

# The appalling presence of sin and resulting conflict within the believer

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[ 0 : 00 ] Turn to Romans chapter 7, which Chris read, and we'll look at that together. Let's pray first again. Lord, as we come, not now to read your word, but to think about it, meditate upon it.

Please grant that the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts would be acceptable in your sight. O Lord, our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

Here's my introduction. There is a version of the Christian message which says something like this. Become a Christian and all your problems in this life will be solved.

So somebody who believed something like that or thought something like that at a certain time might have written the song which says, Now I am happy all the day. I don't know whether they meant it to be taken in a different context, but let's take it like that.

Now I am happy all the day. Is that the Christian message? Life will be easy. Is that the Christian message? Life will be simple. Is that the Christian message?

[ 1 : 15 ] And I'm going to say that I don't think the Christian message is as simple as that, and I don't think it promises those things. I think if that's what we had thought the Christian message was, it will not have good effects, because at some point it will lead us to become cynical.

Cynicism is a very corrosive attitude. And once you start to say that, Christianity is not what it's cracked up to be.

And then you start saying, Christians, they're not what they're cracked up to be. They're hypocrites. And I don't believe them. I don't want anything to do with them. And cynicism leads to unbelief.

And unbelief is when you not only say, well, I'm not happy all the day, so if that's promised, I don't believe that bit. But you don't believe any of it. You get to the point where you say, I don't believe any of that.

It's all rubbish. If you over-promise, then you risk people turning into unbelievers. And it can also perhaps produce guilt.

[ 2 : 23 ] Because if that's what you had believed the Christian message said, then you find you can't live that. You become guilty. And you think, I'm a failing Christian. I'm a rubbish Christian.

I'm whatever word you want to put there. And you start beating yourself up. And feeling that you're letting the side down in quite a definite and unforgivable way.

I don't think the message of Jesus Christ promises those things in that way for this life. It promises them for the life to come.

It does promise that we will be happy all the day when we're in glory. There will be nothing to spoil happiness. Nothing wrong with happiness. We can be happy in this world, but not necessarily all the day.

Life will be straightforward without complications, without sorrow and sighing and tears in the world to come.

[ 3 : 25 ] But not necessarily as simply as that in this world. Let me quote you a couple of things. In 2 Corinthians chapter 4, Paul has quite a long and rather heart-rending section about his experience of life.

He says we have this treasure in jars of clay. And the treasure he's referring to is the spiritual life, if you like, or the spiritual message.

And he says, yes, it's treasure. It's fantastic. It's out of this world. And yet God has seen fit for this particular part of our existence to put this treasure in jars of clay.

Have you seen a jar of clay? Can you imagine a jar of clay? It's a bit rough looking. It's a bit flaky. And it's easily damaged.

Jars of clay are not particularly beautiful. And he says that's the way that it is. The Christian life here is treasure. But it's in jars of clay. It's a sort of mixture, if you like.

[ 4 : 32 ] And Paul goes on to express that in terms of his own experience, his own life. For example, he says, we're hard-pressed on every side.

We don't find life straightforward and easy a lot of the time. We're hard-pressed on every side. He says that in 2 Corinthians 4, verse 8. But we are not crushed. And he says, we are perplexed. So life isn't simple. But we are not in despair. Do you see? It's quite an interesting tension, isn't it? There's something wonderful about the Christian life for every Christian.

But it doesn't mean that life is always simple and always easy. And more specifically to do with our thoughts this morning, in Galatians chapter 5, he describes another non-simple, non-easy conflict. So I've quoted this rather more at length. I've put it on the screen, but I'll read it out.

[ 5 : 38 ] It says, live by the Spirit, or more literally, walk in the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. Well, that sounds fair enough.

For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. So he's describing a conflict. And he says as much, they are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

So he says that there's a conflict. This isn't a theoretical conflict. You can read about it in a book. You find it going on inside yourself. So he says that you do not do what you want.

And there's an inner conflict in the Christian. He goes on to be quite positive. If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. He says that it's not saying that you have gone back to whatever. You are in the Christian life, but your Christian life is one of inner spiritual and moral conflict. And this is the case for fruitful Spirit Christians.

[ 6 : 53 ] Walk in the Spirit, he says. The fruit of the Spirit is. And yet, sandwiched in that, he's saying there's this inner conflict. So that's my introduction. And now let's come to Romans chapter 7.

