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The feeling of lack is generated in the presence of this, and this actually goes all the way back to chapter one of Romans. You remember the sequence of events there. It says when they knew Him as God, it doesn't talk about all of their sins and their disobedience and being given over to passions and things until after their awareness of God.

When they knew Him as God, they did not glorify Him, they were not thankful, they became empty in their imagination, their foolish heart was darkened, exchanged the glory of God for the image of four-footed beasts and so forth, and gave away the natural functions, et cetera, et cetera. They go down this long, scary road of degeneracy, but it's all after they knew God. It is as though being faced with the standard and pushing away the standard brings out the rebellion.

If you are characterized by a rebellious spirit, there's nothing like a standard to make you want to rebel. There was a movie that came out in the 50s, you remember James Dean, *Rebel Without a Cause*, and probably the most famous line out of that movie, I think some girl I vaguely remember, she comes up to James Dean, and he's wearing his leather jacket and everything, she says, well, what are you rebelling against? And he says, well, what have you got? And he's just a rebel looking for something to rebel against. And I think this is the idea that if you are prone, if you are of a nature to reject authority, the imposition of authority is going to give you an arena to manifest that attitude.

It doesn't create the attitude, and it doesn't even necessarily encourage that attitude, but it provides the opportunity to express that attitude. And so when Paul says the sinful misery, or the misery of sin, the suffering of sin, this unhappiness associated with sin that is aroused by the law, people chafe under the law when they're negative, when they're rebellious. What have you got that I can rebel against? You say, I shouldn't want my neighbor's ox or his mule or his wife or whatever.

Giving that standard just gives you an occasion that you might not have even thought about it until the rule came, and well, why not? Why this standard? The rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram back in the Old Testament, when God said it's Aaron and his line that will be the priests in Israel. Well, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram had never rebelled before this. They came out of Egypt.

They went across the Red Sea. They did all of the things that the rest of the Israelites did, but when God came out and said Aaron and his sons have the priestly authority, Korah, and Dathan, and Abiram said, well, what's so special about Aaron? Why can't I be the priest? Why didn't they say this before? Why didn't they say this at the Red Sea? Why didn't they say it in any other... It's at the point that God said only Aaron and his sons can be the priests, and these people said, well, we want to be the priests. Why can't we be the priests? We're just as good as Aaron and his sons, and it just provided an occasion to express the negative attitude that was in their soul.

And we have this today, and society has an answer for it, because it's a truth that the imposition of a standard will spawn rebellion in people who don't like standards, and this happens with children. You establish a rule or you establish a standard, children are going to want to violate it. There's nothing that will produce children kicking and pushing than to say you're not allowed to kick and push.

It just seems to bring it out. If you've ever worked with children at all in a school environment or taking care of them during the day, certain children seem to delight in flaunting whatever standard is communicated. They would have never thrown a rock except that you made a big point out of the fact that you're not allowed to throw rocks.

And so society has an answer for this, and that is let's not impose any standards. We can keep the child from expressing his rebellious nature if we just don't impose any standards. Let the child do what he wants, and he won't rebel.

There's nothing to rebel against. And this is a false solution, and all you do is instead of confronting and extinguishing that rebellious spirit, you give it an environment where it has no boundaries, and it can grow and fester, and inevitably it's going to encounter a standard and rebel in a very big and strong way. And so we see this principle coming to pass all the time, and the answer for today, this happens in Christian circles now for new believers.

Well, you know, there's freedom in Christ. Let's not provide guidelines. Let's not say that there's a particular way that God has organized his plan, that we need to discipline ourselves to learn the Word of God and to understand the right role of the Holy Spirit.

And if they've got enthusiasm and they want to go out and they want to minister and they want to evangelize, it doesn't really matter why they're doing it or what they're thinking. Just turn them loose, and the work of the Lord will get done. Because there are people who don't want to be invisible.

They don't want to be unnoticed. They don't want to be unappreciated. They don't want to be not at the center of attention or not being oohed and aahed at by their fellow believers.

And if you present this as God's standard, they'll rebel against it. So we don't want to teach. We saw last time when Paul was talking to Timothy, he says in the last days that there will be people who will heap to themselves teachers who will tell them what they want to hear.

