

# 40 Days of Fitness

A daily devotional by Rev Garry Hardingham

## DAY 12 – God’s Grace is New Every Day

*For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.*

Romans 7:14 - 20

I once had a beautiful green frog that used to sit on the warm covers of our spa every night, soaking in the warmth coming up through the insulating pads. In the morning I would sit in my office, looking out the window at this frog sitting quietly on the spa covers seemly content with the world.

But at 6:30am every morning, the spa starts up and invariably the green frog would get a slight splash of spa water on her (or him). Spa water has some chlorine and bromine and such and is slightly acidic in order to keep the water clear and fresh. And so the small splash of spa water would irritate the skin of the frog and she (or he) would quickly hop well clear and scurry off under a bush near by. But, again that night, the frog would be back.

Slowly the bright green of the skin became blotchier from small burn marks from the water, but the frog either didn’t care or loved the warmth so much they were willing to endure the consequences. I don’t know what happened to that frog in the long term, but one night she (or he) never came back.

It was as if the frog learned nothing from what had happened at 6.30am every morning. Or, as I said, the need for the warmth outweighed the consequences.

All of us can somehow relate to this frog. We all do things that we repeat knowing that its probably not the best strategy for life. Like Paul in his famous tongue-twister from Romans 7, “*For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate*”, we are, as humans, always confined by a conflict between wanting to do the desire of God, but falling short by the desires of our humanity.

It is the same in our congregational life at times. Often congregations desire change, desire a missional goal, spend months or even years discerning where God might want to lead them, only to fall back into the same old patterns because maybe one or two people are overwhelmed. And then, rather than hearing the voice of God and forging on, decide to use the old “as fast as the slowest” trope to find excuses to stay the way they are. This is followed by hand-wringing and another process of seeking God and so on and so on....

But God knows all this. God sees our failings. God hears our lame excuses and is patient in our lack of movement. Because God’s Grace is new every day. By the grace of God we and our congregations are not who we once were, but nor are we fully there yet. We’re in process. Slowly and surely, we are being transformed. God’s grace allows us to continue in this transformation process. When we miss the mark again today, we will wake up to new grace tomorrow. Not so you can keep on doing the same stuff over and over. But so you can once again step into freedom.

### PRAYER

Be patient with us, dear God  
For we often want to sit in the warmth of the familiar  
Even if it is slowly killing us,  
Rather than strike out for something new.  
But we know that you are patient with us and Your Grace is abundant.  
And every day, you encourage us, pick us up,  
And wait for us.  
Lord, Continue to work in and through us that we  
will be transformed and take sure and steady footsteps  
Towards the freedom You promise us  
Every single new day.

Amen.