

My Divided Contradictory Self

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[0 : 0 0] Father, we come before you confessing that often our pride beats us up and hostile spirits, demons beat us up, that we can feel really guilty about things, Father, that are not sins at all, that we feel no guilt over things that are sins, and Father, that when we do things sometimes which are just really, really wrong, it makes us almost want to give up, Father, to despair. And so, Father, we ask that, and Father, you know as well how sometimes the well-meaning advice of other Christians just serves to beat us up even more. Father, you know how many of us here this morning are refugees from legalistic and moralistic churches that claim to preach grace but end up just beating up its members. So, Father, we ask that you would gently but deeply pour out your Holy Spirit upon us, gently and deeply pour out your

Holy Spirit upon us, so that we might hear these stark words of yours in Romans 7, that they might enter into who we are, and that we might understand the great glory of the gospel and how great is your grace and love towards us. And this we ask in Jesus' name, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

Please be seated. Humanly speaking, the man who was responsible for me becoming an Anglican, not a Christian, I was already a Christian, but me falling in love with the Anglican way, and humanly speaking, the man who was responsible for me recognizing that God had called me to be a pastor. And humanly speaking, the man who was a really important mentor, not only for myself but also for my wife, I started attending this fellow's church as a single man, and when I left, I was married, had some kids, and was ordained. And so, humanly speaking, this man was very important to me. And less than a year after I left the church, he was stripped of his power to minister in the Diocese of Ottawa because of a long history of affairs, which he had kept secret. And I remember getting the letter in the mail, and then discovering that not only was he no longer able to function as a pastor in the Diocese of Ottawa, but that his marriage had broken up. And he had five kids. He had some grandkids at the time as well.

And it was a great shock to Louise and me. And just as I think it was a great shock to many to find out that this had happened to him. And so, how is it that those types of things can go on? Like, why is it that in many ways, God used this man in a very, very powerful way in my life, brought a lot of healing to me in my life as I just watched his example and listened to him pray and heard him teach?

And how is it that something like that could happen in a man like that, and yet at the same time, there was this other side to him that ended up ruining his relationship with his wife and kids and ruining his ministry? Romans 7 gets right to the heart of this issue. And so, it would be a great help to me if you were to open your Bibles to Romans 7. And we're going to look at this text.

[3 : 44] It's a text like a lot of Romans, which isn't meant to be read quickly, but it's meant to be sort of read slowly as we see how Paul shines the light of the gospel and the light of grace into our human condition, both before we know Jesus and after we know Jesus, as the light of the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit shines into who we are as human beings. So, it's Romans chapter 7, and we're beginning reading at verse 7. And it's interesting that the Bible is going to actually begin with asking a question that, and I'm not going to talk about that this, the Bible begins in Romans 7, and then he sort of asks the similar question, but in different words. It's interesting that Paul asks the question that many in our culture ask. In fact, like so many people might say that the problem with this fellow was that Christians are just too anal about moral rules, and that being anal about moral rules ends up leading to people having moral failings, and that if we just cut people more slack, they'd get on better. That some people in our culture think that moral rules, especially moral rules around sexuality, are in fact bad. That they're bad by their very nature, and that if you have a whole pile of moral rules, especially around sexuality, but also in some other areas, that we shouldn't be surprised if things happen, if things go south on us. That in fact, there are many people in our culture who say that moral laws, especially in our culture, moral laws around sexuality, that they actually cause death. And it might be a real surprise for us to see that the Bible asks those very same questions that our culture asks. It's not as if we have to go, oh gosh, how on earth do we answer that?

Well, Romans 7, Paul asks those very same questions. Look at Romans 7, 7. What then shall we say that the law is sin? In other words, that it's evil? By no means. And then look down at verse 13. Did that which is good, and here he means like moral laws, did that which is good then bring death? In other words, are moral laws murderers? Do moral laws kill us? And that's, you just think you were in a postmodern hipster coffee shop, or in a modernist Tim Hortons coffee shop, listening to these questions being asked, both by people in business suits, and people with long beards, and people who are working class. It's a very, they're very common questions, and Paul raises them. Let's go back to verse 7. What then shall we say that the law is sin? By no means.

