

Remarried!

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Bible Text: Romans 7:1-4
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We read sacred Scripture in the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans. Romans 7.

1 Know 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? 2 For the woman which hath an 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 her husband. 3 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. 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. 5 For 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. 6 But 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. 7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. 8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. 9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. 10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. 12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. 13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For

the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

We read God's word this far.

Consider with me tonight the first four verses of this chapter, Romans 7.

1 Know 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? 2 For the woman which hath an 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 her husband. 3 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. 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.

The seventh chapter of the Romans, beloved, is of fundamental importance in the epistle. The letter to the Romans is the most thorough treatment and explanation of the Gospel in one book in all of the Bible. The first part of the first chapter establishes the theme of the entire book which is justification by faith alone. The second half of the first chapter and chapter 2 teach the total depravity of the natural man. Chapters 3 and 4 explain and defend the main truth of the epistle which is justification by faith. Chapter 5 grounds justification in the atoning death of Jesus Christ. Then in chapter 6 begins the section of Romans on God's work of sanctification, his work of making his child holy and that continues through chapter 7, into the first part of chapter 8. The second part of chapter 8 and continuing through chapters 9 through 11 discovers the source of all of salvation in God's eternal predestination. Finally, chapters 12 to the end of the book exhort the believing Christian to live in accordance with God's justifying of him by faith. In this exposition of the complete Gospel, the seventh chapter has an important place. Its place is not that it is devoted to the main subject of the book of Romans which is the truth of justification, rather the seventh chapter teaches the truth of sanctification, God's work of delivering us from the ruling power of sin. Nevertheless, this chapter is closely related to the truth of justification in that it shows that whomever God justifies, he also sanctifies; whomever he delivers from the guilt and punishment of sin, he also delivers from the ruling power of sin. The chapter also describes to us what sanctification is and what sanctification is not. It is never a work in this life of making the child of God perfectly holy, therefore this chapter shows to us that our own good works and our own holy life

are not part of our justification. They never serve to render us just and worthy of salvation in the judgment of God, therefore this chapter also warns us that we must not seek our righteousness and our salvation in the law of God, demanding as it does, perfect righteousness with God. So far is it from the truth that the law helps to make us righteous and becomes the basis of salvation, that in verse 7 the apostle declares that we are delivered from the law and our own text tells us that we have been made dead to the law.

We are dead to the law. At the same time, it is apparent to everyone that our text has some important teachings with regard to marriage, with regard to earthly marriage. Verses 2 and 3 of our text are devoted to the important subject of earthly marriage. Regardless of the place that this truth about earthly marriage has in our text, earthly marriage is not the main thought or theme of our text. When the text speaks of our being married to another and identifies that other as the one who arose from the dead, it is plain that the main thought of the text is a spiritual marriage to Jesus Christ, and because our marriage to Jesus Christ is described in the text as marriage to another, the clear implication is that we have been married before to another; our marriage to Jesus Christ therefore is our second marriage, what we may call a remarriage and that's my theme tonight in keeping with the thought of the text itself. Consider with me "Remarried!" and notice with me what this is, how this has taken place, and why this is a reality. Remarried: what, how, and why.

Explicitly in so many words, the passage describes your salvation and mine as a marriage. Being saved is that we have been married to another, even to him who has been raised from the dead. When the text describes our new marriage partner as the one who was raised from the dead, it identifies our new mate as Jesus himself. We are now married to Jesus. That's our salvation and inasmuch as our salvation is described as a marriage, it is plain that our salvation is a relationship with Jesus. Salvation is not a matter of an arrangement but it is essentially a relationship, just as is true of earthly marriage. Also in describing our salvation as marriage, the apostle describes our salvation as a relationship of love. If earthly marriage is anything, it is a relationship of love. And then as is only faintly true of our earthly marriage, the apostle describes our salvation as a relationship of life itself. We have become dead to our first husband so that we might be married to Jesus, and the implication clearly is that our marriage to Jesus is our life.

