

# Cornerstone Bible Church

## Doing What I Hate

(Romans 7:1-25)

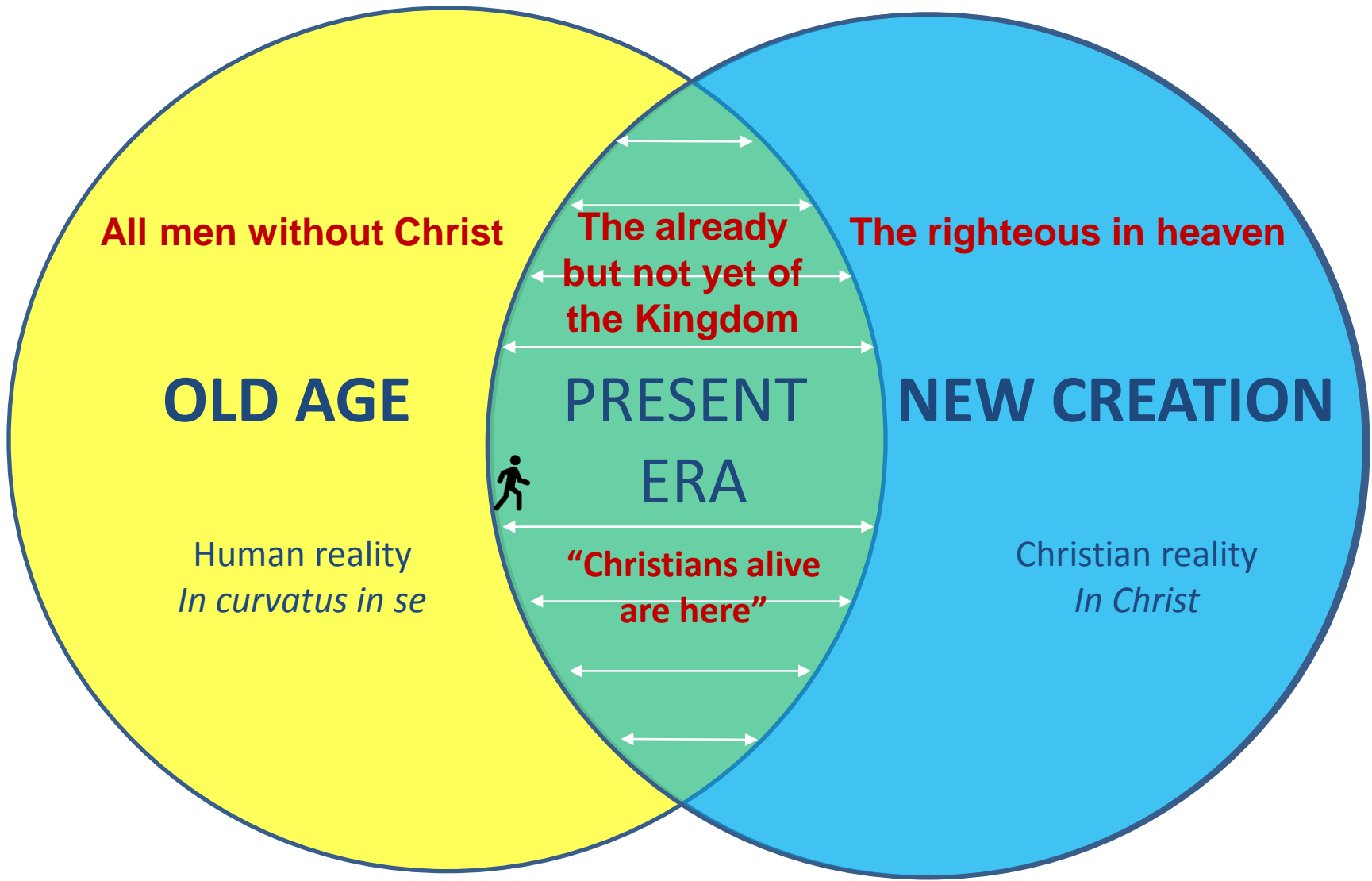
Survey of Romans part 22

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*The Tension to Understand Romans 6, 7 & 8*

SIMMUL JUSTUS ET PECCATOR



## ***The Believer's Existential Dilemma***

- We are new creatures in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17
- We have been made partakers of the Divine Nature 2 Peter 1:4
- We are a new self, in the likeness of God, created in righteousness and holiness of the truth Ephesians 4:24
- **But, we still live in a body of flesh!** We have not been transformed yet! cf. Romans 8
- We live between two worlds.

**Text:** Romans 7

### **Outline:**

- a) An illustration 1-6
- b) An explanation 7-14
- c) An affirmation 15-25

a) **An illustration:** the relationship between the Christian and the Law. 1-6

1. The bond of marriage: dissolved by death.
2. Jesus annulled the yoke of the Law against us at the cross, then He married us.
3. Therefore, the Law has no longer power to bind us. We have been espoused to Christ!
  - The Law cannot curse and condemn us. We are married to a new husband!
  - Our new reality is described by verse 6: “But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that **we serve in the new way of the Spirit** and not in the old way of the written code.”

**b) An explanation:** of the relationship between The Law and Sin. 7-14

“7 What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, 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.”

...

<sup>13</sup> Did that which is good, 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.”