In other words, he's saying, no way, absolutely not. Yet if it had not been for the law, and here he means moral commands that come from God, I would not have known sin, for I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, you shall not covet. Just pause there before we go any further.

It's very, very interesting. In our culture, often when we see the word sin, we think it's referring to sex. Now, it does refer to certain sexual things which are wrong, but the word is far, far bigger, and it's very interesting that Paul here chooses the last command of the Ten Commandments, and it is the, all of the other commands in the Ten Commandments, you can understand them in an external way, as just referring to behavior. And it's the Tenth Command that doesn't refer to external behavior. It's going to the heart, like what's going on in our hearts. So, for instance, if I was to say to you how many people here murdered somebody this morning, hopefully nobody put their hand up. It would actually cause us a bit of a quandary if you did put your hand up. Probably somebody should go call the police if you put your hand up and said that this morning before you came to church you murdered somebody, right?

So, it's very, very easy with a lot of the commandments to say, I didn't tell any lies, I haven't murdered anybody, I didn't steal anything, you know, I didn't bow down to a, you know, a statue of a cow and call it my God and go all the way through. But coveting envy, jealousy, coveting these, this very, very internal competitive, proud comparing of your situation with others and wanting others to have, for you to have more than other people have, this type of insatiable sense. It's the example he uses. He doesn't use where we often go in our culture or where non-Christians expect Christians to go to give an example of sin, but he gives an example of coveting, of greed, of gluttony, of envy, of jealousy, of those internal types of desires which are out of whack. And that's where Paul goes with it. And just as well, before I go any further on it as well, Paul isn't saying that, well actually, Andrew, could you put up the first point? And when the living God speaks, he infringes on my desire for absolute sovereignty. When the living

[9 : 37] God speaks, he infringes on my desire for absolute sovereignty. That's what Paul's going to get at here. He's going to talk about something. I'm going to read the rest of it through, the next few verses through, and I'll give you an example of what he means to show that he has a profound psychological insight about what happens to human beings when God speaks to them. And so where was I with verse 8?

But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me.

For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So the law is holy and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. So what's Paul trying to get at here? Well, I'll use first a funny story and then I'll use a different illustration. A couple of years ago, I was just right here and part of my sermon, trying to open up the Bible, is I shared with you, the people who were there at the time, you folks, that I'm an introvert, that I'm actually quite a strong introvert. I like people, but people tire me and I need to recharge my batteries.

My friend Charlie, he's an extrovert. If he said, if somebody said, if Charlie and I were together and they said, can you want to go to this church and there's 300 people that you've never met before, I would go, oh no, 300 people that I've never met before. And Charlie would go, oh wow, 300 people that I've never met before. We can spend the whole day with them? I would just get him charged up. He'd be so excited. It would be like Christmas for him. And for me, it would be like I've gotten the coal in my stocking, not the presents. Anyway, so I was just sharing about my introversion and one of the things about my introversion, at least for me, is that I'm not very huggy. I don't like hugging people.

I mean, I love hugging my wife and my kids and grandkids, but I'm not like huggy. Most of you who come to the church have probably noticed that I don't go around hugging everybody when they leave the church. So I was sharing this as part of the sermon. And then after the service, there was a woman who was a guest and she came up to me and said, oh pastor, that was so brave of you to share about your introversion. Can I pray for you? And I'm thinking, why? I can always use more pressure.

[12 : 15] Can I pray that the Lord will deliver you from being an introvert? And I didn't want to correct her because, you know, the fact of the matter is I need as much prayer as I can get, right? I'm never going to tell somebody, don't pray for me. So then I said, sure. So I'll have to put the Bible down. So I started to get my hands like this. And the next thing I know, and she was a very sizable woman, she grabbed me with her right arm, put me in a headlock, pressed me to her bosom like this, her arms shaking. And I'm stuck there trying to figure out what on earth to do against her bosom. And then she proceeded with the other hand to raise it and pray loudly over me. The self-confessed introvert who said he didn't like to hug.

