

Sanctification (Pt.3)

Romans 7:7-8:39 (3/17/10)

Dr. Steve Hereford, Pastor-Teacher

INTRODUCTION

1. Let me invite you to turn in your Bible's tonight to Romans chapter 7.
2. Last week we considered the first six verses and tonight we're going to complete the chapter as well as chapter 8.
3. If you remember we looked at two points in the first 6 verses: The illustration (vv.1-3) and the principle (vv.4-6).
4. Under the illustration that Paul gives in verses 1-3, we saw that the law only applies to those who are living.
5. That is, it has nothing to say to a dead man.
6. In verses 2-3 Paul says that marriage law binds a wife to her husband but if he dies she is released from that law.
7. Paul gives his point for the illustration in verses 4-6 by stating the principle that all believers have died to the law and therefore it has no jurisdiction over them.
8. That occurred through the body of Christ, i.e., through Jesus giving up His body in death on the cross.
9. And the purpose was so we would bear fruit to God.

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10. While we were “in the flesh,” i.e., unconverted, we bore fruit to death but now in Jesus Christ we bear fruit to God by good works.
11. Good works are seen by our attitudes and actions.
12. As **Ephesians 2:10 (NASB)** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.
13. Now that we have been released from the law we serve in newness of the Spirit not in oldness of the letter (v.6).
14. Now as we continue with the rest of chapter 7, he states in verses 7-13 the perfection (of the law) and verse 14-25 the conflict (with the law and the defense for it).
15. He begins verse 7 with another rhetorical question.
16. If you remember, he gave two rhetorical questions in chapter 6 (Romans 6:1,15).
17. He says in Romans 7:7, “What shall we say then? Is the Law sin?”

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- I. The Illustration (vv.1-3)**
- II. The Principle (vv.4-6)**
- III. The Perfection (vv.7-13) [of the Law]**

- A. Rhetorical Question #1 (v.7a)

“What shall we say then? Is the Law sin?”

The reason for Paul’s question is to address the one who says if the Law aroused our sinful passions when we were lost then the Law is sin.

But Paul disagrees and answers the same way he did in 6:1, 15 with “May it never be,” and then shows how the Law is good.

Notice...

- B. What the Law Does (vv.7b-12)

It reveals our sin!

According to verse 7, Paul says, “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.”

He’s already stated in Romans 3:20 that “through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.”

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In other words, it *reveals* our sin and the violation of it (4:15).

And in revealing our sin, it shows us how depraved we really are.

When speaking to His disciples, Jesus told them they would be persecuted by the world “because they do not know the One who sent Me” (Jn.15:21).

Then He says in **John 15:22 (NASB)** "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin."

The same is true of the Law.

Paul says in verse 9 that “I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the command came, sin became alive and I died.”

Again it goes back to what Paul says in verse 5, “For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, ***which were aroused by the Law***, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.”

He repeats this thought again in verses 8-12 and concludes that “the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.”

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Why? Because it reveals our sin.

He continues in verse 8...

“But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin *is* dead. ⁹I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive 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.”

Now notice that he doesn't say that the Law killed him but sin.

He begins verse 8 with “But sin.”

Then in verse 9 he says “sin became alive and I died” and this commandment, verse 10, “which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; for sin (v.11)...deceived me and through it killed me.”

He concludes in verse 12 by saying “the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.”

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“Therefore” (v.13) and now he asks another...

C. Rhetorical Question #2 (v.13)

“Therefore did that which is good become *a cause of death* for me? May it never be! ***Rather it was sin***, in order that it might be shown ***to be sin by effecting my death*** through that which is good, so that through the commandment ***sin would become utterly sinful.***”

“Is the law the culprit, dooming Paul (and all the rest of us) to death?”

The answer, of course, is “Certainly not!”

Sin is the culprit.

The law didn’t originate sin, but it showed sin in all its exceeding sinfulness.¹

Again the purpose of the Law was to bring one to an awareness of the true nature of sin and its deadly

¹ William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997). Ro 7:13.

