

Pentwater Bible Church

Romans Message 24

October 30, 2022



The Deluge by J.M.W. Turner Cir 1804

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Romans
Message Twenty-Four
Believers are Dead to The Law
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WE ARE MARRIED TO THE LORD JESUS

Romans 7:1–6

¹Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the Law,) how that the Law hath dominion over a man, as long as he liveth? ²For the woman which hath a husband is bound by the Law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the Law of the husband. ³So 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. ⁴Wherefore, 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. ⁵For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the Law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. ⁶But now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter (KJV).

INTRODUCTION

Paul begins this chapter as if he continues his shadow conversation with his Jewish brethren about the nature of the Mosaic Law and the Law of Christ. The intended audience of the epistle were Jewish people in the church at Rome, most of whom were probably genuine, born-again believers in Christ. Church groups in Christianity are comprised of some believers, a number of unbelievers, and some who were attracted by the message of salvation, but had not yet made a full commitment of faith in Christ. They undoubtedly had friends who were born-again and caused them to want to learn more of this new faith. New born-again believers have an exciting and vibrant message to share regarding their experience. All of these people are on the road to or in belief, and are together in one fellowship we call the visible church. The implication of Paul's words looking back to Romans 6:14 is profound.

¹⁴For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the Law, but under grace (KJV).

If it is because you are not under Law but under grace that sin will have no dominion over you, then to be under Law is to be dominated by sin, and to be under grace is to be liberated not only from the dominion of sin but also from the regime of the Law. However, what the apostle Paul is trying to get across to us is just this: to be under grace is to live according to the Spirit; to be under Law is to live according to the flesh trying to physically keep the 613 commandments in the Mosaic Law, thinking this leads to salvation (Romans 8:5, 13).

With the Law of God Paul is not finding any fault, because it is God's Law. It forbids sin, and it promotes and commands righteousness. Men and women of God in Israel had found the Law to be a safeguard against sin. *Great peace have those who love thy Law*, said one psalmist; *nothing can make them stumble* (Psalm 119:165); another could say, *The Law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul* (Psalm 19:7).

In chapter 6, Paul explained how Christ delivered us from sin. He said that when we died, we also died to sin. But while we are alive in our bodies, we must continue to deal with our sin nature and its attempts to control our thoughts and actions. To describe this tension between our old and new natures, Paul used the analogy of slavery to sin versus slavery to God. He begins chapter 7 by arguing the same point, but using the analogy of marriage. Just as death breaks the marital vow, so death with Christ breaks our marriage to sin. We were bound to sin because we failed to keep the Law. The problem is not with the Law, it is within us. We have inherited a sin nature and it must be dealt with.

In chapters seven and eight Paul uses the word Law in four different ways:

1. The Mosaic Law (Romans 7:7ff)
2. The civil Law (Romans 7:1–6),
3. The Old Testament Scriptures (Romans 7:22), and
4. A governing principle as in the Law of gravity (Romans 7:21, 23, 25; 8:1–4). The last expression is the one used in phrases like the Law of my mind (Romans 7:23), the Law of sin and death (Romans 7:25; 8:2), and the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (8:2). The Law in these expressions refers to something that always works.

WHILE WE ARE ALIVE THE LAW IS OPERATIVE

Romans 7:1–3

¹Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the Law,) how that the Law hath dominion over a man, as long as he liveth? ²For the woman which hath a husband is bound by the Law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the Law of the husband. (KJV)?

When Paul says, *Know ye not, brethren*, he is making an appeal to their own observation respecting the relation between husband and wife. Here in his example, he shows that as when a man dies, and the connection between him and his wife is dissolved, his Law ceases to be binding on her. In a strongly like manner, so also a separation has taken place between Christians and the Law, in which they have become dead to it. Our life and peace now come from that new source, which is Jesus through which we are connected by the Gospel. The Law has authority over a man only as long as he lives. Paul continues his thought from 6:14, *“For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under Law, but under grace.”*

Obviously, the Law has authority only while someone is alive—a dead body cannot be expected to follow any Laws, nor can it make restitution for sins committed. Paul's Greek word for authority (Gr. *kurieuei*) expresses the idea of master. *the Law hath dominion over a man, as long as he liveth*. The Law is here personified, and represented as setting up a lordship over a man, and exacting obedience.

