

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Dead to the Law

Scripture: Romans 7:1-6

Code: 45-50

And now we come to the high and sacred privilege of examining God's precious Word. And I invite you, if you will, to take your Bible and look at Romans chapter 7. In our continuing study of Romans, tonight we embark on a marvelous adventure into this great 7th chapter. This chapter is the first portion of Scripture that I ever taught at Grace Community Church. That was 14 years ago - more than that, I guess, a little. Pastor Elvey had died of a heart attack. I was asked to come and fill the pulpit and speak.

And at the time, I was really deep into Romans chapter 7 so I came, and some of you will remember that I spoke for an hour and 30 minutes. My wife thought I had lost my mind. I was the guest speaker. And I figured I'd give you the supreme test. If you could stand me for that long, you might be able to stand me for a few years. And here we are 14 years later back at the same marvelous passage.

My views of the passage haven't changed. My understanding of it has been enriched and deepened, thanking God for that through the years. And so I look with great anticipation on our thrill of studying this marvelous chapter. Let me read to you the first six verses which will be the setting for our message tonight.

"Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman who hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband as long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the sinful impulses, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law that being dead in which we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter."

Twenty-three times in Romans chapter 7 there's a reference to the law. It is the theme of this chapter. Now the law of God is a glorious thing. And we need to establish that because this chapter says so much about being dead to the law that we need to understand in order to balance that off that the law

of God is indeed a glorious thing, in spite of the fact that we have been set free from it.

Look with me for a moment back to the Psalms, and I would draw your attention to Psalm 19. And in Psalm 19 we read these words beginning in verse 7. “The law of the Lord *is* perfect converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord *is* sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord *is* pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord *is* clean, enduring for ever: the ordinances of the Lord *are* true *and* righteous altogether.” And all of those terms: Law, testimony, statutes, commandment, and ordinances refer to the law of God. And then verse 10 says, “More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” Now that obviously exalts the law of God.

Look with me again 100 Psalms later to the 119th Psalm. And I would just draw your attention to several verses. The whole Psalm is dedicated to the glory of the law of God, all 176 verses of it. But let me just draw your attention, first of all, to verse 12. “Blessed *art* Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy statutes.” Verse 16. “I will delight myself in Thy statutes.” Verse 18. “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.” Verse 77. “For Thy law *is* my delight.” Verse 97. “O how I love Thy law! It *is* my meditation all the day.” Verse 136. “Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not Thy law.” Verse 142. “Thy law *is* the truth.” And verse 165. “Great peace have they who love Thy law.” Finally, verse 174. “I have longed for Thy salvation, O Lord; and Thy law *is* my delight.”

Now that truly honors the law of the Lord, the law of God. In Deuteronomy 27:26 we read this. “Cursed *be* he who confirmeth not *all* the words of this law to do them. And all the people said, ‘Amen.’ ” Cursed is the person who doesn’t do all the things written in the law. In Ecclesiastes 12:13, the writer says, “Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man.” So obedience to the law again is exalted.

Now look with me at the 6th chapter of Deuteronomy, a very definitive Old Testament passage on the character and quality and honor of the law, Deuteronomy chapter 6. The last of the five books of Moses and we read in verse 1. “Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances, which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, that you might do *them* in the land to which you go to possess it: that thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do *it*; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.

“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God *is* one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them

when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

“And it shall be, when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which He swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildest, not and houses full of all good *things*, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantest not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; *Then* beware lest thou forget the Lord, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve Him, and shalt swear by His name. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people who *are* around about you; (For the Lord thy God *is* a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the Lord thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.”

Now God is saying to them, “Obey My commandments or be destroyed.” And this gives a very high position to the revealed Word, the law of God. In Isaiah chapter 42 - to bring the prophetic word in - verse 21, “The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness sake.” Listen to this. “He will magnify the law, and make *it* honorable.” Isaiah 42:21. God “will magnify the law and make it honorable.” The Psalmist says that God has exalted His Word above His name.

Now all of that to say this. That as you study the Old Testament, you cannot be but overwhelmed by the dignity and the honorable character and the centrality of the revealed law of God. In Exodus 18:16, Moses said to Jethro his father-in-law about his design as a leader of the people, he said this. “I do make *them* know the statutes of God, and His law.” Exodus 18:16. In other words, Moses said, “As the leader of Israel, my job can be boiled down to this: I let the people know the law of God.”

Do you know the last command in the Old Testament? The last exhortation as you close the final page of the book of Malachi? Listen to it. “Remember the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, *with* the statutes and ordinances.”

