

**Romans 7:15-25a** The Message (MSG)



- <sup>15-16</sup> 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.
- <sup>17-20</sup> 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.
- <sup>21-23</sup> 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.
- <sup>24</sup> 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?
- <sup>25</sup> 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.

*(Please stand as you are able for the reading from the gospel.)*

**Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30** The Message (NIRV)

- <sup>16</sup> "What can I compare today's people to? They are like children sitting in the markets and calling out to others. They say,
- <sup>17</sup> " 'We played the flute for you.  
But you didn't dance.  
We sang a funeral song.  
But you didn't become sad.'
- <sup>18</sup> When John came, he didn't eat or drink as you do. And people say, 'He has a demon.'
- <sup>19</sup> But when the Son of Man came, he ate and drank as you do. And people say, 'This fellow is always eating and drinking far too much. He's a friend of tax collectors and "sinners.'" By wise actions wisdom is shown to be right."

- <sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus prayed, “I praise you, Father. You are Lord of heaven and earth. You have hidden these things from wise and educated people. But you have shown them to little children.
- <sup>26</sup> Yes, Father. This is what you wanted to do. Then Jesus resumed talking to the people.
- <sup>27</sup> “My Father has given all things to me. The Father is the only one who knows the Son. And the only ones who know the Father are the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to make him known.
- <sup>28</sup> “Come to me, all you who are tired and are carrying heavy loads. I will give you rest.
- <sup>29</sup> Become my servants and learn from me. I am gentle and humble. You will find rest for your souls.
- <sup>30</sup> Serving me is easy, and my load is light.”

## **The Living Word of God for the people of God**