

Romans Part 16 (7:1 – 7:6)

--INTRO:

--chapter 6 recap...

--first we looked at the supernatural transformation that occurs in us when we place our faith in Christ...

- the void of spiritual death is replaced by the life of the Holy Spirit
- the reign of sin is replaced by the reign of Christ through the Holy Spirit

--then we explored how this inner transformation sets in motion a life-long process of our lives being transformed – aligning our thinking with the new internal reality and living it out in our day-to-day lives.

--in ch. 7 Paul continues to develop the themes of ch. 6 while focusing in on the subject of the law in order to further address objections from Jews who falsely accused him of forsaking the Law of Moses.

--"DEAD TO THE LAW..."

--in Romans 7:1-6 Paul drives home the point that **just as we became dead to sin** when we were saved, as he explained in ch. 6, **so we also became "dead to the law"** (7:4)

- another way of saying that we have become "dead to the law" is that we have been "delivered from the law" (7:6)
- the result of becoming "dead to the law" is that we are no longer "bound by it" (7:6)

--the role of the Mosaic Law as a means of bringing temporary peace between God and man is replaced by the role of Christ in establishing permanent peace

--the role of the Mosaic Law as a rigid, external structure for daily living is replaced by the internal dynamic of the Holy Spirit

--Paul begins Romans 7 with a **legal argument from the law itself to prove that we are no longer "bound" (7:6) by the law of Moses** after we become "dead to the law through the body of Christ." (7:4)

--7:1: Paul states the principle from the law that he uses in his argument: "Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law) [*he is primarily addressing legalistic Jews*] that **the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?**" [*not after he dies*]

--7:2-3: Paul then uses marriage law to illustrate this principle: "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."

--in other words, when the husband dies, the wife and husband are no longer legally bound to each other and therefore the wife is free to marry someone else.

--side note: Paul's explanation in ch. 7 about remarriage is not comprehensive and does not factor in adultery which can also be a legal justification for remarriage.

--in 7:4 Paul then concludes "Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ..." (7:4a)

--that is, **since we "died with Christ" (6:8) the Law of Moses no longer has dominion over us** – because, as he stated at the beginning of his argument, "the law has dominion over a man **as long as he lives**", not after he dies.

--just like a widow is no longer legally bound to her deceased husband, so we are no longer legally bound to the law of Moses!

--because we are no longer bound by the law we can no longer be condemned to hell by the law... "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus..." (Romans 8:1)

--"SERVE IN NEWNESS OF THE SPIRIT AND NOT IN OLDNESS OF THE LETTER"

--in the second half of verse 4, Paul carries the analogy one step further: "you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, **that you may be married ["joined" – NIV] to another — to Him who was raised from the dead**, that we should bear fruit to God."

--just like a widow is freed from being legally bound to her husband so that she can remarry, so we have been freed from the law so that we can be "married" to Christ!

--Paul wasn't forsaking the Law of Moses, as the legalistic Jews claimed, but rather he taught that the law of Moses was now obsolete because it was replaced by something far better. In various places throughout the New Testament Paul eloquently sums up how the law is replaced...

--in the words of Galatians 2:19-20: "For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ; **it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me...**" (Galatians 2:19-20)

--"through the law" Paul realized his need for Christ, and then he "died to the law" when he embraced Christ and received "the righteousness of God apart from the law... through faith in Jesus Christ..." (Romans 3:21-22), **thus replacing righteousness through the law**

--and based on the righteousness of God being "credited" (Romans 4) to our account, "Christ lives in" us, **thus replacing the external structure of the law**

--in the words of Romans 6:14: "For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace."

--that is, **Christ who "lives in" (Galatians 2:20) us will never leave us** and allow sin to take His place and once again be our master because Christ's presence in us is based not on our ability to follow the law ("because you are not under law...") but on His ability to keep the law ("...but under grace.")

--in the words of Romans 7:6: "But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, **so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.**" (NASB)

--before faith in Christ, we were "bound" by the law; that is, our standing before God was based on our ability to keep the law...

--"but now we have been released from the Law..." That is, our standing before God is now based on the "righteousness of God apart from the law... through faith in Jesus Christ." (Romans 3:21-22)

--KEY DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN "OLDNESS OF THE LETTER" AND "NEWNESS OF THE SPIRIT": RELATIONSHIP

--rather than simply following rules on paper we are following a person, Jesus Christ!

--rather than our perception of God being limited to obscure manifestations of God, such as on Mt Sinai and the Pillar of Fire in the desert, we can now see the face of God and His hands and feet and hear His voice in the life of Jesus... through the lens of Scripture and the eyes of faith.

--Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." (John 14:9)

--referring to Jesus' relationship to God the Father, Hebrews states that Jesus is "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person" (Hebrews 1:3)

--Colossians 1:15: "He is the image of the invisible God..."

--and not only can we see the hands and feet of Jesus and hear His voice through Scripture, but in a very real sense we become His hands and feet and voice to others as He lives in us through the indwelling of His Spirit – as "we serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter."

--as we follow the living example of Jesus and are empowered by His Spirit, we are able to go beyond what the moral law requires, far from forsaking the law as the legalistic Jews claimed!

--Jesus spoke of going beyond the moral law in His sermon on the mount: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you..." (Matthew 5:43-44)

--Stephen exemplified this: "And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep." (Acts 7:59-60)

--before Paul was saved his attitude was a sharp contrast to that of Stephens. Paul lived by the law but rather than love his enemies he hated his enemies, as he explained when he was being arrested after the Jewish mob in Jerusalem tried to kill him: "Brethren and fathers, hear my defense before you now." 2 And when they heard that he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, they kept all the more silent. Then he said: 3 "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today. 4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, 5 as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished. ... *[then he explains his salvation experience]* 17 "Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance 18 and saw Him saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.' 19 So I said, 'Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. 20 And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.' 21 Then He said to me, 'Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.'" (Acts 22:1-21)

--1 Peter 2:21: "**...Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.**"

--1 John 4:7-11: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 **Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.**"

--1 John 3:16: "**By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us.** And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

--Colossians 3:12-14: "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even **as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.** 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection."

--Ephesians 5:1-2: "Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 **And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us.**"

--Ephesians 4:32: "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."

-John 15:12-13: **"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."**

--a great example of loving your enemies in modern times would be the story of Jim Elliot portrayed in the movie "End of the Spear"

--as we "serve in the newness of the Spirit" – as we love God and love others – the moral law is merely a guideline on how to love...

--for example, through the moral law, we know that committing adultery is not love, even though people's flesh may try to convince them that it is... "we're not married, but we love each other..."