

Title: Together for Good—Who Is “I”? // **Scripture:** Romans 7:1-8:11

ARRIVAL / SOCIAL TIME *15-20 minutes*

Spend the first 15 minutes or so of your time together catching up and socializing with one another. Also find time to catch up together on how the assignments from last week turned out.

SERMON REVIEW *5-10 minutes*

or a long time readers of Romans 7 have asked the same question about Paul’s cryptic “I” found throughout the passage, and the answer is not so easy to find. If we can get to the bottom of it, even in its seeming complexity, we can find beautiful, simple treasure of what it means to be a true follower of Jesus. Will we succumb to a life of riding “the guilt train to glory” or can we find reason to resolve ourselves to hope for a better way? Paul wanted the believers in Rome and those to follow, like us, to understand there is power to overcome sin.

THE MAIN THOUGHT *keep this in mind as you facilitate discussion*

The threat of sin remains but freedom reigns for a sincere follower of Jesus.

SEE IT – Questions *10-15 minutes*

Picture (What is the story saying?): What’s going on culturally in Rome between Jewish Christians and non-Jewish Christians? Why is important to be reminded of the usefulness of the law God gave Israel through Moses? Why is it important to wrestle with Paul’s “I” statements?

Mirror (Where am I in the story?): How does your experience influence how you have read Romans 7? How has your knowledge of the Ten Commandments influenced how you view sin? Why does Paul lament over the power that is lacking in the law? Have you experienced power over sin?

Window (How does the story change how I see those around me?): Have you, at times, read the scripture with only your point of view? How can you invite other sincere and trustworthy voices into your study of the Bible? How has scripture been misused to exclude groups of people from acceptance as true followers of Jesus?

BE IT – Which of these areas is God speaking to you about this week?

Change UP – Exercise

Do you picture God looking at you through the lens of the Ten Commandments which reveal sin but lack power to overcome it? Or rather, do you think God sees you through the lens of Jesus who has the power to conquer sin and death? Read John 1:29-51 and 3:1-18. Take a few minutes of quiet time to reflect on what this means for you. Read the passages again if it helps quiet your mind- let the meaning to sink deeper. Ask God to speak to you about how He sees you. Be honest with him about any sin you have felt powerless over.

Change IN – Group Activity

Shame, guilt, fear and the possibility of being “found out” can keep us from spending intentional time with other believers. It’s true that the threat of sin remains but thanks be to God, it’s also true that freedom reigns in Christ! Jesus set the example and the disciples he chose continued the practice of meeting together to encourage one another in faith. Do you have a consistent, intentional relationship with other Christians? What can you do this week to find or deepen community with others at Grace or in your neighborhood? If you need ideas for connecting email Michael Johnston - michael@gfc.tv

Change OUT – Life Application Assignment

Have you been stuck in a sense of not measuring up, riding the “guilt train”? Has a fatalistic view of following Jesus clouded your capacity to share the hope of the good news of the Kingdom of God? In Galatians 5:13-14 Paul writes, “For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don’t use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. 14 For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Read the rest of Galatians 5:16-26 and ask God how his Holy Spirit is leading you to love and serve your neighbor.

CLOSING PRAYER *5 minutes* May you see God clearly, hear His calling clearly, and may He help you fulfill that calling in faithfulness, trusting no matter how bleak things may appear, we trust the God who raises the dead.