. Lord, to us do thy salvation give. I hear what God the Lord will speak.

[26 : 35] To his folk he'll speak peace. And to his sins. But let them not return to foolishness. To them that fear him. Surely near is his salvation.

That glory in our land may have her habitation. Truth met with mercy. Righteousness and peace kissed mutually. Truth springs from earth.

And righteousness looks down from heaven high. Yea, what is good the Lord shall give. Our land shall yield increase. Justice to set us in his steps.

Shall go before his face. We'll sing these verses. Psalm 55, verse 6 to the end. That in thee may thy people joy.

Wilt thou not us revive? That in thee may thy people joy.

[27 : 40] Will thou not us revive? Show us thine hands, say Lord, to us.

Good night shall we kill you. I'll hear what God the Lord will sing.

To this who feels the case. Until it is the light.

And not return to foolishness.

To them that fear him surely near. It is salvation.

[28 : 54] God, Lord, to us. That glory in your land may have. Our habitation.

For who Twin for pak turned out to Ireland.

Come to the fathers, Yes, lift young from heaven high.

If what is good the Lord shall give, our land shall yield increase, just as you said, just as you said, shall go before this is.

Amen. We can turn now to the passage that we were reading together.

[30 : 31] Paul's epistle to the Romans on chapter 7. And we can read at verse 17.

Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Particularly these words, sin that dwelleth in me. Today we can follow the thinking of the apostle in this section of the scriptures.

Because his intention is to encourage those who have come to faith in Christ to appreciate all that is true of them by reason of that relationship that they are in.

When we speak to people about the Lord Jesus, sooner or later the conversation moves away from the Lord Jesus to the church.

[32 : 02] And the church is a far bigger target than the Lord Jesus. The church is something that people find ample evidence in that would suggest that the church is to be avoided at all costs.

It's not as easy to make such an argument with the person of the Lord Jesus. Because when you look at the life of the Lord Jesus and everything that the Bible tells us about him, if you wanted a reason not to be in a relationship with him, it's very hard to find a reason.

A reason that stands or bears sleep to you. Because he is everything that we are not. And yet, in order to deflect the shortcomings of a refusal to believe in the Lord Jesus, attention is focused upon those who profess to believe in him.

And the main reason for that is that the church is full of shortcomings. The church, as I remind you often, is made up of sinners.

Sinful people. That's what is true about the church. Jesus Christ came into the world to seek and to save the lost.

[33 : 48] Because people were destined to go to a lost eternity. Jesus came into the world to seek and to save them. Out of their sin.

Out of the consequences of their sin. I mention that at the outset because what we are going to look at today may surprise many.

That is that Paul is speaking about the reality of sin. In the life of those out of which Christ has taken them.

He has taken them out of sin. He has taken them to himself. So that sin would not be a dominant part of their life.

So in his very closely argued reasoning. He describes to us the privileges that belong to those who are united by faith to Jesus Christ.

[34 : 57] That they are in an indivisible relationship of faith with him. In his death. In his resurrection.

They are justified by that faith. They are adopted into the family of God. And all that is God's doing.

Not their doing. But God's doing. God did it for them and in them. We read for example in his epistle to the Ephesians.

By grace you are saved through faith. And that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. Not of works. Lest any man should boast.

Then he goes on to say. For we, he says, are his workmanship. Created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

[36 : 00] This is God's doing. Earlier on in this very epistle. You could argue that the same truth appears. The same truth that needs to be remembered at all times.

What the Christian is. Is the result of what God has done and goes on doing. In chapter 3, verse 21. But now he says, the righteousness of God without the law is manifested.

Being witnessed by the law and the prophets. Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all. And upon all them that believe.

For there is no difference. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace. Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Whom God sent forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are passed.

[37 : 06] Through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say at this time, his righteousness. That he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

So the believer in Christ is someone who is justified. To have an impeccable righteousness all of their own.

By virtue of what Christ has done for them and in them. And of course, that does not mean as Paul insists that.

Because God has dealt with them as sinners. God has dealt with their sin in the passion of Jesus Christ.