The standards of the Word of God and the things that do guide the life of faith that we're supposed to lead won't be communicated because it's unpopular, and people rebel against it. So we don't want to rock the boat. And so this is an important principle here in verse 5. When we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, that unhappy craving, it's a combination of desire and the misery that comes from not being able to fulfill that desire.

Forbidden fruit always seems sweeter. This is the attraction that a lot of things seem to have, is when you prohibit it and you forbid it. This is why people laugh at funerals.

You know you're not supposed to laugh, and it's improper and very tasteless and low class, and the simplest thing can get you tickled at a funeral, and then you're just, and why is that? The same thing wouldn't necessarily be humorous at all, but it's because you know that it's forbidden, and it just seems to aggravate things and make it worse. So these are aroused by the law, and Paul has gone to pains in the last chapter to tell us that this is the role of the law. The law shows us how flawed and wrong and corrupt we are, and if we have that corrupt motivation in our soul, it will give us an occasion to express it.

It will arouse. If you chafe under authority, then when God communicates his authority, that's going to produce rebellion. Why does it have to be that way? I was talking with a fellow one time.

We were working on a weekend on a bunch of computers, and he was not a believer, and the conversation, I talked with him several times, and it kind of turned, he said he was an agnostic, and he said, well, he didn't know, and he didn't really care if God was there or if he had a plan or whatever, and I said, you know, you can think about life in a company where the employees, there may be a policy that's set by the president of the company or by the immediate supervisor, and they say this is the way certain things are going to be, and as an employee, you may disagree and say, well, I think that's, I just don't like the philosophy of that. I don't like the effect that it has, and I think that's dumb, and I hate that whole concept. I hate the policy.

I disagree with it strongly. I don't like it one bit, but the thing you have to remember is regardless of what you think about it, it's the policy. Those people have authority.

They have power over your job, and whether you like it or not is really not an issue. Your only decision is am I going to abide by it or am I going to be fired, and people can rail against God and say, well, he's unfair. Why does he allow sin? Why does he allow death? Why does he allow suffering? Why doesn't he make my life better? I think this whole thing of salvation is ridiculous, and why do we have to have righteousness and please God, and why does he punish people with everlasting condemnation just because they don't want to believe him? Why can't he just leave us alone and leave us to ourselves? Well, you can rail all you want, but it doesn't change the fact that God is God, and that is in fact the policy, and that is the plan, and you either adjust to it or it's going to adjust to you and put you under condemnation, but people think it's sufficient to look at something and say, well, I just disagree with that.

Well, you can disagree all you want. Criminals disagree with the death penalty and disagree with jail and everything else, but their disagreement makes no difference to their status, and we have to get beyond all of us, our rebellious nature, and get beyond the fact that maybe we chafe under authority or we don't necessarily understand or agree with things and recognize that that's reality, and we have to adjust to it, and it's our innate pride, and the first step that we make as we

approach God is to recognize that the universe doesn't revolve around us and what we think, and we need to get busy and recognize that the priority is what God thinks and to be sure that we're on the positive side of that. So when God communicates his standard and communicates his plan and his person, in chapter one, his eternal Godhead, his eternal deity and power are manifest in what has been created.

This produces rebellion in people who are rebellious, and here our unhappiness, our suffering, our misery is aroused by the law that's at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But notice in verse six, and this is extremely important to what follows in Romans chapter seven, now what does it say? We have been delivered from the law. We have been delivered.

It doesn't say we will be delivered. It doesn't say we are being delivered. This is a past perfect.

It happened in the past with results that extend into the present and into the future. It's critically important to keep that in mind. Paul says this.

He has been saying it for several chapters. We have been delivered. When you died with Christ, you died to sin.

You died to the law. You're like a woman whose husband died. You're free from his authority.

Now, how many times has Paul made this point? We reviewed it at the beginning of our evening, didn't we? That we're not under the law. We've died to the law. We died with Christ.

Christ died to sin, died to the law. He lives to God. He's under a new system.