So, from the Pentateuch to the last book of the Old Testament, and all in between, the law of God is exalted. Now the result of this was that during the life of Christ and the time of the Apostle Paul, the Jews had elevated the law. In fact, they had even almost made an idol out of the law itself, so that in many cases they were worshiping the law rather than the God who wrote the law. But the point is that they had a very high view of the law of God. All you need to do is to look at the Talmud, which is the rabbinic commentary on God’s revelation, and you read, really, from one end of the Talmud to the other about the sacredness of the law of God.

Rabbi Rabbah said, for example, “The Holy One created man’s evil inclination, but created the Torah to overcome it.” Now that’s fairly errant theology, but it does demonstrate the importance of the law.

They believed that the law could overcome man's sinfulness. Rabbi Judah said, "The nature of the Holy One differs from that of mortal men. When a man prescribes a remedy, it may benefit one individual but injure another. But God gave the Torah - " that's the law " - to Israel as a source of healing for all."

Now the Jews, then, had developed a theology that said men can make themselves right before God by the exercise of the law, by keeping the law. So the law was sacred. Not only was it sacred because of its honorable definition in the terms of the Old Testament, but because they had made it a mode of salvation. And when you come into the New Testament, none of this is lost.

It is apparent in the New Testament time that the people were equally committed to the sacredness of the law. You remember in John chapter 9 when Jesus healed the man born blind and the Pharisees came to investigate the miracle? In John 9:28, "they reviled Him and they said, 'Thou art His disciple;' - " that is, to the blind man " - but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke unto Moses: as *for this fellow*, we know not from where He is."

In other words, they said, "We know that God spoke to Moses." Here they are advocating the law of Moses as the very revealed truth of God. And that gives us insight into how they did perceive the law. It was, to them, the Word of God.

Just to demonstrate it further, turn in your Bible to Acts chapter 21. Acts chapter 21. Let me show you just a brief illustration of this. Verse 20. The Apostle Paul has returned to Jerusalem after some missionary journeys. And he has brought Gentiles with him, Gentile Christians. He's brought gifts from the Gentile churches to give to the poor Jews in Jerusalem. And he comes back and he tells about what God has done among the Gentiles.

And verse 20. "And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, 'Thou seest, brother, - ' " brother Paul " ' - how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law.' " Now that is a good insight into the attitude of the people toward the law. They were zealous for the law.

Now later on in that same chapter, the apostle Paul, wanting to show his own regard for God's revealed truth, went into the temple - in verse 27, actually verse 26 - to go through a rite of purification. "And when the seven days were almost ended - " verse 27 says " - the Jews who were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple stirred up all the people, laid hands on him, and crying out, 'Men of Israel, help: this is the man that teacheth all *men* every where against the people, and the law.' " And, of course, a riot broke out and they would have killed Paul. As it was, the Romans took him and put him in prison to protect him. He stayed there two years before he got to Rome. And so it was the very zeal for the law that precipitated the imprisonment of the apostle Paul.

So, I say to you when we come into the New Testament era, we lose none of that dominant commitment of the people of Israel to the law. The testimony of Paul follows along the same line, does it not, in Philippians chapter 3? Where he says, "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh," and then he tells why, "Circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, I was blameless." So the man really with a vengeance pursued the law of God.

Now as you flow through the New Testament, this commitment to the sanctity, and the dignity, and the respectability, and the honorable nature of God's law is not diminished at all. When you come to the Epistle to the Hebrews, for example, in 2:2, it says that the law was the "word spoken by angels," who were holy beings. In Acts 7:53 it is said that it is the law received "by the disposition of angels." In Acts 7:38 the law is called "living oracles." In Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus said He didn't come to destroy the law, but to fulfill the law.

And even the apostle Paul - now let's go back to Romans 7 - even the apostle Paul in this very chapter exalts the law. Verse 12. "The law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Verse 14. "For we know that the law is spiritual." Verse 22. "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." And to Timothy he wrote, "But we know that the law *is* good." 1 Timothy 1:8. So you can take it all the way from the beginning of the Old Testament right through the New Testament, and God's law is exalted. God's law is lifted up, both in the eyes of the Jew and the Gentile who came to Christ in the church.

Looking at it conversely, how would you define sin? How would you define sin? First John 3:4. "Sin is a transgression of the - " what? " - law." So the law is the essential reality. To sum up all of this, I would draw your attention to Romans 3:31. And in Romans 3:31 we read this, that just after Paul has talked about justification by faith he says, "Do we then make void the law through faith?" In other words, if you can come to God by faith and you don't have to do the law, you don't have to keep the law in your own human strength, if God accepts you by faith, do we then make void the law or render it useless? And the answer is *m genoito* in the Greek, which is the strongest negative. No, no, no, no. No way, impossible. "God forbid. Rather, we establish the law." So, Paul wants to establish the place of the law.

