**Romans Chapter 7**

Chapter 7:1-6

* Paul continues discussing the law and the reasons for it, especially in light of the death and resurrection of Christ, beginning with an analogy of marriage.
* Paul makes the point that death ends all obligations and contracts. A wife is no longer bound to her husband if he dies because death ends that contract. If her husband dies, she is free from that law. In this analogy, we are the bride, the husband is sin, and Christ is the one waiting for our husband to die.
* Paul teaches that through our baptism, we have already died to sin, through our baptism, so we are discharged from our obligations to the law. How is this marriage analogy helpful?
* Paul talks about living in “the flesh.” He does not understand “the flesh” simply to mean our bodies, he understands it to mean human nature, the nature within that is apart from God. That nature is what turns our sins into our passions.
* Paul seems to speak of human nature in a negative light. What ways do you agree or disagree with that? In what ways is human nature good?

Chapter 7:7-13

* In this discussion of the law and sin, Paul is eager to make it clear that he does not believe the law itself is sinful or causes sin, but rather creates a situation where the power of sin can work. Paul describes the dynamic where the warning “Don’t do that!” may become a call to action because of our sinful, rebellious hearts. He make it clear that it isn’t the fault of the commandment, but it is our fault, and the fault of the power of sin within us.
* In what ways are we drawn to and fascinated by forbidden things?
* How have you seen the power of sin at work in the world?

Chapter 7:14-25

* Paul’s problem isn’t a lack of desire – he wants to do what is right. His problem also isn’t knowledge – he knows what the right thing is.
* How different would our lives and world be if our decisions were solely based on what is right and what is wrong according to God?
* Paul’s problem is a lack of power. He lacks power because the law gives no power. C. S. Lewis talks about this: “No man knows how bad he is until he has tried to be good.”
* In what ways do other denominations/religions believe that the law gives them power?
* Paul is completely worn out and wretched because of his unsuccessful effort to please God under the principle of Law. Legalism always brings a person face to face with their own wretchedness, and if they continue in legalism, they will react in one of two ways. Either they will deny their wretchedness and become self-righteous, or they will despair because of their wretchedness and give up following after God.
* Paul finds victory in Jesus. Jesus didn’t come and die just to give us more or better rules, but to live out his victory through those who believe.
* The message of the gospel is that there is victory over the power of sin, hate, death, and all evil as we surrender our lives to Jesus and let Him live out victory through us.
* Victory does not come through theological education nor does it come through religious motivation… it comes through Jesus.
* How have you experienced this in your own life, or seen it in the lives of others?