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character, which brings the sinner to see his need of salvation.²

So, again we see the perfection of the Law.

Before he concludes and moves into chapter 8, he identifies in verses 14-25...

IV. The Conflict (vv.14-25)

If sin is what killed me then what is this conflict?

It is not the Law because it is spiritual³ and we are “fleshly,” “earthly,” “mortal.”

He’s not saying that he is “in the flesh” (v.5) but that he is “of flesh” (v.14).

Paul’s points out in verses 14-25 that **his conflict is sin that resides in the members of his flesh.**

² John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997). Ro 7:13.

³ John MacArthur, *Romans* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996). 382.

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Listen to how he describes the conflict and gives his defense of the Law.

He says in vv.15-25, “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.** ¹⁶ But if I do the very thing I do not want *to do*, I agree with the Law, *confessing* that the Law is good. ¹⁷ So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but **sin which dwells in me.** ¹⁸ **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. 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 am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, **but sin which 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 concur with the law of God in the inner man, ²³ **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.** ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from **the body of this death?**

Tradition says that an ancient tribe near Tarsus tied the corpse of a murder victim to its murderer, allowing its

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spreading decay to slowly infect and execute the murderer—perhaps that is the image Paul has in mind.⁴

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.*”

The psalmist said in **Psalms 51:6 (NASB)** Behold, You desire *truth in the innermost being*, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.

He also identified the struggle in **Psalms 119:5-6 (NASB)** by saying, “Oh that my ways may be established To keep Your statutes! ⁶ Then I shall not be ashamed When I look upon all Your commandments.”

So you're only bound to the law as long as you live. When you die you are released from the law.

We were married to Jesus Christ at the new birth and as such died to the Law through His sacrifice on the cross.

We now serve in newness of the Spirit.

⁴ John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997). Ro 7:24.

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That doesn't mean we never struggle with sin.

Paul makes it clear in vv.14-25 that there is a conflict.

It's not the old nature battling the new nature.

The old man is dead.

You now have one new nature.

The conflict is sin that still resides in you--in your members.

But "thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord" we have been delivered.

Now in chapter 8, he talks about...

V. The Victory (8:1-39) [Over Sin]

From the valley of despair and defeat, the apostle now climbs the heights with the triumphant shout, There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus!⁵

⁵ William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997). Ro 8:1.

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Why? Because we are in Christ and our sin has been taken care of completely by Christ on the cross.

So we do not have to fear condemnation or judgment by the Law.

Nor do we have to fear the wrath of a holy and righteous God.

According to the context of chapter 7, there is even no need for the kind of self-condemnation which Paul described⁶ because of what he says in Romans 8.

Romans 8 says there is victory in Jesus Christ through the indwelling Holy Spirit!

Romans 8 is the no condemnation chapter that every believer needs to understand.

It is life in the Spirit.

In this chapter alone, the Holy Spirit is mentioned nearly 20 times.

⁶ William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997). Ro 8:1.

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He was only referred to once in the first seven chapters.

Paul says in Romans 8 that it is the Spirit who frees us from sin and death (vv. 2, 3); enables us to fulfill God's law (v. 4); changes our nature and grants us strength for victory over our unredeemed flesh (vv. 5–13); confirms our adoption as God's children (vv. 14–16); and guarantees our ultimate glory (vv. 17–30).⁷

A. The Holy Spirit Frees Us From Sin and Death (vv.2-3)

1. The Spirit does what the Law could never do

He “has set you free from the law of sin and death” (v.2)

He delivered you from its penalty.

The Law could never do that. All it could do was reveal sin and its condemnation. It was powerless to produce righteousness.

Paul said because it was “weak” God had to send His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an

⁷ John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997). Ro 8:2.

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offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh.”
(v.3).

