

Willing Spirit...Weak Flesh

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Preacher: Bill Story

[0 : 00] Have you ever fallen asleep when you needed to stay awake?

No, right? No, right? No, when I pray, I never get sleepy. When I studied in college, no, no, never a problem staying awake studying, right?

Late night at 3 a.m. trying to get ready for that exam the next morning. No, of course not at work, right? Especially that afternoon after a big lunch and long meetings and you're sitting down at a desk and trying to do paperwork maybe?

I don't know. Never struggle with that, right? And certainly not in church. Shh. Oh. What? What? What? No, that doesn't happen to us.

We never intend to sleep. We need to be awake in those times. But what happens? As it says here, their eyelids were heavy.

[1 : 21] You know what that's like, right? You're like, I just can't keep them open. They're like 50 pound weights on these things. What's going on?

Well, it could be many things. It could be not sleeping that night. It could be not overeating. I don't know. Who knows what it is? It could be stress. It could be tension. It could be sorrow.

We are afraid. It could be bored. It could be bored. What? What? Never heard of that.

You know, that word never appeared until the Enlightenment. Okay. Boredom is not my problem. It's the bored person's problem. I don't buy it.

My kids tell me that. I don't buy it for a second. Don't buy it for a second. Anyway, sorry. That's a different sermon. So, falling asleep. So, sleeplessness.

[2 : 21] Jesus talks to his disciples about keeping awake. Keeping awake. And yet three times he comes and finds them sleeping. Well, Jesus had told another story about sleeping.

In Matthew 25, the parable of the ten bridesmaids. Remember who took their lamps to go meet the bridegroom? And five of them were wise.

And five were foolish. The five wise bridesmaids took not just their lamp, but also took a flask of oil with them.

So, when their lamps burned down, they had more oil. The foolish did not take any extra oil with them. And so, as the story proceeds, the groom was delayed in coming.

And while he was delayed, all the bridesmaids became drowsy. And they all fell asleep, both wise and foolish.

[3 : 26] Because they were drowsy. And then the voice came out, the groom is here! In the middle of the night. And so, the five wise bridesmaids, who had extra oil, were able to meet the bridegroom in the night.

And the foolish ones asked the wise ones, Can we borrow some of your oil? And they said, No! Because if we give you some, then we won't have enough.

And so, you reap what you sow, foolish one. What I want you to recognize from this story is that the sleepiness, or the sleeping, the physical sleeping, isn't the issue.

Because they all slept. Because they were all drowsy. The issue was readiness. Who was ready when, in the middle of the night, the bridegroom came?

Those who had prepared. Those who had thought ahead. Who recognized the possibility of delay. Let's think ahead and have extra oil.

[4 : 44] They were wise. That's wise. Wisdom, we learn in the book of Proverbs, wisdom is always about recognizing consequences. Recognizing options.

And making a wise choice based on the circumstances. That's wisdom. And often, we learn wisdom the hard way.

By making the wrong choices. Or by not thinking ahead. Right? We lose our keys often enough. We say, I need to put the keys in a place that I'll always remember.

That would be the wise thing. I don't know who would have that problem. No, I'm serious. Whatever it is. We learn.

So, here in this passage, where Jesus is praying, and we have, of course, this contrast of Jesus faithfully praying, though in great distress, he's working through it.

[5 : 47] And then, in contrast, we have the sleeping disciples, who are failing. They're already falling away from him.

Not in tension. But they're already showing the capability of failing him. He's asked them to watch. One hour.

Peter? One hour. Peter? You know who you say you are? One hour, buddy.

How did Jesus say that to him? I don't know. I don't know what his tone was. I don't know if he was frustrated, if he was sad. I lean more toward that, but maybe he's sad to see Peter falling already.

But here we have this contrast. So, Jesus says, watch and pray that you not fall into temptation.

[6 : 57] How do we prepare for temptation? Do you think about that? How can you be ready when temptation comes so that you're not caught, unaware, so that you're not snared, you're not enticed, and baited into following?

How do we prepare for temptation? Do we prepare? See, if we do not prepare, then we will.

be tempted. Just as Peter. Peter sees the soldiers coming, we're going to see that soon, right? He's ready. I'm ready for that challenge.

Then in the courtyard, warming his hands, don't know what his mindset is, don't know what has changed in him, but suddenly, not ready. And not only not denying Jesus, but insistently, defiantly denying he knows him.