Okay. So you can see I'm a very effective public speaker. I had obviously deeply gotten through to her, something about a whole range of things. Anyway, so about a year after that, I was invited to be one of the speakers at Atreus Dias weekend for men. And so if you've ever been to Atreus Dias weekend, there's lots of great things about it, but they love to hug. Good grief. They love to hug. And so when I, for one of the talks, and it fit into it, I shared this story thinking naively and foolishly that I was providing comfort to the other introverts in the room. But all it meant was that every man wanted to hug me for the rest of the weekend. Without fail, probably no man who was there did not take the moment to come up and say, you don't want me to hug you, do you? And then they'd hug me.

I was really foolish. Okay. So on a very, very light note, what is it about human beings that if you say something like that, it creates that desire? Like what is it about human beings?

And what is it if many of you might not even have noticed that there's this fake snow type stuff right here? What if I was to all of a sudden say that you can't touch that snow, that if you touch that snow, it's a great sin. It's very, very wrong. It's very offensive. Now, several things will happen.

First of all, most of you hadn't even noticed it was there. For the rest of the service, if you thought I was serious, you'd keep looking at it, wouldn't you? And some of you, just to show me, would say, hey, George, and then touch it, right? You know who you are. And if you don't know who you are, your best friend knows who you are, they're probably thinking that exactly describes you.

[14 : 56] You would go up and touch it. And others of you would be sneaky. And you might say, Daniel, go over there and talk to George and get him looking this way. And then you'd go up and touch it, right? And then there'd be everything in between. There'd be a couple of you, you know who you are, who probably wouldn't touch it, right? But eventually, if it was there every week, probably we would touch it. So what is it, okay, that about human beings, that we all know that that is pretty true and that none of us are... The thing that maybe surprises many of you is why I was dumb enough to tell the story about the woman hugging me to a room full of men thinking I would get a different result. And that's why you need to keep praying for me. I can sometimes be remarkably clueless. So what is it about human beings? So what Paul is saying here is that moral laws, the one that come from God, not the ones that come from our culture, our pride, our ego, but true moral laws that reflect the nature and character of God, that when God speaks them and we recognize them clearly, there springs up within us an over-preoccupation with thinking about them, and ultimately it reveals within us that we desire to break them.

Like, the men at the Tres Dias weekend didn't realize that their response showed that they were fallen and need a savior, because they were just joking. But that's what their response showed.

It showed that they were fallen and need a savior, and that even though many of them had been Christians for a very, very long time, there was still something within them that desired to transgress.

That's what it shows. Andrew, could you put up this image? And our screen isn't big enough to really, you know, capture this in a perfect way, but you can get a sort of an idea, and it's sort of, probably in an ideal world, we'd have a different screen, so this could all just go straight rather than an angle, but it's what we have to do to get it onto a screen. This image is an image of the story of the Bible.

This gives you a basic understanding of how the entire Bible is written, the overarching story, the story which is actually present in it. And Genesis 1 and 2, that's the first thing, is that the whole world is created by God, and he creates it good.

[17 : 32] And then the second thing is Genesis chapter 3, and it describes how, in Adam, we desire to be like God, and rebel against God, because we want to be like God, and we who are made in the image of God, and have, in a sense, a role of caring for God's creation, that we become bent, we become broken.

The image of God isn't taken away from us, but we become bent. And as Genesis, as the rest of the Bible will show us, that there's not a single aspect of ourselves that isn't touched by the fall, that isn't bent in some small way.

It's not telling us that human beings are evil, it's telling us that every single aspect of what it means to be human, and if through poetry and science we discover other things about what it means to be human, that anything that we discover about what it means to be human is touched by this fall, that it's bent slightly.