Now, with that all in mind, that the law is sacred, holy, just, good, honorable, respectable, and all that, look with me at 3:19 - and we'll draw ourselves into chapter 7 now - 3:19. "Now we know that whatever things the law saith, it saith to them that under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be - " what? " - justified."

Now listen. The law is good. The law is holy. The law is righteous. The law is honorable. The law reflects the mind and heart of God. But nobody, no time, under any circumstances will ever be justified by keeping the law.

Now go to 5:20. Moreover - if you don't get saved by the law, what's the law for? "Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound." In other words, instead of the law creating righteousness, the law made sin what? Abound.

Now let's go one more step, and we'll get to the 7th chapter. 6:14. "For sin shall not have dominion over you." And here is an absolutely shocking statement to a Jew who all his or her lifelong had been committed to the law. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Now a statement like that has to be defended. It just has to be defended. There's no way that Paul can make that statement in 6:14 and then walk away from it and write the rest of this epistle. It's going to leave such a massive block in their minds, he has to deal with what he just said. We are not under the law.

Now would you notice there are two basic statements in verse 14? "For sin shall not have dominion over you." That's the first statement. Now listen carefully. He explained the meaning of that statement in 6:15-23. That is an exposition of that statement. The second statement, "for you are not under the law, but under grace," he explains in chapter 7. He makes those two statements, explains one, and then the other because he cannot leave them unexplained. For those who have such a high and sacred view of the law will be devastated by his statement and they will jettison all of his theology when he says "you are not under the law." They have all their lifetime lived under the law. It's all they've known. So he must explain it. And I believe he does it in chapter 7.

So now you understand the rationale for chapter 7. Against a background of such affirmation of God's law, there must be some explanation about what it means to say we are not under the law. It seems that men have been under the law for a long time, how has that and why has that changed?

Now let me give you an overview before we go specifically into chapter 7. And I'm hurrying as rapidly as I can. Remember the context of all of this. The major theme of Romans is justification by faith. In other words, you're saved not by keeping the law but by believing, right? Through grace. Now we have started with justification by faith in chapter 3. The first couple of chapters showed us how sinful we are. We hit 3:21 and we get into justification by faith, and it runs all the way to the end of chapter 8. Chapter 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, all justification by faith. That's the theme of all of those. And then in 9 to 11, he applies it to Israel, and then in 12 to the end he shows how it works out in living. But the main theme is justification by faith.

Having presented the doctrine itself in chapters 3 and 4, he then is presenting the fruit of that doctrine. And the first one was chapter 5, and in chapter 5 we learned that the first fruit of justification was security. We have peace with God. That's settled. Security.

The second fruit of which he speaks in chapter 6 is holiness. We have union with Christ in chapter 6, and now His holiness is imparted to us. So the fruit of justification: First security, second holiness. Now we come to chapter 7 and the third fruit is liberty. Liberty. We are free from the law. Marvelous. And we're going to see even more fruit of justification. But the point that we've been trying to stress since we got into this thing in chapter 3 is that salvation has tremendous effect. You cannot claim to be a Christian without a demonstrable effect in your life. Salvation transforms people.

That's the essence of what Paul is spending chapter after chapter to tell us. We have in chapter 5 peace with God. We have in chapter 6 union with Christ. We have in chapter 7 freedom from the law. All of that is the fruit of salvation. And that all really answers the rather silly question in 6:1, doesn't it? "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" You see, that's what the critic would say. Your doctrine of justification by faith through grace means that you can just sin all you want and every time you sin God has grace so your doctrine leads to unrighteous living.

In other words, the legalist says, "Boy, we keep people toeing the mark here. We've got all the rules. When you come along and say, 'You're not saved by the law. The law can't save you. You can't keep the law. You're saved by grace through faith.' You're just turning people loose and they're going to run amuck." And so they accuse him of the doctrine that leads to sin. And he says quite the opposite. True salvation leads to holiness, right? That's what we saw in chapter 6. It doesn't lead to license. It leads to the very opposite of license. It leads to holiness, chapter 6. Chapter 7, it leads to freedom from the law.

Now let's take the first section of chapter 7 and look at it. I'm going to give you four points: The axiom, the analogy, the application, and the affirmation. Here we go.

