

Romans
The Dark Guest (Part 1)
Romans 7:14-25
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Romans 7; let's begin by reading together the paragraph that we're studying beginning in verse 14; you follow along. Paul writes:

For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to *do*, but I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not want to *do*, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good. So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not. For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Now we began to study this passage last week, and I noted for you the theme of verses 14 - 25 is the weakness of the law. Paul, in chapter 7, is dealing with the law, and here he deals with its weakness; not because of an inherent weakness in the law, but because of our remaining sinfulness, we lack the ability to obey it perfectly. We still sin even though we have been regenerated by God.

Now last week I dealt at length with who Paul is describing here in the second half of chapter 7. We considered the four most common views. Some say Paul is talking here about the struggle of all unbelievers as they try to obey God's Law in their flesh, and they don't have a regenerate

heart so they're unable to do so. Some say, no, these are only the unbelievers that are under conviction; those who have come to understand their guilt before God and will eventually trust in Christ as the Spirit continues His work, but this describes that time between when they know their sin and before they come to Christ. Others say, no, we're definitely talking about believers here, but they are immature believers; they are believers still trying to gain sanctification by their own effort and their own work. You need to get out of chapter 7 of Romans; you need to get in to chapter 8 and the victory that's provided by the Spirit. So, chapter 7 doesn't describe mature believers, they would say, but rather immature believers: Paul, soon after he came to faith and us in our immature days in Christ.

The fourth and final view, the one that I think all of the evidence most profoundly points to, is that Paul here instead is talking about all believers, both those who are immature and those who are mature. All of us find ourselves in the second half of Romans 7. The strongest arguments, we noted last week, point toward this view. It has the greatest support of church history. The grammar of the passage as Paul changes to the present tense, beginning in verse 14, underscores this view. And there are several statements that are made in the paragraph I just read to you that cannot be legitimately said to be true of unbelievers. Rather, they properly explained, as we'll see as we work through, can only be true of Christians.

So then, Romans 7:14 - 25 is here to show us that, even as believers, we are still unable to obey the law to the extent that we desire, and that's not because of the law; instead, that's because of the remaining sin in us because of our flesh, and there will be a struggle and a conflict with that indwelling sin the rest of our lives on this planet.

Now, another important point to make, as we noted last week, the end of Romans 7 does not describe the true Christian's condition all of the time. In other words, this isn't where we live constantly. Instead, it's how we respond when we sin. If you are a Christian, as we saw back in chapter 6 and as we'll see in chapter 8, your life is characterized by a decreasing pattern of sin and an increasing pattern of righteousness. But while that is true, you and I still sin; and Romans 7, the second half of this chapter, gives perfect expression to how we respond, how we think, how we feel, when we do sin. Like Paul, we hate it, and we don't understand why in the world we have done it again after all that Christ has done, after all of the goodness of God in our lives, after all of the resources that we enjoy in Christ, and we don't want to sin. We want to be pure like Jesus Christ. We want to be holy like He is. We long for that day when there is complete and permanent deliverance from indwelling sin. That's how Paul felt when he sinned. And if you're a Christian, that's exactly how you feel and how you think about your sin when you sin.

Now, the first issue that I need to address today is not actually in the text, the biblical text, but rather in the heading that the New American Standard provides for this section. If you have a New American Standard Bible, you look right before verse 14, and there is an uninspired translator-inserted heading, and it reads this way: “The Conflict of Two Natures.” Now that heading and the popular view that it represents can be seriously misleading and confusing about the nature of our struggle with sin. You see, just beneath this passage lies a crucial question and that is, “What happened to you at the moment of your salvation? What happened to your old self or your old man?” A very popular wrong answer to that question is the answer that comes from the group we’ve been learning about on Sunday night. Rocky was teaching us just over the last couple weeks about the trichotomists.

