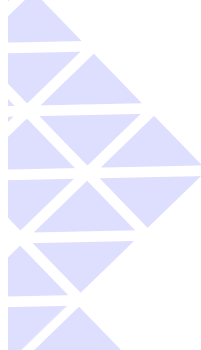


The

DELIVERANCE

FROM SIN

**GOD'S PROVISION FOR OUR
VICTORY**



For that which I do I know not; for not what I would, that do I practise; but what I hate, that I do. But if what I would not, that I do, I consent unto the law that it is good. So now it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. For the good which I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I practise. But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me. I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I of myself with the mind, indeed, serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death. Romans 7:15-8:2

THE DESIRE FOR DELIVERANCE FROM SIN

Any person who believes in the Lord may immediately be delivered from sin. This experience, however, is not necessarily shared reality of all new believers. Many are not delivered from sin after they first trust in the Lord. Instead, they often find themselves falling into sin. There is no question at all that they have been saved, that they belong to the Lord and have eternal life. Yet the great difficulty remains that they are frequently disturbed by sin. Because of this, they are unable to serve the Lord as they would like.

It is most painful for a saved person to be disturbed by his continuing sins. Since he is enlightened by God, his conscience is sensitive. In him is the life which condemns sins; so he has the

consciousness of sin. He deeply feels his corruption and he abhors himself. This is really an exceedingly painful experience.

Out of this experience comes a problem: many believers do not really know what sin is. Some believers say that sin can be avoided by resisting it. Thus they exert all their strength to resist the temptation to sin. Others contend that sin needs to be overcome. Hence they fight with sin all the time, hoping that they may overcome it. Still others declare that since sin has bound us and robbed us of our freedom, we may be delivered from its enticement if we really struggle hard. Therefore, they do their best to struggle. But these three ideas are only men's thoughts; they are neither God's Word nor God's teaching. None of them can succeed in bringing people to victory.

It is the will of God that as soon as people believe in the Lord Jesus, they should be shown the way of deliverance. They don't have to turn many corners before they can be delivered. They should walk this way of freedom from the beginning of their Christian life.

The Word of God does not tell us that we should overcome sin; it does tell us, instead, that we must be delivered from sin, freed from sin. These are the words of the Bible. Sin is a power which holds people. We are to be delivered from its grip, not to destroy its power. We cannot put it to death, but the Lord has removed us from it.

THE LAW OF SIN

For that which I do I know not: for not what I would, that do I practise; but what I hate, that I do. . . . for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practise. But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it. . . . I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members ... So then I of myself with the mind, indeed,

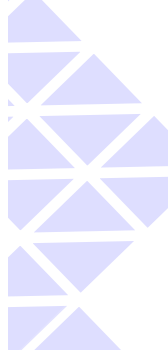
serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.
Rom. 7:15-25

You need to find the key to Romans 7. In verses 15 through 20, such words as these are used: “I would,” “I would not,” “I hate,” “to will is present with me,” “the good which I would,” “the evil which I would not,” and so forth. The thoughts constantly repeated are “would,” “would not,” or “will.” But verses 21 through 25 show us another point. The emphasis is no longer “would” or “would not,” but is repeatedly seen in words like “the law,” “a different law in my members,” “into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members,” “I of myself with the mind serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” If you keep these two points of emphasis before you, you will be able to solve the problem.

In this section of Romans 7, Paul is thinking of overcoming. He thinks it would be best if he could sin no more and please God by doing that which God can accept. He does not want to sin nor does he like to be defeated. Yet he acknowledges that to will is present with him but to do that which is good is beyond him. He wills to do good, but he cannot do it. Though he tries not to sin, he still does sin. He delights in the law of God, yet he is unable to practice it. In other words, he cannot do what he would do.

In verses 15 through 20, though Paul wills to overcome, yet he suffers total defeat. This shows that the way of victory does not lie in “would” or “would not.” Victory is not to be found through man's will. Paul wills and wills, but he ends up in defeat. Therefore, do not think that everything will be all right if only you have the will to do good. To will is with you, but to do is not. All you can do is to will; there is not much use in it.