The sense is, that death releases a man from the Laws by which he was bound in life. It is a general principle, relating to the Laws of the land, the Law of a parent, the Law of a contract, and so forth. This general principle the apostle proceeds to apply in regard to the Law of God,

Paul's rhetorical question creates another concept. Death brings an end to the authority of the Law, but next is God's judgment. Death removes a person from the difficulties of responsibility to the Law, but then enters him or her into the fire of judgment. But if a person can get out from under the authority of the Law without coming under the judgment of Law, that would seem to be an ideal situation. This is the destiny of the believer of Jesus in the Church Age. After the Rapture and Resurrection, we are immediately at the Bema seat judgment. Here our sins are not discussed for they were dealt with at the cross. It is only to be judged on the basis of the exercising of our spiritual gifts.

As Paul continues the analogy of marriage he says, *For the woman*. This verse is a specific illustration of the general principle in verse 1, that death dissolves those connections and relations which make Law binding in life. It is a simple illustration. This has to be kept in mind so that we do not try and go back to the Mosaic Law for our directions in life. When a woman that is married to a man, she is bound by the Law to her husband; to live with him, in subjection and obedience to him, so long as he lives except in the cases of adultery, (Matthew 19:9) and desertion by an unbeliever, (I Corinthians 7:15) by which the bond of marriage is liberated, and for which a divorce or separation is permissible, which are equal to death: but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the Law of her husband; the bond of marriage is dissolved, the Law of it is abolished, and she is at entire liberty to marry whom she will, (I Corinthians 7:39). Even though He permits it under the two aforementioned circumstances, it must be stated that divorce is not part of God's plan. In fact, He states quite clearly that He hates divorce:

Malachi 2:16

16 "For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one's garment with violence" (ASV, 1901).

In other words, the husband has no more authority. The connection from which the marital obligation resulted is dissolved. To her husband. She was united to him; and was under his authority as the head of the household. To him is particularly committed the headship of the family, and the wife is subject to his Law, in the Lord.

Ephesians 5:21–33

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

³³*Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband (KJV).*

So, *her husband so long as he liveth* Paul begins to discuss the marriage relationship of 1. While her husband is alive, if she becomes married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; she will be noted and accounted of as such by everybody, except in the above-mentioned cases: and 2. But if her husband dies, then she is free from the Law of marriage, by which she was before bound. In this instance she is not an adulteress; nor can anybody legitimacy level an accusation to her as such. She is clear from any such accusation even though she is now married to another man. This is additional certification that second marriages under these conditions are Lawful.

DEAD TO THE LAW

Romans 7:4–5

⁴*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. ⁵For when we were in the flesh, the motions which were by the Law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death (KJV).*

Now the apostle follows from the example of marriage and it dissolving, showing, that the saints were not under the Law, including the power and dominion of it: since that, as when a man is dead, the woman is loosed from that Law by which she was bound while he lived. Just as death breaks the bond between a husband and wife, so a believer's death (death to his old self) breaks his bond with the Law. Now she may Lawfully marry another man, and bear children to him without being genuinely accused of adultery. In a like manner in this illustration, believers are dead to the Law, and the Law dead to them. Therefore, as believers in the Gospel, we are released from it, and are Lawfully married to Christ. We may now bring forth the genuine fruits of good works, not in order to obtain righteousness and life by them, but for the honor and glory of God. As the saints and children of God we have become dead to the Law, and that to us. The Law can have no more power over them than a Law can have over dead persons.

We are now also represented as dead to sin, and dead with Christ, and here, dead to the Law, as in Galatians, and consequently cannot be under it; are out of the reach of its power and government, since that only has dominion over a man as long as he lives.

Galatians 2:19–21

¹⁹ *For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. ²⁰ I am crucified with Christ: 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. ²¹ I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain (KJV).*

The old contractual arrangement had to be completely severed before the new one could begin. This had to be as final as death. Jewish believers could not live with a dual allegiance. They could not be under the lordship of Christ and the lordship of the Law. Total commitment to Christ cannot coexist with a total commitment to the Law. That would be spiritual adultery A believer belongs fully to Christ. This happens

through the body of Christ, that is, because of Christ's death on the cross. The believer is then freed to belong to another, that is, to Christ.