And then Genesis chapter 4, up until the end of Malachi, is the next section. And it's a way to understand all of the Old Testament, is that God sees us, having created us good, and to have fellowship and communion with Him, He sees that we're bent and we can't save ourselves.

And for the rest of the Old Testament, Genesis chapter 4 to Malachi 4, it's a combination of promise and preparation. Promising that God, God promising to human beings, He does it gradually, He does it through wisdom literature, He does it through laws, He does it through poetry, He does it through mystical visions, He does it in lots of different literary genres, God speaks in lots of different literary genres, over a wide period of time, but it's all both preparing people for the Messiah and promising the Messiah.

[19 : 24] And then you see up there, it's Jesus, and that means God's kept His promise. That's in some ways the whole heart of Advent, because the heart of Advent is that God has kept His promises in sending His Son to be born in Bethlehem and to die upon the cross, and that Jesus will come again a second time.

God keeps His promise in the person of Jesus. And we all live in 2015, we live in the already not yet. We live in the time between God keeping His promise to call to a people Himself again and to redeem them through Jesus and what He did on the cross, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the guarantee that we have a standing before God which is right, which is given to us as a gift by Jesus that nothing can take away, yet at the same time, obviously the world is still full of evil and rebellion.

There's still evil and rebellion within us, within you and me, and we wait for the end when Jesus comes. And that's basically most of the New Testament. And the end is what's described a little bit today in the Gospel reading, in the book of Revelation at the end.

It's when Jesus comes again, the living and the dead are judged, and the new heaven and the new earth is created. And that's also the end is also the beginning. And this is not only the overarching story of the Bible.

The Bible claims that this is real, that God really is there. He really does speak. Jesus really did come. He really did die upon the cross. There's historical evidence of His existence and of His death, and even historical evidence of His resurrection.

[20 : 58] And that this is not only the story of the Bible, it's the story of the human race. That's the claim of the Bible. It's the story of the human race. It's within this story that we can understand who we are as human beings.

We can understand our longings and our yearnings, our dreams and our hopes, and we can understand those things about us that terrify us. So, Andrew, could you put up A, in good Canadian fashion?

I'm going to keep on saying A throughout the service. This is what the book of Romans is trying to communicate with us. that until we see Him face to face, every follower of Jesus lives in the already, not yet, with a divided and contradictory self.

Every follower, until we see Jesus face to face, that's 1 John 2, every follower of Jesus lives in the already, not yet, with a divided and contradictory self.

We don't live at the end or the beginning. We aren't perfect. Read 2 Corinthians 4 and 5, the treasure of the gospel, the fact that the Holy Spirit indwells the believer, that we have entered into Jesus and that Jesus has entered into us, that's in a sense the already, something that we'll just get more of in heaven.

[22 : 24] But at the same time, we live in the not yet. And as part of that not yet, we aren't perfect. We're not, there's still parts within us that just still are in rebellion against God.

And that's what Paul, that's what the Bible is trying to help us to understand. And it's really, really, really important because, you know, I've talked and I've heard so many Christians and maybe, I don't know, Lord have mercy, when I, maybe I've been guilty of some of this stuff as well, but often I would just have this sense of not knowing what to speak about it as I would hear somebody speak up and say that the problem that you have with your life is a lack of willpower.

Well, I mean, on one hand, every human being has some problems with willpower. I don't, you know, if I could go back in time, I wouldn't have eaten those potato chips last night while I watched the movie, you know?

We all have problems with willpower. But, you know, we might say to a Christian, and it's a really terrible thing for Christians who struggle with depression, Christians who struggle with mental illness, Christians who struggle with some deep type of brokenness within them, and just to be told, all you need is more willpower.

You're just not trying hard enough. If you were trying hard enough, you wouldn't be doing this. It's all about trying. It's all about willpower. And then there's others who say, oh, if you just thought better, if you just thought better thoughts, if you just memorized these attitudes from John Maxwell about how to have a positive life, if you just read more Zig Ziglar and had little positive sayings on your fridge, you would have a better life.