Because I think what Paul is doing is spelling out the dimensions of this conflict as it affects the believer. Rather like what he mentioned in Galatians.

Please can I recap on Romans so far? Because I know that not everybody sitting here this morning has gone through Romans with us. Romans begins with the problem of the present power of sin. And the guilt of sin. And present wrath and future wrath. And he spends chapters saying what a complete pickle the human race is in spiritually.

And in regard to sin and the fearful prospect of God's wrath on the day of judgment. He then says that this problem has been solved by Jesus Christ.

[ 8 : 08 ] In his death and resurrection. In a glorious, powerful, wonderful, cosmos changing way. He then goes on to say that the problem of the guilt of sin is solved by being counted righteous through faith.

And he spends a couple of chapters talking about how we can be counted righteous. Justified by faith. That's not changing us. But it's changing the way God deals with us.

And the box, if you like, that God puts us in. He says these people are righteous. He also talks about union with Christ. And the fact that when we come to Christ in faith, we actually come into a new sphere.

A new place. And to a new rule. A new power. And this technically leads us into the thoughts of sanctification.

Sanctification is a word that Christians use to mean the process of change. change of spiritually and morally being transformed.

[ 9 : 17 ] And not just in the way God thinks of us and treats us. But in actually how we begin to behave. And the sort of people we're turning into becoming holy.

And then subsequent to that, he talked about, he gave us the idea of being married to Jesus Christ. We're not primarily linked to being Jewish or something like that.

We're primarily linked to Jesus Christ. And we're no longer under the power of sin. And we are no longer married to the law. And that brings us to the bit where Chris read where, okay, if we're not married to the law, does that mean the law's bad?

And he was saying in chapter 7, verse 7, is the law sin? Absolutely not. Just to take us a little bit further with that thought.

And then we'll get into the larger paragraphs here. So the question that he is asked in verse 7, is the law sin?

[10:26] Is there an equality? Law of God is sin. And he says, absolutely not. Complete misunderstanding. And then he says in the bit that we were reading, verse 13, did that which is good, so I need to write the word good because that's an important word, did that which is good become death?

So as a good thing, I need to write that word good, good. A good thing, the law, become death. And he says, no, that's wrong as well. Verse 13, did that which is good become death to me? By no means. But something's happened.

And what he was saying was, it's not the law that does this, but sin. Verse 13, in order that sin might be recognised as sin, it produced death in me through what was good.

So sin produced death via the law. And he then repeats, more or less repeats it, that through the commandment, sin might become utterly sinful.

[11:38] So sin becomes very sinful, very sinish, via the commandment. Now I don't really want to dwell upon that, but that's what he says there.

And that leads him in to the bit that we are going to look at together. So that's a sort of recap, and just to cover that ground, which I'm not going to go into just now.

What I do have is an immensely complicated diagram here, which I've been puzzling over for some hours. Some bits I haven't filled in, but let's see what it says.

So I'm now at verse 14, where it says, we know that the law is spiritual, but now he talks about himself. I am unspiritual.

What he actually says is sarkinos, which means fleshly. Fleshly means made of this stuff. You've got this as well.

[12:50] You might have more of it or less of it, but you've got it. Flesh. That's what we have in this world. In the resurrection, we will have new bodies.

But at the moment, we're stuck with this stuff, which is pretty much the stuff you had before you became a Christian. If you're a Christian now, that stuff is pretty much the same. Might be more of it.

Might be less of it. Probably more of it. He's saying there is an assumption. Now let's just see what he does say. Verse 15.

I do not understand what I do. Could be understand, could be know, in the sense that, you know, I know you. I recognise you.

You're my buddy. He could be saying, I do not know what I do. I'm not friends with what I do. Don't recognise it. I don't know, or I don't understand what I do.

[13:52] For what I do, for what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate, I do. Now, let's just try and work this out.

I think the unspoken, normal situation is what I've put on the screen there, which I will explain, where you have a person, and a desire, and an action.

And he says, this is what I would expect. This is how it ought to work. That I, the person, want and wish to do something, and I do it.

That seems well adjusted. That seems to fit together. I, I want to do something, and I do it. That's nice and simple. He says, but in the Christian life, I find it just isn't quite like that.

So this is where my diagram begins to get complicated. So, he says, let me tell you that he uses a couple of words for good.

