

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson
Romans 7:13-25
"The Struggle"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Now we have come to the time in our service in which we read the Scripture, and so if you have your Bibles there will you turn with me to Romans chapter 7? And I want to read verses 13 through 25 of the 7th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

Now we have come to this particular text, verse 13, in our exposition of the book. And the apostle has been outlining some of the results of union with Christ. He has spoken about how we have died with respect to sin, and we have died with respect to law. And sense that raised some questions, the apostle is answering them. One of those was, is the law sin? And Paul answers, no the law is not sin. The law is holy, just, and good. One might ask then well then Paul, if the law is not sin, if it's holy, just, and good, why this death then of which you have been speaking? And so the apostle will answer the question now. Was that which is good made death unto me? Was the law responsible for my death? And he will go on to say no, it's not really the law. Our problem is indwelling sin. That's the real problem.

So will you listen now as we read verses 13 through 25? The apostle says,

"Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I understand not."

Now let me stop for just a moment here. You will remember that when you read the Bible that you are reading a translation. You are reading a translation of a text in the New Testament, a Greek text; in the Old Testament primarily a Hebrew text. And you will also recognize and many of you in this congregation know that there are many manuscripts of the Greek New Testament. And consequently, it's the task of textual criticism to examine the materials of textual criticism according to the principles of textual criticism and arrive at an edited text which is translated into English.

Now it is possible for errors to occur in this sense that the textual critics might select the wrong variant reading, and then it is also possible for translators to error because they don't understand the context.

Now when we read here, "For that which I do I understand not," literally the text might read, occurred by a cursory reader of the Greek text, "For that which I do I do not know." But the word "know" has a broad usage. And it is clear from the context that Paul knows precisely what he is doing. In fact, he gives us here, perhaps, one of the most incisive, perceptive pictures of what transpires in the heart of a Christian man found in all literature. I think it's the most perceptive. Augustine's *Confessions* is, perhaps, next to it. So it's clear that Paul does understand.

Now there is another meaning for the word "know," and we have it in the New Testament and it's surely the meaning here. It's approve. "So that which I do I do not approve," and the following context shows that's the meaning. Incidentally, the New

International Version of which I had a part in translating is also wrong in this spot. I'm sure they're going to change this, ultimately. But it has "I do not know what I'm doing." Of all people, Paul is the one who knows what he's doing. It's clear that the translators at this point didn't know what they were doing. That was the problem.

"For that which I do I do not approve: for," Paul explains, "for what I would, I do not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

And I must make one further comment. The apostle uses the term, I, about thirty times in this section. You will be confused in reading this if you don't understand. In one slight distinction the apostle uses the word "I" in a comprehensive sense most frequently. The comprehensive sense is the sense of the person actuated both by the Holy Spirit or the new nature and sin because we are one person but we have an indwelling sin and we also have been given a new nature having believed in Christ. So that's the comprehensive I. But occasionally, the apostle uses "I" in a very limited sense. That is the person actuated only by his new nature.

Now if we bear that in mind, we won't have any difficulty. And we have one of these limited forces in verse 17.

"Now then it is no more I (in the comprehensive sense it is still I. But in the limited sense) it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. (Can you identify with that? Most of us can.) Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I (limited I) no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man (that's another expression for the limited I, the inward man.) I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, (still another term for the limited I, the law of my mind) and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (Perhaps, this body of death?) I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. (And then a summary statement concludes the section.) So then with the mind (that is the limited I) I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

May God bless this reading of his word.

[Message] Our subject this morning in the continuation of our exposition of the Epistle to the Romans is a very simple one, but I hope a very meaningful one. It's simply, "The Struggle." The Christian life is the impossible life for its element is the supernatural, and this is true in both its inception and in its continuation. In its inception we must learn that religion, it does not avail. We must learn that good works do not save. "For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God not of works lest any man should boast." We must learn also that even sincerity will not avail. The apostle in this great Epistle to the Romans in the 10th chapter in the first verse

expresses the great sincerity that one might have and yet be lost for he said, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge."

