

Romans 7 v 7 - 25

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[0 : 0 0] If you read Evangelical Times this month, the May edition, there is quite a lengthy obituary of a man called Ian Tate, who was a pastor at Welling Evangelical Church and had quite an interesting history.

It was under his ministry that I was converted, and it happened one Saturday afternoon when there was a youth service on, and recently married, and I was being asked to sort of, well, go along to it, and I didn't want to go, so I said no, and then somebody said, well, you've got a car, maybe you could give a lift, so I said, yeah, okay, all right, I'll do it, but I'm going to watch the telly or something like that in the afternoon, some rugby on or something, and I got there, and then somebody said, well, why don't you say you've come here all this distance, three or four miles, and, you know, why don't you say, and it was Ian Tate who was preaching.

He was 95 when he died, and I was forced to listen to this sermon, and I said, I can remember sitting in the seat, I can remember the seat, and I'm sitting there, I'm absolutely fuming, and I'm really, really angry with my wife, her sister, her brother-in-law, and anybody else in the vicinity, because I was trapped, and I couldn't get out of it, and, but the scene was set from Romans 1, and it was an amazing moment, because the preacher set the scene of us all being slaves to sin, and he was not a demonstrative man.

If you ever went to the Welling Evangelical Church, you think this is conservative? Well, that is conservative too, very undemonstrative in the way of worship, and so on, but he had these actual slave chains in the pulpit, and he was just driving home, how we were all in bondage to sin, and then he threw them out from the pulpit, onto the wooden floor, and I jumped out of my seat, and I was converted, and there was an immediate transformation, and I was saved, and I really didn't know what happened, but I knew something had happened, and so at the end of the service, I said to Chris's sister and brother-in-law, you know, and probably Christmas as well, to just need to go and talk to this man, because something's happened, and I think everybody thought, yeah, all right.

Do you remember when you were saved? Do you remember? It may not have been as dramatic as that, because I went in kicking a stream and came out a Christian, and I know the people have got quieter conversions, but there is a moment when you're dead in trespasses and sins, and then there's a moment when you're not, when you're alive in Christ Jesus, and it doesn't matter if it's at an instant when some acts of throwing some slave chains out onto the floor, it doesn't matter if it's something like that or as soon as that, but maybe something, some quiet moment when you call upon the Lord, or maybe some quiet rebuke you give to someone as they perhaps take the name of the Lord in vain, you suddenly find yourself, you've sided with the Lord, well, where did that come from?

[4 : 0 0] And when we were converted, I mean, what happened to me is that there was a new song in my mouth, I went around humming to myself, oh, bless the Lord, oh my soul. I had no idea where that came from.

It was just something that was in my mind, and it was actually a long time afterwards I realised it was Psalm 103. And suddenly reading the Bible became important, and praying became important, and being with the Lord's people became important, and listening to God's word became important, and in fact all my goals and all my aspirations and all my desires, they changed completely from that moment on.

I swore and blasphemed, and drank, and I, you know, I'm not a nice person now, but all those things, they just stopped, and things were different.

And I wanted to become more like the Lord Jesus Christ. But there was always, always a terrible tension, and there still is a terrible tension in my heart, and I, and if you're a believer here tonight, there's a tension in your heart too.

Because what we just read in Romans, where he speaks about the good that I want to do, that I do not do, but the evil that I don't want to do, that is what I do.

[5 : 24] That is what we sense, and what we experience as Christians. And the tension is there, because something else happened when we were converted, and that something is that we made a new enemy.

We made a wonderful friend, but we also made a terrible, and hateful, and spiteful enemy. Because we, in our conversion, become traitors to our former master, Satan himself.

In Ephesians chapter 2, and in verses 1 to 3, we read this. Paul says, And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

Among them, we too, formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

And so, instead of, not, as we can become friends of God, and we cease to be enemies of God, we now take on a new enemy, the one who is described as the ruler of the kingdom of the air.

[6 : 51] And Satan now stands opposed to us. He comes now wanting to destroy us, but unable to do so. And so he comes to us to spoil our relationship with the Lord.

He knows that sin will destroy our walk with him, and he knows that sin will grieve the Holy Spirit. And so what he wants to do is to make us suffer as Christians, because we are turncoats in his eyes.

Peter says this in 1 Peter 5, he says, Be sober-minded and watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion.

Seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of sufferings are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

So he wants to make us suffer in any way he can. He wants to distract us as well from the course that we have now had set in our lives.

[8 : 01] Just as Peter tried to distract the Lord Jesus when he just said to the Lord, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And then Jesus then says, Well, you know, you're all, you know, I'm going to die, and in three days, you know, I'm going to be gone.

And Peter says, No. And the Lord says to Peter, Get behind me, Satan. You are a stumbling block to me. You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.

So Satan wants to distract us, and he tried to distract the Lord at that point. And so his most persistent work is not to bring us down necessarily through outward trials, such as persecution or illness, but in the realm of inward personal temptation.

And that's what I really want us to touch upon tonight. It's not for nothing that the Lord's Prayer has a petition, Lead us not into temptation. We prayed the Lord's Prayer this morning, didn't we?

Which is quite unusual. But lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, or the evil one. And it's not for nothing that the Lord's ministry began with Satan tempting him in the wilderness.

[9 : 20] Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, in three different ways at least. And we read that Jesus was tempted, and yet he was without sin.

In Hebrews it says, We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, and yet without sin.

Satan failed to tempt Jesus into sinning. That was his intention, for sure. But not so with us. Is it?

Adam and Eve were perfect people in a perfect world. And yet they failed the first temptation by disobeying just a single commandment.

Now think about that. We could have done better than that, than Adam and Eve, couldn't we? Well, I don't think so. But that's the situation. They failed, they failed to the first temptation, just one commandment.

[10 : 27] And they failed, and as they failed, as Paul has explained in Romans, we also failed. As in Adam, all die. And so we become rich and fertile soil for Satan.

Jesus was tempted, yet never sinned. We are tempted. And we're far worse than Adam and Eve, and they fell at the very first hurdle.

So inward trials and temptations have caused the greatest of saints, the most spectacular falls. And it's these temptations through our Christian life that just stick to us like glue.

I don't like using the phrase besetting sin, because I think it belittles what sin really is. It's almost as if, well, there's sin, but then there's the besetting sin.

And that's harder to deal with, and we sort of cope with that. No, sin is sin. And it sticks to us like glue. And we, each of us have, in that sense, our weakness, our Achilles heel.

[11 : 36] Now, we read earlier in Romans 7 of the great struggle that Paul had with his inner self. His personal struggle with sin and with temptation.

And he was a great man, was he not? And he introduces a phrase I just want us to hold on to this evening. And it's found in verses 22 and 23 of chapter 7.

I'll read it to you. It says, For in my inner being I delight in God's law, but I see another law at work in the members of my body, in my flesh, in me, waging war against the law of my mind.

That's the phrase. Waging war against the law of my mind. And making me a prisoner to the law of sin within my members.

What a wretched man I am. What Paul is saying here is there's a war going on and it's in the mind.

[12 : 39] We had something of that from Frederick last week. There's a war in our mind. And the reason why the war is in our mind is because Satan has chosen the battleground.

We're in a war and we don't have the luxury of saying, Well, I'd like to fight this war where I want to. Satan says, No, I'm going to fight you in your mind.

The Christian life is full of stress. It's full of tension. It's full of testing. And when we were outside of Christ, we had a bulletproof conscience, which was very useful to Satan in keeping us captive to him.

And a good example of a bulletproof conscience is actually found in Psalm 36. This is what it says about the wicked.

An oracle is within my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked. There is no fear of God before his eyes. For in his own eyes, he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin.

[13 : 50] The words of his mouth are wicked and deceitful. He has ceased to be wise and to do good. Even on his bed, he plots evil and so on and so on. For in his own eyes, he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin.

That's what we were like. We had bulletproof consciences. We could always resist God. Or so we thought.

In our minds, we can just put a fence around us and we have a wonderful, wonderful defense. We don't even flatter ourselves to even detect or hate sin.

But Paul recognized that as new creatures in Christ, he and all Christians will suffer. The fact that Christ also suffered in his temptations, we read of in Hebrews 2.

He says this, Hebrews 2.18, because he himself, that's the Lord, he himself suffered when he was tempted. He is able to help those who are being tempted. Christ suffered when he was tempted.

[14 : 57] That's an amazing thought, isn't it? But it's all part of the condescension of Christ. It's all part of him taking on human flesh. All part of him becoming a perfect man.

And so when he was tempted, it wasn't the case of, well, it's like water off a duck's back, you can't touch me. Christ suffered with the temptations. They were real.