[24 : 06] And then there's others who say that there's nothing at all to do with any of that stuff. You need a special anointing. And you need to have a special anointing that goes along with an experience of emotional breakdown and turmoil.

And if you just have this moment of brokenness with a great emotion, then you will live a life of victory. If you have the willpower, you will live a life of victory. If you have these positive thoughts in your head, you will live a life of victory.

If you just know the right rituals, if you just know the right rules, you will have a life of victory. But that's the normal Christian life.

The normal Christian life is a life of victory. How many of us have heard speakers and Christians who tell us these types of things?

Or they say the problem is that you have demons in you. The reason you can't stop smoking is not because tobacco is more addictive than crack cocaine. It's because you have a demon.

[25 : 05] Let us cast that demon out. And then lo and behold, the poor beat up Christian who says to himself, I've tried my willpower.

It doesn't work. And I, gosh, I've had the demon of cigarettes cast out of me 18 times. I still smoke. Maybe I'm not a Christian at all. Maybe I'm just going to hell.

And it's for those of us who labor under this that Paul continues on in verse 13. And one of the things about this, when I, one of the academic commentaries that I consulted prior to this, there's 10 different ways of understanding Romans 7.

I'm not going to bore, I can't even remember them. I'm not going to bore you with them. I'm going to read it in the most simple, straightforward way because the shocking thing is, is that in these verses 7 through 12, Paul uses the past tense, the form of the past tense.

In verses 14 on, he uses the present tense. This is Paul. He has been a Christian for 25 years, 20 to 25 years.

[26 : 16] God has used him. The Holy Spirit has used him in a way which is far more powerful, not put any of you down, than any of you who are here because God actually uses him to write scripture. And God uses him to plant churches as an evangelist.

God uses him that even when he gets beaten up and thrown in jail, still he shares the gospel. And listen to how Paul speaks. Verse 13 and then following. Did that which is good, which is moral laws, then bring death to me 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.

For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh sold under sin. Now just pause here before we go any farther.

Those of you who maybe have been reading ahead or remember what Ken just read a few moments ago, the language seems way too stark. Andrew, could you put up this next point for me, please?

[27 : 20] Here's the problem. I'm not smart enough to say this, and if you disagree with this, it's Psalm 36, verse 2. Take it up with God.

I flatter myself too much to detect or hate my own sin. That is profoundly wise. Even if you don't believe that the Bible is God's word written, like I do, you have to say, this is profoundly wise.

I flatter myself too much to detect or hate my own sin. And if you say, well, actually, you know, I'm pretty good. I don't sin. Wow! All you've done is proved how much you flatter yourself.

Because your friends, your boss, your neighbors, will not agree with your self-assessment, your kids, or your parents. And so the problem is, is that all of us flatter ourselves too much to detect or hate our own sin.

And so that when we read these next things in Romans 7, we recoil. We want to say, it's too extreme, it's too hard. We want to recoil from it.

[28 : 37] And the reason we want to recoil from it is because you and I flatter ourselves too much to detect or hate our own sin. Including myself in this.

It's jarring. Andrew, could you put up A again? Just remember, until we see him face to face, every follower of Jesus lives in the already-not-yet with a divided and contradictory self.

That's what Paul is teaching us. And when you have a divided and contradictory self, Paul isn't saying that you never use willpower. He's never saying that we don't have breakthroughs.

He's not saying that we shouldn't ask for more of the Holy Spirit. In fact, Romans 8 is the profound after-Christmas break of Romans. We're going to talk Romans 8, three weeks in Romans 8. It's the profound text about the power of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life.

And Paul's not going to say that there's not things you should know. He's not going to say any of those things, but he's going to say that if Christians use these things as sticks to beat up other Christians, trying to get us to believe that the normal Christian life is a life of victory where we do not sin, you have not understood the Scriptures, you have not understood Romans chapter 7, because a divided and contradictory self is exactly what it means.