That's what the gospel declares. That sin is no longer an issue that they need worry about.

[38 : 09] There is of course a body of belief that trivializes sin. And does not want to talk about it. Because they say, if your gospel is the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ.

And if that gospel teaches that Christ has dealt with my sin on the cross. Then the law has no longer any relevance to me.

If sin is the breach of the law. And that's what Paul teaches here. And every breach of the law that is attributed to me. Has been dealt with by Christ on the cross.

Then that need not concern me any further. Because my sins surely are no more. They are obliterated virtually by the blood of Jesus Christ.

And there is that belief. There is that teaching. That sin has no longer any consequences for the believer.

[39 : 18] But Paul doesn't believe that. Because Paul is concerned about sin. Even though he is somebody who has believed in Christ to the saving of his soul.

Even though he understands better than most what Christ has done on the cross. He is still concerned by sin and with sin. And that's really what I want us to look at today.

Trying to put it into some kind of context. Without... When you read this chapter. The reasoning of the apostle is so closely argued.

It's difficult at times to follow. And the minutiae of his logical progression is at times difficult to absorb.

But essentially what he is saying is this. That even though the believer in Christ understands and believes and quite rightly so.

[40 : 24] That their sin has been dealt with by Christ. They are still sinners who need to apply to Christ to deal with sin as it is ongoing in their experience.

That's something that's difficult for us to understand. Because I believe that there are people here who are not professing believers.

They look at the church and they look at the Christian and they point to their sins. And they say, there is the Christian.

There is the great hypocrite. I can identify sin in their lives. I can point to their lives and say to them, they are every bit as much guilty of sin as I am.

They may be different sins but they are sins nevertheless. And there they are. They are saying they believe in Christ and yet sin is so obvious in their life.

[41 : 30] It can't be right. It can't be proper. But not only do those who are not Christians come up with that kind of argument.

Those who are Christians themselves, they struggle with this idea that sin has such a strong grip of their thinking and of their walking and of their speaking.

I know that over the last few weeks I have heard people describe their own experience of coming to faith in Jesus Christ.

And having been newly converted, they were persuaded that sin was something that was in the past.

That's what they thought. They honestly believed that on conversion, sin was a thing of the past. It was never again to trouble them.

[42 : 38] And their mind was so convinced of that when they heard old Christians, for example, pray.

And pray sincerely and earnestly before God in public for relief from the besetting sins that were in their life.

Relief from the burden of a corrupt and a bubbling morass of sin that was within them. And she said, there's something wrong with that person.

There's something seriously wrong with that person. How can that person know the same Christ that I have come to know? It can't be.

And I was told this week of somebody who I came to know and respect and who became an elder in the church.

[43 : 37] But when he was newly converted, he went into a neighbor's house where there was an elder there. And he said, oh, he said, it was a shock.

He was sitting there reading the newspaper. Reading the newspaper. And this was him in his newly found relationship with Christ where all the world and all the things the world did were behind him.

And he found the elder sitting reading the Daily Express. But worse than that, he wasn't just reading the Daily Express. He was reading the cartoon page.

He was reading the cartoons. And this man was, he was black to him as soon as he saw that.

But I can tell you who discovered that this grossly sinful behavior was something that was not as severe as he thought it to be.

[44 : 50] Because he discovered worse things in his own heart as he went on in his walk with the Lord. And this really is the issue that Paul is dealing with here.

It's not something that Paul, in any way, shape or form, is excusing. He's not excusing sin.

He's not trivializing sin. He's not dismissing sin as something that is of no consequence. Far from it. But he is recognizing that sin is something that is in the heart of every man, woman and child as long as they live in this world.

Now before we go any further, I can say that this passage in Romans 7 has been explained in two main ways.

The first way is that people believe that the argument that Paul is making here is an argument based upon his past experience.

[46 : 07] What he was before he came to faith. And when he comes to speak these words, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

He is saying, Paul is there speaking words that belong in the heart and mind of the unregenerate man or woman. A person who has yet to come to faith.

A person who has yet to experience the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Because they can't envisage that the apostle would ever in his days make such a declaration, having come to know Jesus.

