

A STUDY OF ROMANS
ROMANS 7 – PART 1
Taught by Pastor Tim Janiszewski
October 10, 2012

Let's bow our heads and begin with a word of prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we do give you praise and thanks for your precious word. We know that it is all God breathed and useful so that we might be grounded and trained and raised up in righteousness to follow in the footsteps of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We thank you, Lord, that it is the sure foundation that testifies to our great Savior. We believe in the Word of God and Scripture [UNCLEAR], and that it shows us to the Word of God incarnate, our Savior. We believe that this book, Romans, is one of your treasures, one of your masterpieces, by the inspiration of the spirit, that you have gifted to the church and gifted to us this evening. We pray that as we look into your Word of truth, that the Holy Spirit would come and teach us all, superintend, guide and direct, that you may be glorified, we might be built up in faith and that the world might hear the good news of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen!

Just a real quick, little background on how we got into Romans. I don't know if Dr. Bickel mentioned this to you or not, but actually, we did Romans 1-4. You may have thought it strange, "Why is it that Dr. Bickel has been assigned and taken on the task of beginning in Romans 5, I mean, weren't Romans 1-4 good enough?" No, quite to the contrary. We had gone through Romans 1-4 during our last gathering of our Family Fusion, and Dr. Bickel was good enough to jump in and say, "I'll take 5-8." He'll get through 5-8, and just keep your ears out because we do this for 10 weeks in the Fall and 10 weeks in the Spring, and I predict that there will be a class on Romans 9-12 that will come in the springtime, and probably will finish 13-16 a year from now. We're just taking our time. The book of Romans is so meaning, so deep, so awesome, that we want to savor it as best we can, and we're glad that you're joining us for this.

I don't know what your experience with the book of Romans has been, but hopefully, we are aware that it has been a powerhouse in the history of the Protestant Church. You go all the way back to Martin Luther and his great breakthrough was based on what? Romans 1:16-17, where he found out about a righteousness that was not of his making and his own works, but was the gift of God through grace. That was fundamental to both the whole triggering of the Protestant Reformation. Or you go to John Wesley when he went to the Aldersgate meeting where his conversion occurred. You know what he was listening to when he felt his heart strangely warmed and knew that he knew Christ as Christ knew him? He was listening to someone teaching on Martin Luther's commentary on the book of Romans.

You think of people like Martin Luther and John Wesley, and this particular book has been fundamental to some of the hugest movements of transformation in the lives of men who've been giants in the Christian Church over the centuries. It's great for us to have the opportunity to roll up our sleeves and to go over these pieces of Scripture also.

For tonight, hopefully you got the little one page here, the Scriptures are one the back, on one side, should I say. And just for your information, I put the NIV and the ESV. Just raise your hand, how many of you are kind of like normally, the Bible you pick up and read is the NIV? A good number. How many of you probably pick up and read the ESV pretty regularly? Not quite as many, but a good number. Do we have some King Jamesers still here? Look at that, they're all in the back, those King James people. Anyone do the RSV? NASB (New American Standard Bible)...do we have a few of those? Yeah, one or two. Anyway, you get the idea.

The reason I picked the NIV and the ESV is, within American evangelism, the most used translation of the Bible is easily the NIV, but the one that is gaining the most ground and getting the most attention

within the last decade is the English Standard Version. So I thought I would just put both of them there for you so that you can do a little comparing and contrasting as we go along.

With no great motive standing behind us, I'm going to read Romans 7:1-6. That's the passage, the piece that Dr. Bickel has assigned us for this evening. Then we'll jump in and begin to set the stage, look at the framework and come back around to the passage itself a little bit later. So listen to this, as we Presbyterians like to say, listen to this, the reading of God's holy Word. I had to get that in.

“¹Or 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? ²For 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. ³Accordingly, 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. ⁴Likewise, 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. ⁵For 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. ⁶But 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.”

There's our passage. I don't know how many verses Dr. Bickel's been biting off per session, but this is probably one of the shorter segments that you have had thus far. Since you've all been here and I haven't, I'm going to kind of back us up and set the framework a little bit in ways that may hopefully resonate with what Dr. Bickel has been teaching, and if not, you can ask him about it next week.

What we begin to look at here in earnest is an exposition of the relationship of the law to people, whether Christian or non-Christian. If you were to go back and look through the book of Romans, you would find that there's a little bit of reference to the law, but there's no extended treatment of the subject of the law thus far. Actually, you go back, snippet in Chapter 2, little reference in Chapter 3, grab a little bit in Chapter 4, passing reference in Chapter 5, and also then in Chapter 6 is the last reference that came about the law, just two verses, verses 14 and 15 of Chapter 6.

