

**Title:** Dead to the Law  
**Scripture:** Romans 7:1-6  
**Series:** God's Saving Grace

1. Introduction:

a. Chapter 7 of the Book of Romans discusses the relationship between believers and the Law of God. In this chapter, the apostle Paul uses the analogy of marriage to illustrate the believer's relationship to the law. He describes how, through faith in Christ, believers are released from the law, similar to how a woman is released from the law of marriage if her husband dies.

i. The key theme is that believers are no longer bound to the law in the same way they were before coming to faith in Christ. Instead, they are now united with Christ; through this union, they find freedom from the condemnation and bondage of the law.

1. We need to be careful how we understand the term 'Law'. The 'Law' can refer to the entirety of God's Word. In this sense, the 'Law' teaches us all that is necessary because we find Christ in the word of God.

a. An example of this can be found in Psalms 119. The Psalmist deeply appreciates God's law, seeing it as a guide that reflects God's wisdom, goodness, and mercy. The psalmist recognizes the value of living in

accordance with God's precepts and seeks to meditate on them continually.

- i. **Psalm 119:72** The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.
2. The term 'Law' can also indicate a code that must be kept to obtain salvation. This was the prevalent view in both Jesus' and Paul's time. This is how Paul is using the term in our passage.
    - a. The apostle Paul destroys this idea in his epistles, particularly in Romans. He consistently taught that human efforts to perfectly obey the law were futile. The common belief among the Jewish nation was a lie. Salvation could not be earned through law-keeping, as no person could meet the perfect standard set by God. Instead, the Law exposes our sinfulness, leading to our condemnation.
  3. Paul's teachings emphasized a profound truth: salvation is not a reward for our merits but a gift received through faith in Jesus Christ alone. By destroying the myth of earning salvation through the Law, Paul focuses on God's grace. Our justification comes not from the legalistic keeping of rules but from a genuine trust in the redemptive work of Christ.

4. This theological shift from works to grace invites us to embrace faith-based salvation, acknowledging our dependence on God's grace. The Law reveals our need for a Savior, leading us to the liberating truth that salvation is not about what we can do but about what Christ has done for us. **The GOSPEL.**

a. We read in **Romans 3:20** For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

b. So our passage leads us to the cross, where, in union with Christ, believers experience a transformative death to the Law that once brought spiritual death.

2. Verses 1-3: Our Death in Christ Frees Us: Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? (2) For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. (3) Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

a. Paul uses a straightforward analogy from marriage. It's as simple as this: when a couple enters into matrimony, they exchange vows, pledging to honor and cherish each other throughout their lives.

- i. According to Scripture, marriage is a life-long binding covenant.
    - 1. **Genesis 2:24** Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
  - b. However, we understand that if one partner in the marriage covenant dies, then all the obligations incumbent upon the survivor are now set aside, and the widow or widower is completely free in the eyes of God to be married again, to begin a new relationship. In other words, the death of a spouse releases the surviving spouse from the originally binding covenant.
    - i. The law of marriage binds us and regulates our marriage only as long as our partner remains alive.
3. Verses 4-6: We have Died to the Law: Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. (5) For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. (6) But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.
- a. Paul does not say that the law has died but teaches that we have died, so our marriage to the law is over.

- b. The law no longer has dominion over us the way it did before we died. We died in Christ, and in Christ, the law was fulfilled.
- c. This death is in regard to all of God's moral law, not just that part given by Moses.
  - i. Remember, since death entered the world with Adam and Eve, and people after Adam and Eve all died before the Law of Moses was given, sin was in the world before the Law of Moses. The only way sin could be in the world before the Law of Moses is if another law preceded the Law of Moses, namely, the moral law of God, which he reveals in nature and our conscience.
  - ii. Therefore, from the very beginning, the law of God has had dominion over fallen humanity. The 'Law' has exposed us to the judgment and condemnation of the holiness of God. Since the fall, we have been under the relentless burden of the law that weighs us down and exposes us moment by moment to the full curse for our sins. Why? Because as unregenerate unbelievers, we are naturally law-breakers, not law-keepers.
- d. Paul teaches that the 'Law' has not died, but in Christ, we have died, and Christ has taken the full weight of the law's curse upon himself so that we no longer carry that burden on our backs.
  - i. **Matthew 11:28** Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
    - 1. We find our rest in Him, who did what we could not. Jesus was able to keep the Law of God.

