

1. **Introduction:** Today we continue our study of chapter 7. In verses 7-13, Paul argued the Law is not responsible for sin or death. In verses 14-25, he argues the Law is holy and good but has no power to save from sin or produce ultimate holiness.
 - A noticeable change in verb tense occurs between 7-13 and 14-25. Paul appears to change from thinking about the past to thinking about the present.
 - In 7-13 pronouns are first person but the verbs are past-tense. In contrast, pronouns are first person and the verbs are present-tense in 14-25.
 - Linguistically, the natural view of past-tense verbs in verses 7-13 is that they refer to Paul's past experience and therefore probably a pre-conversion time.
 - On the other hand, the natural view of present-tense verbs of 14-25 is they refer to Paul's situation when he was writing and therefore post-conversion.
 - Paul seems to speak about personal experiences before and after conversion.
 - If 14-25 are about Paul's after-conversion experience as a mature Christian, they include some difficult phrases that appear inconsistent with that status.

2. **Romans 7:14-25:** *“For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. ¹⁷ So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³ 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. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ 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.”*

- The interpretation issue is “To whom do the ‘I’s’ in this passage refer?” Commentators disagree.
- Does “I” refer to an unconverted or converted person, or one in some intermediate state?
- As mentioned earlier, in verses 7-13 the past-tense verbs seem likely to refer to a pre-conversion time.
- The present-tense statements of verses 14-25 are difficult to accommodate with what is known about Paul’s life.
- The most natural interpretation of 14-25 is Paul is writing about his situation at the time of writing.
- Paul teaches that every believer is indwelt by the Spirit who works to transform them into a moral likeness of Christ. Also that the justified are freed from slavery to sin and become slaves of righteousness “in Christ.”
- Would Paul, as a mature Christian, say “I am of the flesh, sold under sin?”
- Would Paul, as a justified believer, say “I cannot do the good I want to do,” or “nothing good dwells in me” or “wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?”
- If Paul is talking about pre-conversion experiences, these things make sense, but a different set of problems then arise.
- Would an unconverted man say things like I delight in the law of God in my inner being? Yes and no. If the unconverted man is a Jew, the answer is yes. If the unconverted man is pagan, the answer is no.
- Paul teaches that justified believers are freed from slavery to sin and made slaves of righteousness “in Christ.”
- He teaches that the Holy Spirit indwells each believer and works to transform the believer into a moral likeness of Christ.
- Is he now contradicting these statements in 14-25? Commentators disagree about the proper interpretation of these verses.

3. **Some Thoughts on Human Nature:** A believer’s new life “in Christ” begins with regeneration and justification.

- A person is born into the world with a spiritually dead human nature. Regeneration introduces new spiritual life into the person's human nature but it does not replace the elements of the original as-born nature.
- This new situation can be described by saying, the believer, after regeneration, has 2 sub-natures which interact to form one regenerated human nature.
- The two sub-natures are the old "in-Adam" and the new "in-Christ" natures.
- The desires of the two sub-natures conflict. The new sub-nature desires godly behavior. The old sin nature, inherited from Adam, has sinful desires.
- The old sin nature which controls a person until their regeneration, is displaced at regeneration to a subordinate position but remains powerful.
- In the life-interval from justification until mortal death, a believer's new and old sub-natures oppose one another in constant warfare.
- To some extent that seems to be what Paul is talking about in verses 14-25 but that cannot be the whole story.

4. **Justification without Receiving the Holy Spirit:** It is usual that regeneration, justification, and receiving the indwelling Holy Spirit occur at the same time. However, Acts 19 mentions people who have been justified but have not received the Spirit. What are the implications of that?

- In 7:6 Paul said, *"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."*
- Justification releases a believer both from the necessity of personal perfect obedience to the Law to obtain righteousness and from the penalty due for having disobeyed the Law.
- If a person receives justification but does not receive the Holy Spirit, they have been declared righteous apart from the Law but remain under the Law for sanctification.
- When a person receives the Spirit, He initiates, guides, and completes sanctification.
- Justification without receiving the Holy Spirit sounds much like what Paul expresses in 14-25.

