



## **Sermon by Director for Evangelical Mission, Pr. Troy Pflibsen**

*June, 2026*

Romans 7:15-25a

Paul writes

15 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 that the law is good. 17 But in fact it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that the good does not dwell within me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do the good lies close at hand, but not the ability. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. 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 what is good, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, 23 but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched person that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

The word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

Often it is when we turn the calendar to the new year.

We commit to change something.

We want to do better!

It might be to work out regularly. It might be to lose weight. It might be to call our mother more often.

Whatever it is, we dedicate ourselves to this new or better behavior.

How long does this last?

The hope is forever. The reality is often much less.

We miss working out. We eat that huge piece of cake. Calling mom slips from our memory.

Pretty soon we lose momentum and we are back to our old ways.

We feel bad. We are discouraged. We are frustrated with ourselves.

Now let's go much deeper.

It could be our battle against alcohol or drug abuse.

Perhaps it is an abusive or neglectful relationship.

Whatever the struggle, there is a sense of helplessness and hopelessness as we wrestle with it.

It really does feel like there is something more powerful that controls us.

Paul calls this something sin.

We might use other language.

The label doesn't really matter.

What is important is the awareness that there is this something, this entity, that we cannot resist, we cannot fight on our own.

Now I'd love to tell you that with Jesus this struggle becomes easy.

Some TV evangelists proclaim this.

But Paul doesn't make this promise nor will I.

What Paul does say is that in and through God there is hope.

With God's help we might overcome that which overwhelms us.

With the support of others, who act on God's behalf, the workouts continue, we avoid the huge piece of cake, we remember to call mom.

With the support of others, the addiction's power over us diminishes, or we move from an abusive or neglectful relationship.

God does work. God does work through others.

We all know the success stories.

But on the other side, we also know that there are those who do not overcome.

They might be our own stories. They might be those of the people close to us.

In the midst of this Paul reminds us that God is with us in the struggle, the push against whatever is keeping us down.

God gives us strength. God gives us perseverance.

And when we fail, and we do, God is with us then as well.

In today's reading from Romans, Paul describes well what we often feel.

We try to do what is right.

Instead, we do what is wrong.

It feels like something else is in control.

God does not abandon us in this struggle.

Through others, God may help us to overcome.

And when we fail, God is there as well.

Amen