- e. Christ was able to Fulfill the Covenant of Works:
- i. God's original covenant with man is sometimes called "the creation covenant." In it, Adam and Eve were made in the image of God, and God set before them a test and told them that they were not to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree.
  - ii. Reformed theologians call this the "covenant of works."
    1. The gracious covenant God entered into with Adam and Eve is called a "covenant of works" because the terms and conditions for blessedness are related to their obedience.
    2. Man failed in his responsibility to the covenant.
  - iii. In Romans, we have already seen the stark contrast between the first Adam and the disastrous consequences to the whole race because of his disobedience and the Second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, like the first Adam, was put to the test and succeeded. Jesus was exposed to the complete, awful assault of Satan in the wilderness for forty days, and yet, unlike Adam, He resisted to the end, saying that his meat and drink was to do the will of the Father (John 4:34) and that he lived by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4).
  - iv. His perfection was evident not simply for those forty days in the wilderness; it shone from the day he was born until he died on the cross. At no time in Christ's life did He violate God's law. His

perfect act of obedience is the ground of our salvation.

- v. He died for our sins; he lived again for our righteousness. As the new Adam, Jesus kept the covenant of works. He did what no other human being has ever accomplished. He remained absolutely faithful and obedient to every law of God.

1. **Matthew 5:17** “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.
2. In other words, only Christ has satisfied the Law, and He has done so on our behalf. His law-keeping becomes ours as we are united to Him in His death.
3. So, what flows from Jesus fulfilling the Covenant of Works is our Covenant of Grace.

f. Covenant of Grace:

- i. The "covenant of grace" refers to the promise God gave immediately after the fall of Adam and Eve. He did not destroy the human race but promised redemption that would come through the **seed of the woman**.
  1. **Genesis 3:15** I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”
- ii. So, the promise of the covenant of grace is that we will be redeemed, not because we keep the

law. We cannot keep the law. We will be redeemed through the ministry of the one who does keep the law, the Seed of the Woman.

iii. Beloved, justification by faith alone, can be summarized as justification by Christ alone because our justification is ultimately through His works alone. We could not earn salvation based on our merits, but Christ could earn salvation for us based on His merits! The only way anyone can be justified in the sight of God is through real righteousness, which is achieved only through real obedience to the law of God by His Son.

1. In other words, our works do not save us, but His works, the works of Christ, do!

2. We are justified through the works of Jesus alone, who alone kept the terms of the covenant of works.

3. Since he died for us as our substitute, the apostle sees that, in a very real sense, we died with him, and because we died with him, we died to the law as a way of salvation because, before His death, Christ fulfilled the Law.

g. The Function of the Law in the Life of a Believer:

i. The reality is that the unregenerate never feel their sinfulness. They do not feel the weight of it.

ii. However, by the work of God the Holy Spirit, the redeemed are able to see their helplessness and see the cross. They see the gospel, which is the thing Satan hates more than anything in the world.



- iii. John Calvin taught that the ‘Law’ of God still has three functions in the believer's life.
  - 1. The law's first function is to reveal God's character; it reveals His holiness. In other words, we need to understand whose law it is. The moral law is not simply a list of duties, a list of do's and don'ts. The Law reveals the lawgiver. The law is grounded in the character of God. It flows from his very being.
    - a. As Christians, the more we study the Law of God, the more we will learn of God’s Holiness.
  - 2. Secondly, the law reveals our unholiness.
    - a. The Law of God is a mirror, and when we look in that mirror, it never lies; it drives the Christian to his knees because the law of God reveals the remaining pollution of this world.
  - 3. Finally, even though we are freed from the burden and destruction of the law, it continues to reveal to us what is pleasing to God.
    - a. The law makes it very clear that no Christian should ever be involved with activities it forbids. In that way, the law serves as a guide. We are no longer under its curse or weight, but the beauty of the law is still available to us.

#### 4. Conclusion:

- a. We must understand the power of Paul's words when he says that **we have died to the law through the body of Christ**. The dead man is not capable of obedience or disobedience. Dead people can not sin. The law does not reign over corpses, and in Jesus Christ, we are corpses. Our bondage to the law, our marriage, is over! We are wed to the Lord of Grace.
- b. Our death with Christ dissolves our marriage to the Law; we **are released**. Beloved, we can now **serve in the new way of the Spirit**. Instead of despair, there is joy! Instead of bondage, there is freedom! Instead of death, there is life!
  - i. We are not married to Law, **which aroused our sinful passions to bear fruit for death**, but we **belong to another**, married to Jesus Christ, **to bear fruit for God**.

#### 5. Benediction:

- a. **Hosea 2:19-20** And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. (20) I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD.

### **Public Reading of Scripture Revelation 19:6-9**