How do you go from one to the other? Spirit is willing. I don't think he had any spirit left by the time he got to the courtyard. I think it was all flesh by him.

[8 : 15] Because we look at what extent he goes. Shocking. So how do we do that? See, we do that too. How do we get ourselves into that situation where not only are we kind of not just struggling willing, but weak, but over to here where eh, how do we do that?

How do we get there? I think we have a clue here in this passage. Watch and pray that you may not enter over there.

Get into that position. So we've seen here Jesus praying in Gethsemane. We saw that he's distressed as we're told. And in response to his distress, he pours out his soul to the Father.

We see how he handles his distressed spirit. How do you handle your spirit or your soul more more precisely when it is disturbed, when it is upset, when it is depressed, when it is despairing, when it is low?

How do you handle that? Our natural response is to fade into it. Well, if you're a personality like me especially, to just kind of withdraw and, you know, kind of spiral down.

[9 : 39] So how do you handle it? How does Jesus handle it? First of all, in his despair, he confesses even to the three disciples there. He tells them, my soul is very sorrowful unto death.

Whatever that means. And then he goes and prays. He pours out his soul to the Father. Father, if possible, let this cup pass.

And notice, there is a transition in his prayer. It goes from if possible to all things are possible, make it go away. It goes from a maybe to a please, definitely do that.

That's what I want. But not what I want. That's what I want. And that's what Jesus wanted. Jesus did not want the cross.

I mean, we realize in this scene how human Jesus is. How real temptation was for him. How hard obedience was for him.

[10 : 44] He's struggling. And so through confession and prayer, he struggles with his obedience. He's working out his feelings. Notice he does not dismiss his feelings. He does not ignore his feelings.

He admits them and works them out through prayer. And then we see there's this change where he's praying remove the cup and then we see this yet not what I want.

How does he do that? How do you go from make it go away to okay. Not happy about it, not what I want, but it's more important what you want.

how did he do that? I think the clue is just looking at what he did. He's authentic. He's real. He deals with his feelings. He pours out his soul. He confesses there is power in confession by saying it out loud.

He's able to go from remove this cup to not my will by confession and authentic prayer. that enables him. So he takes one step. That's all he does.

[12 : 01] Pours it out. And through that he's empowered to take the next step. Faith isn't jumping from here, way over there.

Faith is baby step. Can I do that? Can I cry out Jesus? Can I pray all of Psalm 119? No. Can I say help me Jesus?

Yeah, I think I can do that. Okay. That's faith. That's still faith. That's still movement. And that movement empowers me to take another.

Okay. Only worry about one or a time. Just worry about one or a time. Can I just start with... Can I do... And how refreshing to be authentic. To say to the Lord, Lord, I don't want to do this.

this is how I feel about it. This is where I am. Complain. You ever complain to the Lord? You feel like you can do that? Good.

[13 : 03] Because you can. Because it's not like you're going to shock him. Oh, I never knew they felt that way. You know? Gee, I wonder... How did I miss that?

He knows already. He knows. Tell him. Bear fact it out. Look at the Psalms. Look how honest David is. Do that.

There's power in that. There's process in it. As Jesus said, blessed are those who mourn, who get it out, for they shall be comforted.

There's power in that. You will experience the kingdom when you do that. So we see Jesus faithful, struggling, in agony, yet praying.

Now we come to a shift in the focus here in Mark. In the first verses from 32 through 36, the focus is on Jesus and His feelings and His prayer.

[14 : 08] Then notice we come to verse 37, and all of a sudden the emphasis shifts away from Jesus. Now we're told when He goes and prays again that He simply went and prayed the same thing.

That's all we're told. And then the third time, we're not even told that. We're just told that He comes back a third time. So the focus is a shift now to these disciples.

He finds them sleeping. Verse 37, He goes back. Verse 40, He comes again and finds them sleeping. Verse 41, a third time He comes back and again they're sleeping.

the shift of focus is on these disciples. And there's a warning about the dangerous path that they're on because they're about to encounter temptation.

They're about to be exposed for their weakness. They're about to be broken through this process.

[15 : 13] And they're not very aware. It's fascinating as we think about this study. It's kind of, where are they at? They've heard Jesus say things.

They know He's talked about death. I personally don't think they believe that's a physical death. Because when He does raise, they're surprised.