[29 : 57] Until we see him face to face, there is always going to be a struggle with sin. And sin will continue to shock us and surprise us.

And we will, as we see in a moment, we'll ask ourselves, why on earth did I do that? How could I do that given what I know about Jesus? Struggle with sin is the normal Christian life.

To not struggle with sin means that you've surrendered to it. not everyone. I mean, some of us are just tempted for some things and not the others.

I've never been tempted to same-sex attraction, and that's not something I can be proud about. Anybody who's proud about it, that doesn't mean anything. It just means you don't have that temptation.

Some in our midst have that temptation. It's a real temptation that they live with. And that person who has maybe the same-sex attraction, they don't have maybe your problem with pride or with debt because you spend money to fill voids in your lives and they don't, or maybe they don't have your problem with telling the truth or we could go on and on and on and on.

[31 : 19] Just because, I mean, it just really is the case that there are just some temptations that no human, that a particular human being doesn't have. They're just not there. I've stayed in hotels beside casinos.

I've never gone in. I have no temptation to gamble whatsoever. Absolutely none. But I'm not saying that because it shows there's something excellent about me. I'm not going to start telling you all the things I am tempted to, by the way.

And it's one of the reasons I, but it's just not there. And I shouldn't, it's nothing to be proud about. It's just not there for some reason. I have others. I have a long, long, long list. I mean, here's the thing.

The fact is, if God showed up in our midst, an angel showed up in our midst and all of a sudden froze all of us to our seat and all of a sudden the finger of God would touch a part in our forehead and there'd be a pop-up screen that comes from our soul, who we are, and it pops up and it lists the things that we're most tempted to and the things that we succumb to in terms of sin the most and it just gives the top 100.

There'd be nobody here who would only goes up to five or down to five. Everybody would have a list that goes up to 100 and our list would be different. It would just be different.

[32 : 41] When I used to speak in settings before when we were dealing with a lot of issues around same-sex issues, I would say that one of the great problems that Christians have around that is Christians talk as if same-sex attraction is number one.

Where's that in the Bible? Not in the Bible. That's our culture. In fact, it might even be for a same-sex attracted person that when they do that thing in their forehead, their same-sex attraction isn't number one.

It might be number nine. That the greater sin that they struggle with is maybe to do with pride or who knows what it is. I don't know what it is. But that...

It's what the Bible is trying to teach us here, friends. Let's read verse 14 again. For we know that the law is spiritual and what it means is that means here is that it comes from God.

But I am of the flesh sold under sin for I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want but I do the very thing I hate.

[33 : 52] Just pause there. Isn't that a profoundly wise statement? Even if you don't believe the Bible is God's word written, this is profoundly true.

I was sharing on Parliament Hill when I was speaking there to the Parliament Hill Christian Fellowship on Friday. Here's a thing to understand. And virtually no man wakes up and says, I think I'm going to be a jerk to my wife today.

Yep. I think I'm going to take every opportunity imaginable to be a jerk to my wife. Like nobody wakes up... Virtually no man wakes up thinking that.

Like I said, virtually. Okay? Sometimes we wake up really grumpy and ornery and that is what we say. Okay? Or some people say. And no wife wakes up and says, I'm going to spend my whole day frustrating my husband.

I think that's what I'll do. I'm going to contradict him, make his life miserable. I'm going to nag him, bug him. That's what I think I'll do today. That's number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 on my to-do list.

[34 : 59] No wife wakes up thinking that. Virtually none. The experience of people is verse 15.

I do not understand my own actions for I do not do what I want but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want I agree with the law that it is good.

Andrew, could you put up the next point for us please? Here's a really, really important thing about what Paul's saying and you'll notice it in his language but it's really, really, really, really, really important.

One of the problems with like in our laws there's problems that if you're drunk you're not as responsible. There's increasingly this idea that if you have certain types of other things that are drives or wounds in your past you're not as responsible.

