

# Saving Sophie

a bird's-eye tour of Paul's letter to the church at Rome

## Romans 6.1-7.25

*"Shall we go on sinning ...?"*

Here's an outline of this whole section, which may prove helpful.

### **LICENSED TO CHILL?** (6.1-23)

*the power of sin has been broken*

#### **1. you are a new person** (6.1-14)

**the question** [v.1] the problem is not the logic but the theology

**trusting in Jesus was the death of you** [vv.2-10]

you're finished with sin

**getting your head round reality** [vv.11-14]

#### **2. you are under new ownership** [vv.15-23]

**the question** [v.15]

**the practical no-brainer choice** [v.16]

you have to be somebody's slave

**the radical regime change** [vv.17-18]

it's not just a relationship with Him we enjoy, but ownership by Him

**the essential price-tag check** [vv.19-23]

### **GUERRILLA WARFARE** (7.1-25)

*the pockets of sin must be battled*

#### **1. the power of sin is broken** (1-6)

#### **2. the pattern of sin is exposed** (7-13)

**the root of sin is a coveting**

**'the power of sin is the law'**

#### **3. the presence of sin is persistent** (14-25)

- **the essence of this tension** [vv.14-15]
- **the nature of this tension** [vv.16-20]
- **the reason for this tension** [vv.21-23]
- **the answer to this tension** [vv.24-25]

## 5. Romans 6.1-7.25 [w/b Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> July]

*“Shall we go on sinning...?”*

The next ‘key word’ in understanding God’s salvation is ‘**sin**’. If we’re saved through grace, isn’t that just a license to sin? And if we’ve been saved by God from the guilt and the power of sin, how come we still struggle so much with sin?

Chapter 6 of the letter addresses the first of these questions, and that from a more *theological* point of view: chapter 7 addresses the second question, this time with a more *pastoral* perspective.

It’s an important (but not always easy) section of the letter, and repays careful study!

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1. **Read Romans 6.1-7.25.** The gospel of grace sees us tread something of a tight-rope, needing to avoid slipping into either legalism or licentiousness.

When you fall into sin, how does it make you feel?

If sin is still so evidently present in your life, in what sense can we say that its *power* has been broken for the Christian?

**2. Read Romans 6.1-14.** Paul repudiates the notion that God's grace means you can surely carry on sinning, by stressing that in Christ you are now a new person.

In what sense is the believer 'united with Christ', and what are the implications of that?

What practical steps does Paul encourage his readers to take in addressing sin in their lives (vv.11-14)?

**3. Read Romans 6.15-23.** Here Paul gives a second reason why, as those who have trusted in God's grace, we will not carry on sinning – viz., the fact that we are now under new ownership.

Paul is using the language of the slave market where slaves were sold and bought: how does our being 'under new ownership' show itself in our living?

What does Paul say are the consequences of being the slave of sin, on the one hand, and being in slavery to righteousness on the other?

**4. Read Romans 7.1-6.** In addressing the fact that we do still sin, Paul starts by underlining that the power of sin in our lives has been broken.

What point is Paul making by using the illustration of marriage?

What are the points of contrast Paul highlights between our former bondage and our new belonging (vv.5-6)?

**5. Read Romans 7.7-13.** In these verses Paul is explaining the basic way in which sin 'works' in our experience.

Read **Joshua 7.20-21** where Achan confesses his sin: what four 'stages' in the path of sin does he refer to in v.21?

In what way does the law of God afford an opportunity for sin (Rom.7.11)?

**6. Read Romans 7.14-20.** It's wise to recognize that there has been considerable debate as to who precisely is in view in vv.14-25. That said, the tension to which Paul points is surely that between the renewing work of the Spirit of God in our lives, and the fact that we're still living 'in the flesh'.

What are the symptoms of the tension to which Paul refers here? In what ways can you recognize them in yourself?

What conclusions does Paul draw from these symptoms?

**7. Read Romans 7.21-25.** Paul explains in these verses that there is something akin to a guerilla war taking place in the life of a Christian: there are still, in other words, some residual 'pockets of sin' in us, even though we're under the Lordship of Jesus.

How does this 'guerilla warfare' find expression in your experience?

How is this wretched tension in our experience resolved according to Paul?