We're not under the Old Testament age. Paul has just practically beat this to death, and he's illustrated it two or three different ways. And yet, what happens when we get to this section of Romans chapter seven? Let's read it.

What shall we say then in verse seven? Is the law sin? Certainly not. On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. This is a point that Paul has already established.

By the law comes the knowledge of sin. I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, You shall not covet. But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of coveting, all manner of evil desire.

It is as though our nature, as soon as we find out that we're not supposed to look at anybody else and want what they have, suddenly that's all we can do. Don't look through this hole. And we must look.

We've got to see. What do you mean I can't do this? For apart from the law, sin was dead. Meaning that without a standard, you can't cross a line that has not been drawn.

You can't transgress a boundary that has never been set. And so Paul says, and he's doing here

now the same thing that we saw him do back in verse five. Remember he said, When we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law, this is when we were under the law.

None of us have ever been under the law, but this principle applies. We as human beings, the human race when it was under the law, and yet Paul uses the first person plural. Now he's going to do a similar thing, and he's going to use the first person singular.

He's going to set himself up as an example, as an illustration, and this is in one sense a hypothetical. He says, I was alive once apart from the law. I was alive once without the law.

Now, let's think about Paul historically. He was born during the lifetime of Jesus Christ probably, in the age of Israel. Paul was not born prior to Mount Sinai.

Paul was not alive before Moses, was he? So Paul was not around physically on the earth when the law came, was he? He wasn't. He was born under the law. He says, I was alive once apart from the law.

So we know right away that we're looking back at an example. I was alive once apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. When did the commandment come? It came at Mount Sinai.

It came some fourteen hundred and seventy years before Paul writes these words. When the commandment came, the commandment came at Mount Sinai, sin revived and I died. Remember what he said earlier when he said sin was not imputed where there is no law.

Sin is not reckoned where there is no law. But when the law came, trespasses were magnified, trespasses were amplified, and that happened at Mount Sinai. When the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

The wages of sin is death. The penalty under the law on the testimony of two or three witnesses, you could die. You could be stoned under the law for numerous offenses.

And the commandment which was to bring life, remember Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, if you follow these commandments you will have long life, prosperity, milk and honey and so forth. If you disobey these commands, if you depart from your God, the sun will beat down and wither your crops, the sky will be brass, the five cycles of discipline. All of this is back when Moses delivered the law.

The commandment which was to bring life I found to bring death and that was its purpose. By the law comes the knowledge of sin. Sin and death go hand in hand.

Why? Verse 11, sin taking occasion by the commandment deceived me and by that commandment killed me. What is this thing that is forbidden? Remember Eve in the garden? Why is God forbidden this fruit? The serpent says, it will make you wise. You will be like God, knowing

good and evil.

It offers the promise of something deceptive. She saw that it was pleasing to the eyes. It was good for food and desirable to make one wise.

And that was a twisted truth. It would give her knowledge of sin and evil, of good and evil. But that was knowledge that was forbidden.

God didn't want Adam and Eve to have that knowledge, but by eating the fruit, the deception was that it would be a wonderful thing and instead it was the basis for condemnation. Sin taking occasion by the commandment. Now that we know what we're not supposed to do, we just wind up doing it all the more.

Deceive me and by it kill me. Therefore the law is holy and the commandment is holy and just and good. That's how it does its work.

It brings out the contrast between the righteousness of God and the imperfection, corruption, sinfulness of man. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not. But sin, that it might appear to be sin, that it might be shown or demonstrated to be sin, was producing death in me through what is good.

It's the contrast. It's the standard that shows how far we fall short. So that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

The trespass was magnified. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. Now, that statement is where I think a lot of interpretations of this section of Romans go astray because they think that Paul is talking about himself in the present or that this applies to believers in the present.

What is it we're talking about here? All the way back when he introduced this in verse 5, he said, when we were in the flesh, when we were under the law, this is what happened. And now he says, I was alive once apart from the law, and we know that that's not what he's talking about. Then he says the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

So this is life under the law. But remember what we just reviewed back in all of chapter 6 and in part of verse 7? He says, therefore, my brethren, in verse 4, you have become dead to the law. We are not under the law.