They were genuine. They were warring at his soul. But of course, he didn't sin. The difference is, is that we have that same suffering, but we fail and we sin.

Now, the good news is, is that Paul describes and explains what this warfare in the mind is all about. And he does that in chapter 8.

And can we just turn to chapter 8 and just read verses 5 to 9. Romans 8 and verses 5 to 9.

[15 : 56] I'll read it from the NIV version. It's the newer version. It says this, Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires.

But those who live in accordance with the spirit have their minds set on what the spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death. But the mind governed by the spirit is life and peace.

The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh, but are in the realm of the spirit. If indeed the spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.

And so you can see there's a contrast here. It's what the flesh desires, what the spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh and the mind governed by the spirit. And it's explained that there is this warfare, there's this struggle within the Christian.

[16 : 58] We didn't have it when we weren't Christians, so that was okay. We could eat, live, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. It didn't matter. But now we've got this new principle at work in us.

Paul said the same thing seven years earlier to the Galatians. And it's here we begin to understand what is happening to us when we are tempted. That there is a new force at work within us.

And that force is the Holy Spirit. And that force is there to help us in our struggle against sin. And it's no wonder that Paul says, thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

You know, who will deliver me from this body of death? Well, thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ. No wonder he says that. Because he realized, and as he explains later in just the next few verses, it's because we've got the Holy Spirit indwelling with us.

So we're not alone in coping with our inward trials. We have the Holy Spirit. And it's the fact that because we have the Holy Spirit within us, we have all the stress and all the tension.

[18 : 05] If we didn't have the Holy Spirit within us, we wouldn't have the struggle against sin. We wouldn't have this stress. We wouldn't have this tension. We wouldn't have this sense of failure when we sin.

And his indwelling of us creates within us desires to please God. And we learn to walk in the Spirit. And so the warfare that we're in is in fact proof that we're children of God.

And isn't that wonderful? You know, you might be struggling with some sin at the moment. It might be something that, as we had in the children's talk this morning, it might be a secret that nobody else knows.

And you wouldn't tell anybody for the world what that is. But if you're struggling with something like that, then part of the proof of being a child of God is because you're struggling.

Because there is a war going on. And you will fail. And you will sin. But thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[19 : 15] That's the deliverance. But to be successful in this Christian walk, in this warfare, there's something that needs to happen. And that's all to do with the mind.

Our minds need to be renewed. And we could spend a whole week thinking about how to renew the mind. But probably the clearest explanation of what needs to happen to our minds is found in Romans 12.

He says this, It says, The word transformed by the renewing of your mind.

The word transformed actually means transfigured. When Jesus was on the mountain, he was transfigured. And that's the same word. We are to be transfigured, completely changed. Our minds are to be renewed.

And we're to renew the minds with the things of God. So, how do we do this? How do we handle temptation? Because Satan has chosen the battleground.

[20 : 45] That doesn't mean to say we can't fight. And we can fight this spiritual warfare because of several things. And what he's done is he's given us the tactics that we can use and the ways of escape in our spiritual warfare.

And there's two I just want to sort of look at. The first one is to recognize the warning signs. Recognize the warning signs.

When you're being tempted, recognize what's going on. You know, you've got a renewed mind. And you've got a call to have your mind constantly renewed.

You're not living in the secular and the religious world, as we heard this morning. You're not sort of at work. Well, I can do this because it doesn't matter because I'm not at church. It's the call to renew your mind is there.

And the first thing we have to do is to recognize the attacks. Recognize the warning signs. James says this. When tempted, no one should say, God is tempting me.

[21 : 49] For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone. But each person, that's you and me, is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.

Then after desire is conceived, it gives birth to sin and sin to death. And when it is full grown, it gives birth to death. So what is this evil desire and enticement?

Now, I'm not going to be specific here. We all know what it is. But Job has a real insight on this. And it's a verse I came across just recently.

And one of Job's comforters says this about him. He's wrong. But he says this about Job because the accusation against Job is, well, you've had such terrible things happen to you.

Therefore, you must have sinned. Therefore, you're wrong. Therefore, if you repent, you'll be okay. That was the general tenor from Job's so-called friends.

[22 : 48] And he says this about Job. He says, it's wrong, but it's right in this sense. He says, though evil is sweet in his mouth, and he hides it under his tongue, though he desires it and will not let it go, but holds it in his mouth.