Paul's kind of been hinting about the law, kind of dropping little tidbits of future attractions about the law along the way, but he hasn't taken the big plunge into discussing this very significant subject. What you're going to find is that the entirety of Chapter 7 is all about this subject, finally. Finally, after putting it out there in small measure before he takes 25 verses to unpack his central teaching about the role of the law in the Christian Gospel. Obviously, here, we just get six verses of it tonight, but I can tell you that when you come back next week, Dr. Bickel has 7-25, so he'll get like the big, meaty centerpiece, the center cut of Paul's teaching on the law.

This is a little bit of a change of direction for Paul in that he hasn't really dealt a lot with the law, and now he's going to jump into it. But I think we understand that Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit, and Paul was like a really brilliant guy, and that there is also continuity with what he has been writing in Chapter 6 to what we are looking at here in Chapter 7. I'd like to tie Chapter 6 into where Paul's going to springboard into Chapter 7 in teaching about the law before we actually kind of look at the verses themselves. This should be review a number of you who have been tracking along with Dr. Bickel. I haven't heard, I'm sorry, I haven't gone back and heard your wonderful work on Dr. Bickel, but hopefully this will coordinate with what he has been saying.

Here we go. Roman number 1, we've introduce the law, for his first serious consideration, and now we're looking at continuation under point “B” there of Paul's thought from Chapter 6. If we were to re-read Chapter 6, Paul talks a lot, and I'm using my language here, about two dominions. There's one

dominion that people can be under, and that is the dominion of sin, of law breaking, and ultimately of death. It is the dominion of sin and death. The other dominion that he talks about in Chapter 6 is a new dominion, and that new dominion is the way of grace, the way of mercy, the way of forgiveness, the way life in Jesus Christ. He unpacks those in that previous Chapter.

In doing so, what I want us to focus on, just a little passage here. You can see that I gave you Chapter 6 verses 3 and 4, and I want to use that as just kind of a center of gravity for understanding Chapter 6 as it's going to lead into Chapter 7 of Paul's writing. We'll use the NIV just to be equal opportunity Scripture reader, translation readers here, where Paul has written, and you've studied hopefully, ³Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

What's going on here, in this passage, is that Paul is telling us that we live...there are these two dominions—the old dominion of sin and death and the new dominion of life in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. The question that is so important to all of us is this. How do you get from that old dominion of sin death, transferred into what? The new dominion of the grace of God through life in the Holy Spirit. How do you get from A to B, from old to new? What Paul is saying here is that, first of all, there is an objective means that gets us transferred from the old dominion to the new dominion. Who, not what, but who is the objective means that gets us from the old dominion to the new dominion.

Audience Member: Jesus.

It's Christ, of course. It's what Christ has done for us on the cross. It's Jesus Christ who takes away the sins of the world. Sometimes it's talked about, you see the baptism language that's in here in this passage, sometimes some of the old language and old theology talks about Jesus, who of course, being baptized not only in water when he was he was baptized by John the Baptist, but often, he'll talk about a second baptism that Jesus had when he went through the baptism of blood, the baptism, in essence, of his own death upon the cross.

Jesus, if you will, goes down in a baptism of death when? Good Friday. Right? And when does Jesus come up out of that baptism into death? That first Easter morning, right? So there's the...the dying is representative of going down and going under, and the rising, coming back up again in the resurrection of Jesus. How, according to this passage, do we identify with Jesus dying and rising? Through our what? What does it say in the text? Through our baptism. Right. Doesn't it? Because it's saying here, "Do you not know that you have been baptized into Christ?" You were baptized into his death. You were buried with him through death in your baptism.

So here's the deal for us. Our confession of faith...you know, when you confessed your faith in Jesus Christ, when you were regenerated through the power of the Holy Spirit, when you were adopted and became a son or a daughter of God, when you were justified by grace through faith, when you crossed over, that that was the point at which, for each one of us, we subjectively, you know subjective, we personally appropriated the objective thing that Christ did for us back in his death and resurrection. When we profess our faith, in Christ, and according to most Christian traditions anyway, when we seal our confession of faith with what? With baptism. That's the point at which we are identifying ourselves with the dying and the rising of Christ.

You think about it. For those...you know, I know I'm a Presbyterian pastor and I'm going to get myself into all kinds of trouble here, but I'm going to go for it anyway. Any good Baptists in our midst? Oh come, raise your hands. Yeah, there you go. Thank you it's good to have Baptists in our midst. Good to see you, Pastor. Even a Pastor Baptist with us. Of course, if you're a Baptist, you do immersion. Right?