However, after verse 21 Paul himself finds out why his will to do good is unsuccessful. The reason is that sin is a law. Since sin is a law, it is futile to will. Paul shows us the reason for his defeat. He explains that though he would do good, evil is present with him. He delights in the law of God after the inward man, but with the flesh he serves the law of sin. Whenever he decides to delight in God's law, a different law in his members—the law of sin—brings him into captivity. Any time he wills to do good, evil is present. This is a law.



Many who have been Christians for years still do not see that sin is a power which seems to be quite authoritative. They do not see sin as a law. I hope newly saved brothers and sisters will see this: sin in human experience, as well as in the Bible, is a law. It is not only an influence, a power, but it is also a law. Paul discovered how useless it was for his will to battle against a law.

THE INABILITY OF THE WILL TO OVERCOME THE LAW

Will is the inner power of man, while law is a natural power. Both are powers. I like to use an illustration to help people understand this matter of law. We know that the earth exerts a gravitational force. This force of gravity is a law. Why do we call it a law? Because it is always so. That which is not incidental is a law. That which is occasional is an historical accident, not a law.

Why is earth's gravitation a law? If I drop my handkerchief, it goes downward. It happens in UK as well as in Australia. Wherever the handkerchief is dropped, the same thing happens. Gravity pulls it down, so this is called the law of gravitation. Not only is gravity a force; it also is a law. If the handkerchief is only occasionally pulled to the earth, then this force could not be reckoned as a law. A law is something which always acts in the same way. If I throw my Bible upward, it will fall down. If I throw a chair up, it too will fall down. If I jump upward, I will also come down. No matter where or what, what goes up will come down. Then I realize that not only is there a gravitational force exerted by the earth, but there is also a law of gravity.

A law simply means it is always so. It permits no exception. If something happens once one way and another time a different way, it is a matter of history. But if something always happens the same way, it is a law. If a person commits a crime on the street, he will be taken into custody by the police. Should he commit this crime at home, he still will be taken into custody. Whoever murders, regardless of whom or where he murders, he will be taken by the police. This we call a law. A law applies to every person; there are no exceptions. If a man kills someone today, he is taken into custody by the police. But if he kills someone tomorrow and is not taken, kills again the day after tomorrow and is taken, then the

matter of taking people into custody cannot be considered a law. A law needs to be consistent. It must be the same yesterday, today, and even tomorrow. The term “law” implies that it continues unchanged.

Every law has its natural power—something not manufactured by human effort. We may use the earth's gravitation as an example. Wherever I drop something, that thing gravitates downward. I do not need to press it down for there is a natural force which causes it to go down. Behind the law is the natural power.

What, then, is the will? Will is man's determination, man's decision. It speaks of what man decides or desires or wills. The exercise of the will is not without its power. If I decide to do a certain thing, I start out to do it. If I decide to walk, I walk; if I decide to eat, I eat. As a person I have a will, and my will produces a power.

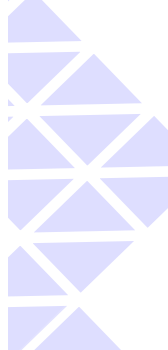
However, the power of the will and the power of a law are different. While the power of the law is natural power, the power of the will is human. Gravitational force does not need the installation of some electrical appliance behind it in order to attract things downward; it acts naturally. If you light a lamp, the heat will naturally rush upward; this too is a law. When air is heated, it rises and expands; this is a law. In rising and expanding, it demonstrates a power, but this power is natural power. The power of the will, however, is something of man. Only that which is living has a will. Neither a chair nor a table has a will of its own. God has a will; man has a will. Only a living being has will. Though man's will does possess some power, it is nonetheless a human power. It is in direct contrast to the power of a law which is a natural power.