The axiom. And Paul is good at establishing self-evident axiomatic principles. "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he lives." Now that isn't any profound theological statement, that's just an axiom. By "axiom" we mean a self-evident truth that doesn't have to be proven. It's just apparent. It's just patently obvious. He calls them "brethren." And he needs, at this point, to interject an affectionate greeting because by now some of the Jews are ready to stone him because of his saying we are not under the law. And so affectionately he may reach out to them with a tender sensitivity that a subject filled with such tension demands.

And he says to them, "Know ye not." The idea is you're really not ignorant of this. It's assuming that they know. He appeals to what he assumes they know. He's rather tactful. He gives them the benefit

of the doubt. He's saying, "You know this, because I speak to them that know law. It is an anarthrous construction, which means there's no definite article. I'm talking to people who understand law. Everyone knows this whether Greek law, Hebrew law, Roman law, Mosaic law, biblical law, Jewish law, any law. Anybody who knows law knows that law only has dominion over living people.

Have you noticed that about it? When you see a drunk who gets into a crash and gets killed, you don't see an officer bending over a corpse writing a ticket. The law does not apply to a dead person. And you will all remember the assassination of the President, John F. Kennedy, and then the immediate assassination of the one who killed him, Lee Harvey Oswald, and you will also remember that he was never tried because the law has jurisdiction only over living people. Now that's axiomatic, that's just obvious truth. The law only applies to people that are alive. Now that's the axiom.

He moves from that to the analogy. And this is a fascinating analogy in verses 2 and 3. And he uses an analogy from marriage. And please do me a favor, and I wish I could have said this to some commentators who've written on the passage, don't turn an analogy into an allegory or you really get mixed up. If you don't understand what I just said, don't worry about it.

Verse 2. "For the woman who hath an husband - " you got that? Not too hard, is it? It's a married lady. "She's bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. If he's dead, she's loosed from the law of her husband." Right? The marriage law doesn't apply if your husband's dead. You're not bound to the corpse the rest of your life. It's a very simple analogy. Now the key thought is "as long as he lives." Law binds people only while they're alive.

Verse 3 kind of expands it. "So then if, while *her* husband lives, she be married to another man, she should be called an adulteress." That's right, isn't it? You can't do that. You'd not only be called an adulteress, you'd be called a what? A polygamist. You can't do that. Or a bigamist. You can't go marry somebody else. As long as you're married to your husband and he's alive, you can't go do that. Now there's not a divorce situation scene here. There are not all kinds of complications. Very simple, when you're married to one person and he's alive, you can't go marry somebody else.

"But if her husband be dead, she's free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." And the whole point of the analogy is just to say that law only applies in marriage as long as both partners are alive. When one dies, that law of marriage is no longer applicable.

How free is she? It says in verse 3 "she's free from that law." How free is she? She's free to be exactly as she was before she ever married the guy in the first place. She's just as free as she was when she was a virgin. She's so free that she can go marry another man.

And we know this is pointed out in the New Testament in 1 Timothy 5:14. Paul says the younger widows I want to go and get married, right? First Timothy 5:14. And in 1 Corinthians 7:39 Paul says those of you who are widows, marry “only in the Lord.” You have a right to marry, but make sure you marry a Christian. The point is that death utterly ends the law binding two people permanently in marriage.

Now when you got married, you went down the aisle and you mumbled and you’ve probably forgotten all that that you mumbled, and if you hadn’t been to a few other weddings, you never would remember any of it, because you were probably pretty well shaken at the time. But somewhere along the process you probably said, “Till - ” what? “ - death do us part.” It’s amazing how many people getting married today want to write that out of their marriage vow. That’s the analogy, very simple. The law only is binding when people are alive. Death ends the authority of the marriage law.

Now please, this passage is not meant to teach all about divorce and remarriage. Divorce isn’t even in here. It is not to be the all time definitive statement on marriage. And some people have made it that and then they’ve taken this statement to say that the only time you can ever remarry is if your partner dies and then they push this passage back into Matthew 5, Matthew 19, and everywhere else in the Scripture and they come up with a rather chaotic view. Don’t start here. This is simply an analogy. It’s very narrow. It’s very limited. It’s only trying to say one thing, death ends the rule of law in marriage. And that’s to illustrate the axiom in verse 1.

Let’s go to the application. And since, by the way, it isn’t meant to teach us a lot about marriage, I won’t use it to do that. All I want you to do is draw the one thought. Let’s go to the application, and he applies it in verses 4 and 5. All of that is to lead up to this essential correlation.