Right? I think they think it's a parable. So they're confused. By any meaning, whatever, they're confused. They obviously don't get it all. So you're wondering, what are they thinking?

As Jesus tells them and shows distress and tells them He's in deep sorrow, what are they thinking?

Oh, another object lesson, I guess. Is that what? What is sinking in what's not? Why would they sleep at those moments?

[16 : 14] Naturally, of course, they're sleeping because they're exhausted. It's been a long day. Had a big meal. It's been an emotionally stressful day. Right?

A betrayer among them. I mean, those three revelations at the meal. You're all going to fall away? No, no, no. Peter, Peter, the rock, the one who speaks for us.

Sometimes we like, sometimes we don't. It's going to deny. This has to be, how do they absorb all that? Right?

I mean, how do they get it all? Luke tells us that they were sleeping for sorrow. So he gives us, Dr. Luke gives us a little bit of insight into maybe what's going on inside them.

There's some sorrow. They're overwhelmed. They're grieving because of this betrayal, because of this falling away, because of their leader, their rock is going to deny.

[17 : 16] What is going on? And you ever get to that point where it's kind of so much that you kind of shut down? I think that's what they're doing. I think they're shutting down.

I think they're absolutely overwhelmed. physically, emotionally, spiritually, they're not ready. But Jesus is going to teach them a lesson that they may not get right now, but they'll remember later.

Through their failure, it'll pop up bigger. Oh, remember that? And by the way, guess who uses the same word about keep awake?

in his writing? Peter. Verse Peter 5, Peter says, stay awake for your enemy, the devil, prowls like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour.

Do you think Peter learned about staying awake? Not about this simply never going to sleep, that's not what Jesus meant, but about being ready. Be sober, be alert, recognize you have a devil, an adversary that you can't see who is clever and devastating.

[18 : 42] He wants to eat you alive. Literally. Well, spiritual. there. Okay.

So, how do we watch and pray in the battle of temptation? How do we take and apply what Jesus calls us to do in verse 38? Watch, keep watching, and keep praying that you may not enter into temptation.

I think Jesus wants us to embrace two things here. Two things he's teaching. One is a warning, and one is about our weakness. First, he teaches us a warning to watch and pray. And secondly, he's going to teach us about a weakness that we need to recognize and embrace, and that is that, yes, we have a spirit that is willing, but we have a flesh that is weak.

And no matter how self-sufficient, how self-reliant, how confident we are in ourselves, we must learn and remember we're weak. No matter how well intended, we're weak.

And some of us don't believe that. Some of us believe that and then forget that. Because we've shut down, maybe.

[20 : 04] Because maybe the temptation we've entered into, we're not ready for, and wow, I'm weak. If I were ready, I might have been a little better, stronger.

At least I'd have seen it coming. I wouldn't have been snagged and trapped and deceived. Okay. So first the warning, pray vigilantly that you are ready for temptation.

Jesus is watching, pray that you not enter into temptation. temptation. I think what that really means is pray that you're ready.

Pray that you're ready. Pray that God prepare you, keep you alert and sober. Prepared. So, we see, first of all, powerlessness in them in verse 37.

As he had said in verse 34, when he left them, watch and pray, or no, he said, remain and watch. And now, as he comes back from praying in verse 37, he finds them sleeping.

[21 : 16] He finds them powerless. They're not able to stay a week. They're drowsy. They're tired. They're overwhelmed. They're stressed out. They're at their limit, I think.

Physically, emotionally. Jesus addresses Simon. Well, Mark says, he said to Peter, didn't call him Peter, called him Simon.

I don't know if there's a lot of significance in that or not. But he calls him Simon. Are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Our translation is weak there where it says, could you not?

As in, are you not able to watch one hour? The word Jesus actually uses is, are you not strong enough for one hour? Are you not macho enough, manly enough, for one hour, Mr.

Rock? Maybe that's why he called him Simon. Amen. you're going to be a rock right now.

[22 : 31] Where's the manliness? Where's the bravado now, Peter? You're going to lay down your life for me? Can't even stay up one hour. Now, how does Jesus say it to him?

What's his tone? I don't know. Is he exasperated? I don't know. He's been in prayer and kind of resolved that prayer, right? He's in spirit.

So I don't think he's mad. I don't think he's in flesh at all that way. I think it's maybe just a subtle wake up, Peter. I don't know exactly how that sounds.