Just as there is fruit (i.e., children) from a marriage, so there is fruit from our relationship with Christ. In the previous chapter (Romans 6:20–21), Paul reminded the Romans that their old life had borne fruit that was reason for shame. But now the expectation is for a harvest of good. Only by belonging to Christ can we do good works and live a life pleasing to God. This is how we serve in the new way of the Spirit.

When we were controlled by the sinful nature *For when we were in the flesh*, Paul reminds us that the Law did little more for them than fuel one's passion for sin. They were under the authority of the Law, but they disobeyed it. In the New Testament, when Paul used the term flesh (Gr. *sarx*), translated here as sinful nature (Galatians 5:24). Our bodies of flesh are weak and physical weakness leads to moral weakness. It has this meaning here and very often in Paul's writings. When we were in the flesh means when we were characterized by fleshly desires and outlook. Paul does not mean that the flesh is of itself evil. Indeed, his looking back to the time when we were in the flesh indicates that it is possible to live this life (and therefore to live in this body) without being in the flesh. But the fact that the flesh is weak means that it is open to temptations of various kinds, and Paul is referring to a way of life that succumbs to those temptations, a life dominated by the lesser, more base desires of human nature devoid of wholesomeness.

What he means is that sin is active in our bodies and minds. They (sins) are manifested as emotions which are lust, anger, hatred, ill will, jealousy, envy, unreasonable fear, and so forth. Although these and similar passions pertain to a person's heart and mind, they express themselves physically, as the jealous eye, the clenched fist, the hateful gesture, and so forth. In other words, this is how we live in an unbridled manner or just as we ourselves want to, or when we live just as people generally like to live, or when we live just as most people desire to live. In this manner one can describe the attitudes of most people and thus signify what human nature is. In other words this refers to the unchecked gratification of these passions, and those who feed them produce the fruit indicated in Galatians 5:19–21 which always results in death. At that time the Law aroused the sinful passions. There is a concept that Paul brings out that there is that in our human nature that we too readily want to do evil, embracing those passions that lead to sin.

Romans 7:6

6But now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter (KJV).

But now, he says, *we are delivered from the Law*. Which means it is now made of no effect. Paul does not say that the Law was made of no effect, or that the flesh was made of no effect, but that we were made of no effect, meaning that we were delivered. We have been delivered from the old man, who was held down by sin, being dead and buried. For this is what he concludes here, *that being dead wherein we were held*. As if he had said, the trap or fetters by which we were held down was brought to death and broken through, so that that which held us down, namely sin, held us down no more.

We have been freed with a view to being servants again, though not in the same way, but *in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter*. When then Adam sinned and his body became liable to death and sufferings, it received also many physical losses, and he became less obedient. But Christ, when He came, made it more enabling to obey God by the help of the indwelling of the Spirit.

That our fleshly passions are now being dead; not sin, but the Law: in what sense believers are dead to the Law, and that to them, has been shown on verse 4. Before we were held; as a woman is by the Law to her husband, or as persons guilty, who are jailed as prisoners; so, we were kept under the Law, shut up unto the faith, as in a prison (Galatians 3:23). The saints are now delivered from the Law because of its annulment.

So that losing its former life, vigor, power, and dominion, does not mean that we now live a loose licentious life and manner of speech. On the contrary now we should serve the Lord their God without fear, and with a wholesome manner of living wholly, acceptable to Him, in righteousness and holiness, all the days of our lives. We do this for our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, who is King of saints, Lawgiver in His church, and whose commandments are to be observed from a principle of love, in faith, and to His glory. We should do this with the mind that we serve the Law of Christ in the New Testament. The manner in which this service is performed, is, in newness of Spirit; under the influences of the Holy Spirit of God, the author of renovation, of the new creature, or new man created in us, in righteousness and true holiness; and from a new heart, and new spirit, and new principles of life, light, love, and grace, formed in the soul; and by walking in newness of life. This is indeed a new life, walk, and manner of speech and not in the oldness of the letter, not in the outward observance of the Law of Moses. This can be characterized as adhering to the letter of the Law and not the Spiritual meaning of it. So that we do not indulge the old man, or walk after the leading of our old corrupt nature. We should also not behave according to the old former course of living. So then on the whole it may be said, that a believer without the Law, being delivered from it, that being dead to him, and he to that, lives a better life and conversation under the influence of the spirit of God.

Next message: ROMANS CHAPTER Seven Cont.

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