



BREAKING THE CYCLE AT THE TABLE!

THE TRANSFORMING POWER
OF HOLY COMMUNION
ROMANS 7:18-25

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RODMAN STREET CHURCH
6.7.26

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Title: Breaking the Cycle at the Table: Finding Victory Through Holy Communion

Sermon Summary: This powerful message confronts us with a truth many of us struggle to admit: we often find ourselves trapped in cycles of behavior we desperately want to break. Drawing from Romans 7, we explore the apostle Paul's raw confession about the internal war between knowing what is right and doing what is wrong. The sermon points out the transformative nature of Holy Communion serves as a means of breaking destructive cycles in our lives. The message reveals three transformative truths about Holy Communion: it begins with confession, reveals the conflict within us, and celebrates the conquest Christ has already won. The message emphasizes that communion is not merely a ritual but a sacred reminder of Christ's victory over sin, death, and the grave. Through confession, acknowledging our conflicts, and celebrating Christ's conquest, believers can find freedom from repeated failures and habitual sins.

The sermon encourages honest self-examination and reminds us that victory is possible because Jesus has already won the battle on our behalf. The sermon uses the poignant poem 'There's a Hole in My Sidewalk' to illustrate how we repeatedly walk down the same streets and fall into the same holes, despite knowing the danger that awaits us. We are reminded

that confession is not about beating ourselves up but opening ourselves up to God's grace. The communion table becomes a place where we stop examining everyone else and start examining ourselves, admitting that without Jesus, we fall apart. This message challenges us to stop pretending we are not hurt and to acknowledge that the very fact we are struggling means God is still working on us. The breakthrough comes when we realize that Jesus stepped into our battle, fought our fight, and won our victory, making it possible for us to finally walk down a different street.

Chapters

Chapter 1: The Prayer and the Struggle Within

We open with prayer and explore Romans 7, where Paul confesses the internal struggle between wanting to do good but repeatedly doing what we don't want to do.

Chapter 2: Walking Down the Same Street: Recognizing Our Cycles

We examine how we repeatedly fall into the same patterns and holes in life, illustrated through the poem about walking down a street with a hole in the sidewalk.

Chapter 3: Confession: The First Step to Breaking Cycles

Holy Communion begins with confession, where we examine ourselves honestly before God and admit our struggles, opening the door to God's grace and forgiveness.

Chapter 4: The Conflict: Recognizing the Spiritual Battle

The communion table reveals the ongoing spiritual conflict between flesh and spirit, reminding us that we are in a battle but Jesus has already won the victory.

Chapter 5: The Conquest: Celebrating Victory Through Christ

Holy Communion is a celebration of Christ's victory over sin, death, and hell, reminding us that because He won, we can overcome our cycles and walk in freedom.

Scripture References from the Sermon

Explicitly Mentioned or Read:

1. **Romans 7:18-25** - Main text of the sermon, discussing the struggle between wanting to do good and doing evil
2. **1 Corinthians 11:28** - "Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup"
3. **1 John 1:9** - "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness"
4. **Romans 5:8** - Alluded to: "Yet while we were sinners, Christ died for us"

Alluded to or Quoted (Hymns/Songs with Biblical Basis):

5. **Isaiah 54:17** - "No weapon formed against you shall prosper"
6. **Deuteronomy 28:3, 6** - Blessings: "Blessed in the city, blessed in the field, blessed when you come in and when you go out"
7. **Deuteronomy 28:13** - "You shall be the head and not the tail"
8. **2 Chronicles 20:15** - "The battle is not yours, but the Lord's"
9. **Hebrews 13:5** - Alluded to in "Because He lives, I can face tomorrow" theme
10. **Matthew 28:18** - "All power in heaven and earth in His hand"

11. **Ephesians 4:8** - Alluded to: Christ "preached to the captives" and set them free
12. **1 John 5:4** - Theme of overcoming/victory

Relevant Supporting Verses for Main Themes:

On Confession and Honesty:

- **Psalm 32:5** - Confession brings forgiveness
- **Proverbs 28:13** - "Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper"
- **James 5:16** - "Confess your sins to one another"

On Breaking Cycles:

- **2 Corinthians 5:17** - "If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come"
- **Philippians 3:13-14** - Forgetting what is behind and pressing forward

On Victory in Christ:

- **1 Corinthians 15:57** - "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"
- **Romans 8:37** - "We are more than conquerors through him who loved us"

QUOTES:

Some of us are not battling new demons. We are battling familiar demons. Some of us are not fighting new battles. We are fighting old battles with new dates.

You cannot conquer what you don't confess. You cannot defeat what you would not disclose. You cannot overcome what you refuse to acknowledge.

Confession is not beating yourself up. Confession is about opening yourself up to God because every confession creates room for God's grace.

The struggle is not out there. The struggle is between my ears. The struggle is between my chest. Sometimes the fight is in your mind.

If Satan cannot destroy you, he will distract you. He can't make you quit, but he'll make you procrastinate and delay.

His body wasn't broken for His failure. His body was broken for my failure. This cup reminds me that His blood was shed for my forgiveness.