So the first thing that we know about sin in recognizing sin is that it's tasty. It's evil is sweet in the mouth.

You hide it under your tongue like a mint imperial. Right? And you love it. And it's nice. And that's what the accusation against Job was.

Wow, you see, you've been hiding sin under your tongue. Ah, it's really good, isn't it? So the first thing about this evil desire enticement is that it's tasty.

And the next thing is that it never satisfies. Recognize that when you're being tempted and trying to be alert to the warning signs, it never satisfies.

[23 : 53] Sin never satisfies. It's true about natural things. In Ecclesiastes it says, all the toil of a man is for his mouth, yet his appetite is not satisfied.

Well, it's true, isn't it? You know, we might be sated and bloated and have a really good meal, but 12 hours later we'll be wanting to do the same thing again. And it's true in the natural world, but it's also true in what we might say neutral things.

In Ecclesiastes, again, it says, those who love money will never have enough. How meaningless to think that wealth brings true happiness. I mean, what are the takes for today, isn't it?

Those who love money will never have enough. It's emphatic. You will never have enough. And you see that with the Bernie Eccleson thing, don't you? You know, the millions and millions and millions, you think, he's got enough.

No, I want more. Why do you want more? Because I want more. That's the rationale. How? So it's, even though money is neutral, we, what Paul says is the love of money is the root of all evil.

[25 : 02] And he's right, isn't he? And it never satisfies. Sin never satisfies because it always takes away. It is a wholly, totally negative aspect in your life and in my life.

And Proverbs says this. He says, the leech has two suckers that cry out, more, more. There are three things that are never satisfied.

No, four that never say enough. Sin never says enough. You will sin today in a particular way and you'll think, no, I'll never do that again.

But you will. Because that's the nature of sin. And so to understand and recognize the warning signs is so important and yet they're so plain, aren't they?

They're so plain. And not only does sin never satisfy, it's also progressive. And this is the teaching that the Lord brings out in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount.

[26 : 05] That a covetous thought leads to robbing a neighbor of his property or his wife. That a petty thief leads to a career of being a career thief or a bank robber.

That a bitter word leads to murder. That a lustful glance leads to adultery. Sin is progressive. You don't start there and you stay there.

It always progresses. And it always progresses because it never satisfies. And so the next step is, well, I'll be okay next time. You'll never have enough money.

It will never satisfy. And the same with sin. And with temptation. It's also progressive. Because we go from bad to worse.

And the worst thing is, is that the younger we start, the worse it is. And is that not one of the reasons why sins against children are the worst?

[27 : 07] Sins against children are horrific, aren't they? And the Lord says, if anyone causes any one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

To cause a child to sin is gross in the sight of God. Because he knows the nature of sin. He knows that evil desires and enticements are all part of the war that is waged against every one of our souls.

And we see the progression today, do we not? Civil partners become, within a few years, same-sex marriage. Abortion is leading to gender selection, which is leading to euthanasia.

You know, the whole, anything that goes against the word of God will always have this progressive theme to it. And so whilst reading the book today that was given about same-sex marriage and what they call the four-lock system, the four-bolt system that makes the law absolutely secure, it's nonsense, it's rubbish, because the law will change if man wants to make it change.

And so the safeguards that we have not to conduct same-sex marriages in this building, to speak out against them in this building, can easily be changed. So evil desires and enticements, they conceive and they lead to sin.

[28 : 43] Exactly what happened in the Garden of Eden. That's the first thing, to recognize the warning signs. But the other lesson, the only thing we can raise our spiritual antennae to, as it is, is to learn from the past.

To learn from the past. We learn from our own experience. That's why I read Psalm 25. How many of us here, don't put your hands up, but would have prayed this, Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways.

According to your love, remember me, for you, O Lord, are good. How many of us pray that? You know, I know I do. You know, remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways.

They're there. You can't undo sin. So why don't we learn from the past? Why don't we learn from the foolish things that we've done when we were non-Christians?

And there's a cry here from the psalmist. The cry is, I know you've forgiven me my sin, Lord, but I can't forget it.

[29 : 50] And so don't remember, please, the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways. So learn from the past. Learn from the experience of others, too.

David and Bathsheba is just a classic example, is it not, of David being tempted? And I'm sure that temptation did not suddenly come on like that.