- Being regenerated by grace through faith in Jesus, but remaining under the Law for sanctification could explain the apparent contradictions in 14-25.
- How believers who were converted before the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost received sanctification is not explained.
- Indeed, even after Pentecost, there were some believers who did not receive the Spirit when they believed. For example: **Acts 19:1-7**: *“And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. ² And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” ³ And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John’s baptism.” ⁴ And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” ⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. ⁷ There were about twelve men in all.”*
- Perhaps Paul went through a stage like that. The extent of the Holy Spirit’s work in Paul on the Damascus Road is not clear.
- He was certainly regenerated and turned from persecuting Jesus to obediently following Him. But when did he receive the indwelling Spirit?
- Perhaps Paul is remembering the anguish of people under his ministry who were like the ones of Acts 19:1-7, regenerated but not even having heard about the Holy Spirit which they must have if they were to become holy.
- Since that Pentecost day, justification and regeneration are normally accompanied by the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit, but there might be exceptions where delays occur.
- Even for a person to whom the indwelling Spirit is given at the time of justification, there remain sin problems arising from the remnant sin nature.
- Paul’s personal experiences show that even a godly Apostle struggles with their remnant sin nature as do all other believers.

- Each of us can identify with Paul's confession about himself.
- Though we may think the language he uses seems at times to not match the experience of what should be true about a mature Christian who has more than 20-years-experience preaching the gospel, I'm confident God understands.
- In verses 24-25 Paul is crying out for relief from his dilemma of wanting to do good but still, at least at times, doing evil. His understanding that sin is "internal" as well as "external," was a shock to his training as a Pharisee.

5. **A Believer's Life after Justification:** Why does a justified believer sin?

- Believers' justification is permanent! Regeneration is permanent! Chapter 8 shows that glorification is guaranteed! But sanctification is in progress and not yet complete. The sin nature remains active and believers will at times sin.
- In justification believers are declared legally righteous by the Father and pardoned from the penalty for sins of the past, present, and future.
- But in mortal life, believers are not experientially righteous.
- Ultimately believers will be glorified, made righteous and holy like God, but in this life they are a work in progress.
- Regeneration, justification, and glorification are all unilateral acts of our perfect God. Believers are passive under these acts of our perfect God.
- But sanctification requires active participation by believers who are imperfect.
- The Holy Spirit makes sanctification possible and guides the believer's thoughts, words, and actions with promptings in their spiritual heart.
- But the believer can interfere with the sanctification process by grieving the Spirit or can even stop the process for a time by quenching the Spirit.
- Participating with the Spirit in the process of sanctification means cooperating by obeying God's moral Law, loving God with all our being, loving others as ourselves, and carrying out the Spirit's promptings.
- In that way, believers can live true to Christ in the here and now.
- Like regeneration, justification, and glorification, living a true Christian life requires God's intervention.
- Thanks be to God's provision of intervention through the indwelling Holy Spirit who is our necessary supernatural helper. He is the subject of chapter 8.

6. **Background Information for Chapter 8:** As preparation for studying chapter 8, it is useful to review the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Pentecost “pouring out,” “coming” or “giving” of the Spirit.

- Jesus said, after He returned to the Father, He would send a helper. He described the mission of the Helper. **John 16:4b-15:** *“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. ⁵ But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷ Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. ¹² “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”*
- How does the Holy Spirit indwell a believer? How does He interact and influence believers and unbelievers? There is much mystery in the work of the Holy Spirit.
- The work of the Spirit is partially revealed, but the “how” of His work seems to be one of the mysteries mentioned in Deuteronomy 29:29: *“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*
- Ultimately, the Spirit transforms every believer into a moral likeness of Christ. That necessarily means He exercises influence over a believer’s thoughts, words, motives, will, imagination, and memory.
- We understand something of why and what He does but very little about how.