Every time you come to this table, you are declaring again that Jesus won. The nails did not defeat him. The cross didn't defeat him. The grave couldn't hold him down.

Failure is not your last word. Addiction is not your last word. Depression is not your last word. Fear is not your last word. Because Jesus has the last word. And His last Word is victory.

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5-Day Devotional: Breaking the Cycle

Day 1: The Power of Honest Confession

Reading: Romans 7:18-20; 1 John 1:9

Devotional: Paul's vulnerability in Romans 7 reveals a profound truth: spiritual maturity begins with honesty, not perfection. When we confess "the good I want to do, I do not do," we're not admitting defeat—we're opening the door to God's transforming grace. Confession isn't about beating yourself up; it's about opening yourself up to God's healing power. The enemy wants you to hide in shame, but God invites you to step into His light. Today, examine yourself before examining others. What cycle keeps repeating in your life? Name it honestly before God. Remember, you cannot conquer what you refuse to confess. Confession creates room for grace, and grace breaks the power of denial.

Reflection: What am I pretending not to see in my own life? What truth do I need to confess to God today?

Day 2: The Battlefield Within

Reading: Romans 7:21-23; Ephesians 6:10-12

Devotional: Every believer knows the internal war Paul describes: "I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind." This isn't a sign of weak faith—it's evidence that God is still working in you. Dead people don't struggle; they don't fight. Your very conflict proves you're spiritually alive. Christianity isn't a playground; it's a battlefield. The flesh says "quit," but the spirit says "keep going." The flesh says "get even," but the spirit says "forgive." Every day you cast a vote with your choices. Remember, the enemy cannot destroy you, so he'll try to distract

you, keeping you walking down the same street, falling in the same hole. Recognize the battle, but don't fight alone.

Reflection: What internal battle am I facing right now? Am I fighting in my own strength or trusting God's power?

Day 3: Jesus Stepped Into Your Struggle

Reading: Hebrews 4:14-16; Isaiah 53:4-5

Devotional: The communion table reminds us that Jesus didn't stand at a distance watching our struggles—He stepped directly into them. He entered your conflict, your weakness, your warfare. The cross at Calvary was a battlefield where the kingdom of God collided with the kingdom of darkness, where sin met righteousness, where death confronted life. And Jesus won. The bread represents His body broken for your failures—not His failures, but yours. The cup represents His blood shed for your forgiveness. You're not fighting this battle alone. Jesus has already engaged the enemy on your behalf. Because He fought and won, you can face your struggles knowing victory is already secured. Draw near to His throne of grace with confidence today.

Reflection: How does knowing Jesus fought my battles change how I face today's struggles?

Day 4: From Struggle to Victory

Reading: Romans 7:24-25; 1 Corinthians 15:55-57

Devotional: Notice Paul's dramatic shift: "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me?" immediately becomes "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" This is the movement from frustration to

celebration, from problem to Problem-Solver. Your last word isn't failure, addiction, depression, or fear—Jesus has the last word, and His word is VICTORY. The nails didn't defeat Him. The cross couldn't hold Him. Death couldn't keep Him down. Because He overcame, you can overcome. Because He conquered, you can conquer. Because He walked out of that grave, you can walk out of bondage, shame, guilt, and destructive cycles. You can walk down another street. Today, shift your focus from what you cannot do to what Christ has already done.

Reflection: What "last word" do I need to replace with Jesus' word of victory in my life?

Day 5: Celebrating at the Table

Reading: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Psalm 103:1-5

Devotional: Holy Communion isn't just a ritual—it's a celebration of conquest. Every time you come to the table, you declare that Jesus won. You're not coming because you're perfect; you're coming because you're broken and He makes you whole. You're not celebrating your righteousness but His. This table is for honest people who love God but still struggle, who believe God but still have battles. When you take the bread and cup, you're proclaiming: "I'm on the Lord's side, and that makes me a winner." You're blessed coming in and blessed going out. No weapon formed against you shall prosper. Failure, addiction, and fear don't have the final say—Jesus does. Come to the table today with gratitude, knowing His grace is sufficient for every cycle you're trying to break.

Reflection: What am I celebrating about God's victory in my life today? How can I live as someone who is "on the Lord's side"?

Closing Prayer: Father, thank You for not requiring perfection but inviting confession. Thank You that Jesus stepped into my struggles and won the victory. Help me walk in that victory daily, breaking cycles that have held me captive. When I fall, remind me that Your grace is greater. When I struggle, remind me that You're fighting for me. I declare that because Jesus won, I'm a winner too. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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Small Group Guide: Breaking the Cycle at the Table

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking God to open hearts and minds to receive truth, and to give each person courage to be honest about their struggles.

Icebreaker (5-10 minutes)

Share a time when you kept making the same mistake repeatedly. What finally helped you break that pattern?

Key Scripture

Romans 7:18-25 - "For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing."