This relationship with Jesus is the real and lasting marriage of each of us, the all important marriage in comparison with which our earthly marriages fade in their significance. There is something important about that for all of us who are here. For one thing, it warns all of us who are married and happily married, that we must not so emphasize our earthly marriage as to dim the importance of our spiritual marriage to Jesus Christ. Happy as they may be, our earthly marriages are only symbols of the real and ultimate marriage. Then there are undoubtedly those here who are not married either because they are a widower or a widow, or because God has made it impossible in one way or another for them to be married at all. The impression can sometimes be left, especially in a church that emphasizes marriage, that those who are deprived of earthly marriage are deprived of something that is of ultimate importance, and that is emphatically not the case. What is of ultimate importance is the marriage that every

believer here enjoys and the bliss of which is his or hers, and that is your marriage to Jesus Christ. You are married. You are married with the all important marriage. You are married to Jesus Christ.

Inasmuch as marriage describes our salvation in the text, it is evident that Jesus Christ is our head, even as Ephesians 5 plainly declares that Jesus is the head of his bride, the church. He is our guide, he is our authority, and not because he inflicts abuse upon us to terrify us into submission, but as our text itself says, by his sacrifice of his body for us on the cross he woe us and wins us by the powerful love that he demonstrated and that he expresses and conveys to us by his sacrificial death by crucifixion, and then we on our part are in subjection to him, not because he frightens us into this submission by his mistreatment of us, but rather by his winning of us exactly by his sacrificial death in our stead and on our behalf. Such love made powerful by the Holy Spirit wins and causes our willing submission to Jesus Christ to serve him not only as the church, but also individually.

Although the word is not used in the text describing our salvation as our marriage to Jesus, the passage is actually referring to the covenant of grace. Our salvation is our participation in the covenant of grace as a relationship of love between God and us in Jesus Christ, a relationship in which Christ is our head and we are in submission to him, but a relationship the experience of which is bliss for us, the highest bliss, the happiness that surmounts any earthly happiness that any of us may enjoy.

Married to Jesus Christ. Ask yourself, "What is my salvation?" Let someone else ask you, "What is this salvation about which you testify?" And the answer ought to come readily to your lips and mind, "I am married to Jesus Christ. My salvation is the enjoyment of my husband and my life is my devotion of myself to my husband and Lord Jesus Christ."

This marriage to Jesus Christ, the text says, is a marriage to another implying a previous marriage to an earlier party in an important relationship. That earlier marriage was our relationship to the law and our earlier marriage partner was the law itself, which must be understood in the text not as the civil and ceremonial laws only but as the moral law of God of the Ten Commandments; the law requiring love for God and love for the neighbor; the law taking form in the prohibition to have any other god or to worship other gods as we please; and which commands us to keep the Sabbath day; to abstain from murder and adultery and theft and all of the rest of the Ten Commandments. To that law we were earlier in a close relationship, such a relationship, according to the text, that in it the law dominated us. Such is the language of verse 1, "the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth." Into that marriage you were conceived and born in your natural conception and birth, as was I, and in that relationship described as a prior marriage in the text, you lived so long as you were not delivered from that relationship by having been made dead to the law.

That relationship, my brothers and sisters, was not a happy one. That marriage was not a marriage of bliss, on the contrary, it was a relationship of the utmost misery. For a marriage partner, the law was severe in its handling of us. It demanded of us absolute

perfection not only of deed but also of thought, of desire, and of every emotion. It demanded love for God and love for the neighbor and it demanded love for God and love for the neighbor perfectly. In that relationship our marriage partner, the law, found fault with us day and night. From our earliest moment of awakening, it put its finger behind our deeds, our words, our thoughts and desires, and found fault with us in every respect. It was critical of us. In that relationship, our marriage partner threatened us with death, hell and damnation. In that relationship, our marriage partner cursed us with the curse of God's damnation and if we were not delivered from that first marriage, that first spiritual marriage to the law, our marriage partner would have damned us eternally in the fires of hell.