The trichotomous position teaches this, perhaps you’ve heard it; perhaps you’ve been taught it; perhaps you’ve embraced it. The trichotomous position teaches this, that before salvation, you consisted of two parts, a body and a sort of animal soul. And at salvation, God added to you a third part of your being, a spirit, and that’s the part with which you relate to God. This is the trichotomous position. The practical result of this position is that after salvation, they would say and teach that there are two equal parts of your immaterial being constantly at war with each other. Your soul is the immaterial part of you, they would say, that remains unchanged from before your salvation. And your spirit is the new part that’s been added. So, as a believer then, they would teach that you have the old man exactly like it was before your conversion; that’s still a part of you, your soul; and you have the new man that has been added, your spirit. And the struggle that’s described here is a struggle between two equal natures, your old nature and your new nature. It’s often pictured as a black dog and a white dog fighting each other, and the one that you feed wins.

There are a couple of proof texts that those who hold this view cite, but as we’ve been learning on Sunday nights, and I’m not to take the time to go through it again. If you have a struggle with this go back and listen, but the biblical data supports the view that both before and after your conversion, you were and are a two-part being; body, the material part of you; and soul, the immaterial part of you. So, what does Scripture teach then about the change inside of you at salvation? What is the spiritual change called regeneration?

Now we studied this at length when we were back in chapter 6, but let me just remind you of it. Go back to chapter 6:1, Paul says, “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?” Is it okay as a believer to continue in a pattern of sin so that grace can increase because where sin abounds grace abounds more? Paul says, “May it never be!”

Christians don't think like this. And then he makes this point, "How shall we who died to sin" [That's what happened to you at the moment regeneration; you died to sin.] "how shall we still live in it?" And then he explains, "Or do you not know [Don't you know this?] that all of us who have been, [and there's no water in this verse; this is immersed, is the idea, all of us who have been immersed into Christ Jesus have been] immersed into His death?" He's talking about the baptism of the Spirit that happens according to 1 Corinthians 12:13, at the moment of conversion for every true believer; you are immersed into Christ. And he says as a result, you've been immersed into His death; you died with Christ. Verse 4:

[... you've] been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection. [Now notice verse 6.] knowing this, ... our old self was crucified with ... [Christ] in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.

Now we covered this at length in chapter 6; and if you're a little fuzzy on it, go back and listen because this is foundational. I'm going to review it briefly for this reason, if your understanding of this passage isn't like it should be, if your understanding of regeneration is fuzzy, then it's going to confuse you about the struggle Paul is describing in chapter 7. When Jesus Christ died, everyone who would ever believe in Him died with Him; that's what he's saying. And the person you used to be died with Him. You died with Jesus to the curse of the Law; you died with Him to the wrath of God; you even died with Him to the controlling power of sin in your life. He conquered sin in His death although He had never sinned. He defeated it in His death. And we died with Him to sin in dying with Him. And the reality of what happened when Christ died was applied to you at the moment of your salvation, at the moment you believed in Christ, at the moment of your regeneration. And your new spiritual life is connected to the new life Christ received when He rose from the dead.

Think about this, believer, you have been made spiritually alive with the very life of Jesus Christ Himself. This is the miracle of regeneration. The old you, the person you used to be died with Jesus Christ at the moment of your regeneration, and you are now an entirely new person in Jesus Christ. What that means is, at salvation, you didn't add a new self to your old self and now your old self, just like it was before, and your new self lives in constant war. That's not what the

Scripture describes. Instead, at the moment of regeneration, your old self died, and it's gone forever. You have become a new creation in Jesus Christ.

You say, "Well, what about my continuing struggle with sin? Where does that come from if my old self died?" You see, although your old man died, and you are a new creation in Christ, you still retain what the Bible calls your flesh, the flesh. It is your unredeemed humanness. It is that part of you that has not yet been redeemed; and its beachhead, its base of operations, is your physical body which has not yet been redeemed.

You see, here's the problem; here's the real problem. Our regenerated new souls, our new self, they are still attached to our unredeemed bodies. And what is the link between our souls and bodies? It's the brain, that gray matter between your ears. You inherited original sin, including certain propensities from your parents. When you were born, that corruption was already permanently burned into your brain. Over time, you added your own sinful patterns of thinking and behaving.

You see, before Christ, think of it this way, your sinful soul etched sinful patterns of thinking and acting into the physical neural networks and pathways of your brain. Sinful patterns were already there, part of what you inherited from your parents, and you added those by your own thinking and your own behavior.