So here are zealous individuals with a zeal for God attested by an apostle, but nevertheless, his prayer is that they might be saved. So consequently, we must learn that religion, good works, and sincerity do not save. We are under sin, and therefore, something must be done for us. When we hear the gospel of Jesus Christ we learn that something is done for us in the saving work that he accomplished when he died as the sin sacrifice on the cross at Calvary. But then as we enter into the Christian life we have another great lesson that we need to learn, and that is that in its continuation the Christian life is the impossible life for it is a supernatural life. It's discouraging as a new Christian to feel that your determination to please the Lord God melts away when trials and troubles come. It's discouraging and it's defeating to see your resolves which you have so earnestly brought before the Lord God melt away when some trial faces you.

And it's certainly discouraging to discover that in the Christian life you find yourself doing the very thing that you hate to do. And so the things that you want to do you cannot do, and the things that you hate to do you find yourself doing them. The tendency is to try all forms of Christian legalism, introduced taboos. Don't do this. Don't do that. Don't do the other thing. And that will be pleasing to the Lord, and you will be victorious in your Christian life. Or resolve even harder with your will. Perhaps, even spend more time in prayer or witnessing, giving out the gospel. These things surely are the means by which we may find merit before the Lord God. But we discover that Christian legalism will not do in the Christian life. We discover as Paul has told us here in this passage that we've read in our Scripture reading that we are slaves to indwelling sin, and something must be done in us now.

So the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the unfolding of something done for us and something done in us. Christ dies for our sins on the cross, and the Holy Spirit is sent into our hearts to complete the work of redemption by doing something in us; something that is not completed until the time of the resurrection, but something that is going on constantly.

So the glory of the gospel is that while the struggle is always there Jesus Christ not only saves but he through the Spirit also sanctifies. And looking to him we may please God.

Now the writer to the Epistle to the Hebrews has put that in a very vigorous way in the 12th chapter of his great unfolding of the high priestly ministry of Jesus Christ. He has said,

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses let us lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us and let us run with patience the race that is set before us looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross."

If I were to look for some illustration of the Christian life in the New Testament as something supernatural, I think, one of the most pertinent illustrations is Peter's walking upon the water. That was something that was supernatural. It was certainly impossible, but Peter did the impossible as long as his eyes were upon the Lord Jesus

Christ. But when his eyes strayed as he came into the presence of the Lord, to the winds and waves and saw their boisterous nature, he became afraid and began to sink.

Now it is very comforting to see that even though his faith has wavered, the Lord Jesus reaches out and saves him and preserves him even in the midst of his unbelief. But Peter walked on the water. He did the supernatural. He did the impossible, because of the virtue that came from Jesus Christ as he looked as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews said, as he looked unto him. The virtue that came from the Lord Jesus Christ enabled him to do the impossible.

Now Paul has argued that as a result of the fact that Jesus Christ is our covenantal head and we are united to him that in his death we have died with respect to sin. He argued that in chapter 6. In chapter 7, he has argued that we have died with respect to the law. We're like a wife whose first husband has died and has married to another. She's no longer under the law of the first husband, but now married to another. So are we. Formerly married to the old man, our relationship in Adam, now as a result of what Christ has done and the faith God has given us, we are married to the risen Christ. We are delivered from the Law of Moses.

Now that raised questions. Is the law then sinful, Paul? You said we have died to sin. You've said we've died to law. Are you saying that the law is sinful? No, no. Paul says the law is not sinful. The law is holy, just, and good. Then what is the cause of this death in me? And Paul will now show that it is indwelling sin. And that is the thing he will show that causes this how of verse 18 to burst from his mouth. "How to perform that which is good I find not."

Now if we will pay attention we will discover how to perform that which is good. Now the apostle has a very simple method of developing his thought here in a passage that is not easy, but nevertheless, it is simple. There are three cycles. One cycle concludes in verse 17 with the statement, "Now then it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me." The second cycle of his thought concludes in verse 20 with this statement almost identical, "Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." And the final cycle concludes with the last statement of verse 25, "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God but with the flesh the law of sin." He wants to show that believers are divided persons, and it is important for us to recognize that.