And when you do immersion on that, the whole symbolism is that when you put that person down under the water, you are identifying that person with Good Friday. Right? Putting them down into baptism, and then when that person comes up again, you're identifying them with Easter, with the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

That's why, I mean, do you need to be baptized to be saved? No. But why has baptism, historically, been such a powerful symbol to the Christian Church of our dying in Christ spiritually to the old world and rising to newness of life? It's because it's supposed to be like a click picture, a snapshot, if you will, of what Christ did when he died on Good Friday and rose again on Easter. I don't know where you are on this, with regard to it, but if you're a believer, and you're a Christian, do you have to be baptized to go to heaven? Absolutely not. I mean, everybody knows that the sinner who was on the cross who believed and Jesus said, "This day you'll be with me in paradise." He didn't somehow get off the cross and go get baptized and get back up there again. You don't have to be baptized, but historically, the way in which Christians mark their identification with having died with Christ and risen in new life with him is through this rite, this ritual, this sacrament, depending on what your tradition and background is, that makes us say, "I own for myself an identification with what Christ did for me 2,000 years ago.

So therefore, what's this mean? Well it means that 2,000 years ago, objectively, the thing that made it possible for you and me to cross from the old dominion to the new dominion took place in Jesus Christ. But subjectively, the thing that got you and me from our old dominion to our new dominion was when we confessed and professed faith in Jesus Christ, hopefully then identifying and marking that by the rite of baptism on top of that.

Always remember, I mean, that there is a two-fold piece to this. There's our redemption accomplished 2,000 years ago, and then our redemption applied whenever you personally came to faith in Jesus Christ. For those of you who are of the Reformed persuasion and want to dig deeper into this, there is a very famous little book by John Murray called, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, that will give you all kinds of great detail about this that we don't have time for this evening. If you like this subject and you want to know more, John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*.

All that being said... I look out and I recognize many faces of our members who I know recognize the objective work of Christ 2,000 years so we could cross from one dominion to another, and I know that many of our members objectively know in their hearts with great joy what is to have believed in Christ and crossed over from the old dominion to the new dominion. But I simply, I don't ever want to miss the opportunity just to have us check, because I don't know all of you, but simply to put it out there. Have you experienced that? Have you, yourself, had that knowledge that yes, 2,000 years ago, when Jesus Christ was baptized into death and raised in newness of life that first Easter weekend, that you have said, "That's my death. That's my resurrection. That's my Savior. I'm crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. Yet not I, but Christ who lives in me, and the life that I now live in my mortal body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

I think it would be easy to assume that everyone in this room knows that; everyone in this room has had that experience, but I never want to miss an opportunity that if there's anyone here who has not had that experience, who has not applied what Christ accomplished 2,000 years ago, that you would do it, definitely that you would do it. If you're wondering about that, you're not sure about that, you want to further talk about it, if you want to pray about that, I would love to have that conversation with you. Just make sure you're certain of that in your own walk of faith.

Let us continue on. You're probably saying at this point, "Well, he is ever going to get to Chapter 7?" {LAUGHTER} Well, alright. If you're going to be that way about it, we'll get on to Chapter 7. Chapter 7 begins. Let's get no further than verse one here where it says, "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?” Just take that little part, the parenthetic part in the center, “for I am speaking to men who know the law.” Alright, what’s the law? The law is?

Audience Member: The Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments. Excellent. Yes, the law is the Ten Commandments. Anybody else want to know piggyback on the Ten Commandments?

Audience Member: Well there’s the Torah, isn’t there?

You piggyback on your own. Very good. Yeah, the Torah. The Ten Commandments, of course, are in Deuteronomy 5, Exodus 20—twice you get the Ten Commandments in there. But within Jewish thought, certainly at the time of Jesus, the first five books of the Moses were called the law, referred to as the law because you had the three divisions in the Old Testament—the law, the prophets and then what are called the writings are the three pieces of it. You’ve got the law of Moses. Yeah. And then, we don’t think of this...you’re correct as far as biblical law, you’re on top of it. But was there more that the Rabbis and the Jews added onto the Ten Commandments, the book of the covenant, the Old Testament? What else kind of piggybacked on even more?

Audience Member: Talmud.

Yeah, eventually. Thanks, Tom, you’re way out in front on that. Let me just get us to the Talmud. You’ve got Ten Commandments, book of the covenant, Old Testament law, first five books. Then there was something in Judaism that was called The Oral Law. It wasn’t written down. It was called The Oral Law that developed throughout the Old Testament, especially what we know as the inter-testamental period from about 400 B.C. to the time of Christ.