Then he urges a preparedness. Verse 38, he says, watch and pray. Watch. Keep watching. Stay awake.

Be vigilant. Be on the alert. Be ready. Know the hour that we're in. They've heard Jesus pray.

[23 : 35] Let this hour pass. What hour is that? Jesus has been talking about an hour that's coming, an hour that's coming, an hour that's at hand.

are you ready for the hour when the hour has come? I think we can sense times when pressure's coming.

An hour is coming, a crisis is coming, maybe, maybe not, but something. Do we grasp it at that moment?

Do we grasp, I need to watch and pray right now through this process? Lord, help me, help me, help me. Right? Watch.

Pray. What is pray? Talk to God. Pray. It's a word that is used exclusively in regard to God.

[24 : 35] So it's not something I do with anybody else. Pray is something I do to God alone. I talk to him alone. I tell him. I pour out my heart.

I ask for things. I confess things. I admit I complain about things. I pour out my soul to him because he's my father and he wants me to do that more than I know.

I mean, I know it, but until I'm doing it, I don't know it. Know what I mean? And note that he tells them to pray for themselves and not for him.

Who's in the biggest crisis of the time? Jesus. He doesn't say, aren't you watching and praying for me? He says, you need to pray for you.

Watch and pray that you don't enter temptation. Wow. what a shepherd. You know, even then he's thinking of them.

[25 : 43] He knows he's aware of their struggle, their weakness. Pray for yourselves that you may not enter in temptation. What do I talk about? Well, help me not to fall into that temptation.

Help me, Father, with my sloth. Help me with my apathy. Help me with my pride. Help me with my blindness, with my deafness. Awaken me. I'm not feeling anything.

Revive me. I'm struggling. I'm not motivated, Lord. Help me. Move me.

If you don't do something, Lord, I'm falling. I'm falling. I'm spiraling. Is there desperateness in your prayer?

is there real, authentic whatever the word is in your prayer?

[26 : 46] And then he reveals a peril. Why this watching and praying? What's so important? What's the issue? Well, that you not enter temptation.

Temptation's in front of you. Deception is in front of you. There's a peril. There's a danger. If you enter into temptation, you're in trouble.

Because by then, you know, spirit's willing, but the flesh is weak. Do you not? Don't count on your willingness. Recognize how weak you are. Say, oh, I'm still strong enough.

well, let him who thinks he stand take heed lest he fall. Peter syndrome.

It's a peril. Why is temptation a peril? Because it's the realm of Satan. You're entering into his land now. You're entering into his territory.

[27 : 51] that's where he works. That's where he does his best stuff. He's not outright, I mean, you don't always see it's deceptive.

It's luring. That's why it's called temptation. It's enticing. And James tells us, remember, James tells us, never think that temptation is from God.

God doesn't want you to do evil. God doesn't lure you to evil. temptation, that comes, James says, from you.

Because you're tempted when you are enticed by the desires in you. So if you didn't have the desire in you, you wouldn't be tempted.

Satan knows he can lure you and entice you because you have certain desires. And when those desires progress, progress and give birth, then they become sin.

[28 : 52] And once sin fully develops, James says, there's a death. There's a dying. There's a pfft. It's all about the deception process.

So we don't want to get into the position of being snared and deceived and enticed. we must prepare.

The reason we fall so often is because we've not watched and prayed. That's just fact. We suddenly find ourselves there and then we're weak.

Weaker than we thought. Or more overweight. Maybe we're like the disciples. It's been a really long bad day. And I'm just, I've got to shut down.

I've got nothing left. And how weak am I then, right? That's normal. That's natural. It's who we are.

[29 : 56] So we're praying that we not encounter temptation unprepared. That we not come into it sleepy but alert. That we're thinking.

We're often tempted because we're not ready. We're not awake. prepared. So we react in anger. We respond with envy.

We're trapped by lust. We're fooled into thinking we can pretend and be false and nobody will know.

I can just fake it. because I've got to that point where I'm not ready. It's just me coming out now. There's no willing spirit.

It's just flesh coming out. And I think that's where Peter got in that courtyard. A place he never thought he would be. Never be that with no will to fight.

[31 : 01] temptation is a trial. Actually in the Greek the word for temptation is the same word for testing and trial.

It's the same word. It just depends on how it's perceived. From God's perspective it's a test and a trial to prove you, to examine you, to prove the genuineness of your faith.

faith. From the dark side it's a temptation to lure you away from faith. It just depends on how you're looking at it.