Verse 4. “Wherefore.” Now the wherefore is the connector. Based on the axiom, the law only applies where people are alive which is illustrated in the marriage law. “Wherefore, my brethren - ” and now he’s again using the affectionate term “brethren” and he adds the possessive pronoun “my” to even endear himself in a more gentle way with them. He says, “Ye also are become dead to the law.” Better to put it in the Greek, “Ye were put to death.” And the violent word for death is used. “You were violently put to death.” And the aorist tense is used to remind them of a great historic reality that happened in a moment in time.

You say, “Wait a minute. I’m a Christian. When was I put to death?” Go back to Romans 6:3. “Know ye not, that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His - ” what? “ - death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of His resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.”

Now where was our death? It was at Calvary, wasn't it? And we've been learning that when you put your faith in Jesus Christ, you are united with Christ, you die with Christ in a real spiritual death. That's what he's talking about.

Now the law - listen carefully - before you came to Christ, the law had no ability to save you. Did you get that? It had no ability to redeem you. By the deeds of the law shall - what? - no flesh be justified. Before you were saved, the law had no ability to redeem you. All it could do was what? Condemn you. And that it could do. Now that you've been saved, the law not only cannot redeem you, but now it cannot - what? - condemn you, either. Because all that the law could demand was your death, right? The wages of sin is - what? - death. He that sinneth, the soul that sinneth, it shall die. "You break My law," God said to Adam, and set it in motion, "and you will die."

And all the law can demand is death. And it so happens that we died. If I commit a crime, as we've been learning, and they take me out and they execute me, and they electrocute me, or hang me, or shoot me, or whatever, and I happen to rise from the dead, that's the law's tough luck, it has no more jurisdiction over me. I paid its penalty. And so in Christ we die and the law cannot redeem us, but it no longer can condemn us either. But before you came to Christ, the law couldn't redeem you, but it could condemn you. And so you were under its tyranny. You were in bondage to it.

There's an interesting note also to note in this verse. It says, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become - " or you were put to death, you were put to death as far as the law is concerned. It's a passive verb, which means you didn't kill yourself. You couldn't do that. It was a divine act. It was God who planned your salvation. It was God who carried it out. It was God who redeemed you. It was God who put you in Christ. It's all the work of God. And when you died, my dear friends, the law no longer had authority over you. We're not under the condemnation of the law.

How did this happen? Go back to verse 4. "By the body of Christ." What does that mean? By the offering of the body of Christ in crucifixion, by being crucified with Christ. Jesus in death satisfied the law because He died the death the law demanded. He paid the penalty in full for all of us and freed us from the law. That's why 2 Corinthians 5:21 puts it, "For He hath made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." He redeemed us from the law by death. He became a curse for us, Galatians 3:13, that we might be delivered from the curse of the law.

Now this whole idea parallels a very familiar passage. I'll just quote it to you. You know it well. Galatians 2:19-20. "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." How did that happen? How did you get dead to the law to live unto God? How did you die to come alive to God? "For I am crucified with Christ;" Right? "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself

for me.”

So I was put to death to the law. I've come alive in Jesus Christ. Now I think you understand that because we went over that in great detail in chapter 6. But here's the salient element in verse 4. "In order that ye should be married to another." Salvation is a complete change of relationship. You no longer have the first husband you had. You no longer are under the bondage of the law. You're now married to Jesus Christ.

It's a beautiful picture, isn't it? We see it in Ephesians 5 where the church is seen as the bride and He is the bridegroom. We see it in 2 Corinthians chapter 11 where we are an espoused wife having a marriage consummated to Christ in glory in the future. So we are called to be married to another and it tells us who it is. "To Him who is raised from the dead." Notice it says "is raised," not "was raised?" Who is - in other words, it's emphasizing His present life. We are not only identified in union with a dead Savior in the past, but we are one with a living Savior in the present. It's a great truth.

There's one good thought. I would just draw you back to 6:9 for a moment, I'll tie this in. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies – what? - no more. Will Christ ever die again? Will He? Then will we ever lose our husband? Never. That's a great word about the security of our salvation. That's a great word about the security of our marriage bond with Christ. Our husband will never die. He will never die. And so we will ever be secure in Him.

And so, we died in Christ by the mysterious miracle of our union with Him, by grace through faith. And we rise to walk in newness of life. And again I say, folks - and this is the salient element of all of this teaching - salvation is a total transformation. We are given security, chapter 5. In us is produced holiness, chapter 6. And liberty from the law, chapter 7. We are free from a works righteousness, from trying to earn our salvation. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the key.