Maybe some of you have heard teaching that the traditions of the elders, that there were, what was it, 612 additional laws that were part of the Jewish understanding of law at the time of Jesus. They weren’t the Ten Commandments, they weren’t the Torah, they were additional Oral Torah, it was called. When Jesus would disagree with the teachers if the law, he wasn’t disagreeing about the Ten Commandments or about the Torah, he was debating with them about this Oral Torah, this additional oral piece that was coming. Tom, you’re exactly right, the Oral Torah became the foundation for the Talmud, which was eventually put into writing in the 3rd and 4th century, in Jerusalem and in Babylon. It did become written down eventually. When we’re talking about the law, this is what someone listening to Paul would have had running around in their brain, by saying those of you who know what the law is, that’s the landscape.

Let’s just do this for fun. We’ll make it basic. Ten Commandments...alright, [UNCLEAR], how many of you here—and I’m not going to make you do it—think you can recite the Ten Commandments for us off the top of your head. We have two—one, two. Well let’s see if we can do it as a group project. I know this is going to be just totally awful for your manuscript, isn’t it {LAUGHTER}, but we’re going to do it anyway. The first command is what?

Audience Member: Love the Lord your God with all your heart.

No. You shall have...

Audience Members: No other goods before you.

Okay that's number one. Number two is? You shall not make any idols, the things in the sky, on the earth or in the sea below, so that's number two.

Audience Member: Don't take the name of the Lord they God in vain.

Thank you very much. Number three? Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. [UNCLEAR] on this one because you just go that one, so we've got to give other people an opportunity, because you said you could do all ten. We can't give it all away with one person, alright, [UNCLEAR] group exercise here. Number four is what?

Audience Member: Honor your father and mother.

One off; that's five. One more about God.

Audience Member: Remember the [UNCLEAR]...

Yeah, remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy is number four. Number five, [UNCLEAR], give us again.

Audience Member: Honor your father and mother.

Yep, honor your father and mother. Number six is...now we get into thou shall not... Shall not kill or murder. Number seven? Do not commit adultery. Then you get to thou shall not steal. We're up to number nine; we're doing great here. Do not bear false testimony or commit a false witness. Number ten is you shall not...?

Audience Member: Covet your neighbor's motorboat.

Yeah. The way I like to put is you shall not covet your neighbor's house, your neighbor's spouse or anything else that belongs to your neighbor. At least we got through the Ten Commandments this evening with that. I want to encourage...and this is just kind of...I'm doing everything that I possibly can before we get really into those six verses, right? But one more little thing. I'm just curious, among your churches, and I know we have a variety of churches represented here, does your church ever recite the Ten Commandments? Do you do the Ten Commandments as part of your worship ever? Okay. One hand went up. We do it at MLUPC sporadically; it's not constant, but sporadically, a few times a year we would do. But I bet a lot of our churches...that's why we don't know it. Right? Because we don't regularly go over the Ten Commandments.

Now I'm just putting this out here just to make trouble, and I'm not going to fall off on it. Sometimes I find it interesting that we get really upset when they take the Ten Commandments off like the courtroom property or whatever it is. Don't you find it a little interesting that we get really upset when that gets removed, but we go to our churches, and we don't say the Ten Commandments. We don't know the Ten Commandments. I'm just putting out a vote there for a little more consistency. To me, the consistency would be, "Let's learn the Ten Commandments and stand up for the ability to freely express them and have them posted." What I would rather not have is no Ten Commandments publicly available to be seen, and also we as Christians just forget about the Ten Commandments also. Just general thinking about our consistency of how we're processing our views on the Ten Commandments when it comes to public and civil life, and yet, then our personal and private spirituality, and sometimes there's a disconnect on those.

Alright. Fair enough. So the question here that we're going to continue is to look at the law. What is the relationship of the law—Ten Commandments, Torah, maybe even the Oral Torah—to people who live over here—I'm sorry, I don't mean you guys over here—those of us who, people living in the old dominion, because there's a relationship of the law to the people in the old dominion. And then what is the relationship of the law for people who have crossed over through the objective work of Christ 2,000 years ago, subjectively applied to our lives when we believed in Christ so that we're now over here in the new dominion. What's the relationship of the law to us who inhabit this new dominion of the spirit? You want to give it a shot? That's what we're going to work on for the rest of the evening.

***Audience Member:** As a tool, like as in a mirror that shows us that we have failed, that shows us our sins in ourselves and we can't, the only way out is through Jesus. He's the only one who can change [UNCLEAR]...*

Absolutely. We'll come back around to that. But yeah, actually, I know this is Galatians, not Romans, but in Galatians 3, Paul talks about the law being like a school master. The Greek word is paidagōgos, someone who was a slave who actually led a kid to their classes so that they didn't run off and go play somewhere. He says the law is like a school master, like a slave who brings you and makes you look at your need for Christ and the Gospel. An excellent answer. But we'll leave that one at that point and we'll come back around to it.