The authority of the law has been broken by the death of Jesus Christ. So now that he's talking about the law and being under the law and the law doing this and the law working that, this doesn't apply to us, does it? We're not under the law. The power of the law, the authority of the law, as he has spent all of these previous chapters, all of those points that we reviewed, demonstrating that the law doesn't apply to us.

Now he's talking historically. He's saying, look, in the plan of God, the human race, in the forward progress of God's plan, this is how it was. There was a time when we didn't have the law, and we were alive.

The law came, sin was magnified, and we died. We recognized that the penalty for that sin was death. Where in the Bible prior to the law of Moses do we have the death penalty? God says, in the day that you eat thereof you will surely die.

But where in the life of people does it say if you do this you will die? If you do this, we have, the only one I can think of is that he who sheds men's blood by man shall his blood be shed. There was a death penalty for murder. But you could die for a lot of things.

A rebellious teenager could die under the law. A priest's daughter that prostituted herself was to be burned with fire. There were many, many occasions where you could die under the law of Moses.

You could die on the testimony of two or three witnesses for a number of different things. And that was its purpose. When the law came, we found out how sinful we were and what the penalty was.

And when I say we, we're talking about the corporate human race. And we have this recorded so that we benefit from it just as if we were there. So it says, sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me and by it killed me.

And again, Paul has not been killed. And it wasn't that when the commandment came and when Paul sinned he came under the penalty of death. We were all born under the penalty of death in the large sense of sin.

So our point here is, I was alive once apart from the law, before the law came. Sin is not imputed where there is no law. It's not reckoned.

It didn't have the demonstration of the death penalty in the sense of physical death and so on. But when the commandment came, sin revived, I died. Sin took occasion by the commandment, deceived me and killed me.

Therefore the law is holy and the commandment holy, just and good. Has what is good become death to me? Certainly not. But sin that it might appear sin was producing, notice, was producing death in me through what is good so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

This was the purpose of the age of Israel. This was the purpose of the law of Moses. And we're talking historically.

This is the past and not the present. We know the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Now let me ask you this.

After all the points that Paul has made, is Paul carnal and is Paul sold under sin? He's not. And he's going to go on to tell us that in chapter 8. Just for fun, skip forward to chapter 8 verse 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. And there's some debate about the rest of that verse who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

But look at verse 2. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Now you can't have both 8.2 and 7.14 be true at the same time. You can't be carnal and sold under sin and free from the law of sin and death at the same time.

When was it that we were carnal and sold under sin as human beings? It was the age of the law. That was the law's purpose. To magnify trespass.

To show the need for a savior. And that's what it did. Look at verse 15 of chapter 7. This is the status under the law.

This is the status before Christ came. 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. If then I do what I wish not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. Now the law is not an applicable standard in this age.

And yet Paul is talking about agreeing with the law. So we have to be talking about the days when the law had authority. Those were the days before Christ died.

The authority and the relevance of the law went away when Christ was nailed to the cross. So he says, I do what I do not wish to do. I agree with the law that it is good.

But now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, nothing good dwells. Now is this the case for a believer? This was the case in the Old Testament age.

This was true before Christ came. But in our flesh, our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Every single believer, carnal, spiritual, obedient, disobedient, faithful, unfaithful, in our flesh dwells something good.

And that is the Holy Spirit. This is another clue that tells us Paul is talking about the status under the law. It is the same contrast he has been drawing for five chapters.

I know that in me, this is Old Testament saint, in my flesh, nothing good dwells. To will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. Now when has that ever been true of a church age believer? The ability to perform what is good has been with us from the point of our

salvation.

That is why God's Word and God's Spirit exist in this age. The resources that God has given us, it is always an option to do that which is good. We are not under the power of sin.

We are not under the lordship of sin and death. And we are not under the providence of the law. But this was true in the Old Testament age.

A lot of folks have had so many questions about what was it like, how was it different in the Old Testament from what it is now? This is one of the passages that tells us that. In my flesh dwells no good thing. You did not have the universal indwelling of the Spirit.

