

Have You Died with Christ?



Bro Ricky Cunningham

Romans 7:5–6

A couple of weeks ago when I was preaching about false prophets, I made a comment that there are some things you can teach falsely but not be a false prophet, and I mentioned three things and I got a few chuckles and a few grins because there are some things I believe a little differently than some others believe. After that sermon, Kory came to me and said that several people asked him what I believe differently about Romans chapter 7. So, this morning I want to share my belief on Romans chapter 7, but I want to give you a little background story first.

Many years ago, the church gave me a sabbatical. I was going to go to Florida for eight weeks and my intention in going to Florida was to write a book on the book of Romans. I had studied the first six chapters and I was going to spend those eight weeks writing about those first six chapters. At the time, Kory was pursuing a professional motocross career and he wanted to train in Florida so the timing was perfect. He was already in Ocala, Florida at Hard Rock Cycle Park training with a trainer, and after the first of the year, I loaded up the motor home and headed there. It was a

small motorhome, twenty-four foot long, seven and a half foot wide, but I stuck thirty commentaries in that motorhome — because if you are going to write a book and you have borrowed something from other people, you need to make sure you give them credit and footnote where you have been influenced — so as I was writing my book I was going to credit everyone who had had an influence on me through those six chapters.

So, get this picture. Kory and I are camped at the motocross park and he is practicing on a motorcycle seven to eight hours a day under the tutelage of a professional. While he was being trained, I sat in the kitchen area of that motorhome to begin to write my book...and something inside me would not let me open those commentaries. I thought...now, my purpose is to footnote — but it was as if the Spirit of God was saying...*don't do it, don't do it, don't do it*. So for the first two days, I struggled. Why am I even here if I can't do what I'm supposed to do? Well, I had just finished Romans chapter 6 and so I thought...okay, I will just start reading in Romans chapter 7. And when I got to the end of the chapter, something inside just said...*read it again*. So I read it again, and I read it again. Now, my methodology is, as I read I write, and I glean everything that I think I can glean. And once I have gleaned everything I think I can glean, I then go to my commentaries — and I had thirty. When I started to open up my commentaries to see if they agreed with what I was seeing, again I just sensed...*don't do it*. For the next three and a half weeks, I never opened a commentary; I just saturated myself, seven to eight hours a day with Romans chapter 7. After a couple of weeks, I began to realize I was straying from what my church believes, both at Ledbetter and the church I was pastoring here at Hardin. I began to realize that what I' was beginning to believe was not going to be mainstream at all, it's going to be viewed as radical; it's going to be viewed as wrong. When I finally opened up those commentaries, well, guess what? I couldn't find any of the mainline scholars and pastors I like to read who agreed with me. Praise the Lord, there were a couple out of thirty. But I came back home knowing that I was now going to stand before our congregation and teach something that was going to be considered 'out on a limb.'

Twenty-two years later, I still stand out on the end of that limb. I don't apologize, because I feel like I am here because of what I sense Scripture says. I believe with all of my heart that if I'm wrong, that doesn't make me a false prophet, and if you are wrong, it doesn't make you a false prophet — but one of us is wrong, and I pray this is not a test of fellowship. I just want to share with you what I hope is the truth. I am not going to blame God for this, but I'm going to say had you not given me the time you gave me, eight weeks in Florida, seven to eight hours a day sitting at a kitchen table in that little motorhome, I do not believe I would see what I now see. Let's be prepared for me to humbly present what I believe in Romans chapter 7 and chapter 8 are teaching.

Scripture

"For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. [That sound bad. It's not a good state to be in.] 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."

Now, this morning we are going to do what I warn us to never do, and that's to start in the middle of a book. We just don't do that here at Hardin. But I have studied this book many, many, many times, and if you have studied this book, you know that the book of Romans basically breaks down into these sections: Chapters 1–3 talk about sin, chapters 4–5 talk about salvation, chapters 6–8 talk about sanctification, chapters 9–11 deal with sovereignty, and then chapters 12–16 talk about service. Therefore, we know that Romans chapter 7 is part of the three chapters that are talking about our sanctification as a Christian.