Let me suggest to you three overall categories for how the law, especially can or might apply, for those who have crossed over into the new dominion of life of the spirit in Christ. One could be the law is still fully binding upon our lives the way it was fully binding for those who were involved in seeking works righteousness. Isn't that possible? Fully binding over here for this group; crossed on over, the new dominion in Christ over here, law still fully is binding and applies to me over here. This is easy. You guys know this.

What's the second possibility? Law was fully binding over here, born again of the spirit through Christ over here in the new dominion, and now the law is?

***Audience Member:** Does not apply.*

Doesn't apply at all. Totally irrelevant. Who cares? Don't need that old law anymore, do we? So that's another possibility. Then I'll suggest a third possibility is that the law was binding here and the law applies over here, but it applies in a different way and in a different manner than the way it operated over here. Actually my goal is for us to work toward answering that question before we finish 25 minutes from now. I see that hand in the back.

***Audience Member:** When you're talking about the law, you're talking about the ceremonial law, the ritual law and the whole law of Moses [UNCLEAR]?*

Yep. You've got it. Let's take a look. In verses 1-3, now we're going to dive in, in earnest, into the passage. You can see on your little sheet here, we are now down to Roman numeral two, point B, which says Romans, we just went through the law is still force or the law is obsolete and irrelevant or the law is modified to serve a new purpose. Which one is it? Well, we'll see. That's the mystery. We're going to make some progress here in Romans 7 beginning with verses 1-3, which I have listed as a principle and its illustration.

Romans 1 begins by giving us the principle where Paul has told us that the law has, in the NIV, it says "has authority over a man." The ESV says that "the law is binding on a person" as long as that person is

alive. That's the basic principle. As long as someone is alive, then the law has force of power, is a binding authority over someone.

Then in verses 2 and 3, Paul moves on and gives us an illustration from marriage and death. We'll re-read that. I'll give you the ESV, "²For 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. ³Accordingly, 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."

Get the basic point here? The law of marriage is really focusing here on sexual fidelity. As long as the husband and wife are both alive, there is a law of a pledge of sexual fidelity, and Paul just picks out the woman toward the man, but it applies the other way. The law of sexual fidelity is equally true for a husband as long as his wife lives. But Paul says—this is not hard illustration—Paul says if that wife, in this case, has relations with another man while her husband is still alive, she has broken the law. She's broken the law of sexual fidelity that bound her and was to have authority over her life as long as he was alive. But, says Paul, at the point where the husband dies, well, does the law of sexual fidelity to her husband apply any longer? Plainly not; no longer applies. If she goes and marries someone else at that point, will anybody have any reason whatsoever to say, "Oh, you're breaking the law of marriage? You're being an adulteress here, shacking up with someone other than your husband"? Well, of course, they won't. It's so obvious that we get the point very, very quickly. The point here that Paul is making is the law applies as long as both are alive, but if someone dies, then the law no longer applies with regard to marriage.

Over here, in the old dominion, the law applies, has binding force over people who are in the old dominion. How is it that they possibly can escape from the binding authority of the law in their lives in order to escape its power over them, its ability to convict, its ability to condemn? What has to happen in order to escape from that? Somebody's got to die. Right? Unless somebody dies, you're still stuck over here in the old dominion, with the law measuring where you succeed, and at least in my life, as much as not, measuring where I failed to amount to keeping the standards of God.

We get now to verses 4-6, which is the application and the further explanation of this, beginning with verse 4, Paul says, "⁴Likewise, 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." You tell me...who died?

Audience Member: Christ died.

Who died in Christ?

Audience Members: We did.

Christ died 2,000 years ago, which earned our objective justification and new life. We died, subjectively, when? When we professed our faith in Jesus Christ, as sealed by the act of baptism. See that's why I wanted to bring in that stuff from Romans 6 into Chapter 7. Paul is saying, "Yeah, the reason that the law can be different for us now in the Christian life is because somebody died." Jesus died to break the power of the law, the power of that old dominion objectively 2,000 years ago, and that got applied to my life and to your life, subjectively, when we became a new creation through Christ Jesus and entered into the new dominion. We died, and the verse says we not only died, but died in order that we might live to Christ instead of living to that old way of the law and attempting to keep faithfully the standards of the law in order to earn God's favor through works righteousness.

Really, I mean, the fulcrum of this little passage that Dr. Bickel has given us for this evening is verse 4. If there is one verse you're going to take away that has like the guts of the argument, it's verse 4; the one that we just looked at there. Quite honestly, going from verse 4 to verses 5 and 6; 5 and 6 are just a further explanation and amplification of what we just said there in verse 4. Paul goes on to say in verse 5, in the old dominion, verse 5 is about life in the old dominion, that was the dominion of our sinful nature. Some of your translations may say the flesh. The NIV says sinful nature; ESV says the flesh. We lived under the dominion of our sinful nature that led to the fruit of death in our lives.

