

Romans 7:13-25

Romans 7:13-25 Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. (14) For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. (15) For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. (16) If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. (17) But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. (18) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. (19) For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. (20) Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. (21) I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. (22) For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. (23) But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (24) O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (25) I thank God; through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

Questions On The Text

Does the law, which is good, produce death?

Verse 13: Paul is continuing his argument from the previous section, but with this question, comes from a slightly different angle. He is answering a possible accusation that claims that he is saying that the law produces death, since it is the law that arouses the sinful desires which result in death.

Not true, says Paul. The law reveals the existence of sin, and shows it for what it is. And the very fact that something as good and pure and holy as the law can produce such a reaction reveals how sinful sin really is.

Why do we do evil?

Verses 14-23: Paul now presents the personal dilemma of everyone who desires to do good. Common to all humans is the experience when, despite the best intentions, the desire to do good and avoid evil is not supported by the ability to do so. How often we do the evil we don't want to do, and fail to do the good that we want to do! How can this be explained?

Paul says that this predicament proves the existence of a power called sin, present in every human. In this way, he implies a distinction between sin (singular) and sins (plural). Sins are what we do. Sin is the power, the force, the inner principle that drives us to commit sins.

Does God have a solution to this struggle against sin?

Verses 24-25: Paul has such an obvious understanding of what it means to wrestle with the power of sin, and lose, that it had clearly been a part of his experience at some stage of his life. He empathises with the person who knows the frustration of such a defeated life and cries out for deliverance.

The body of death refers to the human nature which is bound by sin and subject to death. While the situation seems to be hopeless, there is a solution through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Further Questions For Discussion:

Can you think of occasions when you decided that you would not do something wrong but ended up doing it anyway?

Can you give an example of a very young child, having been told not to do something, seems to have an irresistible urge to do that which they've been told not to? Why do you think that happens?

Can you think of occasions when you wanted to do the right thing but found yourself powerless to do it?

Explain the difference between sin and sins.

What part do you think faith plays in the struggle against the power of sin?