Now, Romans chapter 6 is clear: If you have been baptized into Christ, when you were baptized with Christ you died to sin, and the old person you were, a sinner, died with Christ. Paul said was *crucified* with Him, that the body of sin we live in might be rendered powerless, and then, he said he who has died with Christ is free from sin. Throughout Romans chapter 6, we have this language: died with Christ, free from sin. Why are we free

from sin? Because when we died from with Christ, we were also raised with Christ, and when we were raised with Christ, we became a new person. The old person that was crucified was dead to God, alive to sin; therefore, they were a sinner. But the new person who was resurrected with Christ, like Christ, died to sin and is now alive to God. Therefore, as a new believer, a Christian, you are not a sinner; you are a saint who is alive to God, dead to sin. And Paul says you can't keep on sinning. Why? Paul says, chapter 6, sin shall not have dominion over you, since...Whoa! Here's why sin can't control us anymore, why sin can't be master of us anymore, why sin can't dominate us anymore — I am talking about the power of sin — we are not under law but we are under grace. Then, he's going to finish out this chapter by basically telling us two things: we are either a slave to sin, or we are a slave to righteousness. If you are a slave to sin, guess what? It's going to pay off one day; you are going to die and spend eternally separated from God forever and ever and ever. The result is going to be death. But if you are a slave to righteousness, it's going to bear fruit to God. One day you are going to receive eternal life, life with God forever and ever and ever. Then chapter 6 ends.

Now, look with me at chapter 7.

7:1 Or do you not know, brothers--for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives?

Paul is writing to brothers. Well, he is writing to the church, who he identified in chapter 1 verse 7 as saints of God, and now he uses that affectionate term, brothers. He has just finished in chapter 6 talking about how we are not under law but under grace — and in this verse, he doesn't say 'but,' he's not going to give a contrast, he's going to continue that thought. He says, "Or," because I think, he thinks that some who just heard what he said are shocked, so he's going to go deeper into this thought that sin shall not have dominion over us since we are not under law but under grace. And he says, "...do you not know, brothers?" and then he identifies the brothers. Look how he identifies them (with two dashes), "--for I am speaking to those who know the law."

Why would Paul say that to a church in Rome, predominantly Gentile people, capital of the Roman Empire? Because there are a few Jews in the church. The Gentiles of Rome would have had no problem with Paul saying not under law but under grace, but the Jews would have struggled. So I think Romans 7 and 8 are written in particular to the Jewish side of the church, or to Gentile proselytes, those who had converted to Judaism and had brought themselves under the Law of Moses. Does that make sense? This is key. If you miss that, you will miss the chapter, I think.

Here is Paul's principle: That the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives. So, here's the thought — As long as I am alive, I am under the law...so the way to get out from under the law is to die. Well, that doesn't sound like a good option. Agreed? So that we understand what he's saying, he's going to give us an example. Look at these next verses.

7:2–3 For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

Now, Paul is not teaching on marriage and divorce here, or death here. He's just using what they *knew* to make a point. Here is the point...if you are a Jewish woman and you are married, the law says you can't live with somebody else, because you are married to him. If he was to die, then guess what? You are free from being married to that husband and you can go choose another husband, and if you choose another husband, you will not be called an adulteress. But if he doesn't die and you go mess around with somebody else, you are going to be called an adulteress. So if you are a lady in a bad marriage and you are Jewish, you have to hope he dies. Until he dies, you can't look for anybody else. Only if he dies can you go get husband number two — that is what Paul is teaching here.

7:4 Likewise, my brothers (Now Paul is going to make a spiritual application to the church, the Jewish side of the church) you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.