[14:55] He uses good. So the same word he talked about with the law. The law is good, and he's now going to say, I'm talking about doing good. He uses another word, galos, which if you go to Greece and you say galimera, exactly, good morning.

It's the good for good morning. Galimera. Imera is day, and galimera is the good bit. So he says, I do what is, in this case, he says galos. So I put that as fine.

So he uses two words, good, and another word which I've put there as fine. I think he means the same thing. Let's just see what he's saying. Verse 15, I do not understand what I do, or I don't recognize what I do, for what I want to do, I do not do.

So we've got him wanting, but in terms of following that line through to doing good stuff, it just doesn't work. And he says, for what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate, I do.

So let me try and not make the diagram too complicated complicated to begin with. He says, what I hate, I do. And that's the word he uses, verse 15, what I hate, I do.

[16:18] And he's going to tell us in a moment that what he hates is evil, gagos, evil. Let's see what he says, verse 16.

Because he now repeats that whole thing several times over, and in each time he says it in a slightly different way with slightly different details. Verse 16, if I do what I do not want to do, so instead of saying hate, we could put here not want.

So that's what he does, what he hates or what he does not want to do. I agree that the law is good. So I'm going to fill in a little bit up here around himself and he says the law is good.

Yes. And he co-agrees with that. He says, yeah, I'm in agreement with that. The law is good. Verse 17, as it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.

So I want to enlarge the diagram a little bit and say that he's saying there is a connection not between what I doing this evil but somebody else, not I, does this.

[17:50] Somebody's doing it but he says in a sense it's not me. As it is, it is no longer whoops, I myself who do it but and now he tells us who he thinks is doing it.

He says it is sin living in me. I'm going to shorten that to indwelling sin. Indwelling sin.

It's a strange thing, isn't it? He says there's this sort of split conflict inside me. That's what he said, is it not?

Verse 17, as it is, it is no longer I myself who do it but it is sin living in me. Then he goes on to say I know that no good lives in me.

so I shall enlarge the diagram again and say in over this side where there is not I there is no good. Remember good is quite an important word.

[18:59] The law is good and I want to do good but in just see what he says in me there is no good.

And then he says, let me enlarge on that again, in my sinful nature. NIV says sinful nature. Anybody got a different translation? Anybody got an authorised version?

Adam, got anything there? Yeah. My flesh.

So let's put flesh on this side because although it is a strange translation translation, it's not a normal word that we would use really, but it is what he says in this stuff, in my flesh.

And then he's going to repeat this again, for I have the desire to do what is good. good. I have the desire to do what is good, but I can't do it.

[20:09] I cannot produce it. I can't, so that he's just repeating the fact that this line connecting me and what I want and what I do is broken at the point of doing.

I've lost where I got to, which, that was 18. I know that no good lives in me, that is, in my flesh, for I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot produce it.

I cannot carry it out. Then I think he's repeating the same thing again, for what I do is not the good I want to do. So I produce something.

No, the evil I do not want to do, this I do. I'm not quite sure why the NIV says keep on doing. I think it's all describing what happens in real life.

For what I do is not the good I want to do, no, the evil I do not want to do, this is what I do. Right, and I think he's going to repeat it again now, verse 20.

[21:19] Now, if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. I think he's just repeated, what I put on that rather complicated diagram, which says that I, there's an I, and there's a not I, which is, he said, is indwelling sin, where there is no good, this is my flesh, and that produces evil.

And then in verse, you with me so far? It's quite complicated what he's saying, but I think this is what he's saying, verse 21. So I find this law at work.

Now, let's just ponder the word law. If you're a fan of N.T. Wright, he says that every time the word law is used, it means the Old Testament law.

I don't think that's right. I think he's certainly got that in his mind, but I think he's using it as a pun.

He's saying there's a principle, there's a set of rules at work, not the Ten Commandments, there's a set of principles which I observe to happen in human life.

Verse 21, I find this principle, this law at work. When I want to do good, evil is present with me. I'm sorry, I should have mentioned that idea of being present.

[ 22 : 48 ] is there in verse, I can't see the little writing, it's verse 18, where it says I have the desire to do what is good. He's saying it's present with me.

So I'm going to do a squiggly line to say that wanting is present with me. And then he says in verse 21, I find this law at work when I want to do good, evil is present with me, is right there with me.

So I'm going to draw and draw a squiggly line to connect me, Paul, with evil. So this is a very uncomfortable sort of thing that he's describing.