That was an unhappy relationship. So unhappy was that relationship as described in the seventh chapter of the Romans that one might mistakenly come to the conclusion that this law was an evil marriage partner, that it was comparable to an abusive husband in a bad marriage relationship among men and women, but that would be a mistake and the apostle guards against that mistake recognizing the inclination we might have to criticize the law in that original marriage when in verse 7 he asks, "Is the law sin? Is there something wrong with the law, then, that all it did was to find fault, to criticize, to curse, to condemn and to damn?" if that were a possibility, and the answer of the apostle to his own question is the strongest denial found in the Bible, "God forbid." The fault for that unhappy relationship did not lie with our marriage partner but that unhappiness lay with us. The law had an evil wife, as it were; a bad wife; a wife that was inclined to disobey the will of God; a wife with bad works; a wife with evil thoughts and desires and emotions. The fault for the trouble of that first unhappy marriage lies with us sinners.

But if now we are to enter into a happy marriage, a marriage that is happy with the blessedness of salvation, a marriage relationship that brings to us eternal life, that original marriage to the law must be broken. Here's where the example of earthly marriage that the apostle appeals to in the text enters the picture. A human being may not entertain two marriages at the same time. One who attempts to do that is an adulterer or an adulteress. If one is to be remarried, death must intervene and sever the marital relationship between one and the original marital party, in our case, the law, and that is exactly what the text proclaims has taken the place with regard to us who believe in Jesus Christ and with us who are holy children of believers in Jesus Christ. Our marriage relationship to the law has been severed. Our marriage to the law has been dissolved. That relationship is abrogated. It is no more.

And here it must be clear to us all exactly what this relation to the law is concerning which the text declares that that marriage relationship is broken and dissolved. It isn't the case of us that all connections between us and the law of God have been dissolved so that we have nothing to do with the law of God whatsoever anymore. There is a respect, an important respect in which the law still has a relationship to us but that relationship is not the relationship of the marriage that is indicated in the text, and that relationship is no longer that the law has dominion over us. Our relationship to the law is broken in this respect: that the law has no determination now concerning our righteousness and our worthiness of eternal life. The relationship to the law that has been dissolved is the

relationship in which the law could and rightly did curse us and condemn us and damn us. The relationship to the law that is dissolved is that in which the law says, "Your salvation is conditioned upon your obedience to me, your love of God and your love of the neighbor. Upon your obedience to me stands your eternal destiny." That relationship of the law has been dissolved. That relationship of the law has been severed absolutely, finally, and in all respects.

The text could not make that clearer than it does when it says you are dead to the law. Dead to it. Death, as everyone here knows, severs earthly relationships absolutely and that's particularly true in the case of marriage. When the husband's body is laid into the ground, that husband no longer has anything to do with the woman who was formerly his wife whatsoever. His will does not apply to her. His desires do not affect her. On her part, she is dead to that former husband and that's what the apostle declares is true with regard to our former natural relationship to the law in which the law determined our righteousness and determined also, then, our condemnation and damnation.

That's something that in our most miserable temptations we must keep in mind and fall back upon. We are dead to the law. The law itself sometimes tries to restore that old relationship. I should probably say in the hands of heretics the law is made to try to restore that old relationship. Those are miserable times in our life. Perhaps in the dark hours of the night before we fall asleep, we then are made to hear the law say, "You're a sinful man or woman. You've never obeyed any of the commandments of God perfectly. How do you dare to suppose that you're righteous and saved? Examine your works. Even the best of them, you never aimed solely and fervently at the glory of God. Your own stinking name entered into the best of the works that you performed. Those good works, the best of them, demand your punishment and your damnation and take away from you all your assurance of salvation. Then what about the rebellious thoughts and the depraved desires and the evil feelings that play within you in your soul? How can you suppose that you are righteous before God and worthy of eternal life? You're a damn-worthy sinner!"

