

Romans

Romans Chapter Seven

Romans 7: 4 {1}

June 13, 2010

This is lesson number 44 in our exposition of the Book of Romans.

The Theme of the Letter

“For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**, for it is the **power** of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the **righteousness of God** is **revealed** from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’ ” Romans 1:16-17

Title: “Dead to the Law”

Romans 7:1-6

7:1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? 2 For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. 3 So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. 4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another-- to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. 5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. 6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

In the two previous lessons on Romans Chapter 7 we discussed the fact; the general truth - that Paul states in verse 1.

That a man is under the law as long as he lives.

The law, as Paul uses the word here, is not only the Law given through Moses, although it certainly includes that law and the moral precepts of that law, but the law here is any law principle.

The law principle has dominion, lords it over, and rules a man, as long as he lives under law.

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Then to show that there is hope and encouragement; to show that it is possible for a man to be free from the dominion of the law, Paul states that a death is necessary.

So in verses 2-3, the Apostle gives us the example of the law of the husband. That a married woman is under the dominion of her husband as long as he lives. If she enters into a new relationship while her husband still lives, she is an adulteress. But if he dies she is no longer under his rule and is she is free to marry another.

We also pointed out that in this example that Paul gives he is not dealing with divorce and that there are other Scriptures that deal with that subject. Here Paul is simply stating the principle of law that demands a death before a new marriage can be honorable.

That brings us to verse 4 which declares that indeed a death has occurred.

“Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another-- to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.”

The true believer has died to the law through the body of Christ, that they may be married to Him.

In Chapter 6: The believer has died to sin;
and in Chapter 7: the believer has died to the law.

Verse 4 is one of those remarkable verses in which the Holy Spirit has condensed the Gospel into a single verse. It is very close to Romans 4:25.

“...who was delivered up because of our offenses,
and was raised because of our justification.”

Believer, how did you become dead to the law?
Through the body of Christ.

It is not enough to believe in the incarnation of the Son of God, nor in His perfect obedience to the law, as true as those things are. In the death of Christ on the cross, when He died to His relationship to sin and to the law, so also did everyone that He represented.

Jesus did not simply make salvation possible; He made salvation certain for all those for whom He died.

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Galatians 4:4-5

4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born **under the law**, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

And Romans 7:4 also says that He was raised from the dead. This is the absolute proof that Jesus is the Messiah promised in the Scriptures and that God the Father accepted His death as propitiation for all of the sins of His people.

My dear friend, have you died to sin and to law, or are you are still a slave to sin and under the dominion of the law? If you have not died to sin and to law, you are not married to Christ. Any other supposed relationship to Christ, where death to sin and to law has not occurred, is an adulterous one.

Matt 7:13-23

¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

¹⁵ "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

We must be married to Christ so that we may bear fruit to God.

All of those things those people in Matthew 7:21ff did were not fruit to God!

And so this morning I want to talk to you about being married to Christ.

Why do you suppose the Holy Spirit chose the metaphor of marriage to illustrate the believer's union with Christ?

Marriage is the most intimate relationship that can exist between two people.

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The Book of Revelation closes with the marriage of the Lamb and the great wedding feast when the consummation of the union of the church with Christ will be realized in our resurrection bodies.

The metaphor of marriage flows through all of the Bible as an indication of the believer's relationship to God.

In the Old Testament when the Israelites followed after other gods and worshipped idols; God said they had committed spiritual adultery and were joined to harlots. Joined is a sexual term.

Now the New Testament continues the metaphor; the believer has died to the law so that he may be married to Christ.

Are you married to Christ? Does that relationship with Christ keep you focused on who you are? Do you often think of being married to Christ? What would happen if we did? A man or woman who is faithful to their spouse, when tempted to sin against their marriage, will think:

No, I'm married!

The believer, married to Christ, when being seduced by sin will think:
No, I'm married, married to Christ, how can I be unfaithful to Him?

In Romans 6:3 we saw that the believer is baptized into Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit, baptized into His death. Just as we were all in Adam when he disobeyed God and we were charged with the sin and guilt of Adam, even so those who are baptized into Christ are charged with His righteousness.
That is Union with Christ.

Union with Christ means to be married to Christ.

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Try to forget what marriage has become in the 21st Century and think about the relationship that God instituted. **Gen 2:18-25**

18 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." 19 Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. 21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. 23 And Adam said:

"This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

This is the most intimate relationship or union that can exist between two people; the two are joined and they become one flesh.

The prophet Isaiah writes about the **true Israel of God**

In the Hebrew culture, it was a great distress for a woman not to be married and produce children, especially a male offspring. And so the prophet Isaiah describes the ultimate blessing of being married to God and living with Him in heaven.

Listen to Isaiah:

Isaiah 62:1-5

For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, And her salvation as a lamp that burns. 2 The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, And all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, Which the mouth of the LORD will name. 3 You shall also be a crown of glory In the hand of the LORD, And a royal diadem In the hand of your God. 4 You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, Nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; But you shall be called Hephzibah [Palestine], and your land **Beulah** [married]; For the LORD delights in you, And your land shall be married. 5 For as a young man marries a virgin, So shall your sons marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So shall your God rejoice over you.

The most intimate union between a man and a woman is to be married.

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And God uses the metaphor of marriage to describe the union of the believer with Jesus Christ. To be married to Jesus is to live in **Beulah Land**.

That is why the Bible warns us not to practice fornication and adultery.

Fornication and adultery are sinful and impure unions. **1 Cor 6:9-11**

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

So if infidelity in our earthly relationships can deny us the kingdom of heaven, how much more serious do you suppose unfaithfulness to our heavenly Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ must be?