I've got the desire to do what is good, but I find right breathing down my neck, as it were, is evil. I find evil is right there with me.

Then I think he's going to say the same thing again with some different words. Verse 22, in my inner being, or my inner man, I delight in God's law.

[ 23 : 54 ] So I shall add yet more to this. The I, he refers to the inner man, and not only does he say the law is good, but the law is something that he delights in.

So I've written next to law, the word delights. So, let me try and find the place again. In my inner man, in my inner being, I delight in God's law, but I see another law at work in the members of my body.

So I shall add that detail in. We call it indwelling sin, he called it a place there was no good, he called it his flesh, and now he calls it the members of my body. I see another law or principle at work in the members of my body.

And now he describes how they fit together. He says these two dynamics, these two workings, or this sort of strange split and conflict, he says wage war, I see another principle at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members, the parts of my body.

So he gave us another word for the I, he said my mind, and he said, I've got two arrows sort of going between the I and the not I, and one of them is the arrow of war, I don't know which one it is, one of them, war, and the other is the arrow of captivity, making me a prisoner of the law of sin.

[ 25 : 55 ] So there's a dragging, captive-making force, captive, I can't now write captivating because I've put an E on it. so there's a conflict which in one way is a sort of war and another way is a bringing into captivity.

I think that's what he said, I've only put down what he said, I'll read it, I see another law at work in the parts of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members, the parts of my body.

And there's the diagram, and it is rather complicated, though I think what he's saying is not so complicated that we can't understand it. But he summarises the whole thing, and I've put a W and an M to put over the whole thing.

Anybody like to suggest what I had in mind with the W and the M which sort of describes the whole kitten caboodle of this pickle? Wretched man was what I was thinking.

It says, verse 24, what a wretched man I am. I looked up the word wretched, it's used in Revelation where it says you don't realise that you're wretched, poor, pitiful and blind.

[ 27 : 15 ] It just describes a really unfortunate, miserable condition. And he says, what I've described is not a pleasant condition.

It's a wretched condition. Wretched man that I am. And then he calls out, who will rescue me from this body of death? I think we might even add that over this side to say that he's referring to this. The fact that we are stuck with this until the Lord comes and we're raised again in new bodies. Who will rescue me from this body of death?

Now he doesn't just stop there and say, woe is me, Christian life, far from being at all enjoyable, is actually totally miserable. He doesn't stop there.

And it's difficult to get this balance because he's not saying it's all joy and happiness, but he's not saying it's total misery either. That's the difficult bit. He's saying, thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[ 28 : 25 ] He doesn't leave himself sunk in the depths. He says, there is this ongoing conflict, sometimes it's more, sometimes it's less.

But I'm not sunk. I'm hard pressed but not crushed. If you like, I'm perplexed but not in despair. Christ's on my side. Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So therefore, please notice, it says so then, your Bible says so then, and the next verse has got a therefore, therefore.

Same word. So let's give equal weight. Therefore, verse 25, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the flesh a slave to the law of sin.

I don't think I've got any more room to put those on the diagram but he's saying, in my mind, my relationship to the things of God's law is, I'm totally up for that.

[ 29 : 35 ] But in the reality of living in this world, before the resurrection, sin has quite a grip on me still. Okay, that, and then he goes over so on mine you have to turn the page, which is rather unhelpful, but the next thing he says, therefore, it's again same word, therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Now let's, before I finish filling in the diagram, I think we need to ask, who is he talking about? That's the key question. Who is he talking about?

Because he said all the way through, I, I agree, I do, I don't do, I hate, so he said I. Now who is he talking about?

And people have come up with, I think, the following three possibilities. Number one, he's talking about actually how he used to be. Before I was a Christian, I don't have this, it's not true of me anymore, but before I was a Christian, that was what it was like.

So he really should have said I used to, but anyway, other reason. So that's one possible answer. Here's a possible answer that I've put in, Paul as a defeated Christian, Paul as a substandard Christian, Paul as a Christian who ought to be ashamed of himself.

[ 31 : 03 ] So that's my answer B, which we'll come to in a moment. And then answer C, a real aspect of Paul's life as a Christian. That's answer C.

Now, let's not come to a conclusion too quickly. Paul, before he became a Christian, I think the problem with that is, the problem with that is not verse 14, which I've put, but the bit where he says, I agree with God's law.