But now, your soul has been redeemed. You're a new person in Jesus Christ. But you are still stuck using the same body, the same unredeemed brain, filled with the corruption you inherited from your parents and the corruption you added before Christ, and to some extent, even after Christ. Someday, God is going to give you a new body with a new control center, a new brain; but until then, you will have to battle your flesh, not just your body. It's everywhere your brain touches: your thoughts, your emotions, your feelings, your decisions. You're going to have to battle that part of you that remains unredeemed until the day you die or until Christ returns. And it is that struggle (listen carefully) it is that struggle between the new person that you are in Jesus Christ, that redeemed soul that is now you; and your flesh, that is your unredeemed humanness that has its beachhead in your physical body; that's the struggle Paul describes in the second half of Romans 7. That's the background.

Now, let's look at the struggle together. This passage begins with our struggle with sin described. In verses 14 - 20, our struggle with sin described. In verses 21 - 25, he's going to explain it, but here he primarily just describes it, and he does so profoundly and so beautifully

because our souls resonate with this. Now, just to remind you, here Paul changes to present tense verbs beginning in verse 14 because he's now describing his current struggle with sin as he wrote this letter. Paul describes his ongoing struggle with sin and your ongoing struggle with sin and mine as well in two very similar, in fact almost identical laments. You probably saw them as I read this passage that kind of repeat one another.

The first lament is in verses 14 - 17, and the second lament is in verses 18 - 20. Although they are very similar, they are not identical. And as I meditated on this passage and tried to discern why Paul would so repeat himself, there is a difference. The first lament, in verses 14 - 17, focuses primarily on what I do. That is, the sinful choices I make. Notice how he says it, verse 15, "... what I am doing, I don't understand." Also, in verse 15, "I am doing the ... thing[s] I hate." Verse 16, I am doing "the very thing I do not want *to do*." The focus of this first lament is on the fact that I do those things that I hate.

The focus of the second lament is primarily, and I use that word "primarily", it's an important word, because there is the other side of it in each of these laments, but the focus primarily of the second lament is on what I don't do. That is, those things in God's moral law that I agree with and I don't do them. That's verses 18 - 20. Notice verse 18, I don't do the good that I will to do. Verse 19, "the good that I want, [to do] I do not do." So, these are the two laments.

Let's look at them together. Paul's first lament then, lament, number one, he makes this point, "I do the things I hate," I do the things I hate, verses 14 - 17.

Now, in both this first lament and in the second lament, Paul follows the same basic pattern. He begins by identifying the nature of our condition, then he provides proof of that condition, and finally he defines the source of our condition. So, let's track through this first lament that way.

Notice first, then, in verse 14, the nature of our condition, the nature of our condition. Now before we look at the verse as a whole, just look at the first word, "For". As you read your Bibles, be aware that these little words are often absolutely crucial to understand the flow and point of the passage. Paul is here connecting this section that follows with the one that came before it with that little word "For." What is the point of comparison? Remember back in verses 7 to 13, Paul says, "before I became a Christian the law wasn't responsible for my sin, my sinfulness was." In verses 14 and following, he's going to make the same point. He's going to say, "The law isn't responsible for my sin after I became a Christian either, it's still my inherent sinfulness."

So, with that in mind, look at verse 14. “For we know that the Law is spiritual.” Notice Paul begins by affirming a truth on which Christians universally agree, “We are all knowing.” This is something that’s self-evident. “We are all knowing that the law (And here in context he is talking about the moral law of God, summarized in the Ten Commandments, further summarized as loving God and loving others, the moral law of God is, notice what he says,) is spiritual.” He means that like the Holy Spirit who gave it, God’s moral law has a divine holy character about it. He’s really saying the same thing he said back in verse 12, “The Law is holy.” When he says it’s spiritual, he’s essentially saying the same thing; it reflects the holiness of the Spirit who gave it; it is spiritual. “I, [On the other hand, notice verse 14.] I am of flesh.” The Law is holy, and I’m not.