God’s condemnation against sin was fully poured
out on the sinless flesh of Christ. ⁸

B. The Holy Spirit Enables Us to Fulfill God’s Law (v.4)

By God condemning sin in the flesh the righteous
requirement of the Law was fulfilled.

C. The Holy Spirit Changes Our Nature and Grants Us Strength for Victory Over Our Unredeemed Flesh (vv.4-8)

Notice how he contrasts life in the Spirit verses life in
the flesh. He says...

1. We no longer live “according to the flesh” (v.4)

This is not an admonition, but a statement of fact.

“Walk” refers to one’s lifestyle and behavior.

⁸ John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*,
electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997). Ro 8:3.

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2. We no longer “set” our “minds on the things of the flesh” (vv.5-8)

To have your mind “set on the flesh” is to have a mindset that includes one’s affections, mental processes, and will.

Paul’s point is that unbelievers’ basic disposition is to satisfy the cravings of their unredeemed flesh.⁹

That’s why he says...

- a) To have the mind “set on the flesh is death” (v.6)
- b) But to have the mind “set on the Spirit is life and peace” (v.6)
- c) To have the mind “set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so” (v.7).

⁹ John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997). Ro 8:5.

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The unbeliever's problem is much deeper than acts of disobedience, which are merely outward manifestations of inner fleshly compulsions.

His basic inclinations and orientation toward gratifying himself—however outwardly religious or moral he may appear—are directly hostile to God.

Even the good deeds unbelievers perform are not truly a fulfillment of God's law, because they are produced by the flesh, for selfish reasons, and from a heart that is in rebellion.¹⁰

So...

d) If you're "in the flesh" you "cannot please God" (v.8).

3. We "are not in the flesh but in the Spirit" (v.9)

How do we know who is in the flesh and who is in the Spirit?

¹⁰ John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997). Ro 8:7.

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He tells us in verse 9, “However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”

Unbelievers do not have the Spirit.

Jude 1:19 (NASB) These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, *devoid of the Spirit.*

The NKJV says “not having the Spirit.”

Since we have the Holy Spirit and Christ in us, he says in verse 10 we’re alive “because of righteousness.”

Because we are according to the Spirit, we have no obligation to the flesh (v.12).

The only obligation we have is to put its deeds to death by the Spirit (v.13).

It is the Holy Spirit who grants us strength for victory over our unredeemed flesh.

In verse 14-16 Paul says...

- D. The Holy Spirit Confirms Our Adoption as God’s Children (vv.14-16)

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How does He do this? By the leading of the Spirit.

Verse 14, “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

Verse 16, “The Spirit Himself testifies with our Spirit that we are children of God.”

God’s Spirit doesn’t lead us through subjective, mental impressions or promptings to provide direction in making life’s decisions.¹¹

1. He leads us by circumstances

Acts 16:7 (NASB) and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them.

2. He leads us by making the Scriptures understandable

Luke 24:44-45 (NASB)⁴⁴ Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets

¹¹ John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997). Ro 8:14.

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and the Psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ ***Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.***

Ephesians 3:16-19 (NASB) ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power ***through His Spirit*** in the inner man, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to ***comprehend*** with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

3. He also leads us through divinely enabling us to obey Scripture (sanctification)

Galatians 5:16 (NASB) But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

E. The Holy Spirit Guarantees Our Ultimate Glory (vv.17-39)

1. We are join-heirs with Christ (vv.17-18)
2. The creator awaits the revealing of the sons of God (vv.19-23)

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3. Even we groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons (vv.23-25)
4. Until then the Spirit helps us pray (vv.26-27)
5. The Spirit helps us to see how God causes all things to work together for our good and for His glory (vv.28-30)
6. The Holy Spirit enables us to see that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (vv.31-39)

CONCLUSION

1. We have now went from being condemned to being justified to being sanctified.
2. In our next time together we will look at *Restoration: Israel's Reception of God's Righteousness* (9:1-11:36).
3. Let's pray.