Now when we look at this passage and we study it a little bit it is not long before we discover that believers have differed over the interpretation of it. One of the most interesting things about it historically is that this was the passage that James Arminius, the father of Arminianism, first began to expound in an aberrant way that led, ultimately, to questions about his orthodoxy in the Reformed Church in Holland. It was his expositions of Romans chapter 7 in which he departed from that which was generally the standard teaching on Romans chapter 7 and caused his teaching to come into question. James Arminius died a Reformed theologian, but his followers, ultimately, broke from Reformed teaching severely and originated what we know as Arminianism, another interpretation of Christianity. But this is the chapter in which Arminius began to differ from the Calvinistic teaching in which he had been taught.

Now you study this and immediately you will discover that there are differences of opinion concerning this particular section. There are some who say that Paul is not reasoning as a Christian man here, but as a non-Christian man. That is he is reasoning as

a man who is simply trying to keep the law apart from the faith of a redeemed man. And then there are some other positions as well.

Now we don't have time in a sermon on Sunday morning to deal with the history of the interpretation or with the fine points of the positions which I just mentioned, for example. I only say this, as far as I'm concerned it seems to me quite plain though there are strong arguments one might bring up for a different opinion that the apostle is really speaking as a saved man and he's drawing on his own experiences. And I will give for you what I consider to be the more significant arguments. In the first place, the general flow of the argument of the Epistle to the Romans suggests that because the apostle has already discussed the doctrine of sin and justification. Now he's moved on into the discussion of wrath and sanctification, and so it would be natural for this to have reference to Christian life teaching rather than teaching about justification and how to become a Christian. So the flow of thought in the epistle would suggest that Paul is speaking as a saved man.

In the second place, I'd like to remind objectors to this view that the burden of proof rests upon them to prove their point rather than upon me to prove mine, because the apostle is using the first person. He says, I, I, I. And when a man uses the first person and when he uses the present tense, you will notice that he uses the present tense throughout this section, then we are to assume that he is speaking of his own feelings at the time of his writing unless one can demonstrate plainly and clearly otherwise. And this is the more important when one remembers that he uses this language uniformly throughout the section. In the immediately preceding verses, he used the past tense. But now he uses the present tense. And so the fact that he uses the present tense with the "I" suggests I'm writing as a Christian man, and I'm telling you the experiences that I have had as a Christian man and the experiences that I go on having.

Therefore, I think we're led irresistibly to the conclusion in the preceding section we have historical facts concerning how he came to understand the nature of the law, how it brings conviction of sin, and actually increases the sin that dwells with us by stirring it up; whereas here, he is talking about his present experiences. Furthermore, it is very difficult for me to see how an unsaved man could diagnosis his case so perfectly. I've never known one to diagnosis his case so perfectly. He has a clear view of himself. He says, "I know in me that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing." He has a noble view of the law of God. He hates sin. He delights in the law of God. He looks to deliverance from Jesus Christ. How can that be the language of an unsaved man?

So I'm inclined to think then that the apostle is arguing as a saved man. He is drawing upon his own experiences, and with that we will move on to the passage itself. And let me just comment on some things that I think are somewhat important in it. In the 14th verse he says, "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin."

Now he wants to show us in this section this cycle that the believer is a bondsman to sin. He says we know that the law is spiritual. By that he means the law is something that has been given from heaven. In Rabbinic literature it was often said that the law was spiritual and the meaning of the contexts usually is that the law is something given by God on Mount Sinai.

So when he says we "know that the law is spiritual," he means the law has been given to us by God in heaven, and thus, it is holy, just, and good. "But I am carnal, sold under sin," I am fleshly.

Now it is, I think, important to note that he is talking about the partial bondage of an imperfectly sanctified man, not the total bondage of an unsaved man. That is evident in the context, and we'll point out in a moment some further evidence of that. So when he says, "I am carnal, sold under sin," he's talking about the partial bondage of the imperfectly sanctified.

Now the New Testament speaks of Christians as carnal individuals. William G. T. Shedd has commented in his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans that a regenerate man may be called carnal is proved by 1 Corinthians 3:1 and 3. So the apostle calls himself carnal, sold under sin. He means that apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit, he is dominated by the flesh, and we shall see he's brought into defeat by the flesh constantly. He's not master in his own house. That's what he's really trying to say. I'm not master in my own house. I am a bondsman to sin even though I have been brought to the forgiveness of sins.