It happened like that. But there was things that led up to it. The fact that he was in his palace and not at war. The fact that he was looking and idling himself and not busy.

And, you know, David should have learned from Job. Job says, I've made a covenant with my eyes, not to look lustfully as a young woman. That was a prayer of Job.

And David should have known that. And we know that. But he ignores it. He finds himself in a place, in a position where that word is just pushed to one side.

[30 : 58] He's living in the secular world and not in the religious world. And that's what happens when we sin. We push Christ to the side. Say, we don't need you here.

Because I know you know what I'm thinking or doing. And so we sin. But the glorious thing is that even after sinning, there is a way out.

Nathan, the prophet, confronts David. And he does it in a dramatic way. And David says, I have sinned against the Lord.

And Nathan said to David, the Lord also has taken away your sin. What a wonderful savior. He's just committed adultery with Bathsheba. He's, his, Bathsheba is pregnant.

A husband has been murdered, effectively. And, and he's cut to the, to the, to the quick. With, with this word from Nathan, from the Lord.

[31 : 59] And he says, I have sinned against the Lord. So repentance, there is a way back for all our sin. That doesn't mean to say that we sin so that grace might abound. That's one of Paul's arguments.

But there is a way back. And yet there is a way back for David with consequences. The baby dies. And there are consequences for all our sins.

We may have our sins forgiven. But the consequences, the effects, the ramifications, the knock-on effect of our sin continues. Paul says this.

These things, remembering the past, happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us on whom the culmination of the ages has come.

So if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall. No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful.

[33 : 01] He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. Well, we have looked at two things.

To recognize the warning signs. To learn from history. But we are in a spiritual warfare, brothers and sisters. We are in a spiritual warfare. And I will tell you what.

You are on the front line. We are on the front line. And we must engage the enemy. We have no choice with that. We are in a spiritual warfare.

We must fight. We can learn from the past. We can reflect on these things. We can look at the warning signs. But there comes a day when we have to engage the enemy.

There are rules of engagement. What are the rules of engagement? Well, the rules of engagement. The first one is to follow the commander.

[34 : 04] We all have a commander, don't we? The commander is the Lord Jesus Christ. Hebrews 12. Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses.

We love Hebrews 11, don't we? The great roll call of faith. And they're all sinners. And some of them were really bad. And huge failures.

Spiritually speaking, at certain times in their lives. But we're surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. All that's forgotten. And he says, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Fixing our eyes on Jesus. Manchester United want a new manager, don't they?

By a half. Right. They have to fix a mind in getting that. We have to fix our eyes on Jesus. He is our commander.

[35 : 10] He is a pioneer and perfecter of our faith. Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. Scorning its shame. Sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

It says, consider him who endureth such opposition from sinners. So that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Luke to the commander. First rule of engagement.

Luke to the commander. Second rule of engagement is get fit. Get fit spiritually. Now, I'm not going to read all this.

But we know where to get fit, don't we? Don't we? That's a bit of a tease, isn't it? But Ephesians. Ephesians 6. Ephesians 6 is the great passage on the armor of God.

And he starts off that passage, verse 10. Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

[36 : 13] For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers and against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

We have this inward struggle, don't we? We have this battle within us. And we have to resist sin and Satan. But we have the Holy Spirit working for us.

But what Paul is saying here is that our struggle is not actually against flesh and blood. There's something behind that. And it's against the rulers. It's against the authorities.

It's against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil. And we need to be fit in order to be able to understand that. Spiritually fit. We need to be spiritually dressed.

Put on the whole, the full armor of God, it says, isn't it? You've got the belt of truth. The breastplate of righteousness. The readiness that comes from feet that have been shod with the gospel.

[37 : 12] You've got the shield of faith. And you've got the helmet of salvation. We need to get dressed. We've got to be equipped. If you're a soldier in going out to war, you've got all the gear.

Have you ever seen the soldiers? Do you think how they carry all that stuff? Well, they have to be fit, don't they? And then they've got to carry all this gear as well as a 70 pound backpack. Backpack.

Backpack. And so we have to get dressed. We've got to put on the whole armor of God. And we've got to become spiritually aware. It says that we're to watch and pray.

Watch and pray. Prayer is so important. Watching is so important. Praying without watching and watching without praying won't do.

You've got to do both. Failing to watch and pray in Gethsemane led to the great downfall of the disciples, didn't it not? Peter in particular says that, he says this, that when he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping, Simon, Jesus said to Peter, are you asleep?