And then the end of verse 4, great truth. "In order that we should bring forth - " what? " - fruit unto God." That's the purpose. Because of Christ we bear fruit. May I remind you that this is not a command, this is a statement of fact? It could read, "in order that we bring forth fruit." We do. There's no such thing as a no-fruit Christian. Salvation has a product. Because of a transformed life, we bear fruit unto God. Now carry that back to the question at the beginning of chapter 6. When you preach a grace salvation, and you ask people to come to Christ by grace through faith, and they don't have to do anything to earn it, and you're under grace, and sin abounds grace much more abounds, does that lead to sin? No it doesn't because chapter 6 says that if you're truly transformed you produce holiness, and chapter 7 says if you're truly married to Jesus Christ you will bring forth fruit unto God. Just the opposite is true.

The great theologian, Hodge, wrote, "As far as we are concerned, redemption is in order to produce holiness. We are delivered from the law in order that we may be united to Christ. And we're united to

Christ in order that we may bring forth fruit unto God.” He goes on to say, “The only evidence of union with Christ is bringing forth fruit unto God. As deliverance from the penalty of the law is in order to produce holiness, it is vain to expect that deliverance except with a view to the end for which it is granted.”

In other words, if you’re saved, you’re going to produce fruit unto God. What is fruit? Well, we’ve studied this in the past. Two things: Attitude and action. What’s attitude fruit? Galatians 5:22-23. “The fruit of the Spirit is - ” what? “ - love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith meekness, self-control.” That’s attitude.

What about action fruit? Hebrews chapter 13. “The fruit of your lips praise unto God.” Philippians chapter 4. The fruit of a loving heart, a gift sent to the apostle Paul. Philippians talks about the fruit of righteousness. Any righteous act, any act which glorifies God, is fruit. Any right attitude or right act is fruit. And when Christ transforms your life, and you are dead to the law, and you come alive to God, it is not just because of a past historical event, it is because of a present living Christ, with whom you are one, and in whom He produces fruit unto God. He is the vine and we are the – what? - branches. And the vine produces the fruit through the branches.

So the question of 6:1-2 is again answered. Salvation has a product, but the product isn’t abuse, and the product is licentiousness, and the product isn’t libertinism, and the product isn’t license, and the product isn’t sinfulness, thinking you’re going to get forgiven for everything you do because of some transaction that’s made. The product of true salvation is chapter 6, holiness; chapter 7, fruitfulness, and fruit unto God. That means fruit that glorifies God.

And that’s something new, folks. That’s something brand new. Before we came to Christ, how was it? Verse 5. “For when we were in the flesh, the sinful impulses, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.” This verse is so loaded, now. Hang on, I’m going to give it to you fast. Four key thoughts, here they come: Flesh, sin, law, death. Circle them in your Bible in verse 5: Flesh, sin, law, death. They go together. They’re all the same kind of thing. They operate in the same sphere.

The flesh produces sin, which is excited by the law, which it results in death. That’s a pathetic quartet, frankly. They are terms that describe man’s fallenness, man’s unregenerate state. They are a sad description. Let me take them piece by piece. And this is a very important statement at the beginning of verse 5, very definitive. “For when we were in - ” underline the word “in” “ - when we were in the flesh.” “In the flesh,” what does he mean by that? Well, we were really deep in it. It was our sphere of being. We were in the flesh. We were deeply in the flesh, profoundly in the flesh, engulfed in the flesh.

What is the flesh? It's used two ways in the Bible and you must distinguish them. First, it's used physically. And when flesh is used physically in the Bible, it has no evil connotation. Did you get that? When it's used physically, it has no evil connotation. For Jesus Christ is come in the what? Flesh. "For the Word - " John 1:14 " - was made flesh." When it is used in the physical sense, it has no evil connotation. In fact, in 1 John 4:2 it says that anyone who doesn't confess that Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.

But listen, when flesh is used in the ethical or moral sense it always has an evil connotation. Always. When it's used in the ethical moral sense. You find that, for example, in chapter 8, flesh is used in verse 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 13, flesh, flesh, flesh, flesh, flesh all through there. You find it in Galatians 5 at least four times. You find it in Ephesians chapter 2. And every time you find it used in an ethical moral sense, it has an evil connotation. And it is speaking of man's unredeemed humanness. Very important. So "when we were in the flesh" is when we were unredeemed. When our being - our real personage - that I living in us was engulfed in the flesh, was captive to the flesh.