Likewise, if you are a Jewish believer... Well, if you are a believer, what does Romans chapter 6 say? It says if you are a believer you died with Christ, and when you died with Christ, you were raised with Him and for Him. And so here is what Paul says...you as a Jewish believer are no longer married to your former husband, you are no longer married to the law of God; you are now married to Christ, husband number two. That just seems so simple! Why are Jewish believers not under law? Because there was a death that occurred. So here is my principle:

Jewish believers are not married to the law, but to Christ. They are free from the law because of their death with Christ.

Tell me you see that. So we have husband number one, the law, but whoa...does that mean the law is dead? No. Law is still alive. Law is still powerful. Law is still operative. Paul didn't say the Jews are released from the law because the law died; he said they are released from the law because *they* died. They died with Christ. When they died with Christ, they were raised with Christ to be *married* to Christ. Why? So that they will bear fruit for God. I hope you see this.

Paul's Thesis Statement

7:5–6 For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at working our members to bear fruit for death. 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.

Bear with me just a moment. It is my heartfelt conviction that Paul, here in these verses, is revealing what we called in English class the thesis statement. Do you remember writing your research paper in high school or college? Before you turned in the paper, you first turned in a topic, and

then once the topic was approved, you had to turn in your thesis statement. You had to study enough to kind of know what you wanted to say and what you believed, and then you had to turn that statement into your teacher and your teacher had to approve it. Once it was approved, you had a certain amount of time to prove in your paper what you said you were going to prove in your thesis statement. Now, if you are like me you loved those projects, they were absolutely awesome to get to do.

So you have to understand, I was sitting in that little kitchen area in a little motorhome, in a little motocross park, and all of a sudden my eyes get opened to what I learned in grammar class — Paul is now giving us his thesis statement! — and there are two parts to it. There is verse 5, “For while we were living in the flesh...”, and then there’s verse 6, “But now...” and there’s a contrast. Here is what I want you to know I believe, and it’s ok if you disagree with this, but we aren’t going to see this alike. And if I am wrong on this thesis statement then I am probably going to be wrong in my conclusion, but here is what I believe: The truth of Romans 7:5 is proven by Paul in Romans 7:7–25. What did he say in Romans 7:5? “For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.” So, what I expect to see in Romans chapter 7:7–25 is that thesis proved. That while we live in the flesh, sinful passions are aroused. They are aroused by the law and then result is death, separation from God. This is what life looks like if you are a Jew and you are married to husband number one, the law. It’s not going to go good. If you stay married to the law, the end result is going to be eternal separation from God. And you are going to be a miserable person throughout your whole life if you try to earn a right relationship with God by keeping the 613 laws of Moses. It’s not going to turn out good.

Now, look at 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.” I believe Paul is going to prove this in chapter 8 verses 1–39. Does everybody get that? I have read some commentaries that say Paul could have gone from Romans 7:6 straight to Romans 8:1. No, he couldn’t. He couldn’t. If he had done that, the best

grade he could've gotten in class was a 50 because he wouldn't have proven his first point of his thesis. Does that make sense? Now, here is what influences me. When we start verse 7 and we go to verse 25, it's going to be Paul talking about the life of a Jew (himself) trying to earn a right relationship with God, and how, ultimately, that was used with God to bring him to realize he was a sinner and need of salvation in Christ. And then once he comes to Christ, he's going to talk about the difference in being in Christ and being under grace rather than being under law. Now, I am not asking you to believe this; I am just asking you to follow my thinking. Look again at verse 5, "While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, at work in our members to bear fruit for death." If I am close to right on this, just based on that verse here is what I would expect...there would be no mention of the Spirit of God and there would be no mention of the new life in Christ, and everything in verses 7 through 25 would be leading to doom and gloom, separation from God, and the life of a man enslaved to sin. Now, let's actually see what verses 7 through 25 say.