Interestingly, Paul even says in there, isn't it, that our sinful nature, our passions, were aroused by the law. What do you think he's talking about there? How is it that the law over here, when we're in the old dominion, actually incited us to disobedience to God? How was it that it was used in order to actually to make us worse lawbreakers and more condemnable in terms of our unrighteousness?

***Audience Member:** Your conscience.*

Yeah, by our conscience. Absolutely.

***Audience Member:** Accusing us.*

It does. Yes. So you feel the guilt, which gets back to, I'm sorry, you don't know, the gentleman from Michigan was mentioning earlier about that one. Let me just give it to you this way. I think we all know the concept of forbidden fruit. If somebody says, "Little Johnny, age 4, you can't touch the stove," what does Johnny usually want to do? Touch the stove. If the law says you shall not commit adultery, then there's a part of you that says, "Oh that must be really interesting. Better check into that."

***Audience Member:** There's something in our sinful nature that when we're told not to do something, we want to do it.*

Yeah. That's what Paul is talking about here. He says, actually, even though the law itself is a good thing, it's not the law that's broken; it's who's broken, in the old dominion. We're broken. We've got a sinful nature. We operate according to the flesh, and the flesh just takes the good law and says, "Hmm, boy, I'm going to use that law and twist it to make you crave the very thing that will leave you broken and rejected and wondering what your life is all about."

I wanted to read...maybe many of you are not contemporary Christian music people, but this one actually was pretty good; one of the more popular songs. I confess I listen to KLOVE sometimes when I'm driving around in the car and get blessed by it. There was a song; it was very popular about a year-and-a-half ago, called *More Like Falling In Love*. I don't like the whole song, but it applies to this point, if you know the song. Just listen,

Give me rules
I will break them
Show me lines
I will cross them

I need more than
A truth to believe
I need truth that lives
Moves and breathes

Give me words
I'll misuse them
Obligations
I'll misplace them

'Cause all religion
Ever made of me
Was just a sinner
With a stone tied to my feet

Pretty strong, isn't it? All religion—not true faith—all religion ever made of me was just a sinner with a stone tied around my feet, because works righteousness, either trying to keep the law to earn God's favor is a stone tied around our feet, or when we see the law and want to break it, then it's a stone tied around our feet also. That's what verse 5 is saying. The law, in the old dominion, couldn't help us, couldn't deliver us. In fact, it incited us to get ourselves into just worse trouble.

And then finally, verse 6. This is where Paul chose the contrast between the two. He says, "But now, by dying." Who died? We died. "To what once bound us," the old dominion taking advantage of the law, now that we've died to what 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," with it. Our Christian faith is no longer about trying to earn our righteousness by keeping the law, nor is it about the law having its power to just incite us to go ahead and break it and get into worse trouble. We've been delivered from that into a new way of the spirit.

I've got two last pieces I want to do here. The new way of life in the spirit, I'll tell you what, I'm not going to talk about that. The reason I'm not going to talk about that new way of life in the spirit is that's Chapter 8. In Chapter 8, Dr. Bickel and you are just going to have a hay day talking about life in the spirit all through Chapter 8. It's an incredible, one of the best chapters of the whole Bible. Do not miss talking about Chapter 8 of Romans. It's all about life in the spirit.

Let's talk, for just a brief minute then, about what is said in verse 4, where Paul says that we belong to another who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God. Let me get your interaction on that. What do you think it means now that you're in the new dominion of walking in Jesus Christ, having been redeemed, no longer in that old dominion, and Paul says the reason you're over here is to bear fruit for God. What is that? What is fruit for God? This is not a rhetorical question. I'd love your input on this. When you think about your life and bearing fruit for God, what kind of stuff do you think of, "Now Lord, I've got to bear some fruit for you"? What is that?

Audience Member: *To freely talk about him with other people.*

Absolutely.

Audience Member: *Without any shame or holding back or fear. Why wouldn't you?*

The fruit of our testimony to other people. The really great part of the fruit is every now and then, when God's drawing someone, doing this regenerating work in somebody's life, and they say, "Yeah, I want to accept Jesus as my Savior, I want to cross over from the old dominion to the new dominion," I mean, it's the Holy Spirit doing it, but part of the fruit is we get to participate in people making that transition. Absolutely, the work of evangelism and helping people be birthed into the kingdom is one of the most wonderful ways that we bear fruit for God. What else?

Audience Member: *The fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, all those.*

Right. Absolutely. Galatians 5:22-23, the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. And then Paul says, "There's no law against these." You see how Paul's working that law thing. Fruit of Spirit, all good, no law against the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. As you see, those attributes of our Christian life growing in our lives, that's bearing fruit for God, wonderfully.