Now may I suggest to you that that's a past tense experience? I'm no longer in the flesh. That's right. Neither are you if you're a Christian. You say, "How do you know that?" I'd thought you'd ask. Look at 8:4. Verse 4 says we're not to walk after the flesh. Then verse 5. "For they that are after the flesh - " now there's another phrase that's just the same as "in the flesh." The "in the flesh" and "after the flesh," folks, are the same thing. "They mind the things of the flesh." That's their world, their sphere. "But they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be fleshly minded *is* death; to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. Because the fleshly mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

So if you're in the flesh, after the flesh, fleshly minded, you don't know God. And then verse 8, again here's this same phrase, "So then they that are - " underline the word " - in the flesh can't please God." That's an unregenerate person. Now watch verse 9. "But, ye are not - " what? " - in the flesh." Very important. You're not in the flesh. You're in the Spirit if the Spirit of God dwells in you, and the Spirit of God dwells in every Christian, right? Because if He doesn't, you don't belong to Christ. That's what it says.

And if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin. The Spirit is life because of righteousness. Now listen very carefully. Go back to where we were in 7:5. Unregenerate people are in the flesh. You're not in the flesh. You say, "Well, what's this stuff that keeps getting in the way of my holiness?" May I suggest to you that you're not in the flesh, but the flesh is in you? It no longer engulfs you. It no longer has made you its captive. You are no longer its slave. You have been freed from its bondage. You do not ever have to yield yourself to it, do you?

Galatians 5 says you don't. Walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. You may do fleshly things because the flesh is in you, but you're not in the flesh. Very important. That's an unregenerate

designation. Now I'm a new creation. The real me is regenerated, redeemed. It is an incorruptible new nature after the very nature of God Himself. It is holy, pure and undefiled.

But, I still have my unredeemed humanness, as we saw in Romans 8. And I wait for the redemption of this body when it gets transformed and I lose that flesh that's still in me. So as new creatures, we're in the Spirit. We're not in the flesh, but the flesh is in us. But unregenerate people are in the flesh. And look what happens - verse 5 again. The sinful - interesting term here - passions, impulses, the flesh generates sinful impulses, sends out impulses. It literally - if you read it this way - "the sinful impulses - " skipping down, " - did work in our members." And the word "work" is *energe*. They're energized. The flesh energizes *pathma*, the passions, the impulses.

And how interesting, he says, "Which were by the law." And this is just incredible, a really incredible statement. Now how can a good law create evil passion? Two ways. First of all, it reveals evil, right? So you wouldn't know what evil passion was, you'd only know what passion was. You wouldn't know it was evil if there wasn't a standard against which you sinned, right?

So the law reveals sin by setting up the standard and so you know it's sin when you run against it. But secondly, the law excites evil because nothing seems more appealing to people than to do something that is forbidden. Have you noticed that? Just tell people you can't do it and watch them rush to try. So the law excites sin. We're going to find that later in chapter 7. He says, Paul says, verse 10, "The commandment which *was ordained* to life I found *to be* death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*." In other words, it seems as though the law of God, instead of us living up to the law of God, the law of God simply shows us evil. And instead of us wanting not to do it, we then want to break the law. There's something in us that seeks to rebel.

So, we're in the flesh. The flesh produces sinful impulses, which are heightened and intensified by the law, and the result, fruit unto death. Fruit unto death. These sinful impulses, it says, excited by the law work in our members. And in the unregenerate person that's body and soul. That's all of them. That's everything they are in all their parts to bring forth death. Now, as you know, that verse is very closely paralleled to what we studied in chapter 6.

So, we see the axiom, the analogy, and the application. He says we used to be like that, verse 5. But verse 4, that's all changed. We are now dead to that, and alive in the resurrected Christ, and not producing fruit unto death, but fruit unto God.

Now a final affirmation in verse 6. "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead in which we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of letter." Now listen carefully as we wrap this up. This is very important.

“But now - ” great words. Great words. We’re not in the flesh anymore. We are delivered from the law. That’s the great affirmation. That’s the *sunum bonum* of this brief portion. We have been, literally it says “delivered from the law,” it means released. We have been discharged from any legal liability. The law said, “You’re guilty, you die.” Jesus died, paid our death. We died in Him. The law has no claim. We have no legal liability. The curse that was on us has been taken by Christ, Galatians 3:13. This is a great affirmation.

And then it says, “having died to that wherein we were held.” We were held captive by the flesh, by its sinful impulses, by the law, and by death. They held us captive. They don’t hold us anymore. Remember we saw in chapter 6, you don’t have to sin? Sin is not your master. Its tyranny has been broken. You’ve been set free from the law. It can’t condemn you anymore. It can’t slay you. It can’t kill you. It can’t require death. That whole thing is a dead issue. What a marvelous thought. Marvelous thought. We’ve been set free.

