**Romans 7:14-25**

For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. **15** For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. **16** Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. **17** So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. **18** For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. **19**  For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. **20** Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. **21** So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. **22** For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, **23** but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. **24** Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? **25** Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

**“Deliverance Made Right In Christ”**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. When relief does not come from the Gospel, it tends to go off in all the wrong places. We see this especially becoming an issue today with assisted-suicide. Sadly, Canada legalized the practice last year and now a recent lawsuit over a woman with osteoarthritis made it clear. An article stated, “Superior Court Justice Paul Perell told the courtroom in Toronto that a patient's death does not have to be imminent, and their condition does not have to be terminal. Rather, he said, the patient qualifies for medically assisted dying if their death 'has become reasonably foreseeable', and that their remaining years would be marred by suffering.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Strange how St. Paul saw suffering far more than in terms of bodily ailment or what comes from aging. He proclaimed, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Certainly, physical suffering is can be great, which needs compassion and care. Yet, the pain staking struggle over life is not new to baptized believers. Our desire and actions are in hostile conflict with each other. We call this the old man vs. the new man, the old Adam against the new Adam, or the sinner at war with the saint. This struggle is real for the Christian, but the world wants nothing to do with it. Christ Jesus will carry our burdens and so we have relief from Him.

1. **Burdens bear down on us leaving no relief for the weary.**
2. Guilt never lets us go before the Law.

* “For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin” (vs. 14)
* St. Paul pops the hood and reveals how the baptized still must confess the old Adam clings to us all our days.
* Now the world hears that sin remains in the saints before God and figures this only gives validation and a license to sin.
* Yet, knowing the Law is spiritual means none can escape guilt for Jesus said, “…out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander” (Matt 15:19).

1. Distress is having to bear what I cannot fix.

* “For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing” (vs. 19).
* Love is not a vague thing set upon sinful standards, but Christians know love is good when it comes from what God’s Law says.
* To love God and our neighbor is what we want, but how much do we constantly miss that goal! (Want vs. Action)
* This distress cannot be solved by calling the evil I do “good” or redefining love to make my Christianity more comfortable. (Destroys faith)

1. Frustration finally bears down on nothing else other than my flesh.

* “Who will deliver me from this body of death” is the cry for relief we cannot give ourselves or what none can cover up by saying, “You are a good person.”
* The struggle that follows Christians goes with us to the grave, because the old Adam in us has no plans to die without a fight.
* You want to do good, you want the Law, you want to love then as the baptized you are no less in that same wretched dilemma as St. Paul.
* Our own strength and actions do not deliver the victory we seek, but many times end up doing the very opposite.

1. **Thanks be to God Jesus Christ always unburdens us with His relief.**
2. The wisdom of God has become flesh.

* Who else can call out and make that promise, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).
* This is not rest in anything or anyone else other than Jesus for the guilty do not need a second chance, but to have sins forgiven.
* If nothing good dwells in my flesh, then Christ found the way to dwell with me by taking all burden of my sin upon His flesh.
* Christian struggles have daily relief from baptism for, “you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption…” (1 Corinthians 1:30)

1. The grace of God is a gift at work for sinners.

* Everything must drive us to Jesus, since the law of love on its own would either turn us to pride or to die in despair.
* Luther states, “Therefore sin remains in the spiritual man for the exercise of grace, for the humbling of pride, for the repression of presumptuousness” (LW Vol. 25).
* What a gift of grace that by keeping us a sinner God raises up the saint to live by faith before Christ who fights for us as the Savior.
* By Word and Sacrament, our Lord comes aligned with perfect love both in what He wants and does for Jesus is your forgiveness, rest, and security.

1. The goodness of God keeps salvation for His saints.

* Rather than this “body of death” tainted with evil desires and corrupt thoughts, there is a better entrustment in the Gospel.
* Since it is through Christ we are saved, St. Paul also has no problem saying, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom” (Colossians 3:16).
* Christian struggle dies without the Word where the Holy Spirit works to renew the saint within to battle against the sinner until death.
* Of course, in this wretchedness faith always gives thanks to Christ for revealing Himself to us just as we say after receiving the sacrament!

Life can be such a burden at times and that brings weariness. Other times, maybe we just do not want to be a burden. Rather than assisted suicide, confess to those in such despair, “Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” The fact is nobody is perfect, none struggles so righteously that the sinner will not stick out as much as the saint. Being a Christian never rested on us, but Christ who perfectly saved us by God’s grace. St. Paul neither despaired nor denied doing good as an apostle because his wretchedness did not win out over Christ. This daily struggle is ours, but God daily leads us to repent, see His forgiveness, and live by faith as His saints. Christ Jesus carries our burdens and so we have relief from Him. Amen. Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-4644228/Woman-arthritis-approved-euthanasia-Canada.html [↑](#footnote-ref-1)