But the other side of that is that there are those who see what the apostle is saying here. And what the apostle is saying is exactly what the believer must see.

And only because they are believers can they see it. Because only with the sight that faith gives us can sin come fully into view.

[47 : 22] I can tell the unregenerate, the unbeliever, the person who doesn't know Jesus Christ what sin is like. But I don't believe that person will ever see sin for what it is.

Until the eyes of their soul are opened by the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Look at what Paul is saying.

I delight in the law of God after the inward man. Is a person who is an unbeliever capable of saying that?

Is a person who does not know who Jesus is able to say that? If you don't know Jesus today as your Lord.

If you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. As your Savior. Can you say earnestly, honestly, without any shadow of doubt. I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

[48 : 28] I find it impossible to think that a person who is yet to know Christ can say that they love the Lord.

That they love his word. That they love what his law represents. So what then are we to make of what Paul is saying here?

Well, I think what we can say without any question is that Paul is able to speak about sin at first hand.

That might seem obvious, but it has to be said. Paul's understanding of sin comes from an experiential knowledge of it.

And his knowledge of it, accompanied with the grace of God, is such that he knows that sin, essentially, is fatal.

[49 : 37] It's fatal to the sinner. If it's not dealt with. When he says we were in the flesh, the motions of sin which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

He understood for himself that the consequences of sin in his life and in the life of every other person was death.

God had decreed it. God had determined it. God had declared it. God had declared it. And he left no one in any doubt.

Simply because everyone without exception is obliged to keep God's law. Not just to keep it as best as you can, which is what some people are happy to do.

But to keep God's law in its entirety, in all its perfections, without any shortcoming, without any failing, without any bit missed out.

[51 : 02] Because God's law is perfect. And God's law requires perfection. And failure brings condemnation.

And condemnation results in judgment at God's hand. And Paul came to know that for himself. Under the conviction that the Spirit of God brings into the experience of the sinner, the sins are brought home to them.

And that is what was true about him. And for those who are interested, those who are like Paul once was, a legalist.

Like Paul once was, ready to condemn others in the areas of their life that he was willing to expose and to bring to judgment.

He understood for himself that he couldn't partition off people's lives in that way.

[52 : 19] The legalist has no foundation upon which to build because the law reveals that all have sinned and come short of God's glory.

The law, in the hand of the Spirit, exposes.

The law is not only to bring to the people's lives in that way. The law is not only to be able to do that, but the law is not only to be able to do that, but the law is not only to be able to do that. What the law requires. And that's interesting. And it's interesting, and many draw attention to it. That the example that Paul cites is covetousness.

Covetousness. Covetousness. Because covetousness is not something, you know, if you steal something, what you steal, people can see with their eyes.

Something that belongs to somebody else has been taken by you from them. And it doesn't belong to you. If you take somebody's life, you've taken a life that is not yours to take.

[53 : 48] But to covet, if you covet something, who can see your covetousness? Who can see your covetousness?

It's not open to perusal outwardly. Because it's a sin that is mostly in the heart.

But Paul says, if the law had not exposed it, if the law had not brought this covetousness to light, I would have continued in it and I would have remained a sinner.

Earlier on in chapter 3 again he says, Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

As the role of the law brings sin to light, it reinforces God's condemnation of certain behavior. It convinces us of it.

[54 : 54] So what other answer is supplied that is not legalism, but there's antinomianism, which is really dismissing the law, making the law unnecessary, making the law irrelevant.

Take away the law and there's no sin. That's the easy way. Take the law away and, you know, you can think of the laws of the land.

We're obliged to behave in certain ways within our communities, on the road as we drive our cars. Remove the law and there's no breach, there's no brake.

So we're safe from its condemnation. But that's not what the Bible teaches us. That's not what Christ has done.

Yes, the Gospel tells us that Christ, in his grace, has fulfilled all righteousness. He's fulfilled the obligations of the law for us, so that we have no more obligation to the law in order for us to live or to escape death from it.