Audience Member: *The law becomes our guide. It's not disappeared, but it becomes a guide, not something that's accusing us all the time, but we have the motivation to stay within God's bounds in our*

lives because we want, not to earn anything, but because out of love for God, we want to keep his commandments.

Absolutely. You're getting into what is the role of the law in the life of Christians as we live in this new dominion. Part of it is we are not interested in the law as a means of either earning God's blessing, earning his approval. We're not interested in it as the thing that's just convicting us and showing us that we're damnable before God. Now the law is now over here showing us how we can live for God and bring God pleasure.

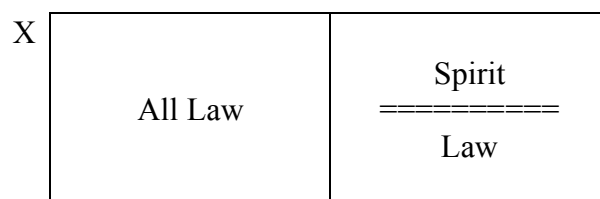
Think of it this way, and I think it wrote it probably in here and just jumped over it while I was rambling on. If you go back under Roman numeral two, point "C," and then under 2, Romans 7:5-6 explained. Do you see under number three where I have good works measured by the law are a way of attempting to establish our righteousness so that God will accept us. That's the way it works in the old dominion. We try to do good works that are measured by the law, because the [UNCLEAR] for measuring up? The works of the law I do. Right? Okay. We hope that if we do enough good works with the law, that God will say, "You're righteous. Okay. I approve you," and we will then have the acceptance of God. You see how it goes from works according to the law, trying to be righteous, so that God will accept me.

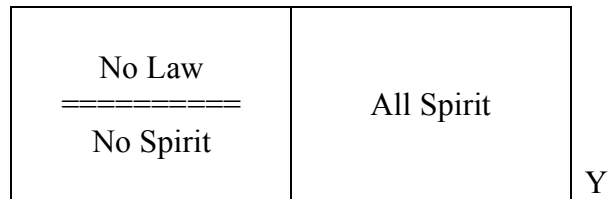
But over here in the new dominion, it works the exact opposite direction. What Jesus Christ did for us means that we are what? First of all, we are accepted by God, because Jesus Christ is our righteousness, who accomplished all the righteous works that we couldn't do ourselves, in order that now, we might bear good fruit in order to show our love and appreciation and thanks for God.

As Ted's saying there, what is one of the great ways that we know that we're doing things that bring joy to our Heavenly Father? His law. His law does because his law reflects him, so now, when I keep the Ten Commandments, I'm not trying to keep the Ten Commandments so God will say I'm righteous, so that God will accept me. God has accepted me, he's made me righteous through Jesus Christ when I accepted him and was sealed at my baptism, so that now, I can live to keep his commandments to bring him joy because he's already accomplished all the works that were necessary for it. You see?

When you think about the law as a way of saying, "Abba Father, thank you. I love you for everything you've already accomplished," then the law starts to become a joy in your life. Whereas for the person in the old dominion, the law is oppressive because they're always thinking, "Am I doing enough to be righteous? And if I'm righteous enough, will God say I'm okay?" It just totally flips it upside down. That's a whole different way of looking at the law.

Let's do the last thing here, and then I've got to let you guys go. You'll see here on number 3, theological and personal application, and you're wondering what's this chart with the X and Y axes and all that stuff. Well that's this thing over here that I have put on the board. Let me just talk you through that if you can crane your neck and take a look at it here.





As you can see, we've been talking about the law (Y axis) and the spirit (on the X axis). I've divided that chart into four quadrants on there. You can see in the bottom left is if you have no law and no spirit, and if you go right above that, on the axis, you just have all law, right, and no spirit. If you went to the right, you'd have all spirit on the X axis, but no law. Then the top one in the top right hand box is the spirit and the law together.

Let me explain this a little bit because it really applies to what we're talking about here. If in our society, or if you meet a person who doesn't believe in the law at all, and they don't believe that there's some spirit that should guide their actions in terms of who they should be and what they should do, some inner intuition, we'll call it, of that. If you don't have any law guiding a person or internal compass, or conscience, you could call it, or sense of intuition about what's right and wrong, if somebody is devoid of both of those things, what do you have? Anarchy. You've got a mess. You've a sociopath on your hands because they just have no sense whatsoever about right or wrong because they don't believe an external border should manage what they're doing, and they don't have an internal compass in order to guide them. They've got nothing. You have anarchy; you have a sociopath at that point. So we definitely don't want to go there, do we, as individuals or as a society?