There are people who've gone through therapy and the result of the therapy is that they can have a big smile on their face because they now know that everything that's wrong in their life is somebody else's fault. But the Bible here is very, very clear.

[36 : 12] My divided and contradictory nature does not let me off the hook for the wrong that I do and the good that I fail to do. My divided and contradictory nature does not let me off the hook for the wrong that I do and the good that I fail to do.

It doesn't let me off the hook. But just remember throughout all of this if you could put up A again, Andrew until we see him face to face every follower of Jesus lives in the already not yet with the divided and contradictory self.

Let's just continue reading and let's do verse 16 again. Now if I do what I want sorry now if I need better glasses for if I do what I want do not want I agree that the law is good so now it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells in me.

So now it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. Is this just contradicting what you just said George or is this I'm a bit confused. Here's I'm not going to be able to prove it to you I'm just going to have to make a bit of a statement about this but it's one of the problems that we have when we bring our cultural assumptions and we just read one part of the Bible but let me tell you if you study the Bible especially the Old Testament but if you study Genesis to Malachi and then if you study the New Testament you'll see that the Bible knows that there's obviously things that come in pairs and that the number two exists but the Bible rejects all dualism.

Andrew if you could put up this next point. It's really important for us to understand and listen to this language here. The Bible is not saying that I am not divided between the divine and the earthly the higher and the lower the good and evil spiritual and physical mind and matter I could add yin and yang I am not a soul trapped in a body I am not an angel trapped on this human plane I am not a God self trapped in physicality.

[38 : 26] The Bible completely and utterly rejects all of that any type of dualism that mind is good and matter is bad that the spirit is good and the body is evil that the higher is good and that the lower it rejects all of that all the way through it in fact he's here trying to make this claim that I am redeemed fallen in the already not yet.

You see the fact of the matter is that God claims every square inch of reality every molecule is maintained in existence by him everything was created by him except evil which is a type of unmaking or breaking it's all sustained by him it will all be redeemed by him and I have a spirit and a soul and I have a body but I am an indivisible unity of spirit or soul and body an indivisible unity to divide that is what Christians understand death to be and so the Bible here is not so it's easy for us to slip in what Paul is doing is he's using stark imagery he's using a multiplication of different types of images to capture so that you know maybe if you're coming from one a certain type of pagan perspective or a Jewish perspective that you can get the point because he's using lots of different analogies to try to capture this fact of a divided and contradictory self but I have one self not two

I have one body not two and the fall affects my mind it isn't as if somehow or another it's just my body that's you know don't be mad at me for stealing that thing in the store it was just my hand my mind is thinking pure thoughts no it's nothing ridiculous like that our body is God's our mind is God's our sexuality is God's our money is God's God claims all our memories our past our dreams our longings our yearnings everything that makes me me he claims and it is redeemed in Jesus but there is a power and force still within me because I live in the already not yet and I will not be whole and free until I see Jesus face to face Andrew could you put up A again please last time I'll put it up until we see him face to face every follower of Jesus lives in the already not yet with a divided and contradictory self let's continue reading from verse 17 we see where

Paul's going with all of this I have to sort of go quicker because of the time sin that dwells within me I am divided and contradictory in my mind my body my sexuality my attachment to money my ambition every single part of me is divided and contradictory so I find it to be a law that when I want to do right verse 21 evil lies close at hand for I delight in the law of God in my inner being at the very center of who I am where Jesus sits on the throne but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members where's

Paul going with this profound verse wretched man that I am who will deliver me from this body of death 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 Andrew could you put up the almost final point wretched person that I am who can deliver me from this body of death thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord Hoboken God God God God's grace will work on my sexuality and it will work on my will power and it will work on my memories and it will work on the images in my head and it will work on my thinking and it will work on the furniture of my brain and it will work on my habits and the grace of God through the power of the Holy Spirit and God's Word written will work on how I understand my relationship to the state and how I understand my relationship to male or female and