[56 : 22] But what the law does, nevertheless, it shows the sinner his sins. It reinforces the guilt. And in that sense, Paul insists that the law is holy, that it is just, that it is good, and that it is spiritual.

Go back again to verse 6. He says, Now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

What has changed is our relationship to the law. The law has not been destroyed. The law has not been removed. But our relationship with it has changed.

We are delivered not from its obligations, but we are delivered from its penalty, if we are in Christ. We, as Christians, serve God.

We, as Christians, obey God. When you are born again by the spirit of God, you are born again to a newness of life.

[57 : 38] The Christian commentator, John Murray, in his comments on Romans 7, he says this, The death to the law has been accomplished in the death of Christ and our union with him in his death.

The death to the law. But that does not mean that the law is no longer relevant to the believer.

As spiritual creatures, just as the law is spiritual, they live for God and Christ. You live to serve him. If you look at verse 22 again, which we pointed to, I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

Paul says this as a convert, as a Christian who believes in Jesus Christ. I delight in the law of God. I don't believe that it is through my fulfilling of the law that I have life, but because I have life, I fulfill the law.

It is not the same. Before Paul came to know Christ for himself, he was dead.

[59 : 02] Dead in trespasses and sin. Before he came to know Christ for himself, he had to say, as every other person has to say, no good thing exists within me.

Look at verse 18. I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.

He finds this in his sinful human nature. something that needs to be dealt with, and only by God's grace can it be dealt with.

In Romans 8, he goes on to say, they that are after the flesh to mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace, because the carnal mind is enmity against God.

For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

[60 : 17] That's the whole essence of what Paul is saying. If you are trying to please God by your law works, by doing what the law is requiring you to do, and you understand, and you only understand a little of it, you understand that, and you're doing your best, your best is not ever good enough.

So how is it possible for the believer to bring forth fruit unto God? Which is what they want to do. If you believe in Jesus Christ, this is what you want to be.

You want to be fruitful. You want to be God-pleasing. You want to live a life that will magnify and honour God.

And how can you, when you are confronted with your inability and your shortcomings and weaknesses, while Paul has to deal with that, Paul has to recognise that, and he does in this verse that we're looking at.

There is an understanding that there is indwelling sin. And you have to remember that it's not Paul here, when he talks about sin dwelling in me, he's not looking at the world around him and seeing sin in the world around, although he can.

[61 : 56] The world is... in the grip of sin. It's there everywhere you look. And it's not that he's not unconcerned by what he sees in the world.

But he finds something closer to home. He finds something that concerns him every bit as much, if not more.

That there is a problem that he needs to wrestle with, and that is what he is doing. Indwelling sin. Even while you are walking after the Spirit, even while you are led by the Spirit, even while you understand that your relationship to Christ is different to the relationship that you had with him, before that, you still experience sin in some form or another.

The Puritan writer put it like this on many, many occasions. Sin vexes the believer.

because not only do they discover it where it shouldn't be, but they are also conscious of a constant...

[63 : 27] being constantly the target of Satan's endeavours to make them sin or to make them be what they should not be.

But this is what Paul is saying. Look, you were once in chains to sin. You were once in bondage. You were once in a situation where you could not and did not do what the law wanted you to.

You had no desire to do it. But that has changed. And while it has changed, you still find what he calls a law, which seems strange.

He calls it a law. that there is this in him which has the same power almost as a law.

something that is constantly revealing itself in his heart and in his mind. And he says, he describes it in different ways.

[64 : 38] You know, sometimes I want to do something. God wants me to do something. I know God wants me to do it. But then I find myself distracted.

I find myself taken away from this that I know God wants me to do. You know, if you read about prayer, if you read about the experiences of God's people in prayer, one of these experiences that almost without exception is mentioned by those students of the prayer life of the believer is that the moment they try to engage with God in prayer, almost without exception, there is something that comes between them and fulfilling that desire to pray.

They are no sooner on their knees but that a thought comes almost from nowhere that takes their attention and takes their attention.

You know, prayer, you're talking to God. It's not what you're doing when you pray. You're talking to God. And if you're talking to somebody who's important to you, you think your mind and your mouth would be in unison and you'd be united.