[38 : 20] Couldn't you keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. And then there's this wonderful caveat. For the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

So we have these desires to do good. But those desires just seem to get swamped by the evil that is within us. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

And as long as we remember that, and as long as we're alert to that, then we know that looking to the commander, wearing the whole armor, being spiritually fit, will do us good and will take us through.

Paul says this in Ephesians 6, And pray in the spirit on all occasions, with all kinds of prayers and requests. And with this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

So that's where we've come to. We've looked at conversion. We've seen how Satan stands opposed to us. We see how Satan has chosen the battleground, our minds.

[39 : 31] We see that we need to renew our minds. We've seen that he's given us three tactics. To recognize the warning signs.

To learn from the past. And the last one, which is to engage with the enemy. Got to engage. Can't run away. And then the final things.

The final question is, well, will things get worse? Well, the good news is, they will. They will. How do I work that one out?

Well, let me put it this way. They should do. They should do. Things should get worse in our spiritual life. In this respect. Is that once we, as we go through our Christian life, we ought to sin less.

Because we're more and more being conformed to Christ. As we go through the Christian life, we still sin. But that sin should become a darker, darker thing to us.

[40 : 34] It should be like a long shadow and a short shadow. There we are. We're aiming to be close to Jesus. He is a radiant sun.

And we start our Christian life when we're miles away. And so we have a long shadow, don't we? But the closer we get, the shadow shortens. But it darkens. And that's what sin should be like in our lives.

We'll never get rid of the shadow. But the darkness will get darker as we get closer to Christ. And so it becomes more abhorrent to us.

And we have a greater appreciation of the wickedness of our own hearts. That's how it gets worse. But we also have a wonderful, wonderful insight.

So the wonders and the glories and the forgiveness of a loving God. Who forgives and forgives and forgives again. He is a God who is in control.

[41 : 34] A saviour is in control. He will not let us go. And he will work all things through for his glory. That was so with David and Bathsheba.

Can you imagine that? That God brought good and glory out of that terrible thing that David did. What was the good? What was the glory? Well, from that came Solomon.

From that was a continued line of Messiah. The Lord Jesus Christ. And God was glorified in that. Christ is glorified in that.

So things should get worse. They should get worse. In that sense. That we will see the darkness and the horror of our sin. And we'll stop playing fast and loose.

With those things which beset us. In Philippians it says this. And shall close with this. It says, finally brothers and sisters.

[42 : 31] Whatever is true. Whatever is noble. Whatever is right. Whatever is pure. Whatever is lovely. Whatever is admirable. If anything is excellent or praiseworthy.

Remember what it is. Think on these things. The battle for the mind. Think on these things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me.

Put into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. Paul was the ace mentor. Was he not? He was the one to whom he is saying.

Just follow me. And you'll follow Christ. And we're to be like that in that sense. Aren't we? We want to be more like Christ. So that people can look at us.

And say. Well I want to be like that person. Have you had a mentor in your life? Or somebody you've looked up to. And you say. Oh. That saint there. Oh. I wish I was like that person.

[43 : 26] I wish I was like her. I wish I was like him. I've had one or two people like that. Where I've fought so highly of them. Because of their maturity. And yet they would be the people.

Who would be the most humble. They would hate sin more than anybody you'd know. And so on and so forth. Because they were like Christ. So we're to be examples. One for the other.

Do you want to be a good example. Or a bad example. Do you want to be like Christ. Or like the world. Well if anything is excellent or praiseworthy. Think on such things.

Heavenly Father. We ask that you would help us to. Realize the warfare that we're in. The great struggle that we. Do have with our sin.

Is something which is there. That we've asked. The Lord that I might grow in every. Grace and love and power. Lord we've asked you to do that. And then. You just come along.

[44 : 27] And it seems that you. We get. Ravaged by all kinds of temptations. And situations that. We just say. Well what are you doing Lord. But Lord we know that you're answering.

Prayers for grace. And power. And so we ask you to help us. To deal with our sin. We ask that you. Help us to deal with those things. That hurt you.

And hurt our. Brothers and sisters in Christ. Those things that. Are just like. Spiritual self harm. Lord help us in these things we pray.

And give us deliverance. And victory. Over the one who would. Crush our souls. And we ask this for the glory of your name. Amen.