Peter describes temptation or trials this way. In 1 Peter 1 he says we by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to reveal in the last time.

That's the good news. In this you rejoice. Though now for a little while if necessary you have been grieved by various trials, testings, tribulations, temptations.

[32 : 04] So that the tested genuineness of your faith may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. So Peter talks about a temptation, a trial as a testing, a proven ground.

It shows what's really there. It reveals what's there. It's like when they, heat up the metals, right? We talked about that a couple weeks ago I think. Silver and gold, right?

It brings the heat, the fire, raises the impurities and you can scrape it off. So it reveals what's there, what's real. It separates. That's what temptation slash trial slash testing does for us.

It reveals what's really there. Does it show my faith? How much faith does it show? Does it show a little bit of faith?

Does it show some willingness but a lot of weakness? Some weakness but a lot of willingness? You know, what does it show? Just, that's all it is. It's an exam. You take an exam, it shows you what you know, right?

- [33 : 13] That's what it does. It shows the genuineness of your faith. It purifies, exposes, reveals. So, first of all, pray vigilant that you're ready, vigilantly that you're ready for temptation.
- Do you pray about temptation? It's one of the things we're told to pray for, actually. Right? Jesus says, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
- How do you pray that? What do you mean when you pray that? What are you thinking about when you pray that? Do you ask the Lord to help you be ready to recognize the temptation when it's coming?
- To help you keep alert when the temptation, so that you don't get to the point where it's too late and I'm unprepared and I'm overwhelmed. Help me avoid that, Lord. Help me to see it coming.
- So, embrace the need to pray vigilantly that you might be ready for temptation. Then Jesus gives a reason at the end of verse 38. He gives a reason for this prayer, a cause for this prayer, a motivation for this prayer.
- [34 : 28] Why must I pray that? Because your spirit is willing, yes, but your flesh is weak. Embrace the fact that you are in a war, that you are in a conflict.
- That inside of you, believer, is both the willingness and the weakness. Just because you're saved, you're just protected.
- No. If you're awake, you know that's not true. You're protected when you're trusting. You're protected when your shield is up.
- You're not protected simply because you walk out the door unthinking, unprayed. Right? That's, you're just a target. So, I just want to look at these two statements here in verse 38.
- the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. So, first of all, there's an intention that's willing. There's a spirit that is willing, which means a spirit that is ready, a spirit that's eager, a spirit that desires and wants to do what's right.
- [35 : 44] As a Christian, we're aware that we have a double nature. Are you aware that you're a split personality? You're a, not technically a split personality, but that you have two natures? You know, you've been changed.
- You've been radically, miraculously changed. You know, now you have this new heart. You really want to please God. You really want to obey. The commandments are not burdensome.
- They're not a guilt shaming thing. It's, no, I want to do that. Not every single minute of the day, maybe, in my honesty, but at the end of the day, no, I do.
- Some days more than others. Let's just be real. But, but, I have that new nature. God's given me a new heart, new desires, new values.
- Things are different. What he hasn't done is taken away the old flesh. See? He's put us into a conflict where we have to trust him, and we have to keep talking to him.
- [36 : 48] We have to stay connected. So, Jesus says, yes, you, you, you, you have a willing spirit, but you have a weak flesh.
- There is an, an, an, there is an innate inadequacy within you. Your flesh is weak. It's without strength. It's unable. It's limited. It's insufficient.
- It's lacking to overcome temptation. As a Christian, we still live in a body of flesh. We still carry the baggage of our old nature.
- All those scars, all those habits, all those tendencies, they're all still there. And the more we walk with Christ, the more we saturate ourselves in the word. Some of those things fade.

Okay? Some of those things fade. And at least my experience is, God reveals new ones. It's like, it's like, I think, I think Christians are more, are aware of sinfulness because now we're trying to walk on a narrower road and we're just aware of more stuff, right?

[38 : 00] Not to guilt us, just to recognize, okay, I am weak. Wow. I have all these tendencies. I have all these distractions. So we still have that baggage. Are you alert to that?

Does it motivate you to pray? Your weakness. See, I think that's what Jesus is getting at. Why watch and pray?

Because we're weak. And sometimes we're weaker than we think we are. Only the fire will tell. So how did these guys do after Jesus encourages them?