[43 : 30] I can go on and on and on and on and on the Holy Spirit that's why we have hope in this it's the already not yet for a Christian right but it's always going to keep bringing us back to saying that's why I need a Savior in a sense as the Holy Spirit moves and works more deeply in our lives not only do we do start to see some victory over sin and we really do and we really do see healing but we often discover new areas of our lives that were broken by sin that we didn't even know existed and one almost final point Andrew could you put up point number six a follower of Jesus's eternal standing with God cannot be shaken but our walk with Jesus needs daily attention and daily grace a follower of Jesus's eternal standing with God cannot be shaken but our walk with Jesus needs daily attention and daily grace when we call out to Jesus to be our Savior and our Lord we he really takes our hands he really redeems us he really makes us born again the final word about God we can from God about us we can now know but in the already not yet until we see Jesus face to face I have a divided and contradictory self and knowing the gospel the more I'm gripped by the gospel the more I'm able to be have before me a model of how it is that I should live as I'm grounded and gripped by the gospel gripped by the gospel and grounded in the gospel there begins to be a process to see yes the Bible knows this about me and maybe by myself and maybe with the help of a brother or a sister or a congregation I can start to look at how it is that I have such a problem with selfishness there's such a problem with anger in my relationships or such a problem with twisted ambition and as the gospel grips us and as we're ground in the get in the gospel as we understand how our standing before God that is dependent not upon our accomplishments but upon his right standing with God given to the lowest and worst believer and the best as a free gift of grace his right standing with God is now mine when I put my faith and trust in Jesus and nothing will take that away and as this gift of righteousness grips us as it becomes the ground of our being we have a model for how to live we get nudged into new ways of living we get drawn with the problem of seeing the promise of seeing Jesus face to face to new ways of living and we can look at those roots of our behavior and our contradictory and divided self as we give up the whole process of self-righteousness and self-justification even as people criticize us we can say yes I am a man who needs prayer and I don't think I need to be healed of introversion but introversion doesn't excuse all of us the way I live and there are things in my introversion that needs healing just as extroverts need some healing in their extroversion and you see it's within this context you're gonna understand everything in the Anglican liturgy the heart of the Anglican liturgy is to get you to give your life to Jesus but day by day there's going to be new things that come to our attention that we need to say Jesus I'm sorry for that and give me grace that's what the confession is all about not that you say confession 53 100 times you go to heaven nothing to do with that it's your daily walk and we'll skip the other images let's just go to Romans 1 could you all stand please could you say this with me Romans 1 16 and 17 for I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power

of God for salvation to everyone who believes to the Jew first and also to the Greek for in the right the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith as it is written the righteous shall live by faith a power of God for salvation that ordinary people like you and me can receive and then we begin to live in the already not yet until we've given our lives to Jesus God is just patiently hoping that we respond to his call his call on our lives to give our lives to Jesus but when we put our hands in Jesus's hands we receive a righteousness that comes from God and now we live by faith let's bow our heads in prayer father if there are any here who have not yet given their lives to Jesus may this be the day may this be the moment where they call out to you not with fancy words or that they have to repeat after me but may they just say father Lord Jesus Christ what George was talking about today I need I am that wretched man I need you as my Lord and Savior and father may those who have not yet made such a call may they say that today and father for those of us who are here we still have contradictory and divided selves you know father how things like anger resentment or unforgiveness or wounds from our past and you know father the power they still have in our lives we call out to you father that you might make us disciples of Jesus gripped by the gospel who are being freed by your holy spirit and by your word there are only people who are being admired by the gospel our Father if there is any other means should have been did we make us better as if we are subject to God and in our lives we ask kamera we speak to you that we offer you who are seeing Jesus in their lives in their lives look at all of us IT offices when they stop■■■ we just said pour it out father we might be disciples of Jesus gripped by the gospel pour out your holy spirit in this we ask in Jesus name and all the people said amen

Amen.