

Lesson 37 - MARRIED TO CHRIST *Romans 7:1-6*

(7:1) - “Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?” - Having stated that those who are IN CHRIST and who have been brought by God to faith in Christ **“are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14)**, Paul is now inspired by the Holy Spirit to use the law of marriage to illustrate this great truth. Remember, **“not under the law”** means that the law has no legal hold upon us. The law cannot condemn us because no sin is charged to us. All our sins were charged to Christ Who was **“made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law” (Gal. 4:4-5)**. Redemption accomplished by Christ, the Godman and the Surety of His people, means law and justice satisfied. To be **“under grace”** means to be in Christ, washed clean in His blood and clothed in His righteousness imputed. So, because of our union with Christ, the law has no legal hold upon us.

What did it take to satisfy the law? It took the death of Christ. And this is so for any under the dominion of the law. They are under that law until death. This is why God tells us that **“the sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law” (1 Cor. 15:56)**. Where God imputes sin, God’s law demands death. **“But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20)**. How does grace abound? **“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:21)**. The believer’s death to the law is accomplished by the death of Christ as his Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer. As stated, Christ was **“made under the law”** because the sins of His people were imputed to Him. He died under that law to satisfy the law’s penalty and set His people free.

(7:2-3) - Paul uses the law of marriage to illustrate his point - “For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.” God’s law for marriage binds a man and a woman together for life - “Till death do us part.” The only thing that can satisfy this law and free either the husband or the wife to marry again is the death of one or the other. Paul speaks of the woman who is **“bound by law to her husband so long as he liveth.”** If there is a divorce and the woman would marry again, then the law of marriage considers her **“an adulteress.”** This would hold true for the man as well if the situation were reversed. He would be considered an adulterer. The point is that nothing frees either one from the law of marriage but the death of one or the other.

We need to understand that Paul’s purpose in these verses is not to place some special stigma upon believers who have been divorced as if to make them “second-class Christians.” The law does show those who divorce and remarry to be adulterers, but we who are Christians are all sinners saved by grace and have nothing in which to boast. We are all forgiven adulterers, whether our adultery is physical or spiritual. Divorce is sinful and should be avoided at all costs, but it is not some kind of “unforgiveable sin.” Paul’s purpose is to use the law of marriage as an illustration of the believer’s death to the law in and by Christ. The next verses prove this.

(7:4) - “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him Who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God” -

First, understand what it means to be **“dead to the law”** (cf. *Gal. 2:19-21*). It means that the law cannot condemn us because our sins cannot be charged (imputed) to us. Our sins cannot be imputed to us because Christ stands as our Surety, and our sins have been imputed to Him.

Secondly, HOW did we become dead to the law? It was **“by the body of Christ,”** i.e. by His death for our sins as our Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer. In our name and in our nature, Christ satisfied God’s justice against us and established a perfect righteousness by His obedience unto death. His death, or the sacrifice of His whole humanity upon the altar of His Deity, honored, established, magnified and satisfied God’s holy law. As far as the law being satisfied, there could have been no consideration of nor contribution from our suffering or our obedience. We are sinners and the law could only pronounce us cursed based on our best efforts to obey it. But, by the body of Christ, based on His righteousness imputed, that same law demands our justification and life.

Thirdly, WHY did Christ do all this for His people? He did this so that we could be **“married”** (united) to Him in the marriage union of faith, given to and worked in us by His Spirit imparting His resurrection life, **“that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”** This is the spiritual fruit that comes from the life that is in the Vine Who is Christ the Lord (*John 15:1-8*). This is the fruit of faith in Him, repentance of dead works and all sin, obedience motivated by grace, love, and gratitude, and all the fruit of the Spirit (*Gal. 5:22-23*). We need to understand that this is fruit, NOT that we produce, but fruit that we bear or **“bring forth”** from Christ to the praise of the glory of God’s grace.

(7:5) - “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death” - “In the flesh” describes our life BEFORE the new birth, BEFORE we were given spiritual life and brought to faith in Christ. It describes the **“natural man”** (*1 Cor. 2:14*) and those who were by nature dead in sins (*Eph. 2:1-3*). When we were unbelievers, the passions of sins were done in light of the law (either the law of conscience or the written law of God). These sinful passions showed themselves in one of two ways: (1) in abject rebellion against the law as in the case of openly immoral, irreligious, and perverted people, or (2) in religious efforts and activity seeking to establish our own righteousness before God. Either way, it was all **“fruit unto death”** because it all fell short of the standard of perfect righteousness required by God for justification and which can only be found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

(7:6) - “But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter” - “But NOW,” after having been **“delivered from the law”** by the death of Christ, and after having been brought to faith in Christ and repentance of dead works, we are able to **“serve in newness of spirit.”** **“Newness of spirit”** describes the service of faith, not in the sense of sinless perfection in our service, but in the sense of following and serving Christ as motivated by grace. **“Oldness of the letter”** describes the written law imposed upon rebels who have no faith in and love for Christ. This is legalism as motivated by legal fear of punishment and mercenary promises of earned rewards. **“Newness of spirit”** is the service of a willing, loving bondservant of Christ. A bondservant serves his Master because he loves Him and desires to honor Him.