

The Believer & the Law

Text: Romans 7:1-6

Introduction:

1. This chapter deals with the believer's relationship to the law. Essentially, the Apostle Paul enlarges upon the truth of 6:14 *"for ye are not under the law, but under grace."*
2. Chapter divides into two main sections:
 - Vs. 1-6 – How we are released from servitude to the law through our sharing with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection
 - Vs. 7-25 – Paul describes his own struggle under the law as a newly saved man before coming to understand the truth of his identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection as detailed in Chapter 6 and Vs. 1-6 of this chapter.
3. Denny: "The subject of chapter 6 is continued. The apostle shows how by death the Christian is freed from the law, which, good as it is in itself and in the divine intention, nevertheless, owing to the corruption of man's nature, instead of helping to make him good, perpetually stimulates sin."

I. The Reign of the Law (Vs. 1)

A. The Law's Extent (1a)

1. "the law" = phrase occurs 20 times in Romans 7. Hence, Romans 7 contains the most comprehensive teaching on the law of God in the N.T.
2. "the law" = the first 5 Books of Moses (Pentateuch) Covers moral, civil and ceremonial precepts. It encompasses the whole legal system. "The law in all its parts" (Haldane)

B. The Law's Exercise (1b)

1. "hath dominion over" = translated elsewhere as "exercise lordship over" and "be Lord of"
2. "as long as he liveth" = the law will not die (Matt. 5:18). It cannot pass away as it is the exposition of the holiness of the eternal God.

II. The Representation of the Law (Vs. 2-3)

To illustrate the truth of Vs. 1, Paul appeals to the laws of marriage to show that only death breaks a legal bond.

A. The Length of the Marriage Bond (permanence) (Vs. 2a, 3a)

1. The Covenant is Lifelong (2a)
 - a. "so long as he liveth" 1 Cor. 7:39 *"The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth;"*
 - b. Mark 10:7-9 *"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one*

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*flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. **What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.***”

2. The Consequence for Remarriage (3a)
 - a. Luke 16:18 Jesus said, “*Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marieth another, **committeth adultery: and whosoever marieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.***”
 - b. Mark 10:11-12 “*And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, **committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.***”
 - c. Summary: The Bible plainly teaches that if one remarries while their first spouse is still living, they commit adultery. If you find yourself in such a place, forgiveness is available for you like any other sin but it needs to be confessed for what it is.

B. The Loosing of the Marriage Bond (annulment) (Vs. 2b, 3b)

1. The Covenant is dissolved by death (2b)
 - a. “but if her husband be dead she is loosed” (2b)
 - b. “but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law” (3b)
2. The Consequence for Remarriage (3b)
 - a. Remarriage right and pure after death of partner.
 - b. 1 Cor. 7:39 “*The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, **she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.***”
 - c. 1 Tim. 5:14 “*I will therefore that the younger women **marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.***”

III. The Release from the Law (Vs. 4-6)

Application of the illustration to the law. Note the word ‘wherefore’

A. Remarriage to Christ (Vs. 4)

1. The means (4a)
 - a. “dead to the law by the body of Christ” = our union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection has dissolved our marriage to the law, our first husband. “In God’s view, our identification with Christ, brought all believers to the end of their history at the cross, so that their former relationships (to sin, law & the world) are ended.” (Newell) At the cross we have Christ’s death **for us** but also our death **with Christ**. He died **for me**, I died **in Him**.
 - b. Note: the law (our first husband) does not die (Matt. 5:18) but we died to it in Christ.
2. The purpose (4b)
 - a. Note the word ‘that’ That we might be married to the risen Christ, that we might bear fruit unto God

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- b. Christians often referred to as the “bride of Christ”
- c. ‘fruit’ = produced by life, not law. The Christian lives by the power of resurrection life within, not external law without. “Do this and live, the law commands, but gives me neither feet nor hands. A better word the Gospel brings. It bids me fly and gives me wings.”
- d. Phil. 1:11 *“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, **which are by Christ Jesus, unto the glory and praise of God.**”*
- e. Col. 3:4 *“Christ, who is **our life**”*
- f. Galatians 2:20 *“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.”*
- g. The vine & the branches: John 15:1-8 – Only the vine can produce the fruit so let’s not try to do what only the vine can do!
- h. The example of Christ: *“the Father that dwelleth in me, **he doeth the works.**”* (John 14:10)

B. Review of our salvation (Vs. 5-6)

- 1. The Past (Vs. 5)
 - a. “in the flesh” = unsaved state, dominated by the fallen nature
 - b. “motions of sins” = the affections or feelings of sins.
 - c. “which were by the law” = It is natural for the corrupt nature to desire what is forbidden. The law not only cannot produce fruits of righteousness in those who are under it, but excites in them the motions of sins bringing forth fruit unto death. (Haldane)
 - d. “fruit unto death” = See Vs. 20-23
- 2. The Present (Vs. 6)
 - a. “dead wherein we were held” = released from the bondage described in Vs. 5 through union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection
 - b. “that we should serve” = end of our release again in view. We were saved to serve! We were servants to sin under the condemnation of the law. Now we are servants to Christ under the power of grace.
 - c. “newness of spirit” = service in a new sphere in contrast to the law. “New as to quality” (Wuest) We have a regenerated spirit, indwelt by God’s Holy Spirit who produces fruit in our lives (Gal. 5:22-23) *“...the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”* (2 Cor. 3:6)

Conclusion:

- 1. Have you been delivered from the law and wedded to Christ (salvation)?
- 2. Are we living the Christian life by the pressure of law from without or by the power of life from within?