Verse 16, I agree that the law is good. and the bit where he says, I delight in God's law. Which verse is that?

Lost it. 22. In my inner being, I delight in God's law.

Yeah, maybe I've put this other way. He does say, I'm unspiritual, but verse 22 says, I delight in God's law. So, he's been very clear that the problem with human beings is not that they're partly good, the problem with human beings is they're totally sinful.

[ 32 : 22 ] And there is not a bit in normal human makeup, which is okay. there isn't a bit in normal human makeup, which says, well, I'm very spiritual, it's just I have the problem of expressing myself.

So, I don't think Paul can be saying, this is me, before I was a Christian. I don't think that works. A real aspect of Paul's life as a Christian, now, verse 16, he says, I agree that the law is good. I think only a Christian can say that. I really have no problem with God's claims and his standards and his ways.

I'm totally up for that. I agree that the law is good. I think only a Christian can say that. Verse 22, in my inner being I delight in God's law.

Only a Christian can say that. That's something that the spirit puts inside people. That's the work of the spirit. He talks about the mind and he's going to go on and talk about the mind of the spirit and being spiritually minded.

[ 33 : 39 ] I think that's what he's talking about. In verse 25, he says, I myself, in my mind, am a slave to God's law. It's the flesh that's the problem.

So, if we choose between A and C, I'm definitely going to go for C. It's not him before he became a Christian.

He couldn't have said, I love God's law. That's a spiritual thing. I'm going to go for C. It's a real aspect of Paul's life as a Christian.

Now, let's deal with B. Is he a defeated Christian? Is he a substandard Christian? And I'd like to draw your attention to verse 21 and 23.

And the little word hidden away there, I find. And verse 23, I see. To me, those are words of observation.

[ 34 : 45 ] I find, says Paul, as I live my life as a Christian, indeed as I live my life as an apostle, indeed as I live my life as someone who is put up as a paradigm, do you know what I mean by that?

A sort of example to follow. Christ saved me as the chief of sinners, so look at me, look at my life. And Paul says, this is what I find about me.

And then he says much the same thing, verse 23, this is what I see. This is what I see going on in me. And to me, that rules out B.

He's not saying, this is something that I'm ashamed of and you mustn't, you mustn't, you know, that's the conclusion you need to draw.

He's just being honest and saying, I'm an apostle, I live the Christian life, please don't expect to live the Christian life in any higher plane than I do. And this is what I find. This is what I see.

[ 35 : 50 ] This is what I find. So I'd like to finish that diagram by writing over the top of it. We've written over the top of it so far, wretched man, because that's what he says about himself, wretched man.

And I'd like to write two other words over the top of it, which I think apply to this person. N and C. No condemnation. No condemnation. It could be normal Christian, couldn't it? Yes. From the, yes, from, I was thinking, these questions are always slightly to do with telepathy, aren't they? What he actually, what he says is, there is no condemnation. And that's a rather strong statement, isn't it? And I draw your attention to the two therefore.

It isn't one that's a small therefore and one's a big therefore. Verse 25, so therefore, I in my mind am a slave to God's law and in a sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

[ 37 : 02 ] There's a therefore, as he describes this very uncomfortable tension. And then there's the same word therefore, there is now no condemnation. And the fact there's a chapter division in between is a complete accident of the way people did this 400 years after the text was written.

Yeah? That's an accident. The chapter division is not, Paul didn't write it in chapters. So what he's saying is, here's this very uncomfortable tension.

There's me, it's what I want, what I do, and the fact that there's this uncomfortable indwelling sin, which seems to want things and do things that I don't want to do, I'm sort of split.

And in some ways you could say I'm a wretched man. Tries me to distraction sometimes, I feel so ashamed of myself sometimes. But I'm going to write something else over the top of that even, there is no condemnation.

There's no condemnation for Christians who struggle with indwelling sin. In fact, he's going to go on to say later, that's the way to live.

[ 38 : 19 ] If by the spirit you do mortify the deeds of the flesh, you will live. If by the spirit you do mortify the deeds of the flesh, you will live. Having that conflict, not giving in in that conflict, finding that conflict, is the person over whom is written in big letters no condemnation.

So I've got seven conclusions. But they're all quite quick. Number one, this passage does not teach us that sinning is okay.

Does not teach us that sin is okay. Sin is never okay. So if you've got to the point where you say, well I sin, that's the way the Christian life is, doesn't matter too much, you are heading in the wrong direction.