There wouldn't be any distractions that would take you away from it. But the strange thing is, for many believers, they find themselves going into this engagement of prayer with God and before they know it, some other thought comes into their heart and mind and it appears to be such an important thought.

[66 : 31] It appears to be so desperately needful for them to deal with this, to think about this, to try and put this that has come out of nowhere and to in some way give it attention.

But that's, where does that come from? It's that entirely entirely from outside. We can blame the devil and say, yes, this is what you do. It's his work.

He comes to you with other thoughts and he plants them the way a farmer plants a seed in the soil. But it's not just from outside, Paul says.

he says, sin within me. It dwells in me. That word that he uses there that's translated dwelleth means that it's not something that's going away.

It's not something that's fading away. It's not something that's going to disappear through time. It dwelleth in me. It is something that I have to recognize and deal with and engage with and wrestle with so that it doesn't gain the mastery over me.

[67 : 58] Satan held God's people in chains, but they are in chains no more. Sin was something that enslaved them, but they are slaves no more.

God is on the throne. Satan is not the one who is in control of our lives. he is not the one who keeps us enthralled.

Principal Don't McLeod often talked about to us as students how we are to reconcile God's grace with the dealing that we have with indwelling sin.

And he said the following, thank God that in our conversions the dominion of sin has been broken. Our wills have been liberated.

Our God has given us an ability to render to himself that which is true obedience. And then he says, even though it is not perfect obedience, because we are not in this world liberated entirely from the consequences of sin in the world or in our life within the world.

[69 : 26] We believe that the day will come when sin will be no more. Sin will never again feature in our experience. It does not know in the experience of the believer have mastery, but it doesn't mean that they are not without striving and struggles that have to be engaged in as a consequence of what they know to be true.

Paul attributes the breakdown to the effect of sin from within. And some have described the Christian to be in a state of civil war.

that they are constantly on the battlefield. I'm going to finish with a quotation from Robbie Duncan.

And to many it might be a complicated understanding of how the Christian ought to see things. But this was how this godly man saw it.

He says the new creature does not sin. And he quotes the words which we find in the first epistle of John which tells us that the Christian is not a sinner.

[70 : 52] The new creature does not sin. But the complex man in whom the new and the old man is, he sins. these true, while inconsistent and contrary, are not incompatible.

What a work is the work of regeneration, whether we consider him who regenerates or that which is regenerated by him.

If the Christian believes that sin is in their life, then they are concerned by it because they see the destructive elements that sin brings.

They are concerned because of it, because they don't want it to be there. What we would be, what the devil would want us to believe is, because of sin, you can't believe yourself.

to be a believer, because the believer should have no sin. Ideally, the believer should have as little sin in their life as possible.

[72 : 12] Only by God's grace can the indwelling sin be kept in check. But we need to resolve to God's grace for that.

We need to understand what sin is. We need to understand how sin is in the world and in the life of the believer in the world.

one of the puritans, and I always remember the description, he says, sin as a caterpillar is clearly an ugly thing.

and you understand how destructive it is. But when sin comes as a butterfly, its beauty makes you forget how dangerous it is.

[73 : 40] But your instinct with regard to a butterfly is to cradle it, to hold it in your pan, admire it. And unfortunately many sons are like that.

Yes, there is sin in the world. Yes, there is sin in the heart of the believer in the world. They would desire to be rid of it and with God's grace they wrestle with it because they know how desperately serious the damage done by it is.

Not just outside of ourselves, but we wrestle with it as those who are in the grip of sinful inclinations that are hard to resist.

Amen. I'm going to conclude by singing Psalm 130 to sing the whole psalm to God's grace. Psalm 130 Lord, from the depths to thee I cried.

We'll sing the whole psalm to God's face. Lord, from the depths to thee I cried. Lord, come the depths to thee I cried.

[76 : 23] Give ■ress to me live here, Lord, who shall stand, and thou, oh, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, We're taking on the end to be Forgiveness is a beautiful day I can be I wish for God my soul to help me my hope is in this world more than in the the morning I can my soul is for the Lord

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