Life under the Law

Paul realized he had a sin problem (V.7–8)

Verses 7 and 8 say, "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." But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead." Whoa! Do you hear what Paul is saying? Paul was saying...Is the reason we are not under law because the law is bad? No, law is good! Paul is going to say if it weren't for me being a Jew under the law, I would never have realized I was a sinner. While I was trying to keep the law, guess what happened? The law actually made me aware what covetousness was. Up into that point, I did not know what covetousness was. Now, Paul's not meaning that intellectually he didn't know what it meant to not covet. What he is saying is I never have a problem with keeping the Sabbath; I never had a problem of dishonoring my mom and dad; I never had a problem putting God before other gods; I never had a

problem with murder; I never had a problem with adultery; and I never had a problem with bearing falsehood. I thought I was doing good until I came to that commandment that said thou shalt not covet. Then do you know what happened? When I tried to keep that one, I started coveting everything. The more I tried not to covet, the more I would covet. So my principle is Paul realized he had a sin problem as a Jew under the law. I mean, isn't that his own words? The law is doing its part. What's the law supposed to do? Make me realize I have a sin problem. Now, is it the law's fault? No, it's sin's fault. Sin seized an opportunity, sin that was lying dormant in him suddenly took control of his life, and he couldn't stop coveting. He's now under the power of sin, not as an act, but a power, a principle in his life.

Paul realized he was dead, not alive (V.9–11)

Verses 9–11 say, "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." What did life under the law cause Paul to realize? He came to realize he was dead, not alive — dead, not physically, spiritually, separated from God, a sinner. Does everybody see this?

Paul realized he was a slave to sin! (V.12–14)

Verses 12–13 say, "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." I want you to listen to that language. Paul says, is the law the problem? No. Is husband number one the problem? No. There was nothing wrong with husband number one; the problem was sin in you seized the opportunity and made you become sinful beyond measure! So all of a sudden, you are committing sins that you had never thought about committing, and the only reason you thought about him was because there was a law that said you can't do it!

I really read this...A hotel opened in Florida that was close to the beach, so close that they worried the people in the hotel might want to fish from the

balcony, so they posted a sign, "NO FISHING FROM THE BALCONY." Guess what started happening two or three months later? Men were fishing from the balcony all over the place. And the hotel couldn't stop it. So someone suggested they just take the sign down. They took the sign down, and guess what happened? Three months later, nobody was fishing from the balcony. How many of you have ever thought about going to Florida and fishing from your balcony? No, we don't think thoughts like that until there's a law saying we can't do it! Once we know we can't do it, we are going to try to do it.

That is Paul's point with the law. God married the Jews to husband number one, this law that's holy, spiritual, and good, to make them realize they are sinners! That leads to verse fourteen, "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin." Here's my point: Paul realized he was a slave to sin. He said I am sold under sin. It's the picture of slavery. The slave trade was very common in the Roman Empire, and so this phrase sold under sin come right out of slave trade. That meant you were under a master, you were dominated by someone, someone else controlled you, someone else had right to your life. Paul uses this word in a spiritual way to say...I am of the flesh and I am a slave to sin. There is no way you can look at that phrase "sold under sin" and come up with any other conclusion than Paul saying I am a sinner, not just a sinner, a *slave* to sin.

Now, those of you who disagree with me on this have noticed, and you have asked about the change of verb tenses in verse 14, from the past tense to the present tense. I agree. And in that little kitchen, in that little mobile home, for weeks I struggled, because everything I was hearing him say in the present tense didn't sound like a believer to me. I couldn't understand why he changed tenses but it sounded like to me he was drawing attention to himself. But it made me think he was drawing attention to himself not as a Christian but as a Pharisee — who living under the law, who everybody else in the Jewish world thought had it made and did not have sinful thoughts — Paul is now emphasizing how he felt when he was an unredeemed Pharisee trying to be saved under the law. Months later, I discovered something when I begin to go through my

commentaries and read the scholars. See, I was trained in Greek when I was in Bible seminary, but I am not a Greek scholar. Can I read Greek? Yes. Do I understand Greek? Yes. Am I a scholar? No. But I discovered that in Greek language, there is a present tense called the dramatic present, or the historical present. When a Greek writer would use a dramatic or historical present tense of a verb, they are speaking of a past time, a past event, but they are putting it in the present tense to make it historical, to make it dramatic, so that it emphasizes the point. When I read that, I thought... *Wow! That's what Paul's doing here.* He's switching tense, not to talk about himself as a believer who is writing the letter to the church at Rome, but he's using the dramatic present to talk about himself being a Pharisee trying to earn a right relationship with the law...and here is what he says...I am sold under sin; I am a slave to sin.