Now, in the clearly autobiographical section that runs from verses 7 - 13, Paul uses first-person pronouns: I, me, my, some ten times. But in that paragraph, he always uses it with the past tense verbs because he’s describing his life before Christ. But here in verse 14, for the first time in this chapter, Paul changes tenses, and he begins to use present tense and only present tense verbs. Why? Clearly, he intends to describe his current condition as a believer who has been in Christ by the time he writes Romans, 30 years. And notice how he describes himself, verse 14, “I am of flesh.”

Now first of all, you need to note what he doesn’t say. He doesn’t say that he is “in the flesh.” He has used that expression in the context here to refer to unbelievers, and so he doesn’t use it here to refer to himself. Go back to 7:5, he says, “while we were in the flesh,” talking about unbelievers. Unbelievers are “in the flesh;” that’s how to describe them; their entire lives are characterized by sinfulness; they are in the flesh. In 8:9, he says, “However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.” So, he says believers are not in the flesh. So, Paul, in verse 14 of chapter 7, doesn’t say, “I am in the flesh.” That would mean he was an unbeliever; he doesn’t say that.

He also does not say that he is according to the flesh, another expression he uses in context for unbelievers. Look at 8:5, “For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh,” and verse 6, that’s “death”. They’re headed toward eternal death; so that’s not what he says either. That too would be to say that he’s an unbeliever. Notice back in verse 14 what Paul does say. He says he, and all of us, are “of the flesh” or fleshly would be another way to translate it. Technically, the word means “composed of flesh”. But it’s used here and also in 1 Corinthians 3:1 in the sense of being characterized by sinfulness, by spiritual weakness and sinfulness. Paul says, “That’s me.”

Leon Morris writes, “Paul recognizes the excellence of the Law. He knows that constant obedience to the Law is the way he should live, [Listen to this.] but he also knows that owing to the weakness of his fallenness, his flesh, he does not always do what he should.” Here’s the point, the believer is not in the flesh, but the flesh is in us, major difference in meaning. We’re not unbelievers; we’re not in the flesh, but the flesh is still very much in us. That’s what he is saying.

Now, he goes on further to explain in verse 14, “I am of flesh, [and what I mean by that is that I am] sold into bondage to sin.” Now some have tried to link this with those Old Testament expressions of Israel’s kings, you remember like in 1 Kings 21:25, “Surely there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the Lord.” But there really is no comparison because Ahab sold himself, that is, abandoned himself, gave himself over entirely to sin. True believers don’t do that, and Paul isn’t saying that about himself. Notice he didn’t sell himself; he was sold, passive voice, he was “sold into bondage to sin.” This is an expression from the slave market. Paul found himself, not at “all times”, but “at times”, under the control of sin; that is when he sinned. It’s not like it was before he came to Christ; he’s described that back in chapter 6. He says unbelievers are “slaves of sin” in the sense that their entire lives are subject to slavery to sin. In 6:14, he says that’s not true of me; it’s not true of believers. Sin will not be your master anymore, he says if you’re in Christ. So, we’re not slaves of sin in the sense that sin dominates our entire lives like it did when we were unbelievers. But, he means here he is a slave to sin in one sense only, which he goes on to explain.

So notice, secondly, in verses 15 and 16, the proof of our condition, the proof of our condition. When Paul says that he is “of flesh,” that he is “sold into bondage to sin,” he’s now going to explain it; what he means by that, and he’s going to prove it in the next two verses. Here’s what “bondage to sin,” that Christian’s experience, looks like. Verse 15, “For [that is the reason I say that I am sold under sin is that] what I am doing, I do not understand.” Paul says, when I sin, I don’t understand what I’m doing.

Now the Greek word translated “understand” is a familiar Greek word to Greek students that simply means “to know”. He says, “when I sin, I don’t know.” Now, that can mean understand as it’s translated here; I don’t understand; I don’t understand why I did that; I don’t get it; I can’t grasp why I made that decision.

This word “know” can also be used in the sense of “to condone” or “approve”. It’s used, for example in Psalm 1:6 which says, “the LORD knows the way of the righteous.” In the

Septuagint, this word is used. That is, He not only knows about it, but He condones it; He approves of it. So, the word can be used that way, and I think Paul may very well mean both here. I think he is saying this, “When we sin, we do what our minds don’t approve of, what we don’t condone, and what we just don’t understand.” Why? Why would I have made that decision? Verse 15, “For [And here’s what I don’t understand, he says.] ... I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.”