That is why it is remarkable that the tabernacle craftsmen, a couple of the kings of Israel, and various other people, prophets and people in leadership positions in the Old Testament age were said to have the presence of the Spirit because this was an unusual and atypical thing. Your average run-of-the-mill Israelite believer in God did not have the Spirit dwelling in him. In his flesh dwelt no good thing.

And obviously the power mechanism by which we bear fruit to God with righteousness was not there as a routine thing. Now, we also saw in Romans that it said that the law and the prophets bore witness to righteousness by faith. And it was possible in the Old Testament age to pursue righteousness by faith, to fulfill the Old Testament scripture that says the just shall live by faith.

The Holy Spirit was available to those who asked for him. Jesus said, if you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? What age was Jesus speaking those words in? The Old Testament, the age of Israel, the age of the law. Jesus Christ lived under the law and so did the disciples and everyone that Jesus taught was in the Old Testament age.

And in that age, the Holy Spirit was obtainable by request. If you shall find me when you seek me and search for me with all your heart. Go back and read Proverbs chapter 2. So the norm was in me, in my flesh, nothing good dwells.

To will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. The law didn't give the power to perform what was good. It demonstrated that we didn't have the power to perform what was good.

And in verse 19, the good that I will to do, I do not do, but the evil I will not to do, that is what I practice. If I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law that evil is present with me, the one who is willing to do good.

For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man, 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. Now, where in the church age, where anywhere else in Romans in talking about this age and the freedom we

have in Christ has Paul ever said that we are in captivity to the law of sin? We're not. This does not apply to us.

This is a contrast, a comparison and contrast with life under the law. This was the frustration for Old Testament saints. When we get around to studying the book of Ecclesiastes, we're going to see an entire book devoted to this principle.

Solomon got so frustrated because with the maximum amount of wisdom that God could grant to a believer in the Old Testament, he came to understand that he couldn't perform eternal good. He couldn't perform righteousness that would last as a routine thing. It was an exception and an aberration in the Old Testament days to be able to do this because the purpose of that age was to demonstrate a different principle.

That's why the Old Testament saints longed to see our day. They longed for the day when you could be free from the law of sin and death and live a life that was on the positive side of the ledger, that produced fruit to God, the righteousness that comes by faith. And so this is the situation of the Old Testament saint, and it was frustrating.

It was awful to fail. Imagine the pain in David's soul committing the failures that he committed. Even with the presence of the Holy Spirit there and all of the advantages that he had as the King of Israel and as a man after God's own heart, one of the most memorable things about David's life is the violent contrast between his peaks and his valleys, between his successes and his failures.

And part of the reason for that is this syndrome. In the Old Testament age you didn't have the routine indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the power that comes through the Word of God and the Spirit of God working together. You didn't have freedom from the law of sin and death.

Instead, 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. O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? And then there's a little parenthesis here to remind us. Paul says, I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

That's who delivers us. That's what put an end to this miserable epoch in human history. And there ought to be parenthesis around that because Paul is anticipating the point that he's going to make and he says there is someone who is going to deliver us from this body of death.

And it's not talking about when we get our resurrection body. We can be delivered now. We are free from the law of sin and death now.

So then he brings up his final conclusion here in verse 25. So then, with the mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh I serve the law of sin. Think about all the things we've covered in Romans where he said don't yield your members as weapons of unrighteousness to sin and to

death.

Yield your members as weapons to God for righteousness. We have that choice. We're not enslaved.

We're not held captive. None of these things are true of us. And the whole reason Paul presents these is to show us what a great freedom and what a great opportunity we have in this age and what our purpose is.

We're not here to demonstrate the insufficiency of human effort and human nature. We're here to demonstrate the sufficiency of God and the sufficiency of the power that he's put inside us. What does that mean? How do we answer the question what does this mean to me? What should I bring away from recognizing these principles that Paul is communicating? It does not serve the purpose of God.

This is the application that I see. It does not serve the purpose of God in this age to seek to do good works, to seek to conform to an external standard of righteousness. In Paul's day this standard was summed up in the law of Moses.