Discussion Questions

1. The Reality of Cycles (10-15 minutes)

- Pastor shared the poem "There's a Hole in My Sidewalk." Which chapter resonates most with where you are right now?
- Why do you think we keep "walking down the same street" even when we know there's a hole waiting for us?
- How does it feel to hear that even the Apostle Paul struggled with doing what he didn't want to do?

2. Confession: The First Step (10-15 minutes)

- The sermon emphasized that "the table begins with confession." Why is confession so difficult for most people?
- What's the difference between confessing to God and just feeling guilty about something?
- How does confession create "room for God's grace" in our lives?
- Read 1 John 1:9 together. What promise does this verse offer us?

3. The Conflict Within (10-15 minutes)

- Paul describes a war between his flesh and spirit. What does this internal conflict look like in your daily life?

- The pastor said, "The struggle is not out there. The struggle is between my ears." What did he mean by this?
- How does recognizing that we're in a spiritual battle change how we approach our struggles?
- What are some practical ways we can "cast our vote" for the Spirit each day?

4. Celebrating the Conquest (10-15 minutes)

- Why is it important to celebrate that "Jesus won" even when we're still in the middle of our struggles?
- How does Holy Communion remind us of Christ's victory?
- What does it mean practically that "because He won, I'm going to win too"?
- How can we shift from focusing on what we cannot do to what Christ has already done?

Key Takeaways

1. Confession is the starting point for freedom - We cannot conquer what we don't confess. Honesty with God opens the door to His grace.
2. The struggle is evidence of spiritual life - If you're wrestling with sin, it means God is still working in you. Dead people don't fight.
3. We're not fighting alone - The battle belongs to the Lord. Jesus stepped into our conflict and won the victory for us.

4. Communion celebrates our victory - Every time we take communion, we declare that Jesus conquered sin, death, and the grave on our behalf.
 5. Victory is available now - Because Christ overcame, we can overcome. We can walk out of bondage and walk down a different street.
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge: Choose One

1. Practice Daily Confession - Set aside 5 minutes each day to honestly confess your struggles to God, then thank Him for His grace.
 2. Identify Your "Same Street" - Write down one recurring pattern or cycle you keep falling into. Share it with a trusted friend and ask them to pray with you about it.
 3. Memorize Victory - Memorize Romans 7:25 - "Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Speak it aloud when temptation comes.
 4. Change Your Route - Literally or figuratively, identify what "street" leads you to temptation and make a practical plan to "walk down another street."
 5. Communion Reflection - Before next month's communion, spend time in prayer examining yourself and thanking Jesus for His victory in your life.
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Accountability Questions

- What specific cycle are you trying to break right now?

- What is one practical step you can take this week to "walk down another street"?
 - Who can you be honest with about your struggles?
 - How can this group pray for you specifically?
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Closing Activity (10 minutes)

Confession and Celebration Circle:

1. In a spirit of confidentiality and grace, invite members to briefly share (without details) one cycle they want to break.
 2. After each person shares, have the group respond together: "Jesus won, and you're going to win too!"
 3. Close with prayers of thanksgiving for Christ's victory and petitions for breakthrough in each person's struggle.
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Closing Prayer

Thank God for His grace that meets us in our weakness. Pray for courage to confess, strength to fight, and faith to believe that victory is already won through Jesus Christ.

Additional Resources

- Read the full chapter of Romans 7 during the week
- Journal about your "hole in the sidewalk" - what keeps drawing you back?
- Find a Christian song about victory and worship with it this week

Leader's Note

Remember to create a safe, non-judgmental space. The goal is honesty and healing, not shame. Remind the group that confession is between them and God, but sharing with trusted believers can bring accountability and support.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Paul confesses in Romans 7 that he does the evil he does not want to do and fails to do the good he wants to do. In what areas of your life do you most identify with this internal struggle between spirit and flesh?
2. The sermon uses the poem about walking down the same street and falling in the same hole repeatedly. What 'street' do you keep walking down despite knowing there's a hole waiting for you, and what would it take for you to finally walk down a different street?
3. The pastor emphasizes that confession is not about informing God but agreeing with Him about the truth of ourselves. Why is it so difficult for us to move from examining others to examining ourselves honestly before God?
4. How does the act of taking communion force us to confront our cycles of sin and brokenness rather than pretending we have it all together?
5. The sermon states that the very fact we struggle is evidence God is still working in us, since spiritually dead people do not fight. How does this perspective change the way you view your ongoing battles with temptation?

6. What does it mean practically that Jesus stepped into your conflict and won the battle on your behalf? How should this reality change the way you approach your daily struggles?
7. The pastor says many believers have been saved for years but are still walking down the same street and falling in the same hole. What keeps Christians trapped in cycles even after experiencing salvation?
8. How does regular participation in communion serve as both a reminder of our need for grace and a celebration of Christ's victory over the patterns that bind us?
9. Paul shifts from frustration to celebration in Romans 7:25, moving from what he cannot do to what Christ has already done. What would it look like for you to make this same shift in your current struggles?
10. The sermon emphasizes that we cannot conquer what we do not confess and cannot defeat what we refuse to acknowledge. What is one cycle in your life that you need to stop denying and bring into the light through confession?