Now this is a very interesting expression. Look, first of all, at the two words “would like,” what I “would like” to do. The Greek word is the word “will.” He says, “I am not practicing what I will to do.” Now, he’s talking about God’s Law here, and he says as a Christian, I know God’s moral law, and I approve of it as good and desirable and right.

More than that, notice the contrast with the second part of the verse, “I love it, I love God’s Law, and I will to do it.” I make a decision to obey it, he says, but here’s what I don’t understand. At times, not at all times, but at times, instead of doing what I wholeheartedly agree is good and right, what I know about God’s Law and what I have determined to do, I end up not practicing that. But sometimes I end up doing the very thing that I hate which is the things that God’s Law forbids and what I had determined, what I had willed, not to do.

Now, if you’re a Christian, you get this. This is exactly how you feel when you sin. Paul, in Galatians 5:17, describes this same conflict. He says, “the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, [capital “S”, Holy Spirit] the flesh sets its desire against the [Holy] Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; [He’s talking about what’s going on inside of a believer.] for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.” That word “please” is the Greek word, is the word “will” so that you may not do the things that you will, the things that you have determined and decided to do because you approve of them as what’s good and right. This is the struggle.

Verse 16, “But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, [if I end up doing what’s contrary to God’s moral law and what I did not will to do,] I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.” The second half of that verse literally in the Greek text says, “I am speaking with the Law that it is good. I’m saying exactly what the Law says.” Yes, that’s what I should’ve done, and it’s good, and it’s right, and it honors God. My disapproval of the sin, along with my determination not to do it, proves that I am fully agreeing with God’s moral law, that it is fundamentally good, that it’s morally beautiful. It’s what he said back in verse 12, “the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.”

Now, what is Paul saying in verse 16? He's essentially saying this, "I don't blame the Law for my sin. Even as a believer, it's my fault. I am of flesh; I am sold under sin; that's why I make the choices I make contrary to what I had determined to do." Verse 15:

For what I'm doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I (*willed*) to *do*, (what I approved and chose to do) ... I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good.

Paul, by the way, is not saying, [don't misunderstand him here], Paul is not saying that he never obeyed God's Law, or that he constantly habitually disobeyed God's Law. No, here he's concentrating on what happened when he chose to sin and when we choose to sin. This is the stress of what he is saying, and this is the bondage to sin of which every believer is personally conscious.

If you're a Christian, you read this text, and your heart, your soul, resonates because you love God's Law; you want desperately to do it; you want to live a life of obedience to Jesus Christ; you want to please Him; you don't want to make the same sinful choices that you've made in the past; and you affirm the Law is good, and you even make a decision, "I'm not going to do that anymore; I am going to walk in obedience to God and His Word." You will to do it, but there's a powerful struggle. That's what Paul is describing here.

Now that brings us, thirdly, to the "source" of our condition. Verse 17, "So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me." Now please do not misunderstand the Apostle Paul. A lot of people who want to excuse their sin try to use this text to do so, but it's crucial that you understand that in saying what he says in verse 17, Paul is not denying that he is responsible for his sin. I don't see how he can make it any clearer. Let me show you, look at verse 15, "I am doing the very thing I hate." Verse 17, "sin ... dwells in me." Verse 18, "nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh." Verse 19, "I practice the ... evil." Verse 21, "evil is present in me." Verse 23, "the law of sin ... is in [the] members [of my body]. Verse 25, and here couldn't be any clearer, "I myself ... with my flesh [am serving] the law of sin." So clearly Paul is not denying personal responsibility for his sin, and you should never use this text as some sort of evidence that you're not responsible for your sin. That is not what Paul is saying. What is he saying?

Look at verse 17 again, “So now, [in light of the fact that I agree that the Law is good and I have willed to keep it,] “no longer” [this used to be true before I came to Christ, but] “no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.” Now this takes us back to where we started this morning. He is describing the source of the conflict within us, and he is differentiating, in verse 17, between his new redeemed self and the sin that still continues to dwell in him.