He finds them sleeping, verse 37, verse 38. He says, watch and pray that you're not entering temptation. Now they're all bucked up, right? Now they're ready to go. Now they're, they've been encouraged and inspired because Jesus is the most inspiring teacher there is, right?

So they are moving, right? Right? So he goes away, verse 39, and he prays again, the same words, time passes, and verse 40, he came again and found them vigilant.

[39 : 12] Sleeping. Sleeping. Still tired. And this time Mark tells us why. Because by now we're wondering, what? What's with these guys?

Mark says, he found them sleeping. Why? Because their eyes were very heavy. Their eyes were being weighed down. And you all know what that's like.

You're trying to keep your eyes up and they're just this. Sometimes we'll be up past eight. And she gets up before, before God intended, right?

Before the, the rooster crows or anything. She gets up like when Jesus used to get up before it's, well, it's still dark. So by eight at night, she's been with these little creepy crawlies all day.

And I look over, she just, I never have that problem. I just, I don't know. Except in the mornings. I'm the opposite. No, you know what that's, you all know what that's like.

[40 : 20] It's just, you're overwhelmed. You're tired. You're exhausted. That's what Mark says. That's, that's where they're at. Luke adds, it was for sorrow. So there's, there's not just a physical thing going on.

There's an emotional thing going on. It's been a tense, just wiping out kind of day. You don't have to do a lot physically to be wiped out at the end of the day.

You all know that. If it's an, if it's an emotionally stressful day, you're, you're sometimes more wiped out. Just overwhelmed.

This is where these guys are at. Let's be fair to dead guys. Okay. Let's be fair to these guys. These are real disciples.

These guys love Jesus. And he acknowledges that. I know Peter, James and John. I know your spirits willing. I know you want to. I know you're eager to, but I also know that your flesh, your flesh, your flesh, your flesh is weak.

[41 : 23] You just don't have the power. You don't have the ability. So I understand when Mark says their eyes are being weighed down.

In other words, it's happening to them, right? They're not intentionally saying, okay, time to take a nap. They're not trying to sleep. They're trying to stay awake. They're just overwhelmed.

So it's not intentional. They're not defying. They're just weak. They're not ready. They're not motivated to watch and pray.

Jesus is just as tired, if not more tired than they are, I'm sure. And yet, why can he keep praying? Because he's motivated. He's driven by something deeper than physical, emotional tiredness.

The disciples are not. They're kind of shutting down. They're just, I'm at my limit. I give up. And so they're falling.

[42 : 28] Finally, verse 41, Jesus comes back the third time, sees them sleeping. It's very difficult to know translation-wise how he's saying what he's saying.

He says three things. He says, sleeping, resting, enough. That's the literal translation. Sleeping, resting, enough.

Okay, what is that? Are those questions? Are they statements? Is it sarcasm? What's going on here? Don't know. But I'm assuming, since he's just come out of prayer and resolved, okay, not my will, but his will.

Here I go. I'm ready now. This is the third time. I think when he says enough, I think he's saying, prayers answered. Got it settled. Sleep right.

Do whatever you need to now because it's over. It don't matter what you do now because I'm on my way. And here's the betrayer. That's my best stab at what he's kind of getting at there because it's kind of like a staccato kind of quick response.

[43 : 36] He has his answer. But the disciples don't. Jesus knows the path in front of him and now he's ready to go.

And we're going to look at that next week as he's now betrayed into the hands of sinner, which is an interesting image. Into the hands of sinners.

He's delivered over. And we're going to see the betrayer. We're going to see the process and that. But so he's ready to go.

The disciples are another picture. They're not ready. They're still kind of getting sleep out of their eyes and kind of going, what?

Who knows what, you know, they're in foggy land. They're not ready. Paul explains, I think, very well what this double nature for the Christian is like.

[44 : 39] There's a conflict in us. And I want you to hear, believer, that it's very normal. It's normal to have a conflict within you.

Do not beat yourself up for this. It is the way it is. Listen to how Paul describes it. And I bet as I read these words, and you've probably read them before, you go, that's how I feel.

That's how I feel. That's how I feel. Okay. Romans 7. Paul explains. He says, I know that nothing good dwells in me. He's going to clarify.

That is in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. Then he makes this odd statement.

For I do not do the good I want. Can you relate? In there? Do you not do the good you want to do? Yeah, all the time.