- The Spirit's interface to a person is spiritual. I believe the Spirit interfaces through our spiritual heart.
- The Spirit's activities are mostly silent and invisible, taking place in our inner being, but the internal changes produce externally observable effects.
- Observable effects include things like being reformed from alcohol or drugs, learning to control your temper, ceasing vulgar or blasphemous language, or becoming a diligent student of the Bible.
- The interface of the indwelling Holy Spirit with a believer is so intimate it is often difficult for a believer to know whether the Spirit is working or they are themselves working or both.
- Trying to understand how the Spirit interacts with a physical person seems to have much in common with attempting to understand mind/brain relationship.
- Is the physical brain the source of the nonphysical mind, or does the nonphysical mind use the physical brain to accomplish its purposes?
- Biblical comments about eternal life show us that some vital non-physical part of a person survives at their mortal death. The surviving non-physical part is usually referred to as "soul." The soul is rational, has memory, imagination, and other characteristics usually associated with "mind."
- Both before and after Pentecost, the Spirit has always interacted with and influenced those who believe. The "outpouring" of the Spirit at Pentecost apparently signaled a change in the way the Spirit interacts with people. Many believe the Spirit influenced but did not indwell believers before Pentecost.
- The Holy Spirit, as the third person of the Trinity is truly God and has all God's attributes. He is eternal, the same in essence and character as the Father and Son, unchanging, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, etc.
- Though God does not change, His interactions with His creation do.
- God always deals with His creation according to His purpose that includes different actions at different times..

7. **Pentecost**: In Judaism, the 50th day after the first day of Passover is designated the Day of Pentecost.

- The Pentecost following Jesus' crucifixion was very special. On that day, the disciples were assembled awaiting fulfillment of Jesus' promise of power to carry out His commands when the Spirit fulfilled the prophecy of Joel.
- **Joel:2:28:** *“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions.”*
- The Holy Spirit came upon the assembled disciples bestowing on them amazing gifts to be used in spreading the good news about Jesus.
- The Spirit came with power. His coming was accompanied by noise like a rushing wind. Divided tongues as of fire settled on each one of the disciples.
- When the disciples left the house and were seen by people, they were acting so strange that the people thought they were drunk.
- Then Peter, anointed by the Spirit, preached to the crowd attracted by the strange things happening to the disciples. About three thousand were converted.
- In his sermon, Peter quoted Joel: **Acts 2:33:** *“Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.”*
- It is not precisely clear what is signified by the “coming” or “pouring out” of the Spirit.
- All members of the Trinity are omnipresent. Omnipresence means “completely available at every spatial point in Creation.”
- However, the Spirit's omnipresence does not signify He interacts with whatever is present at each point in creation. God determines when an interaction will occur.
- Something significant concerning the Spirit and His relationship to people took place on that Pentecost. Scholars disagree about just what it was and what it means.
- Was it the advent of the Holy Spirit? Was it a special manifestation of the Spirit given to prepare the disciples for the task of spreading the Gospel?

- No matter what is said, one thing is clear, the Pentecostal event was unique, unusual, spectacular, and epoch changing.
- All believers are brought into union with Christ. Together all believers form a spiritual body of which Christ is Head.
- Christ's Church was set in motion that Day of Pentecost and has become the earth's most important institution.
- Undoubtedly, all believers, OT and NT, owe their regeneration, justification, sanctification, illumination, and assurance of their salvation to the gracious work of the Holy Spirit.
- I am convinced the Holy Spirit is and has always been the One who applies the benefits of Christ's salvation work to believers, either in anticipation of what Christ would do, or because of what He had done.
- A common reformed position, originating with Calvin, asserts that the gift of the Holy Spirit to believers was "partial" before the Pentecost event, but on that day, the gift of the Holy Spirit was "complete."
- Calvin says, that before Pentecost, *"The Holy Spirit was not yet given, that is comparatively speaking when comparing the Old Testament with the New, the full gift of the Spirit was future."*
- It seems to me that Calvin means that, like us, he doesn't fully understand how the Holy Spirit interacts with believers but since he is confident salvation is real in both OT and NT times, the Spirit was working in both times.
- A remaining question is "Was the work of the Spirit different in some way in OT times from that in NT times?"
- What does a "partial" giving of the Holy Spirit mean?
- Does it mean the Spirit regenerated but did not indwell? Can the Spirit bring about sanctification without "indwelling?" I don't know, but I am confident sanctification is always a work of the Spirit however He accomplishes it.
- The question of the time when the "full giving of the Holy Spirit" or outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh was to occur is indicated in John's Gospel.
- **John 7:37-39**: *"On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever*

believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”³⁹ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

- The outpouring of the Spirit did occur as stated after Jesus was glorified. The particular time was on the Day of Pentecost after Jesus’ ascension and glorification.

8. What is Next: Chapter 8.