Now some people have affirmed on the basis of the next verse that Paul was a golfer. There's a story about a very dedicated preacher who was playing golf and on the thirteenth hole, finally after having topped a few and hit a few into the trees, finally go onto the green and putted up near the hole on his first putt and had just a little short two foot putt and missed that. Well he picked up his ball and he threw it as far as he could, broke two clubs, and sat down in frustration. I want you to know that I have experienced that same thing, that identical thing. And in fact, before I was saved there was a few other things that I did on the golf course when I missed putts like that. So he said I've got to give it up. I've got to give it up. "Give up golf?" said the caddy. "No, the ministry," he said. [Laughter]

Now there was a preacher, a Lutheran preacher, by the name of Roger Prescott who was pastor of Saint Mark's Lutheran Church in Fargo, North Dakota. He used to have days on the golf course in which it looks as if his avocation was going to drive him from his vocation. Well there was a fellow clergyman with whom he played, and this man showed him how to deal with the frustrations of the golf game. When his fellow clergyman showed him the way to deal with it, it made it a whole lot easier for him. He noticed that on one hole the fellow clergyman hit a very weak drive out there and then he got up to his ball he pulled out the club that he thought that he'd reach the green with and he settled himself down into his position and he drew back and shanked it off into the trees over to the right and he jumped up and down and said, "Romans 7:15! Romans 7:15!" And the blood vessels on his head were popping out like this and he thought that was a very nice way to swear but he didn't know what Romans 7:15 said, and so when he got home that night the first thing he did was to look it up and in his Bible it read, "I don't understand my own actions, for I do not want I want but I do the very thing I hate." [Laughter]

So on the basis of this some have affirmed that Paul was probably a golfer. [Laughter] Now you know you never can tell what will happen in Believers Chapel, but this morning after I finished the message one of our wits in the audience out there, we have better wits in the audience than in the pulpit, I assure you. He said, "We know that Paul was a golfer because he said I have finished my course." [Laughter] And that proves it.

So anyway the apostle writes here, "For that which I do I do not approve." The apostle surely understood exactly what he was talking about. It's the translators that don't

understand Paul. "For that which I do I do not approve for to explain what I wish that I do not do but what I hate that do I. If then I do that which I would not I consent unto the law that it is good." And he concludes the first cycle by saying, "Now then it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me." Isn't it an interesting thing that even when we are in our most holy moments, our holiest times, sin intrudes.

Have you ever gotten down upon your knees and said I need a more intensive prayer life? And so you pray very fervently, but even in the midst of your prayer to the Lord God himself, you are in his presence, an unholy thought will flit into your mind and you will suddenly stop thinking about praying to the Lord and you'll think about that thought. That thought will come into your mind just like a buzzard through the sky. And then if that doesn't happen you will pray very earnestly and you will get up and you will say I surely am making an advance in the spiritual life. [Laughter] It won't be long before they'll be asking me to be a deacon or an elder at Believers Chapel. I'm so earnest in my prayer life. Even in the midst of our affirmations of desires to please the Lord and even in our aspirations sin intrudes. We are bondslaves to sin or ourselves.

Now in the next cycle the apostle turns to the negative, stresses the negative and inward side of things. He says in verse 18, "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh," that qualifying limited clause, incidentally, shows us that he writes as a Christian. If he was writing as an unsaved man he would just simply say I know that in me there is nothing good. That would be true of the unsaved man, but the fact that he says, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh," shows that there is an aspect of him that is good. So he writes as a Christian. "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." He's speaking in the limited "I" sense. So he distinguishes between himself and the flesh. He's a divided person. The flesh is utterly corrupt. It can do nothing for God.

Many years ago when I was in the insurance business in Birmingham, Alabama, and had just been converted Lewis Sperry Chafer came to Birmingham, Alabama and conducted a weekend series of meetings. Why I had a friend who was a graduate of Dallas Seminary and I went to the meetings at his invitation, and I enjoyed Dr. Chafer and listened to every one of the messages that he gave. I remember one of the messages particularly because it was on Romans chapter 7. And Dr. Chafer was a man who was sixty-two years of age at that time, just a little man, a very nice face and a very fine teacher of the word. I listened to every word that he said. He was very quiet. Some people I know went to sleep. They used to complain about that around the country so they told me later, but I always found him most interesting. Well in the midst of one of his messages he said now Campbell Morgan, who has traces of Arminianism in his teaching, changed a verse of a well-known hymn that we often sing. We actually sang it this morning. I did not tell Mr. McCracken about this. I don't know if he had heard a tape previously or what, maybe it was just the providence of God that we sang that hymn, Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing, this morning. Dr. Chafer said, "Campbell Morgan had traces of Arminianism."