[45 : 39] That's not just me. It's normal. But the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. I mean, are you sure this is the right Paul?

Isn't he all straightened out in the head? There is a tension, a conflict, a war. Now, if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it because the real me is saved.

But sin that dwells within me. See, sin's still there. So I find it to be a law, a reality, that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.

For I, myself, my real person, I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in the members another law, waging war, waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members, in my flesh, my old habits, my old nature.

It's still there. Can't you just kill that? God, won't you just take that away? Please. Please? We've all prayed that, haven't we? Please take that away.

[47 : 00] I didn't design you that way. I designed you to live with that conflict so that you look to me and trust me. One day I'll take it all away.

One day you'll be home and that fight, that struggle, that agony, that pain will be over. But for now, we walk by faith, not by sight.

Who, Paul says, wretched man that I am. Don't you feel like that about yourself when you're really honest and just before God?

Oh, Lord, how do you love me? Wretched man that I am. Who will deliver me from this body of death? Oh, there's good news.

Thanks be to God. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, conclusion, I myself serve the law of God with my mind. That's my intention.

[48 : 01] That's my desire. That's my new person. But, with my flesh, I serve the law of sin. I will continue to sin. Not intentionally. It's not my desire.

But because I'm still in flesh, I still, I can't. I will get better. I learned to overcome some things.

Some of that begins to fade. Yes. Like I said, God likes to, oh, here's a new one. Lord, I want to work on this one. No, you're going to work on this one.

I really need to work on that. You're going to work on this one. Stop asking about that one. You know how it is, right? It's like, come on, Lord. This one, if you fix this one.

Oh. Sorry. I get frustrated with the Lord sometimes. He just sits up there. Peter, watch this.

[48 : 59] No, I'm going to do that. We do that in the men's group all the time. Jesus is just sitting up there next to Peter. Peter, that's what I'm going to do to Randy. Bless this brother. He's going to love me after he sees what I do.

Because Peter, remember, you are in his shoes. I remember, Lord. Thanks that I'm here now. All right.

I have weird thoughts. Sorry. So here's that conflict that's strong. Do you recognize the conflict? Do you recognize a new part of you that wants to do what's right, delights in God's way, and yet there's an old that's fighting and opposed and still captive to sin?

You think, aren't I supposed to be free of that? Yeah, you're free to choose. Evil is close, and I still do sinful things.

The spirit and the flesh are in opposition to one another. So how do you overcome it? If sin is still present, and I'm unable to do what I want to do, how do I overcome it?

[50 : 06] How do I conquer this? Well, you know what? After Romans 7, Paul wrote another chapter. It's called Romans chapter 8. And in that chapter, he answers that question.

How then do we live with this conflict? You know what Paul says? Walk by the Spirit. Set your mind on the things of the Spirit.

Take your flesh and crucify it by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit who dwells in you is your power.

And apart from Him, you will just fall. Get to know the Holy Spirit. Walk with Him.

What's that look like? Take a walk with your wife. What's that like? A lot of listening? There you go. And talking.

[51 : 21] I'm sorry. That was probably the weakness of flesh coming out there. No, it's a relationship, right?

That's all I'm trying to say. It's a relationship. Holy Spirit is a person, not a force. He represents Jesus to us.

Who represented the Father to us. You are dealing directly with the Father and the Son and the Spirit all at the same time. Don't try to figure that out. The Spirit is simply the one who applies the power to you.

Enables you to keep walking. The point of all this is you can't overcome by your own strength. Apart from Christ, you can do nothing. So do you pray for God's power to fight sin?

Are you concerned about it? Are you struggling with apathy? Oh, I hate those seasons of apathy. I hate them.

[52 : 30] Revive us, O Lord. Do you embrace these truths? Jesus wants us to embrace these truths. That I must watch and pray that I may not be unprepared for that temptation and embrace the fact that I am much weaker than I think I am.

And therefore, look to Him. Do you prepare for temptation? Or do you get caught by temptation? It's all a matter of preparation.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you, Lord, for Jesus' teaching. We pray that you would apply to each of us, Lord, what we need to hear. Maybe we need to hear the praying part.

Maybe we need to hear the weakness part. I don't know. But bring upon our minds and especially invade our hearts with truth today.

and awaken us. Awaken us. Help us to walk with You.

[53 : 40] Make that real for us. We ask in Christ's name. Amen.