Those are the worst temptations of the believing child of God. Is anyone here foreign to those temptations? Not subject to the doubts that those temptations raise in us? Then our response to the law must be this, "You have nothing to say to me in this matter. You're not involved in this matter of my guilt or innocence, in the matter of my righteousness or unrighteousness, in the matter of my worthiness of salvation or my unworthiness with regard to salvation. You have no say in the matter. You are such that I am dead to you. Dead! I'm married to another."

And with regard to this vitally important truth, the apostle calls upon the illustration of our earthly marriage. In this connection, he lays down several fundamental truths about earthly marriage and they are, first, that a wife is bound to her husband, and therefore a husband to his wife, as long as he lives or she lives. The fundamental truth in the second place is that accordingly if a woman marries another man while her original husband is living, she shall be called an adulteress. She shall be called an adulteress because this is what she is. She shall be called this by the church and she shall be called this by God himself because marrying another man while the original mate is still alive is adultery.

And the third fundamental truth about marriage is that death and death only frees the married person to remarry so that in that case the second marriage is not adulteress but an honorable marriage.

What's unclear about this concerning earthly marriage as taught in my text? Is there anyone, even the young women and the young men who are here, even the children, who cannot understand this truth about marriage? Marriage is for life. To marry again while an original mate is living is adultery, forbidden by the seventh commandment of the law of God and by Romans 1 through 4. But the death of one of the two frees the survivor so that he or she may remarry in a legitimate honorable marriage. "Oh," say the other churches, the other denominations, including those who like to be considered conservative, with a sneer, "that's the position of the Protestant Reformed churches." Well it is, in the mercy of God, still to stand on marriage of the Protestant Reformed churches and my response to this sneering critic is, "Why is not this also your stand plainly evident as these fundamental truths are in Romans 7:1-4, to say nothing of the other passages of holy Scripture?" This ought to be the stand of everyone who claims the name of Christ in all the world and it certainly ought to be the message and stand of every church that claims to be a Bible-believing church, every church that includes Romans 7 in its Scripture.

There is this also remarkable about the apostle's appeal to earthly marriage and description of it in the text, that evidently he could assume the knowledge of these fundamental truths by the church at Rome and all of the members of the church at Rome. He doesn't argue these fundamental truths about marriage. He assumes that all of the members of the church at Rome are familiar with these fundamental truths and in agreement with these fundamental truths and that's remarkable. The church at Rome had been organized not many years prior to the writing of this epistle. The church of Rome was gathered out of a society that was as corrupt maritally and sexually almost as the United States of America. Marriage was held as little in honor among the Roman citizens and these people too prior to their conversion, as it is held in honor in our society, and yet within a few years, the apostle could appeal to these fundamental truths of marriage to illustrate the grand spiritual truth of the Gospel that he is proclaiming. These are the A, B, C's of the Christian religion regarding our life in marriage and the family. The apostle could assume knowledge and agreement of and with these truths in his own day.

There is something important for the main truth of the text in these illustrations also. These fundamental truths of earthly marriage are not the main thought of the text, our spiritual marriage to Jesus is the main thought of the text. But if this illustration falls away, the main truth that they illustrate fall away as well. Let me show that. Suppose after the service tonight having gone into the parking lot, I inform you, "Your tire is flat as a pancake." But suppose you don't know what flat means and you don't know what a pancake is. When I say to you then, "flat as a pancake is your tire," you won't know the truth about your tire. So it is in our text. If we don't know the fundamental truths of marriage, particularly that before one may marry another his wife must have died or her husband must have died, and that only then may we marry Jesus Christ, obviously we won't make sense out of or agree with the main teaching of the passage either.

We're confronted with a serious problem in the passage, a problem that concerns our second marriage, our covenant relation to God, our salvation. There's a huge problem before us in the text. We're bound to our first husband, the law, as long as both of us live. That law has dominion over us, demanding perfect obedience for righteousness and salvation, and threatening us with God's curse and damnation in the case of disobedience to it, the law. And that law is God's law. It is good. It is just. It is holy. It may never simply be disregarded or done away with. If now we are to be saved by entering into a marriage relationship with Jesus Christ, our close and natural relationship to the good and holy law of God must be dissolved. How? How can that ever be? The answer of the text is: by the body of Christ. We are dead to the law by the body of Christ. The thing that otherwise was impossible for us, deliverance, that was out of the question, are now a reality by the body of Christ.

The body of Christ in the text is the body that the eternal Son of God made for himself and united to himself nine months before the birth of Jesus in the womb of the virgin Mary. It is the body that was born as a little child in the lowliness of Bethlehem's stable. It's the body of Jesus that throughout the years of his earthly ministry bore contradiction and shame at the hands of sinners. It was the body that was seized in the garden of Gethsemane. It was the body that was spat upon in the halls of justice. It was the body, the body that was nailed to the accursed cross in which our Savior bore for six hours the wrath of God. Then it was the body that was laid shamefully in the grave of Joseph of Arimathea. In that body, Jesus Christ took upon himself all the punishment that the law demanded justly of you, so that when he was finished suffering, the law had no demand of anymore punishment from you and from me. The law was satisfied with regard to its just demand of punishment. Yes, and in that body and by that body, Jesus Christ earned for himself the right to become our husband by giving to us the right to become his wife. Not only did his body satisfy the demands of the law for punishment, but his body also satisfied the demands of the justice of God for us to have the right to become the wife and bride of Jesus Christ. Ask, "When did I die to the law?" And the answer is, "I died to the law in the death of Jesus Christ, one Good Friday afternoon many hundreds of years ago. I died with him and I died by him, and I died specifically to the law with regard to the law's right to determine my righteousness and salvation. And I died to the law in such a way that now Jesus Christ has the right and has given to me the right to become the bride of himself."

Not only according to the text did our death to the law and marriage to Jesus take place by Jesus' death, but also by his resurrection again, that we might be married, the text says, to him who rose. Jesus must rise if he's going to be our husband and if we're going to be his bride. We can't be married to a dead man. He rose and now he's able to take us to himself as his bride individually by faith and collectively as a church by gathering us out of the wicked world and uniting us to himself in the truth of the Gospel. Now he enters into that marriage relationship with us. The impossible is a reality by the body of Christ and by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

What's the message of the text, therefore? What the message of every sermon ought to be: the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ in which is all our salvation. The connection we have, the relation we have, the marriage as it were that we had with the law, is severed and abolished and we have a new relationship now, a marriage with Jesus Christ which is eternal life and salvation.

Don't try to restore that old relation to the law. I'm speaking now to the church more than to the individual. Down through the ages since the time of the apostles, church history proves that the church foolishly is always inclined to try to restore that original old relationship to the law. That's a kind of description of the main heresies that have plagued the church down the ages. We must have justification by works. We must have a salvation by the law as well as by Jesus Christ. Or our salvation is conditioned upon our own acts of obedience to the law, our love for God, and our love for the neighbor. That's another way of saying we're married to the law and its demands and our obedience to the demands of the law determines our salvation and our eternal life.

Don't try to restore that old original relation and marriage. Remember what that relationship meant for you and me. It meant constant criticism. It meant the threat of condemnation and damnation. It meant fault-finding. It meant the requirement of that obedience that we could never render to the law. For salvation we had to become dead to it, and for salvation the body and resurrection of Christ brought about the second marriage, the blissful marriage, the happy marriage, the marriage to Jesus Christ that we enjoy by faith alone in him.