Please hear me. **Grace is grace.**

There is nothing that you can do to obligate the Sovereign Lord so that you can make any claim to being the cause of your being in Christ {justified, born again, saved}. **Ephesians 2:8-10**

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

And because grace is grace, when you are in Christ, there is nothing that you can do that will cause God to reject you. **Jude 24-25**

24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, 25 To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.

That is why when you preach the Gospel it will sound like antinomianism to the unbeliever.

To preach that grace superabounded over the reign of sin caused some to think that they could continue in sin.

That is why Paul in Chapter 6, declares that a believer can not continue in sin.

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Now I believe that everyone here this morning professes to be a Christian.

But my dear fellow sinners, I do not presume to have infallible knowledge that a single one of you are truly in a saving relationship to Christ.

If it offends you to be asked to examine your faith, I'm sorry. But if these questions offend you then you probably are not saved. Only a self-righteous person will resent being asked to examine themselves.

“You can have no greater sign of a confirmed pride than when you think you are humble enough.” A Serious Call to the Unconverted, William Law

The Apostle Paul did not think it unreasonable to test his faith. **1 Cor 9:27**

But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified{reprobate}.

And so I urge you to think with me about this matter of being married to Christ.

We will compare some of the aspects of being faithful in a marriage to being married to Christ.

4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be **married** to another-- to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

How would you define a Christian?

Think quietly about that question and be honest with yourself.

Did the name of Jesus **immediately** come to your mind?

If Jesus is not the focus of your definition of a Christian, you are simply wrong.

You can have morality without Christ; you can have religion without Christ; you cannot have Christianity without Christ.

There are, of course, extreme definitions of Christianity.

One extreme definition would be to define a Christian based on ethnic or geographical identities. E.g, “America is a Christian nation.”

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That is true only in the sense that America is not a Muslim nation or is not a Hindu nation. In no sense of the correct meaning of Christianity can America be considered a Christian nation. But that, I say, is one extreme.

On the other end of the spectrum would be the various religious groups that claim exclusivity for their particular group. Any group that claims that in order for you to be a Christian, that you must belong exclusively to their group [sect], is a group preaching works for salvation.

There are many sects that teach that unless you are one of them you can't be saved. In a previous message I pointed out that they can't all be right and it is my belief that none of them that claim exclusivity are right. Examples of these religious groups include the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Christ, and the Primitive Baptists. We won't even get into cults such as Jehovah's Witness and Mormons, et al, all of which claim exclusivity.

That does not mean that Jesus does not claim to be the exclusive way to God. Cf. John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through Me.

What we are dealing with is who is a Christian?

So then Jim, who is a Christian?

One who is married to Christ and one who is faithful to that union.

This being a Baptist church, we hold that a member of this local body must make a personal and public confession of faith in Jesus Christ and submit to baptism by immersion.

We are not saying that those people who are not Scripturally baptized are not saved, but we would question why a believer would refuse to be baptized after they have been taught the meaning of baptism.

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An ideal local church would be made up of believers only. But the Lord Jesus warned that until He returned at the end of the age that there would be tares {darnel weeds that looked like wheat, except there was no fruit in it} among the wheat; unbelievers among the believers in the local church. It is very difficult, perhaps impossible, to tell the tares from the wheat. But there are some things that will help us to distinguish the tares from the wheat.

This is not so much that I or anyone else can know for sure about the salvation of another person, but we surely need to care about our own soul. And so I invite you to examine yourself.

We are not able to see another person's heart the way Jesus does. So we simply must have some measure of whether a person is married to Christ. It is not my responsibility to decide whether or not another person is a believer or not. It is my responsibility as a pastor to tell you the truth.

It is obvious to me that the people who most need to hear this message are not with us this morning, but I am not giving anyone who is here a pass, including myself.

Spurgeon's question about **Ornamental Christians?**

*9 I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness
In the great assembly;
Indeed, I do not restrain my lips,
O LORD, You Yourself know.
10 I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart;
I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation;
I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth
From the great assembly.* Psalm 40:9, 10

“In many churches there are a very large proportion of idle people. I hope they are saved; the Lord knows whether they are or not. But whatever else they are saved from, certainly they are not saved from laziness. We seem to get some people who are but half converted. I hope their hearts are converted, because their hands do no work.

Albeit, there are some portions of the body which may be said to be ornamental; it is equally true that they also have some distinct service; there is not one of them put there to do nothing. Some Christians seem to imagine that they are ornaments, for certainly they are of no use. They think that their whole duty consists in taking their seat, filling up their place, and listening with more or less attention to the sermons that are preached. As to the idea of everybody doing something for Christ, and the exhortation as good soldiers of the cross not to shirk their duty; these people say that it is sheer madness.

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Sleepy souls, they presently become victims of their own infatuation. As men who habituate themselves to take opium, they grow soporific. Then their Christianity becomes like a dream.

The apathy of the church, which has lasted so long, is truly disheartening. With many a deep drawn sigh do we bewail it. O that we could get the church to awake!"

{Edited from Spurgeon's "The Master's Profession; The Disciples' Pursuit" #977}

So for the purpose of helping us to examine ourselves, I have come up with seven characteristics that seem to me to be essential in the definition of "Who is a Christian?" You may be able to think of more.

1. A personal knowledge and relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. Authority and sufficiency of the Scripture; all Scripture.
3. A private prayer and devotional life.
4. Love for God above love for self.
5. Love for others as much as love for self.
6. Fellowship with the saints; meeting with the church.
7. Generous financial support of the local church.

You know that this is not legalism and I will resist any set of rules that would place me under its law. But you test the spirits and see whether they be of God.

Rom 12:1-2

12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your **reasonable service** {worship}. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

We will take this line of thought up next time {D.V.}.