In our day it's summed up by the Christian culture, by the actions that we engage in, the places that we go and the things that we do. There is a huge culture, depending on the environment or the circles that we move in, if you find yourself in a seminary environment, are you meeting in a small group? Are you ministering in some form, in some capacity? Are you in some circles? Are you marching on the abortion clinic? In other circles it's are you ministering to the lost? The standard, I would say the single most prevailing standard today is that the purpose of being a Christian is viewed as evangelism. You hear this on the radio constantly.

Now that you're saved it's your job to carry the gospel to the world. Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. That is presented as our reason for being, as our purpose and our mission.

Global Mission 2000, we want to get the gospel to everybody in the world by the year 2000. Everything is oriented toward evangelism. Evangelism is a wonderful thing.

Evangelism is at the center of God's heart and at the center of God's purpose. God performs evangelism. Read Romans 1. God faces people with his eternal power and deity and they have to make a decision about that.

That's evangelism. We have never been tasked with evangelism. We are tasked with bearing fruit to God and it's not the fruit of others coming to Christ.

As wonderful as that is and as many times as God will use us in that endeavor, that's not our purpose. We don't live to reproduce. We're not Amway.

We're not a pyramid organization. We don't live to create converts underneath us. It's a terrible distortion.

So many people who are consumed and who are given this misrepresentation of the purpose of Christianity expend human energy in years and years of quote-unquote Christian service. The strange thing is that oftentimes people are evangelized and people say, well, see, it's working. And many times this happens in spite of what folks are doing rather than because of.

And the truth of God always carries its own authority. It carries its own power. And you can present the gospel in a misguided attempt.

You can be completely wrong in your motivation. You can be completely wrong in your understanding of the Christian way of life. You can spin off and go into a completely strange direction.

And yet that truth, it's like the bread on the waters. It never comes back void. And so then people say, well, see, there was fruit.

Somebody got saved. So I'm right. I'm righteous.

I'm fulfilling the will of God. And it's completely wrong. And it's going to be one of the saddest days in history at the judgment seat of Christ when people who have perhaps led a half a dozen or a dozen or two dozen or five dozen people to the Lord are going to find that that's wonderful.

There are people who came to Christ. Those people would have come to Christ anyway, and that person has no fruit in their life. There's no gold and silver and precious stones.

And I say, but wait, it was through me that this person got saved. Not at all. The truth of God confronts and convicts.

It's the Holy Spirit that evangelizes. And the fact that you happen to be the person that communicated that truth, there's no credit. Why did you do what you did? Were you seeking to establish your own righteousness? Were you doing it in a system of works? Were you wanting to be sure that people knew that you were a soldier in God's army and that you were trying to bring in the kingdom and all of these other distortions? No credit.

Somebody came to Christ and there's no credit. There's no righteousness assigned to your life, even though you were the means by which someone came to Christ or you were the means by which the hungry were fed or the naked were clothed or the sick and afflicted were comforted. When you stand before God, it is as though you caught a pass on the sideline and ran 85 yards and got into the end zone and you're waving the ball, but the referee's saying, sorry, you stepped out of bounds back here at the line of scrimmage.

But I carried the ball. I eluded the tacklers. I went into the end zone.

I'm here. Sorry. You didn't do it the right way.

You broke a rule. It doesn't count. But I got the ball.

The ball is here in the end zone. No credit. It doesn't count.

And there's going to be many coming to Christ in that day. Lord, Lord, in your name, look at all of these things I did. I never knew you.

You never knew me. We never had a relationship. You never got a grip on the plan.

And it's the saddest thing in the world that this is presented and touted and accepted and everyone has agreed that this is the Christian life. This is the Christian mission. It's a big club.

Everybody likes it. Everybody has squeaky clean fellowship and smiles and pats each other on the back and lets all get in the stadium and cheer for one another and keep our promises and so forth. And it's all going to go up in smoke at the judgment seat of Christ because that wasn't the mission.

My favorite example, some of you have heard me say this before, but a movie was made, it's been a long time ago now, with a lot of great stars, Clint Eastwood and Telly Savalas and Donald Sutherland and several other very well known movie stars. It's Kelly's Heroes and they're in the Army. It's World War II.

There's a war to be fought. There's an enemy to be defeated. There's a mission to accomplish.