Let's go up the Y axis then and I'll explain it a little bit here. What if you have a person who really believes in the law, but they don't really believe in spirit, or the spirit, or the spirit of God, or conscience? It's all about the law, keeping the law, maintaining the law, the do's and don'ts of life. Right? Okay. If someone goes up that direction, you'll see I've written under the old dominion, that's works righteousness. That's the person who is saying, "If I just keep these laws, and if I maintain them scrupulously enough, then God will accept me and I'll be righteousness in God's sight." There's no spirit in them whatsoever. It's just, "I've got to take off and keep the letter of the law, the written code, precisely, in order to earn righteousness with to God." That's in the old dominion.

But then I snuck in there, you see, and I said the new dominion is legalism. I hope it's not true of any of us and we have to work about it. But if you know Christians who are totally over-ended on law, on rights and wrongs and do's and don'ts, and have no sense of a theology of the Holy Spirit in their lives...I'm not saying they always do it, where would they tend to skew their Christian life? Toward legalism. They would tend to skew their life toward the do's and don'ts part of what it means to be a Christian.

If we totally skew our Christian life to the do's and don'ts without the spirit being involved, then we are prone to move, maybe not in terms of our eternal life, but in terms of our practice, out of the new dominion, right, of the spirit, back where? Back to the old dominion that as all about being measured by the law. So, you see, the law needs the spirit in the Christian life. The law without the spirit in the Christian life can be disastrous.

Let's go the other direction on it. If you go out the other way toward all spirit and no law, those are folks that say, "The Christian life is all about the Holy Spirit. Nothing but the Holy Spirit. It's not about the law at all. Get rid of the law. Throw the law out. We don't need any laws. We don't need any of the externals of the law as part of the Christian life anymore." The tendency can be there, and I don't mean

to trample on feet because, but you see, and I put ultra-charismatic and ultra-liberal. You think, “What do those two have to do with each other?” Well the truth is a lot of charismatics are great in that they believe in the power of the spirit, but always within the borders of what Scripture teaches. That’s a healthy way of looking at it. But you occasionally will run into a charismatic who says, “No, no. We’ve got a revelation from God that goes beyond what Scripture teaches. We’ve got one here...the Bible is still true, but the Bible wasn’t complete and we’ve got something from the Holy Spirit that here, that we need to add onto what Scripture is teaching here.” That’s where you’ve gotten too far here to say the spirit is overwhelming the Word; the Word with what God teaches about right/wrong, laws, morals, etc., etc.

Where it’s really hard on people who are that far on that, I would call it an error going too far, where they jettison the law, is that’s what liberals do, too. If you look at the liberal church in America, it’s always about the spirit; it’s not about the Word. It’s always about going beyond what the Scriptural text says to the spirit of what the text surely must have meant, instead of what the text says. It’s interesting that a liberal, having studied some theology, they almost always, if you look at a liberal theology of the Holy Spirit—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—they almost always collapse the Trinity, not into the Father. They don’t collapse the Trinity into the Son. What do they collapse the Trinity into? Spirit. Because for them, ultimately, it’s about spirit; it’s not about Word, it’s not about law, it’s not about standards. The funny way, if you go all that way, you run into trouble in the Christian life also.

That’s why I put the last one up there, which for me, is the winner, is that we need a theology of the spirit and the Word that walk together with it. We need the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit, for us as Christians, knowing that we live in the new way of the spirit, that we may bear fruit for God. But Ted, you already lead us down the right direction. Why do we still need the law within the Christian life? Not to justify us.

Audience Member: *You gotta go back to it and measure your life against it because you want but in God’s will.*

That’s right.

Audience Member: *[UNCLEAR] your salvation but because you appreciate what God’s done for you.*

Absolutely. You have the power of the Holy Spirit, joyfully, to want to fulfill those things, not out of obligation, but out of the glorious freedom of the sons of God, as the Scripture tells us about. That’s the transformation. The law becomes a guide. The law becomes something that shows us how to live [UNCLEAR], to the glory of God in the presence of God. So Amen! That’s the way that works in the Christian life. Let’s try to avoid all law, all spirit, and know that we live a life of Christian freedom in the spirit that nevertheless is guided by and enabled through the testimony of the law as the servant of the spirit in the Christian life.

We’ve got to close. Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for a chance to look into this piece of Scripture, to think about it in the context of Romans, to look at the verses themselves, and then finally, to look at a little paradigm of how it influences the way we live our Christian lives. Lord, we do pray that we would not fall on the side of legalism, of losing the breath and life and joy and power and guidance of the Holy Spirit. We also pray that we wouldn’t fall into—the theological word is antinomianism—lawlessness that’s all about the spirit, but has nothing to do with the Word and with the truth of the Word. Lord, show us the right way to combine the Spirit and the Word that we might live true, free Christian lives to your glory. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen!