

Romans Part 22 – Chapter 7

Sunday, August 28, 2022

With input from David Jeremiah, John MacArthur, Max Lucado

Romans 7 makes two major points:

1. Verses 1-13 – we are free from the law of sin, our old nature has been put to death
2. Verses 14-25 - we are still in the flesh and have to recognize it's draw to sin

Remember Romans 5:20: *The Law came in so that the offense would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more*

But we know that the law is good: Psalm 19:7-11

*The law of the LORD is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure,
making wise the simple;
⁸ the precepts of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is pure,
enlightening the eyes;
⁹ the fear of the LORD is clean,
enduring forever;
the rules[Ⓜ] of the LORD are true,
and righteous altogether.
¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey
and drippings of the honeycomb.
¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.*

Romans 7:1-6 *Or do you not know, brothers and sisters (for I am speaking to those who know the Law), that the Law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? ² For the married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he is alive; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband.*

³ *So then, if while her husband is alive she gives herself to another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress if she gives herself to another man.*

⁴ *Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you also were put to death in regard to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. ⁵ For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were brought to light by the Law, were at work in the parts of our body to bear fruit for death.*

⁶ *But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.*

John Piper:

Paul's answer is that when you died to the law you were joined to Christ. You weren't freed from the law just to float around in no relationship at all. You were freed from the law and united to Christ. Christ is your new "husband." And notice what it says about this Christ – "who was raised from the dead." This person we are joined to is alive. This is no list of commandments. This is no external slate of duties. This is a spiritual union with an all-glorious, all-providing, all-satisfying, ever-living Person. More real than the person sitting next to you.

John MacArthur:

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 just obvious truth. The law only applies to people that are alive.

Paul 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.

In verse 2 we see a married woman who is 'bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives.' If he's dead, she's released from the law of her husband. The marriage law doesn't apply if your husband's dead. You're not bound to a 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 expands 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.

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.

In verse 4 "Therefore" is the connector, "*you also were put to death in regard to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.*"

You say, "Wait a minute. I'm a Christian. When was I put to death?" Go back to Romans 6:3. We used this for our baptisms last week: *Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him*

through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life.

Romans 7:4: *Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you also were put to death in regard to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.*

⁵ For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were brought to light by the Law, were at work in the parts of our body to bear fruit for death. ⁶ But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

⁷ What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? Far from it! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET." ⁸ But sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. ⁹ I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin came to life, and I died; ¹⁰ and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; ¹¹ for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it, killed me. ¹² So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

¹³ Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? Far from it! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by bringing about my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

Where was our death? It was at Calvary. 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 Paul is talking about.

John Piper:

So, what is your life, justified Christian? Are you a kind of neutral free-floating moral agent that can say, "Let's sin that grace may abound"? No. If you are justified by faith, you are united to Christ by faith. You are married to him. He is the satisfying love of your life. And you bring forth fruit from fellowship with him. Or to put it another way, if you are justified by faith, you are inhabited by the Spirit of Christ and he is not neutral or passive. He is at work in you to create a newness of mind and heart that loves and serves.

Your freedom from the Law is because of what Christ did on the cross. Christ bore the Law's penalty and fulfilled the Law's demand for all who believe. The Law's condemnation and demand for perfection have been satisfied for all who are in Christ. So, as verse 6 says, "We have been released from the Law." This is a blood-bought, new covenant blessing. Glory in it for Christ's sake!

All your sins have been forgiven. "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." Preach this to yourself this week when Satan assails you with accusations. Remind him and yourself of the new covenant promise of Jeremiah 31:34 and the all-sufficient payment of the blood of Christ.

A new Spirit has been given to you; God has put his own Spirit within you. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the Father.

Therefore, fifth, you know the Father not just as the first great commandment, but as a Spirit-given experience. And you have fellowship with the Son by his Spirit. You died to the Law so that you might be joined to another. You know him and you walk with him and you fellowship with him. To live is Christ.

The man in
Romans 7 is
frustrated because
he focuses on his
own performance.

Romans 7:14-25: *For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am fleshly, sold into bondage to sin. ¹⁵ For I do not understand what I am doing; for I am not practicing what I want to do, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ However, if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, that the Law is good. ¹⁷ But now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin that dwells in me. ¹⁸ For I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. ¹⁹ For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. ²⁰ But if I do the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin that dwells in me.*

²¹ I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. ²² For I joyfully agree with the law of God in the inner person, ²³ but I see a different law in the parts of my body waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin, the law which is in my body's parts. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Notice in the comparison of verses in Chapter 6 and 7 that our old self is dead, we are now living in the flesh:

Romans 7

For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. (Rom 7:14)

For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. (Rom 7:15)

So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. (Rom 7:17)

For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. (Rom 7:18)

For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. (Rom 7:19)

But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. (Rom 7:20)

but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. (Rom 7:23)

Romans 6

knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; (Rom 6:6)

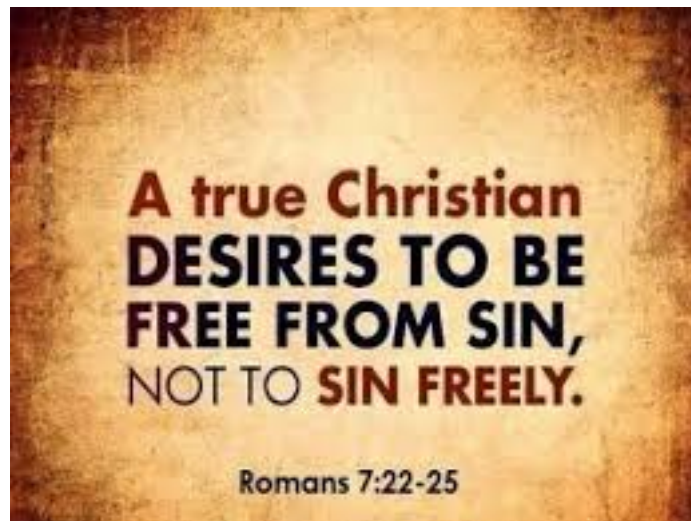
Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, (Rom 6:12) and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. (Rom 6:13)

May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? (Rom 6:2)

But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, (Rom 6:17) and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. (Rom 6:18)

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. (Rom 6:20)

But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. (Rom 6:22)



David Jeremiah: “There are very few things that divide Christians like their attitude towards the law. The two towers of legalism and license polarize many congregations. Legalism is the tendency to reduce one’s relationship with God to a set of rules which can, in turn, be used as a standard to measure spirituality. License is the improper application of our liberty for the purpose of gratifying the flesh rather than allowing the Holy Spirit to control our lives.”