

a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?

²⁵ Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Application

- ☞ We must stop living under the rule of the old captain who tells us that right standing with God is obtained through obedience to the Law and through striving to live a good life. Instead we must live under the new captain, the Lord Jesus Christ who tells us that we are justified (declared righteous before God) by grace through faith in Him.
 - ☞ Our real problem is not external (the Mosaic law, our environment, government, etc.), but rather the internal problem of sin****
 - ☞ Even though we have died to sin through our identity in Jesus Christ, we still wrestle with the reality of sin
 - ☞ Working hard in our own power to keep God's commands and overcome sin will ultimately lead to frustration and failure
- What to read for next week: Romans 8

****If the real problem for all of us is internal and not external, then the only real hope for America is not for better political leaders, nor for better government. Rather the only real hope for America is a spiritual revival. Because in the end, if the problem of sin in people's hearts is not dealt with, no matter who is in charge, we will still have insurmountable problems in this nation. That's not to say we should not vote for godly leaders, but rather we need to remember that no person nor political party will ever be the real solution to the real problems in this nation and in this world.

If Christ has set us free from sin, why do we still wrestle with it?

Romans—Living by Faith (part 6)

Romans 7:1-25

Review:

- ☞ **Romans 1:1-17** The major theme of the book of Romans is the gospel: how a person can attain right standing with God
- ☞ **Romans 1:18-3:20** All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
- ☞ **Romans 3:21-5:21** We are justified (declared righteous) by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, NOT by keeping the law, NOR by any good works, NOR by any religious affiliation, NOR by any religious activity
- ☞ **Romans 6:1-23**

Died to the Law (Romans 7:1-6)

¹ Do you not know, brothers and sisters—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law has authority over someone only as long as that person lives? 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 that binds her to him.

³ So then, if she has sexual relations with 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 if she marries another man.

⁴ So, my brothers and sisters, 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 for God. ⁵ For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. 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.

Goodness of the Law (Romans 7:7-12)

⁷ What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not! Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."⁸ But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the law, sin was dead.⁹ Once I was alive apart from the law*; but when the commandment came**, sin sprang to life and I died. ¹⁰ I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death.

*What does this passage mean? We know it does not mean that Paul was spiritually alive in the sense of being sinless, he already made that very clear in the earlier chapters of Romans. So just like v. 8, "For apart from the law, sin was dead," does not mean that sin was non-existence before God gave Moses the law. Rather it means that before the law came, sin was not as "active" or as "powerful" as after the law came. In addition, it means that with the law comes an increase awareness of both sin and the penalty of death. People are spiritually dead, but without the law, they may not realize it.

**What does it mean "when the commandment came"? Some think that Paul is using his personal experience to also reflect and identify with the experience of the nation of Israel. Remember back in the time of Moses? The nation of Israel met God at Mt. Sinai and they made a commitment. They stated, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." Contrary to the movie, "The 10 Commandments" with Charlton Heston, God first gave the 10 Commandments not to Moses alone, but to the entire nation of Israel. Then Moses went back up the mountain and God gave him more instructions and commands. But during that time, Israel strayed & built a golden calf and worshipped it. So by the time Moses came down off the mountain, the nation of Israel basically broke every one of the 10 commandments. That's why Moses threw down the tablets which broke at their feet. They had already broken their covenant with God. So here's the question: Did the 10 commandments in and of themselves really help the nation of Israel to obey God and obtain right standing before Him? The answer is no! Instead of the 10 commandments helping the Israelites to obtain right standing with God, instead the commandments

¹¹ For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. ¹² So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

☞ **The law promises life to those who perfectly obey it, but because of our disobedience, the law prescribes death. So the Law is good in that it brings awareness of sin. But instead of increasing our resolve to obey, it awakens the sin within us which increases the temptation to disobey.**

Sin-The Real Problem (Romans 7:13-25)

¹³ Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! Nevertheless, in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it used what is good to bring about my death, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

¹⁴ We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin***. ¹⁵ I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

²¹ So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me

condemned the Israelites. But does that mean the 10 commandments and the law of Moses are bad? No- Paul says they are holy, righteous and good.

***This statement is one of the chief reasons why people think Paul is talking as an unregenerate person (an unbeliever). Many would argue how can Paul say this when in chapter 6 he just said that we are no longer slaves to sin. However, like in other places in Romans, Paul makes statements that he assumes we understand that the surface meaning of the verse cannot be taken out of the overall context of this letter. For example, we know that in Romans 2:6, Paul is not saying that one can earn their way to eternal life. Likewise, we know that in Romans 7:8-9, Paul is not saying that before the law, he was guiltless in regards to sin and as a result, he was spiritually alive and already had eternal life (see the note on 7:8-9).