In that first marriage, there was no fruitfulness. That's implied by the text. No fruit unto God. But the purpose of our remarriage is exactly that we will bring forth fruit unto God. Of course, the purpose of Christ in marrying us is also our salvation. That former marriage to the law was a relationship of misery. Our relationship with Jesus Christ is a relationship of bliss and happiness, above all, the assurance of salvation. Our first marriage to the law was for us shameful. The law was always exposing our shame. Our second marriage, our marriage to Christ is a marriage of glory. We bask in the glory of the obedience of Jesus Christ which becomes ours by faith. That original marriage to the law was a union of death. So long as we were in that union, the law passed upon us the sentence of death and threatened us with the death of damnation. Our remarriage to Jesus Christ is a union that means our salvation in this life and in the life to come. But that's not the only purpose of Christ with his marrying of us to him, nor does the text refer to that explicitly, rather it gives as the purpose of Jesus Christ in marrying us that we might bring forth fruit unto God. Married to another in order that we might bring forth fruit unto God.

Here the analogy with earthly marriage holds. Often our earthly marriages are fruitful with children, and in the case of believers, covenant children who grow up to fear and love and praise God. But even if our marriages are not fruitful with children, a marriage between two believers is spiritually fruitful. Try to remember your youth if you are an adult, and the young people here will have to agree with this. In our youth, we were for the most part selfish. I won't say absolutely self-seeking but nevertheless quite selfish.

What governed our life was what we wanted, what we liked to do, what pleased us. Those considerations pretty much dominated our life and then we married and things changed. Now we began living for somebody else. The pleasures of our wife or of our husband, the will of our wife or of our husband, the welfare of our wife or of our husband came to the fore, and if God added children, that was all the more the case, that father and mother devoted themselves to their children.

There is a spiritual fruitfulness in earthly marriage among the people of God. That the apostle applies to our spiritual marriage to Jesus Christ but don't overlook that clearly implied in the text is that our original marriage to the law was not fruitful. It never brought forth fruit unto God. Being dominated by the law, having our salvation depend upon our own obedience to the law never brings forth fruit unto God. At the most, it can produce a life lived out of terror of going to hell, or the production of good works in order to earn God's favor, and those things are not pleasing to God. Such a life does not please him, but in that original relation to the law, we never devoted ourselves to God out of thankful love to him for the gracious salvation of Jesus Christ and it's that life and that life only that is pleasing to God and truly fruitful to him, that you do what you do, you think what you think, you desire what you desire, you feel what you feel, for God's sake because of Jesus Christ, your husband, and because of your gratitude to him for his gracious salvation of you.

Again and again the church falls into the trap of thinking and then practicing and preaching the Gospel is alright to give people the assurance of salvation but we want them to live a holy life and in order to do that, we have to reintroduce the law, "Do this or die. Make this a matter of your own righteousness with God. That will produce holy people." It never will. It never has. God is pleased with a grateful life, a life lived out of gratitude to him, and then the law is a standard and a guide but not the basis of our relationship with God in Jesus Christ.

You know this. That's how the text begins, "Know ye not, brothers?" That's a rhetorical question. These are truths that all of us know, that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives; that there are these fundamental truths of earthly marriage that bear on our spiritual state; and that if we're going to be delivered from the law and its curse, we must become dead to the law and be married to Jesus Christ. Know ye not these things? Now know from the Gospel that this is a reality. You are dead to the law, as am I, and we are married to Jesus Christ so that we may bring forth fruit unto God, a life of devotion and thankful love, that we may bring forth fruit unto God. Amen.

Let us pray.

Our Father, bless thy word to our freedom and comfort and also to a stirring of us up in a livelier fashion to devote ourselves to thee. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Let's sing the only Psalter that really can be sung right now and that's 125, the first four stanzas.

"O Royal Bride, give heed,
And to my words attend;
For Christ the King forsake the world.
And ev'ry former friend.

Thy beauty and thy grace
Shall then delight the King;
He only is thy rightful Lord,
To Him thy worship bring.

To thee, since thou art His,
Great honor shall be shown;
The rich shall bring their gifts to thee,
Thy glory they shall own.

Enthroned in royal state,
All glorious thou shalt dwell,
With garments fair, inwrought with gold,
The Church He loveth well."

The grace of God, the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy
Ghost abide with you. Amen.