Now, let me ask you a question, for those who disagree with me. If the Apostle Paul is writing here in the present tense as a Christian, how can he tell the church of Rome in Romans chapter 6 that if you have been baptized into Christ, you died with Christ — and if you died with Christ you died to sin and you have been set free from the law, and sin doesn't have dominion over anymore and you can't be a slave? How can he tell the church at Rome they can't be a slave to sin, and then here in Romans 7 say he is a slave to sin? Is this a 'do as I say, not as I do' moment? No. Are you going to tell me you believe that while the Apostle Paul was writing the book of Romans he was a slave to sin and not free, after 'free from sin in Christ' being the main point of Romans chapter 6? That's a contradiction, a big contradiction.

Paul realized he did not have the ability to do what he wanted to do and he realized he did not have the ability to not do what he did not want to do! (V. 15–18)

Now, look at verses 15–16, "For I do not understand my own actions. 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." Do you see what Paul is doing? Paul is saying I don't do what I want to do, and if I don't do what I want to do then I agree with the law, that it's good. What Paul is saying is the law is making me aware I can't do what I want to do. It's not the law's

fault! No, the law is doing what it's supposed to do. It's supposed to make me aware that I can't do what I want to do! The next verse says, "So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 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." This is the great Apostle Paul writing to the church at Rome, and he says he doesn't have the ability to do what he wants to do, which is to do right. How many of you believe a Christian does not have the ability to do right? We do have the ability, don't we? Paul says he doesn't have the ability. The language here is he doesn't have the ability to do what he wants to do! Let your kid try that on you as a parent, "Sorry, Dad...can't do what you are telling me to do. Just don't have the ability!" That's what Paul says...he came to realize he did not have the ability to do what he wanted to do, and he realized he did not have the ability to not do what he did not want to do. That is life under the law. The law brings us to the place to understand we are a sinner, we are a slave to sin, and we don't have the ability to do what God requires.

Paul realized sin was in control of him! (V. 19–20)

Verse 19 says, "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing." Paul is not presenting an act of sin here but a continuation of sin. This would be like a Christian saying I can't quit lying. I can't quit gossiping. I can't quit doing pornography. I can't quit having affairs on my wife. I can't quit cheating. Are any of you going to buy that? No, you are not going to buy that because it's a lie! Paul is not talking here about occasionally committing an act of sin. He says I keep on doing evil! Verse 20 says, "Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me." He came to realize that sin was in control of him. Paul's not passing the buck here and trying to separate himself as a dichotomous believer who sin has taken complete control of and he has no say in this. No. He is saying there's a dominant principle in his life, and the dominant principle is sin and it's in control of him. Now, I have a question. How can Paul say in Romans 6:14 "for sin shall not have dominion over you since we are not under law but under grace" and now turn around and say sins got control of him? It's because he's not under grace in this chapter. He's under law in this chapter and law is doing what law is

supposed to do, and that is bringing us the place to recognize we are a sinner and we can't be freed from it on our own.