The question before us is: when the will and the law are in conflict, which will emerge as conqueror? Usually the will overcomes in the beginning, but the law conquers in the end. Man first overcomes, but the law eventually emerges as victor. For example: I am now holding up a Bible which weighs about half a pound. The force of earth's gravity is operating on this book and is trying its best to pull the Bible to the ground. So the law is working. But I as a person have a will. My hand is lifting the Bible and I will not allow it to fall. I succeed in holding it up; I have overcome. My will is stronger than the law.

Right now, at 8:17 in the evening, I have overcome. But wait till 9:17, and I will start to sigh that my hand will not listen to me. By tomorrow morning at 8:17, I will have to get a doctor to treat me! A law never tires, but my hand does. Man's power cannot overcome natural law. The law of gravitation continues to pull; it pulls without will or thought. I will not let the Bible fall; I forcibly hold onto it. Still the time will come when I can no longer hold on. When I cease to lift up the Bible, it will drop to the ground. The law works twenty-four hours a day, but I cannot.

Eventually the will of men will be defeated and the law will overcome. All of men's wills cannot conquer natural law. Human will may strenuously resist natural law and may at the beginning seem to overcome, but finally it will have to give in to the law. Do not despise the law of earth's gravitation. You are battling with it daily. All who are now in their graves, if able to speak, would have to concede that they are not as strong as the law. For decades you appear to be daily in ascendancy over gravity. You almost forget the great power of earth's gravity; you live as if there were no death. You are active from morning till night. But there will come a day when you too will be pulled down by the law of sin and death. At that moment, your activity will come to an end. There is nothing you can do; the law has conquered. Can you imagine a person who by force of will could hold onto a Bible so that it never falls? It is impossible. Sooner or later he has to yield; the law will come forth as conqueror.

In Romans 7 the subject is the contrast between law and will. Its theme is very simple, for it deals only with the conflict between will and law. At an earlier time, Paul was not conscious that sin is a law. Paul is the first one in the Bible to discover this truth. He is also first to use the term "law." People know that gravitation is a law, that heat expansion is also a law, but they do not know that sin is a law. At first even Paul did not know this; only after repeatedly sinning did he discover that there was a power in his body which gravitated him to sin. He did not sin purposely, but the power in his body pulled him to sin. Sinning is more than historical; it is a law. When temptation comes, we try to resist, but before long we fail; this is our history of defeat. Again temptation comes and again we resist and fail. This happens the tenth time, the hundredth time, the



millionth time. It is the same story: temptation comes, we resist; and before we realize it, we are defeated. As this occurs time after time, we begin to see that this is not just an historical fact. It has become a law. Sinning is a law. If one were to sin only event; however, we cannot say sinning is historical for it is not limited to once. It has become a law.

Temptation comes and I am defeated. I have no way to overcome. Each time it comes, I fail; thus I come to realize that my defeat is more than just defeat; it is the law of defeat in me. Defeat has become a law to me. Brethren, have you seen this? Paul saw it. In verse 21 he tells us his great revelation—a revelation about himself. He says, “I find then the law.” This is the first time he realizes it that way. He senses a law. What is it? “That to me who would do good, evil is present.” Whenever he wants to do good, he finds evil is present in him. This is the law. When I would do good, sin is present. Sin follows closely after good. Not just once, not just a thousand times, but it is always this way. I now understand it to be a law.

A GREAT REVELATION

It is not that I sin accidentally or occasionally; it is not that I sometimes sin and sometimes do not; sinning is a law to me, for I constantly sin. Because this occurs all the time, I know it is a law. Whenever I would do good, evil is present. When Paul's eyes were opened to this, he realized that all his own efforts were futile. What had he tried? He had tried to do good. He had thought his will could overcome sin, not knowing that no will can ever overcome sin. But as soon as he saw sin as a law, not just a conduct, he immediately conceded that to will was useless. The will could never conquer the law. This, indeed, was a great discovery, a very great revelation.