Now I heard that. I didn't know exactly what that meant but it sounded bad. [Laughter] And so I paid attention. He said, "I know that hymn has a verse in it that reads, 'Prone to wander Lord I feel it; prone to leave the God I love.'" But he said,

"Campbell Morgan who has traces of Arminianism changed it to 'Prone to worship, Lord I feel it. Prone to serve the God I love.'" And then Dr. Chafer turned to the audience and he said, "Now how many of you think that Campbell Morgan was right?"

Well we heard that clause, "that has traces of Arminianism," and that sounded bad and so nobody raised their hand. He said, "How many of you think the hymn writer was correct? Prone to wander?" And so we all raised our hands, and that little smile came over Dr. Chafer's face. He was a man before his time. He had a mustache. Anyway, a smile came over his face and he said, "Both were right." And of course, he was right because it is true there is an aspect of each one of us as believers that is prone to wander. And there is also an aspect of us as a result of our conversion that is prone to worship. We are divided persons. One of the things that the Holy Spirit attempts to do it seems to me in the lives of each of us and does at his sovereign will at a particular point is to bring us to the place where we recognize that we are so weak we cannot do anything. As long as we think we can do something we're not weak enough. It's not until we come to the realization that in the flesh we cannot please God, it's not until then that we are able to really advance.

And finally, in the last of these cycles in verse 21 through verse 25, he says the believer is always in a losing conflict. The old man living within is stronger than the renewed self. The new life alone is not enough in the Christian life. Listen to what he says, and notice the figure of the warfare and how we lose the battle every time. He says in verse 21,

"I find then a law, (a principle) that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man, (after that renewed self) But I see another law in my members, (there are two wars there) warring against the law of my mind, and (notice the second law is always victorious) and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

The apostle uses the present tense. It is durative in force. There is warfare constantly going on and as long as this warfare goes on within the believer and as long as the believer does not look outside of himself he is always in a losing battle. He will lose every time. I delight in the law of God after inward man, but I see another law, it wars against my mind and it brings me into captivity. I'm constantly defeated. It's no wonder that he said, "Oh wretched man that I am!" And I want to tell you, there is nothing more musical in the ears of the Lord than when a Christian says, "Oh wretched man that I am!" There is nothing more spiritual, there is nothing more scriptural than when a person says, "Oh wretched man that I am!" You can see that in all of the teaching of the word of God. You can even see it in the question of salvation. You can see this principle in sanctification.

Take Jonah as an illustration. There he was in the belly of the great fish. When did he get delivered? When he had given up all hope of delivering himself. If you'll read the 2nd chapter of Jonah, he was in great misery. He prayed. He was still in the belly of the great fish. He cried. He was still in the belly of the great fish. He promises, "I will look again toward Thy holy temple." He's still in the belly of the great fish. He moralizes. He sacrifices. He vows, but he's in the belly of the great fish still. At length he finally says, "Salvation is of the Lord."

Mr. Spurgeon said, "He learned that line of good theology in a strange college." [Laughter] "Salvation is of the Lord." And the very next verse he's on dry land. You see the principle is that deliverance comes both from condemnation and guilt of sin and from bondage of sin when we recognize we cannot deliver ourselves. "Oh wretched man that I am!" What a magnificent, musical, spiritual, scriptural cry! And then he goes on to say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

You know when the apostle says, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" we want to notice one thing. I don't want to get ahead of myself. But will you notice that relative pronoun, the masculine, "Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" It is not what but who. In other words, it is a person who delivers. Man does not a law. He does need religion. He cannot keep the law and religion will not save him. What he needs is a Savior. And so Paul looks outside of himself, and deliverance in the Christian life comes when we look outside of ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ. As Dennison put it, "Oh that a man would rise in me that the man I am may cease to be."

