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Romans 7:15-25

At the Movies: Tangled

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Romans 7:15-25 The Message

What I don’t understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise. So if I can’t be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God’s command is necessary.  But I need something more! For if I know the law but still can’t keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! I realize that I don’t have what it takes. I can will it, but I can’t do it. I decide to do good, but I don’t really do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don’t result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time. It happens so regularly that it’s predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God’s commands, but it’s pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge. I’ve tried everything and nothing helps. I’m at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn’t that the real question? The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.

**Show Tangled Clip beginning after chapter 4 (minute 29:00 until 32:40)**

In Tangled we see acted out what we do in our own lives. We have this conflict within us, we are pulled one way and then the other at the same time. There was a young woman who was describing for her therapist a life of indulgence that was becoming self-destructive: parties, alcohol, sex, and drugs. It was a downward spiral. Her therapist asked her a question: "Why don't you stop?" The woman appeared stunned by the question, and responded, "You mean I don't have to do what I want to do?"[[1]](#footnote-2)

**Read Scripture** Romans 7:15-25 (The Message)

The Apostle Paul feels a battle within himself between good and evil, between God’s will for his life and his old human nature pulling him away. Paul’s life had been transformed by an experience with the living Christ and he had a deep desire to be obedient to God’s will and purpose every single day of his life. But part of Paul covertly rebels. Paul wants to do what is right but he falls short again and again. Anyone able to relate to that? Time and time again we succumb to temptation to cut corners, to surrender to what we know if less than God’s best.[[2]](#footnote-3)

The conflict within ourselves will come in our life, that is the progression of life. That is the reality. We will feel like there are times in our lives when we are going down the hill and times when we are going up the hill. I started a book that has been on my nightstand for months. And there was a line that I have to share with you. The book is called “The Rent Collector” by Camron Wright. “Believing it not enough… If you want to resurrect hope, doing is the most important thing” (33).

Sin does not control the way that we live. Our anger or addiction or pettiness or resentment or pride does not control us. We can be led by the spirit of God and give ourselves completely to God.

You know, we want immediate results. We say, “Well, I prayed and God didn’t answer my prayers.” Or, “I came to church but it didn’t make a difference.” We have to get rid of the excuses. We all have reasons why we can’t do things, but today we have to get rid of the excuses. We have to go all in with God. In all the areas of our life: our money, our relationships, our politics.

We have to decide today if we are willing to do something new in God and grow. With Christ we can climb out of the valley that we are in. Have you ever noticed though when you resolve to not lose your temper, something happens. We try to change and we fail.

We try to scoop out that part of our life that we want to change and it doesn’t work. Have you ever been at the beach and you scoop a bucket of sand out. It doesn’t even make a dent. More sand fills the space. When we decide to do something in our lives, we have to fill that space up. We have to fill the void that we have created with something good, with something holy. We have to find something to occupy that same place. Whatever sin, whatever addiction, whatever anger is in that place, we have to replace it. And in order to replace it, we have to give everything to Jesus. We have to go all in.[[3]](#footnote-4) The void in our life will be filled, and it is up to us if it will be filled with something good or with something bad.

Do you want to know the Bible? Jump in! Do it! When we try to go it alone we fall into a ditch. If you want to dig out of that valley, then join others here at Greenland Hills in studying the Bible. With others, fill the void. Start a relationship with God. You will grow and find your purpose in life. You will learn to live your life for the good of others.

It takes great courage to go all in. But with God’s help, we can do it. We can give God every area of our life, including the secret areas that only God knows.

There is hope. There is always hope. Thanks be to God though Jesus Christ our Lord! Christ is victorious over sin and death, and we claim that victory every single day. We are on the way of perfection, John Wesley the founder of the Methodist movement, said. On the path of holiness where we experience Christ’s growing power over sin, where we experience Christ’s growing presence in our hearts. May we continue to grow to be so mature in our faith that we no longer sin.

And when we feel hopeless, may we remember that God is in the resurrection business. When we get down to the bottom, there is always hope.

1. Story found here: <http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/5123/sermon-options-july-6-2014> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Ideas for this paragraph taken from: http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/5123/sermon-options-july-6-2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. The sand illustration, getting rid of the excuses, going all in, and filling the void idea is taken from week three at this link: http://theshorechurch.com/media/sunday-sermons/movies/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)