

Released from the Law, Bound to Christ

Romans 7:1-6

Sermon-in-a-Sentence: In Christ, we have died to sin and have become slaves to righteousness (Romans 6); and we have also died to the Law and have been joined to Christ so that we might bear fruit for God (Romans 7).

As we continue to grow in the Christian life, sooner or later we are confronted with the question, "What is our relationship and responsibility to the Old Testament Mosaic Law? What role should it play in our lives? Are we obligated as Christians to try to keep the Mosaic Law?" (Colossians 2:16-17; Romans 14:5-6)

In Romans 7, Paul discusses the Christian's relationship to the Law. He uses the term "the law" 23 times in this chapter. God gave us His Law to accomplish two objectives:

- 1) To expose our *sins* so that we might repent and come to Him in humble faith for salvation.
- 2) To expose our *sinfulness*, our *sinful nature*, so that we might realize our inability to help ourselves and come to Him in humble dependence for sanctification. (*Charles Swindoll, Romans, p. 150*)

In Romans 7 Paul shows that the Law is powerless to save...

vss. 7-14	The Sinner	The Sinner is condemned by the Law
vss. 15-22	The Lawkeeper	The Lawkeeper can't live up to the Law
vss. 23-25	The Christian (who has a new nature)	The Christian who has a new nature finds that his or her obedience to the Law is sabotaged by the effects of the old sinful nature

"Once again, Paul declares that salvation cannot be found by obeying the law. No matter who we are, only Jesus Christ can set us free." (*Adapted from the Life Application Study Bible, p. 2417*)

In chapter 6, Paul argued that we are not *saved* by keeping the Law and in chapter 7 he argues that we cannot be *sanctified* by keeping the Law.

Do this and live, the Law commands, But gives me neither feet nor hands.
A better word the Gospel brings. It bids me fly and gives me wings.

(Quoted by Wuest, Romans, p. 113)

I. The Question (vs. 1)

1 Do you not know, brothers — for I am speaking to men who know the law — that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives?

- In view of the larger context of Romans 3-8, are Christians obligated to try to keep the Mosaic Law in order to obtain and maintain a right standing before God?
- What authority does the Mosaic Law have over a Christian? It has *no authority* over him, *because* he is dead!
- Paul uses the term "the law" in two different ways. In verses 2-3 it refers to "the law of marriage." In verses 4-6 it refers to the Mosaic Law of the Old Testament.

Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ:

1. Have been released from the Law (vss. 2-3, 6)
2. Have died to the Law (vss. 4, 6)
3. So that the Law no longer has authority over them (vs. 1)
4. So that they might belong to Christ (vs. 4)
5. So that they might bear fruit to God (vs. 4)
6. So that they will no longer be controlled by their sinful nature (vs. 5)
7. So that they may serve God in the new way of the Spirit (vs. 6)

II. The Illustration (vss. 2-3)

2 For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. 3 So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.

- Biblically speaking, marriage is for life. But if one partner dies, the law of marriage no longer applies to the other partner and he or she is free to marry someone else.

III. The Application (vss. 4-6)

4 So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.

- The law has authority over a man only as long as he lives. Therefore, the Mosaic Law no longer has authority over believers because, in Christ, we have died to the Law.
- The Law did not die—we died to the Law and therefore it no longer has dominion over us.
- In Christ, through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, we are able to bear fruit to God: practical righteousness, Christlike character and conduct, holiness and obedience to the Word of God, faithful and fruitful service to God.

5 For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death.

- Before we were saved, we were totally controlled by our sinful nature. Consequently, the Law served only to arouse our sinful passions resulting in bearing the fruit that characterizes those who are spiritually dead.
- The Law did not bring life—it can only bring death because of our inability to keep it.

6 But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

- Under the Law, no divine enablement was given to help the people keep the Law. But under Grace, God's Word is written in our hearts and the Holy Spirit enables us to obey.
- In Christ, we walk in newness of life (6:4) and we serve in newness of the Holy Spirit (7:6).
(Wiersbe, Be Right, p. 86)