When through God's mercy anyone is brought to see that sin is a law, he instantly knows how ineffective any method of overcoming sin with the will must be. Before he sees this, he is always making resolutions. When tempted, he bites his teeth and determines to overcome, but eventually he fails. The second time he is tempted he surmises that his first resolution was not strong enough, so this time he makes a firmer resolution to not sin again for any reason. But let me tell you, however strong his resolution is, he still fails again. He

may yet conclude that something is wanting in his resolution, so when again tempted, he once more resolves before God and asks the Lord to help him. Since he is not sure of his resolution, he prays, “O Lord, please have mercy on me. Help me that I may not sin this time.” After he gets up from his knees, he once again fails. He wonders why he cannot overcome sin by making resolutions. The answer is that it is because no amount of will effort can ever conquer a law.

This hand of mine may be quite strong; it may be able to lift fifty pounds. I have a watch here which weighs only five ounces. It should not be difficult for a hand that can lift fifty pounds to hold up this five-ounce watch. However, there is also a law here exerting its gravitational force on my hand. It pulls every second, every minute, and every hour. It keeps on pulling till I cannot hold this five-ounce watch. The hardship in bearing a load is that the longer you bear it, the heavier the object seems to become—not that the load itself has been increased, but that the law begins to overcome the bearer. The law overcomes the man. Nature overcomes man. This power operates so constantly that it incapacitates you.

Another illustration is losing the temper. This is a common and easily recognized sin. Everyone has committed this sin several times. When you hear some unpleasant words, you feel uncomfortable, as if churning inside. If the same person says more unpleasant words, you may answer in kind. But should he continue to say such unkind words, you may be so stirred that you scold him and beat the table. You have lost your temper. You feel badly afterward because as a Christian you should not lose your temper. So you resolve that next time you will not. You are quite sure you will not. After prayer, you believe you are forgiven. Your heart is full of joy, for you say you will not lose your temper again. But later on, you again hear people say distasteful words. How uncomfortable you feel. You hear further words a second time, and your insides churn like a machine. The third time, you burst. You are, of course, conscious of your fault. How can a Christian lose his temper? You ask the Lord to forgive your sin, and you promise that hereafter you will not lose your temper. But after some time, the experience is repeated all over again. What, then, do you call this? It is not just sinning; it is the law of sin.

Sinning is not accidental; it is a law. If a person kills another person, this is sin. But if he kills every day, this is the law of killing. If a man loses his temper daily, his bad temper has become a law to him. It is not by chance that people sin, nor do they sin only once. People sin countless times throughout their lives. The liars in the world keep on lying; the unclean keep on being unclean; the adulterers keep on committing a adultery; the stealers keep on stealing; the ill-tempered keep on losing their temper. It is a law within men which cannot be conquered.

It is a great discovery when the Lord has mercy on you and opens your eyes to see that sin is, indeed, a law. If you see this, victory is not far away. Should you consider sin merely a matter of conduct, you will no doubt try to pray more and to resist more in order to overcome the next time. But it is futile. As the power of sin is strong and constant, so our strength is weak and untrustworthy. As the power of sin is always triumphant, so our power is always yielding. Sin's power is victorious and our power is defeated. The victory of sin is a law, even as our defeat is a law. When I would do good, evil is present. Paul says he has found this to be a law, an unconquerable law.

I do hope that you will be clear on the nature of sin. If you see this law, you will be delivered from many hardships and sorrows. If you are willing to accept God's Word, you will know that sin is a law and that you cannot overcome it with your will. Then you will be able to see the real way to victory. It is a great blessing to find this law. It may take many defeats, possibly hundreds or thousands of defeats, to discover for yourself this law of defeat. You have to be so utterly defeated that one day you realize you can never overcome sin by your will. Sooner or later, sin will rise up and declare that it is a law, so what can you do? Let me tell you, all who trust in their own willpower will have to acknowledge that they can do nothing about it. Since sin is a law, what can you do? You cannot resist it; the power of your will can never overcome the power of a law.

THE WAY OF VICTORY

We know man is not delivered by exercising his will. When he is using his willpower, he is unable to trust God's way of deliverance. He has to wait for the day when he submits himself to God and confesses that he is utterly undone. Then he will pray, "Lord, I am