But they find out that there's a bank and it's got gold in the vault. And so they take their tank and they take their communications equipment and their uniforms and everything else and they mount a mission and they're going to get the gold out of this vault. And there's teamwork, there's camaraderie.

They overcome great obstacles. They get into the village and the last obstacle is to break open the vault. And they discover that their tank that they thought had this ammunition turns out to only have paint rounds.

They're practice rounds full of paint. And all they do is splatter when they're fired. They have no real power, no real ammunition.

And the bank is defended by this one lone German tank. And when they realize that it's a standoff, they can't defeat him. They walk out of the tank waving a white flag and they explain to this tank driver that there's gold in the bank and they'll split it with him.

They compromise with the enemy. The German has real ammunition. He blows the bank open and they all get this gold.

Well, you can see the parallel there. We can take all the wonderful resources that God has given us and yet we can be pursuing the wrong mission. God wants to win the war.

God wants to defeat the real enemy and achieve the real objective. But we get it in our minds. We take the equipment and the accoutrements and go and seek something else.

And we find that there's no power in that life and the only way that we can really get anything done is to compromise with the enemy. And when we compromise, we essentially have thrown in with the enemy and he and we are achieving a common goal. It's our own gratification.

It's our own glorification. It has nothing to do, it's an abuse of the provision and the equipping and the opportunity and the vital need for this greater and more important mission to be accomplished. And that's the situation that faces us.

And that's what Paul is trying to demonstrate. And he says, look, there's a mission in this age. There's a thing that God wants to accomplish.

He's equipped us. He's freed us from the authority of the previous age and from all of the negatives that pertained in the past. Don't go back and fall under that.

Don't serve the old purpose. Don't fall under the old ways. That's history.

We have a new age. He says, look, this is how we were before. We had these passions.

We had these sufferings. And we couldn't do anything about it. When we wanted to serve God, we didn't have the ability.

And that was a part of God's purpose to show us that even when we want to, we can't. No matter how highly motivated we are, motivation can't overcome the corruption of sin and the corruption that we are born in and that we live in. And God wanted to demonstrate that.

And he said, look, here's the most faithful people you'll ever find. But the least in the kingdom of God is going to be greater than any of them because in the kingdom of God you have the power to produce righteousness. And in the Old Testament age, you don't.

You can't. It's not there. That age demonstrates corruption and death.

And that's what he's going back and giving us another illustration of here in chapter 7. And it's going to be a very glorious thing when we get to chapter 8 and he says, here's the contrast. Here's where we stand. And Paul is painting us a great, clear picture of the opportunity that we have and the standing and the freedom that we have, the resources that we have, and the greatness of the mission that God has called us to.

We saw him talking about that over in Philippians chapter 3. I don't think that I've already attained that. I forget the things that are behind and I look ahead and I press toward the mark of the high

calling of God in Christ Jesus. And we no longer have to experience the frustration of serving sin.

We don't have to worry about the standard of being judged by works and of falling short. This is an incredible thing and I think that's why the book of Romans, this letter to the Romans, is so long. Because Paul has to labor and struggle and give example after example and argument after example to say, can't you see that the old has passed away? All things are become new.

With the death of Jesus Christ, all of that stuff died with him. And we died with him and we have a new and great opportunity. We'll continue our study.

We'll wrap up chapter 7 and we'll get into chapter 8 next time. But let's close here in prayer. Father, we thank you for the opportunity that you've given us.

We thank you for the privilege of being born in this age and of having the direct ministry of your spirit, the inherent power that is contained in your word, and the wonderful opportunity to reflect your glory, to be declared righteous, to be granted your righteousness in our souls, and to see the outworking of that in this age and in the next. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will take these things and make them a part of our thinking as we go through the day, that our purpose and our pursuits will be toward the goals that you have set for us in this time and not goals and desires of our own making and for our own gratification. We pray that we will be delivered from this present evil age.

We pray that through our lives the light and the glory of Jesus Christ will shine. And we pray that our fellowship and our daily function will be that which brings pleasure to you that is worthy of our Savior Jesus Christ. And we ask it in his name.

Amen.