When I sin, when you sin, it is not the new person that we are in Christ; it is sin. It is the dark guest of our souls; it is the squatter who still dwells in me although I am a new creation in Jesus Christ. Paul is here describing the extent to which indwelling sin can exert its power and influence in our lives. The sin that we commit is not the expression of the new creation that we have become in Jesus Christ. No longer am I the one doing it, the real me, the new me, the person that I am in Jesus Christ. Instead, the sin that we commit as believers comes out of that part of us that remains unredeemed, what Paul here calls “our flesh” or in verse 17, the “sin which dwells in me.”

Now, I don’t want you to miss the major point of these verses because it’s incredibly encouraging. This internal conflict is entirely consistent with being a Christian. If, like Paul, you find this very conflict in your soul, it should be a great source of hope to you. It should encourage you that you really belong to Jesus Christ; that you have been regenerated; that you have been justified because unbelievers aren’t like this.

It is true that unbelievers may experience a guilty conscience, and they may make some kind of resolution to be better, but they don’t experience this kind of deep soul conflict. They don’t love God’s Law with their whole being, and they don’t hate their sin. They may hate the consequences. They may hate what it’s brought, the trouble it has brought into their souls, but they don’t hate their sin as an offense against the God they love. And they don’t love God’s Law and long in every part of life to be like Jesus Christ.

In fact, let me give you a little test this morning. If you don’t love God’s Law, and if you don’t long with your whole soul to be in every way like Jesus Christ, and if you don’t long to be free of the sin that’s in your life because you hate it, because it offends God your Father who has been so good and gracious to you, then you’re not a Christian because this is how Christians respond to their sin. And when we sin, we come as 1 John reminds us, and we confess that sin, and we receive forgiveness. Or, as Paul reminds us here, and as we will see in 8:1, after he describes this incredible struggle with sin, he reminds us, there is therefore “now no condemnation ... [to]

those who are in Christ Jesus.” because of what Jesus our Lord did at the cross, and that’s what we celebrate in the Lord’s Table.

Take a moment to prepare your hearts as the men come.

Our Father, thank you for this amazing passage that gives such powerful, poignant expression to the very thoughts and feelings of our souls when we sin. Father, thank you for the encouragement that it is. Thank you that there is therefore “now no condemnation ... [to] those who are in Christ Jesus” because He suffered the penalty of every sin that we would ever commit. And yet Father, while we have been justified, while we have been declared right with You as our judge, You have taught us that when we sin, we are still to come in confession and seeking forgiveness, not from our Judge where we’ve been declared forever justified, but from our Father against whom we have sinned.

And so, Lord, we do that even today as we come to take of the Lord’s Table. We freely confess our sins to you as You commanded us to do so, each of us from our souls. Lord, **You** know our sins; we know them all too well, and we come asking your forgiveness, confessing and seeking your forgiveness.

Father, for the sins of omission, those things that you have commanded us to do, that we have not done; for the sins of commission where we have willingly and freely done what You commanded us not to do, we seek Your forgiveness. Father for the sins of our souls, for our pride, forgive us that we so often see ourselves as little gods, independent of You, and we see ourselves above others, superior to others.

Father, forgive us for our selfishness that our lives are all consumed with us when we ought to love You and we ought to love others. Forgive us, oh God, for our lust, for desiring those things that You have not given or even that You have forbidden, whether it’s the stuff around us, whether it’s position and power and status and fame, or whether it’s sexual sin, Father, forgive us for lust. Forgive us as well, oh Father, for the words that come out of our mouths, often filled with half-truths and deception, intended to hurt, to injure others, to seek revenge, words that don’t build others up, but that tear them down, that aren’t intended to minister grace, but intended to exalt ourselves and to hurt others.

Father, forgive us for our actions, those things that we have done that are clearly contrary to Your will and purpose. Forgive us for our lack of love for You, for our unfaithfulness to share

the gospel with others, for our failure to believe Your Word, Lord, for our impurity, for squandering what You've provided, for hoarding it up and not sharing and being generous with others, so many ways we have violated Your Law.

Father, forgive us. Forgive us for the sake of Jesus Christ who perfectly atoned for all of our sins so that You could forgive us. Forgive us and help us to worship our Lord in the Lord's Table.

We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.