**b) An explanation:** of the relationship between The Law and Sin. 7-14

- **The problem is not with the Law.** The commandment is good.
- The Law points to and reflects the heart and character of God. It is God's will and desire. There's nothing wrong with the Law. Psalm 19:7 **"The Law of the Lord is perfect!"**
- **If the problem is not with the Law, what is it?**  
The problem is SIN!  
*(A good machine with a bad operator)*
- The Law is what gives traction to sin.
- Sin without the Law a Jet Engine without air



**c) An affirmation:** the inevitable dilemma/paradox for the believer 15-25

<sup>15</sup> For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

<sup>16</sup> But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, **I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good.**

<sup>17</sup> So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me.

<sup>18</sup> For I know that **nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh**; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

<sup>19</sup> For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish.

<sup>20</sup> But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

<sup>21</sup> I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good.

<sup>22</sup> For **I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,**

<sup>23</sup> but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

<sup>24</sup> Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

<sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

c) **An affirmation:** the inevitable dilemma/paradox for the believer 15-25

1. We do what we hate

15 For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

2. The new man loves Righteousness

16 if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, **I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good.**

3. Remaining sin is still in us

17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me.

4. The flesh remains evil

18 For I know that **nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh;** for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

19 For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish.

20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good.

22 **For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,**

a) The reality of the battle between flesh and spirit

23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

b) The anguish of the war

24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

c) The Victory of the war

25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.



c) **An affirmation:** the inevitable dilemma/paradox for the believer 15-25

**1. We do what we hate.**

- This is the believer's dilemma.
- A hint about pastoral counseling: CHRISTIANS ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO TRULY KNOW THIS PARADOX!
- The unbelievers don't fight. Paul uses a strange language to describe it. **"<sup>9</sup> I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died."**
- I take the side of commentators who see this as an existential (not a theological) declaration.
- Paul is saying, I was living in peace and self satisfaction when I had no conscience about the Law, but when I learned the commandment, **I realized my utter sinfulness.**

**c) An affirmation:** the inevitable dilemma/paradox for the believer 15-25

**1. We do what we hate.**

- Who was “existentially” alive apart from the Law?
  - The person who had no conviction of sin.
- Who died when the commandment came?
  - The person who saw their sin arise through the Law.
- **Remember Bunyan: Christian** thought he was drowning. **Ignorance** found **Vain Hope** offering a ride on his ferry, but Ignorance was sent to hell from the gates of heaven.
- As unbelievers we were persuaded to be alive and to be very good people, until the Spirit applied the Law with conviction.

**c) An affirmation:** the inevitable dilemma/paradox for the believer 15-25

**1. We do what we hate.**

- Even true Christians may convince themselves that now they keep the Law and are pleasing to God on account of it,
- They trust their standing with God because they obey Him!
- This is the death Paul suffered when he discovered his sinfulness
- Now after receiving new life in Christ, they still struggle as a result of remaining in a body of sin.
- The Gospel must be applied to the soul daily

Illustration: **blue** pill / **red** pill of the Matrix

c) **An affirmation:** the inevitable dilemma/paradox for the believer 15-25

## 2. We love the Law, but we don't do what we love.

- This is the flip side of the coin.
- “According to the inner man” ...
- “O how I love your Law” cf. Psalm 119
- “Your commandments are sweeter than honey, even honey from the honeycomb” Psalm 19
- James calls it knowing to how to do good, but not doing it.
- Here lie the tons of “*I should...*”, and “*someday I will...*”, in our vocabulary.

c) **An affirmation:** the inevitable dilemma/paradox for the believer 15-25

### **3. The emotional rejection: “wretched man that I am!”**

- Even as believers we carry remaining sin.
- Even as believers we still are who we are, by nature.
- It is the implanted seed of God that works the change.
- When we realize who we really are, we cringe.
- Beatitudes: “hunger and thirst for righteousness” both imputed but also imparted.
- The parable of the two men praying in the Temple: “be merciful to me the sinner.”

**c) An affirmation:** the inevitable dilemma/paradox for the believer 15-25

### **3. The emotional reaction: “who shall deliver me from this body of death?”**

That is the body where our regenerated souls live.

**The illustration:** “... binding the corpse of a murder victim to the back of the murderer! The words of Paul in this passage bring to mind this gruesome practice of carrying around a 'dead body', much like a man condemned. It's as if Paul felt that something dead was strapped to him and accompanied him wherever he went... Paul was expressing the experience of every believer. Even though we long for purity and holiness, yet at times we feel bound helplessly to the "dead body" of our sinful nature. Even though we know that we are 'new creatures' in Christ, and that our physical bodies are not in themselves evil, the tendency to sin is always carried around with us. We often feel (like Paul), that we do what we do not want to do, and we do not do the things that we want to do. How often do we cry out like Paul "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

c) **An affirmation:** the inevitable dilemma/paradox for the believer 15-25

**4. The Dilemma ends in Hope:** Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the Law and from the power of sin through it.

“<sup>25</sup> 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.”

## **CONCLUSION:**

- ✓ In your dilemma, look to Jesus
- ✓ During your battle with sin: look to Jesus!      Illustration:  
Baseball players and the coach
- ✓ In your victories: look to Jesus!
- ✓ In your defeat: look to Jesus!

*“Never are we so holy, that we do not need Jesus’ grace and forgiveness, and never are we so sinful, that we can’t have Jesus grace and forgiveness”.*

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*“Never are we so holy, that we do not need Jesus’ grace and forgiveness, and never are we so sinful, that we can’t have Jesus grace and forgiveness”.*

That’s why the next sentence is: **“now there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”** This should be Romans 7:26 and not Romans 8:1



**END**