You say, “Have we been set free just to do what we want? Is this what Christianity is? Man, we can just sin like gang- busters? Just go at it, and know that grace is applied to us, and just sin up one street and down the other? Live our life any way we want?” No, no, no. Watch. “In order that we should serve.” Oh, I like that. *Douleu*, obedient servanthood.

And may I suggest that the English here is somewhat ambiguous, but the Greek is not? Again it demonstrates a result. It isn’t that we’re supposed to serve, it is that we will. We have been saved unto fruit, that’s verse 4. We have been saved unto service, that’s verse 6. We do serve. I think Wuest translates this so well, “We were discharged from the law, having died to that in which we were constantly held down, in so much that we are habitually rendering a bond-slave’s obedience to God.” Beautiful.

Now listen. Here comes another thing to add to your list. If you’ve been justified by grace through faith, you’ve received chapter 5 security, chapter 6 holiness, chapter 7 liberty, chapter 7 fruit, chapter 7 service, obedient service. That is a product. Is a Christian going to sin? Is grace going to make him sin? No, grace is going to so transform him as to produce security, holiness, liberty, fruitfulness and obedient service. That’s the mark of regeneration. And what kind of service is our service? I love this, end of verse 6, it is “not *in* the oldness of the letter.” If you will, it is not in submission to an external code. It is not the letter that kills anymore.

It’s not just cranking out externally some kind of ritual. It’s not on the outside obeying the law of God while the heart is unresponsive. It’s not Phariseism. It’s not legalism. It’s not externalism. It’s not religiosity. It’s not hypocrisy. We’re not just cranking out external action. But we serve in newness of spirit, newness, *kainos*, new in quality, not new in chronology, a whole different kind of service. Not an external service, but an internal one.

So that we say this, listen very carefully. When you become a Christian, you are set free from the law. You're set free in the sense that the law can no longer condemn you. But you're set free to serve that same law - listen now - to serve that same law, not in a perfunctory, external manner, but from deep within your heart. So when the question comes up, well, if you just tell people they're not under the law and they're free in Jesus Christ, they'll just go out and violate God's law, then you don't understand what salvation means, because it plants within you a new nature and the bent of that new nature is to serve God in spirit from deep within the heart.

This, of course, is the work of the Holy Spirit. We still serve the law. In fact, we serve it better than we could before we were redeemed. Because we serve not the letter of the law but the spirit. We no longer are slaves to a legal set of values and rules in order to gain favor with God, but we now serve God out of love because He's granted us salvation. We are free, free to serve God, not free to serve ourselves. We did that before. We aren't legalists serving the letter, but in newness of spirit we serve Christ.

So somebody asks the question. If we're free from the law as Christians, is the law binding on us? The answer is no and yes. It is not binding in the sense that our acceptance with God depends on it. It is binding in the sense that our new life seeks to serve it. You see, the law couldn't save you because you couldn't keep it. Now that God saved you, the law can't condemn you, and for the first time in your life by the power of the Holy Spirit, you can keep it. So we're not under the law condemnation but we serve God's law out of the depths of a committed heart.

Is the law important? Oh yes. Can we say with the psalmist, "O how I love Thy law?" Oh yes. Even though it can't save us? Yes. Even though it would condemn us? Yes. Because Jesus Christ has born that condemnation and by planting within us the divine nature has enabled us to keep that very law. And we don't serve it externally, but out of newness of spirit.

So, we're dead to the law in the sense that it could save us or condemn us. But listen, people, we are more alive to the law now in terms of serving it to the glory of God than we've ever been. Well, that's just the beginning. Come back next week for the next section. Let's pray.

Lord, we've laid some foundation for this great chapter tonight. We're going to talk more next time about if we've now been set free to serve the law, why is it so hard? Why is it so difficult? Something in us says, "I want to serve God's law." Something in us says, "I want to serve sin." If we have been transformed, if we have been made to produce holiness, fruitfulness, service, why is it so hard? Why the struggle, Lord? Help us to be able to understand that as we continue our study and then into chapter 8 as we see the victory given us in the Holy Spirit. Thank You, O God, for what is ours in redemption, that we lack nothing, that we're not seeking more of anything, but that we are complete in Him, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

And I would pray tonight, O God, for any in our service who have not embraced the Savior, who have not come to know Jesus Christ and been set free from condemnation, for the law condemns. It says you die and you pay forever. And may we know, O God, that even forever could not pay the price, even if we suffered forever, could not pay the price for our sin that Christ paid in His death. May every heart embrace that great truth.

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