"Who shall deliver me?" Thank God there is such a man through Jesus Christ our Lord, forgiveness from Christ on the cross, deliverance from Christ in the heart through the Holy Spirit. You know sometimes I must confess, I guess it's my old age, but I do get a little disturbed when I hear evangelical Christians these days running after every kind of superficial kind of teaching and emphasis. I even hear Christians saying, this is when that law of the flesh is inclined to get the best of me, I even hear them saying what I'm interested in is practical teaching.

Now let me say to you my dear Christian friend, there is no more practical teaching in all of the Bible than theological teaching. Theology is practical. So called practical teaching as a general rule, not always, so called practical teaching is often impractical because it's false. This is one of the great mistakes of Keswick teaching. They have failed to stress that we are in a constant struggle as long as we're in the flesh. There's no plain of life to which we may attain or in which we may reach finally that we should have smooth sailing. There is growth, there is development, and when we've been a Christian for many years we should, of course, have made progress in the Christian life. Our failures should not be what they were when we began.

We are not like little children, constantly a mess, constantly in trouble needing constant discipline, but as long as we're in the flesh we're struggling. The struggle is there to the end. The apostle will point out that complete deliverance does not come until the resurrection. It's impossible to live in Romans 7 and then get out of Romans 7 and into Romans 8 as we're often told as a permanent dwelling place. That's not taught in the Bible. We have struggle as long as we're in the flesh, but there is a way for us to enjoy overcoming power and that is by looking outside of ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ. And the sanctifying ministry of the Holy Spirit continues constantly, and we learn more and more as it is the habit of life to look to him in the trials and troubles of life. All of the experiences of life if brought simply to our risen Lord and looked at in the light of him who is outside of us, all of those experiences become stepping stones to growth and development in our Christian life. The Christian life is very simple. It's really looking unto him in all of our experiences.

So "who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." That's kind of a little theme statement that he will develop in Romans

chapter 8. Romans 8 is the exposition and expansion of "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," for it is through him that the Spirit comes to indwell us.

So the apostle then has stressed the inability of the flesh either in the unconverted or in the converted he must do something in us now, for and in us at the resurrection for ultimate deliverance. The sufficiency of Jesus Christ, the apostle stresses. So as I say he says in a sentence what he will say in a chapter in a moment.

John Newton, that great Calvinistic servant of the Lord and hymn writer wrote a stanza which I think is apropos. He said, "By various maxims, forms, and rules that sought for wisdom in the schools, I sought my passions to restrain but all my effort proved in vain. For since my Savior I've known my rules are all reduced to one to keep my Lord by faith in view. This strength supplies and motive too." Mr. Newton was right, and that sufficiency was received when our inabilities are acknowledged by God by the Holy Spirit bring us to the conviction of what we are and causes us in his wonderful grace to lean upon him who is our sufficiency, then we know what it is to find some deliverance in our Christian life. When we give up, he takes up. May the Lord give us the desire to please him in a holy life a will to give him the reigns of our hearts.

There is one last thing that remains if I may say it, the apostle said, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Why not try Paul's recipe? "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." We cannot live the Christian life in our own strength. We can only live it in the strength of the Son of God. May God help us to look unto him.

If you are hear this morning and you've never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, of course, you do not have him within. Your need is to recognize him as the sacrifice who offered himself up for sinners, and if God the Holy Spirit has brought you to the conviction that you are lost under guilt and condemnation, your need is to flee to the cross and receive the free gift of forgiveness of sins. So may God speak to your heart. Come to Christ. Believe in him. Receive everlasting life as a free gift. It's not by works or righteousness that we have done. It's according to his mercy that he saves us. May you come to Christ. And for you who are believers come to Christ. Come to him. Look to him in the experiences of life, in the troubles, the trials, the disappointments, the tragedies, in the needs come to him and he will undertake for you. Believe him.

Shall we stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for this page out of the apostle's life. What a great privilege it is to be able to read after the apostle's own explanation of the thoughts and aspirations and disappointments and struggles that were part of him. We thank Thee for this transcript from the apostle's experiences. O, God help us to learn from it.

If there should be some here, Lord, who have never believed in Christ may they turn to him right now. And for those of us who do know Thee, Lord, so work in us by the Holy Spirit that we're motivated to look oft outside of ourselves to him who not only saves but sanctifies in the Spirit. Go with us now. For Jesus' sake. Amen.