



EXPOSITION

Monthly e-Bulletin from Virginia Beach Theological Seminary



From My Window

A few days ago in the office I had a sweet conversation about Psalm 29 which calls for God's people to ascribe glory to his name. David begins his poem in heaven where the LORD's majesty is honored. He then likens the LORD's glory to an earthly storm—its brilliant flash of lightning, its power to break a great cedar, and its terror to shake the wilderness. Finally, he recalls the ancient Noahic "flood" (a term used only here in the OT outside of Gen. 6–9). With this unique reference to humanity's worst disaster, David makes his point: *"The LORD sat enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever"* (Ps. 29:10). In other words, when chaos abounds, God is still the glorious king. So take courage, my friends, no matter what force displays its chilling power in the world today, our God sits enthroned!



The 25th fall semester is underway, and we rejoice in God's good hand upon us. Thank you for your prayers on behalf of our dedicated and godly faculty and staff!

Back (left to right)

Dr. Mark Hassler – Associate Professor of Old Testament
 Dr. Roger DePriest – Faculty Associate in Biblical Counseling;
 Executive Director of Grace Biblical Counseling
 Mr. Edward Estes – Registrar; Director of Admissions
 Capt. Tony Brazas (USN ret.) – Chief Financial Officer
 Dr. Michael Windsor – Professor of Church History; Librarian
 Dr. Daniel Davey – President; Professor of Bible Exposition
 Dr. Thomas Dailey – Professor of New Testament
 Dr. Eric Lehner – Academic Dean; Professor of Theology
 Dr. Brent Belford – Pastor of Colonial Baptist Church;
 Faculty Associate in Pastoral Studies

Front (left to right)

Mrs. Susann DePriest – Assistant to the Librarian
 Mrs. Anna Lehner – Administrative Assistant
 Mrs. Gloria Schrader – Administrative Assistant

Not Pictured

Mr. Joel Dailey – Assistant Business Manager
 Mr. Peter Damianidis – Live Stream Video Producer



Paul's Discovery ... My Encouragement! (Rom. 7:21–23)

Recently, I received a letter from a pastor who said that he was discipling a young man who desired to enter the ministry. He said they were studying through the book of Romans and were “stumped” by Romans 7:14–25. In response, I told him it is usually best in a difficult Pauline passage to locate the conclusion of Paul’s argument so you can sense his direction. In this case (vv. 14–25), Paul develops his paragraph to highlight *his personal discovery* (vv. 21–23). Paul’s discovery encourages me; in fact, it has been used by God in my personal life to keep me in the ministry. So, let’s review together the apex of Paul’s testimony.

Paul introduces his discovery with these words (v. 21, my paraphrase): *Therefore, I discovered a new norm in my life: in me is the desire to do right, but also in me is a formidable presence of evil.* First, the present tense verbs suggest that Paul is using “I” to refer to his own current spiritual condition. Second, as one who has been changed by the Spirit (v. 6), he makes a profound discovery: within him is *both* the desire to do right and a propensity toward evil. In other words, Paul’s new position “in Christ” did not confer upon him a sin-free human body; he remains subject to decay, death, and the deceit of sin (7:20; 8:10).

Paul continues in v. 22 to frame his discovery (NLT): *[However], I love God’s law with all of my heart.* Paul distinguishes himself from the unsaved person in 3:9 who is “under sin”—though sin is in him, his heart rejoices in God’s truth. Paul borrows the phrase “God’s law” (used three times in 7:22, 25; 8:7) from the hymns of the Psalter, which refers to one’s joy in *the entire Old Testament* (e.g., Ps. 1:2; 19:8; 119:97).

The result of Paul’s discovery is unveiled in v. 23: *There is an inner raging war between what I know to be right and the sin that dwells in me.* In short, Paul’s present Christian experience is a daily conflict between the genuine desire to obey truth and the temptation of sin. On the one hand, the power of sin’s grip is broken (6:6), but on the other hand, its presence is still active and bids him to pursue its pleasures (6:12). James M. Boice clearly explains that “the war within . . . describes the conflict of a mature Christian [believer], in fact, the conflict of an apostle of Jesus Christ in his later years. So the struggle Paul speaks of is a struggle we all face, and will continue to face—if we are Christians” (*Romans*, 2:765).

Paul’s startling discovery causes each of us to carefully consider our own spiritual condition. Thankfully, Paul has not left us without reassuring words, and his ideas flood my soul with encouragement. **First**, my present inner conflict confirms that I am indeed a child of God. Because of my relationship with Christ I have “newness of life” (6:4), and though sin dwells in me, I am joyfully compelled to serve God “in the new way of the Spirit” (7:6, 25). **Second**, my daily conflict produces in me a deep longing for heaven. My present condition is only temporary, though spiritually exhausting and draining. However, like Paul, I eagerly wait for the complete “redemption of [my] body” (8:23). **Finally**, Paul’s discovery is *not* the sum total of his Christian experience. And neither is it the sum total of our Christian experience! Paul uses 7:14–25 to expose the reality of each believer’s conflict, but he also uses it to prepare the way for the comforting ministry of the Spirit. Put another way, Paul’s celebration of the Spirit in Romans 8 is deeply rooted in the need for the Spirit as described by Romans 7. Indeed, sin rages within our bodies, but the Spirit provides all our necessary resources for a victorious life of “joy and peace” (15:13); so let’s live and enjoy today through his unlimited power!