Paul doesn't say, I've got this problem that I keep sinning. That's okay. He says, wretched man that I am. He really deeply feels that this is wrong.

So it doesn't teach us that sinning is okay. Number one. Number two, Christians are really born again. There is a new attitude deep within.

[ 39 : 50 ] So sometimes that's the bit that we're not too sure of in our own experience. We think, actually, am I any different? And the Bible tells us that at the deepest level, if we become Christians, we say, you know, you must be born again.

And that's not one of these Christian misunderstandings or oversimplifications. That's a true statement. And a Christian is born again by the work of the Spirit, and something has changed deep within.

That's what Paul says. In my mind, that's the way he describes this depth of his heart and his attitude, if you like. You know, that's changed.

I love God's law. I love God. I want to do his will. That's a new attitude. And yet, third conclusion, Christians find there is such a thing as indwelling sin.

That's the phrase that he uses, the idea to dwell within. A parasite, if you like, a bit like alien, if you would like a disgusting type of way of visualising it.

[ 41 : 00 ] Something inside me which doesn't belong there, which lives and grows in me and operates quite happily on its own terms. I hate it, but it's there. There is such a thing as indwelling sin.

And, number four, this will not be finally removed till we have resurrection bodies. Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We have to wait for that. That's something in the future, the resurrection. Number five, conflict with sin is a significant part of the Christian life, full stop, ongoing, full stop.

Conflict with sin is a significant part of the Christian life ongoing. I don't mean to say that we're always as conscious of sin as on other days.

That might be a good thing, that might not be a good thing, but I am saying that it is one of the dimensions of the Christian life, the things we ought to be aware of.

[ 42 : 12 ] So the Christian life isn't just a question of whether we can get to enough meetings or whether we're doing enough worship. The question is what are we doing about indwelling sin?

How is the battle going? Have we forgotten there is a battle? Are we conscious that there's something there that we need to be praying about, acting upon, or have we just gone quiet on that? Conflict with sin is a significant part of the Christian life, ongoing, and it can be a heartbreaking part of the Christian life. Number six, this coexists with the presence and work of the Holy Spirit.

Coexists. They both go on together, and one does not drive out the other, and vice versa.

I remember Dick Lucas saying this, I was very struck by it, indwelling sin doesn't drive out the spirit, and the spirit doesn't drive out indwelling sin, that's it isn't it brothers?

[ 43 : 19 ] That's what he said, and almost the voice in which he said it. But, it's a striking thought, isn't it? In this portion of the Christian life, between now, when we're converted, and the day we see the Lord, we have the Holy Spirit living within us, he gives us this new mind, he gives us a new dynamic of life, so that we do actually make progress, and yet, indwelling sin is there, and the presence of the Spirit does not expel indwelling sin.

both are there together, if you like. And, seventhly and finally, the believer who experiences this extraordinary tussle and conflict, this believer is under no condemnation.

And I want to emphasize that, because you might well be sitting there thinking, do you know, I know what he's talking about, because I, you know, even last night when I was thinking the things I meant to do and wanted to do I haven't done, and the things I've done I hate, you know, I open my mouth and I'm going to try and say something gracious and what comes out, I think, oh dear, did I just say that?

And you're thinking these sorts of things and you think, I'm such a rubbish Christian. what I want to say, I'm not going to dispute that you're a rubbish Christian, because all Christians are rubbish Christians, that's part of what being a Christian is in that sense, you'll say a wretched man that I am, but I am saying this does not mean that you're not a proper Christian.

Christian. The words no condemnation are written over your life, and Jesus wrote them there, if you want to put it this way, he wrote them there in his blood.

[ 45 : 24 ] There is no condemnation for you. You are as embraced in the love of God as any Christian ever is, and he's going to go on to say at the end of chapter eight, neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And our sins don't separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. And indwelling sin doesn't separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And our failures don't separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. This believer is under no condemnation. and is fully embraced in the inseparable love of God in Jesus Christ.

I'm going to repeat that because I think it's worth saying again. If you feel that you are a terrific failure as a Christian because of this conflict or things like that, I want you to go home and say to yourself, that bit in the Bible, tell me I got this wrong.

If I am in Christ Jesus, if I am experiencing this tussle, it does not mean I am condemned, but the Lord says there is no condemnation for you.

[ 47 : 01 ] Let's sing together.