Paul realized the law of sin in his body was more powerful than the law of God in his mind! (V. 21–23)

Verse 21 says, "So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand." Hear this theme he keeps developing. Verses 22–23 say, "For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, 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." Evil is so close to him that all of a sudden he realizes he has this desire in his mind to serve the law of God. But while he's trying in his mind to serve the law of God to do what's right and not do what's wrong, he realizes there's another law inside him. That's what? Making him captive! Making him enslaved! What is the principle? It's the law of sin. So inside Paul at this time there's a law of sin that's so great he can't do what he wants to do, and he has to do what it wants him to do — and the law of God in his mind that he's striving to serve does not give him power over this law of sin. This law of sin wins every time; it brings him captive. Does this really sounds like the guy who wrote Romans 6? No. I mean yes he wrote this, but he's not referring to himself as a Christian who's struggling with sin. He's writing about a Jewish Pharisee who is enslaved to sin because he's trying to show the Jewish side of the church that you can't be set free from sin under law. You have to come into a second marriage, and that marriage is with Christ. You are free in Christ and it changes your life! What the law cannot do, Christ does.

Paul realized he was a wretched (miserable) person! (V. 24)

Now, listen to verse 24, "Wretched man that I am!" Just listen that first part. The Apostle Paul is writing this and he's admitting he's a wretched man. The word, wretched, means miserable. Paul realized, under the law he is a wretched, miserable person. Do any of you really believe that the Apostle Paul who is writing this great letter to the church at Rome is miserable and wretched? No, he's not speaking about life with Christ; he's speaking about life under the law. When you are a Jew striving to keep the Law of Moses and you are trying to do it but can't do, and you are not

wanting to do something but you do it — when you come to that place you realize you can't do this, that you don't have the ability to do this, you are miserable. You are miserable!

So with his mind Paul is going to serve the law of God, but with his flesh the law of sin! (V. 25)

We will come back to the last part of verse 24 and the first part of verse 25 at the end. But look at the last part of verse 25, "So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin." Here's what Paul saying, in my opinion. As a Pharisee living under the law, he came to this place of misery, and he is saying...*in my mind, I am going to serve the law of God. In my mind, I'm going to do the right thing. But do you know what I'm going to do in my flesh? I'm going to serve sin. In my mind, God knows I do not want to have an affair, but I'm going to have an affair. In my mind, I'm going to tell myself I'm not going to do pornography again, but in my flesh, I'm just going to look at pornography tonight. In my mind, I'm going to serve God, but in my flesh, I'm going to lie, I'm going to cheat, I'm going to steal, I'm going to serve.* This is the great Apostle Paul! He's not saying with my mind I am going to serve the law of God, and with my flesh I am going to *struggle* with the law of sin — he's not picturing a struggle; he's picturing him in a life of service to sin, and it's breaking his heart! But if he hadn't gone through this marriage with the law, as a Jew he would have never come to understand he was a sinner.

Paul realizes his only hope of deliverance from this body of death is Jesus! (V.24–25)

So, what's my last point? The last part of verse 24 and first part of verse 25 says this, "Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" So, what does Paul realize? His only hope of deliverance from this body of death is Jesus. Guess what the next verse says, chapter 8 verse 1, "There is therefore now..." Remember Romans 7:6, "But now..." Now, he's going to start talking about married to Christ. There is therefore now what? No condemnation. Why? For the law of the Spirit of Christ has set him free from the law of sin and death. Is the

guy in chapter 7 free in any way? No. In chapter 7, does it mention the Spirit of God ever? No, not in verses 7 through 25, because he's not talking about life in the Spirit, he's talking about life under the law. If I'm wrong and you are right, and Paul is a Christian — then you can put your faith in Jesus Christ, live anyway you want to live, and you can just say that's just the way I am. You can follow any sinful thing you want to follow if Paul is a believer here, because then *you* could say with my mind, I'll do this but in my flesh, I'll do that. Nobody believes that's what Paul's saying...but that's what he says. So he either is a Christian or he's not when he's writing this. He's not. You say you struggle. I know you struggle, and Paul talks about his struggle — but it's not in Romans 7, it's in Galatians 5. Do you know where his struggle is? It's not between flesh and law, he's not under law; it's between flesh and Spirit. And then he tells us if we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the desires of the flesh. Here in Romans, he is dominated by the flesh because he doesn't have the Spirit because he's not in Christ; he's under law, in my humble opinion.