

# DELIVERED FROM THE LAW

In this newsletter, we are going to look at some of Paul's statements in Romans, which are misunderstood and misinterpreted, specifically Romans 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."—Romans 7:6.

It shouldn't come as any surprise that Paul is not talking about freedom to break the law. All of His writings point to sin as shameful, hopeless slavery; but, unfortunately, many people think that true freedom is slavery to sin.

## Context

In this section of Scripture, Paul paints several pictures to help people understand the gospel. His pictures begin in Romans, chapter 5:

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed [give responsibility or blame to] when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him [Jesus] that was to come. [The rest of this information in parentheses ends in verse 17.]"—Romans 5:12:14.

Paul paints sin as a power, one that dwells in the world; and all the children of Adam are inside this world. Because Adam was corrupted, his children were born corrupted. Adam was made in the likeness and image of God; but, once corrupted, his children who came out of him were tainted with his own corruption. This is why there is death. Adam's sin caused us to inherit a carnal nature, and we receive the wages of his sin—death. Even though there was no written law yet, sin still reigned even though Adam's children did not necessarily disobey direct commands from God like he did. Everyone knew the golden rule: "Do unto others what you would want done to you."

Paul makes his point:

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one

shall many be made righteous."—Romans 5:19.

If sin entered because of one man's disobedience, righteousness can enter by one man's complete and perfect obedience; and that man is Christ, who knew no sin. Nevertheless, it is of necessity that we are born to that man, that righteousness may reign in our lives instead of sin. Hence, there is a need to be born of the Spirit—to be born again, into Christ.

Paul then says:

"Moreover the law entered, that the offence [offense] might abound [exist in great numbers]. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."—Romans 5:20.

In a few verses, Paul will clarify this point more; but the important thing is that, even though sin increased because of the law, grace increased much more through Christ Jesus. Paul has now laid the groundwork for his next chapters.

## Paul's Three Pictures

Paul immediately makes this statement after talking about the increase in grace:

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"—Romans 6:1-2.

In Paul's day, an accusation was actually made that he was claiming something similar to the idea that the more we sin, the more grace we get:

"And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just."—Romans 3:8.

Contextually, Paul is not talking about grace in this portion of Romans; but it clearly shows that he, in no wise, supported the idea of sinning to accomplish good.

In Romans 6:2, Paul introduces a new concept: We are dead to sin; so how can we live in it any longer? Then he paints a picture of what he means.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."—Ro-

mans 6:3-4.

2 Baptism symbolizes our death to sin; but more than that, it is not just symbolic. Here, Paul indicates that something actually happens when we are buried in the watery grave:

“For he that is dead is freed from sin.”—Romans 6:7.

God gives us freedom from sin. This is quite an amazing event. The water washes away our sins:

“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”—Act 22:16.

This is accomplished through our faith in Christ; so, if we don’t have faith, it actually won’t do anything.

Paul’s purpose in sharing this picture was to share this point:

“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—Romans 6:11.

Dead to sin; alive in Christ. This was Paul’s message. He opened the believers’ eyes to see the significance of baptism. He ended his discourse on baptism with this:

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”—Romans 6:14.

Paul did not say that death does not have dominion over us, but that sin doesn’t. He clearly states that, if we let sin rule over us, we will die the second death.

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”—Romans 8:13.

After he shows what baptism means, Paul gives two additional examples built on this concept. First, he addresses those who are men, with the example of slavery. He says:

“Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

“What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—Romans 6:18-23.

He relates his point with his previous conclusion about baptism—dead to sin, alive in Christ, freed from sin, servants of righteousness. Then Paul addresses the audience of Jews with these words:

“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? 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.”—Romans 7:1-3.

As long as a woman is alive, she is bound to her husband by the commandment against adultery. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry another. Then Paul makes a point that confuses many people:

“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 [Jesus] who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. 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. 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.”—Romans 7:4-6.

### A Brief Overview

Let’s sum up what Paul has said so far. He begins by telling his readers that, since one brought in sin through disobedience, one can bring in righteousness by perfect obedience; and this righteousness may come upon us through being born to that individual. The purpose of the law is to tell us what sin is, and sin became worse when the law was added; this is not because the law causes sin, but because sin now disobeys a direct command of God, like Adam did. Where sin abounds, more grace is given. We should not sin because we have died to sin by being baptized into Christ, and now we live for Him. To those who are in the flesh, He said this is like being a slave to sin; but become free so you can serve a different, better master. To the Jews, he said this is like a woman being freed from her husband to marry another.

So Paul’s three points are compared: dead to sin, we are now alive to Christ; freed from

sin, we are servants of righteousness; and dead to the law, we are now married to Christ.

### Delivered

The conclusion that some folk may get from his comparisons is that the law and sin are the same. But Paul immediately denies this:

“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay [no; an old use of this word]. I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”—Romans 7:7.

He then clarifies what he is saying:

“For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew [an old word meaning killed] me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.”—Romans 7:9-13.

The commandment was ordained to life, but when it was given, sin used it to kill us. Sin did this by causing desires that are contrary to the law. The law entered that the exceeding sinfulness of sin could be understood; sin is able to kill us with good things. Marriage, eating, and drinking—these are good things, and sin used them to corrupt the antediluvians until God destroyed them with a flood. Sin is also able to kill us with the presence of God. Since the law has come, sin uses it to kill us. Thus, we need to be delivered from the law. Paul then shows us the struggle of every sincere man who is without Christ:

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.”—Romans 7:18.

We cannot do good; we are doomed to death because of the power of sin to deceive and slay us with or without the law. No matter how much we try, we cannot do good of ourselves. Paul then says:

“I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.”—Romans 7:21.

He calls this law the law of sin which is in the body, those parts that are controlled by the sinful nature:

“But I see another law in my members, war-

ring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”—Romans 7:23.

Paul intellectually believes the law is good, but his flesh is still a slave to sin. This leads him to exclaim:

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”—Romans 7:24.

It’s important to note that Paul is continuously referencing the pictures he has already painted. For instance, when he uses the phrase, “body of death,” he is pointing back to his example of slavery to sin:

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him [Jesus], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”—Romans 6:6.

So Paul is painting a picture of a man that is yet to have the body of sin destroyed in his life, a man that is still in slavery to sin, a man that is not baptized into Christ. But his question is to effectively influence people toward the better way; this is why he continues by thanking God:

“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”—Romans 7:25.

In Galatians, Paul describes this struggle with the flesh, when the mind serves one law and the body serves another law:

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”—Galatians 5:17.

The flesh basically continues to have longings for fleshly things, while the mind has longings for spiritual things. These longings are contrary to each other; but as a servant of sin, Paul has to obey his desires even if he doesn’t want to. In his example, he is highlighting the experience of someone who longs to be freed from slavery to sin, but has not been. Most people live so much in the flesh that they never experience this battle. Paul then presents Christ:

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”—Romans 8:2.

Here, Paul says he is free from the law of sin, not the Ten Commandments. He points his readers to the Spirit as the only means of freedom. Through Christ, Paul has been freed from the power that the lusts of the flesh had

4 over him. He has been delivered from the Ten Commandments, not because they are bad, but because sin was using them to kill him. He has been delivered from them so that he can obey them.

Paul then explains how Christ delivered us:

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”—Romans 8:3-4.

The Ten Commandments cannot save us from sin, but Christ did, by living a righteous life while being in the likeness of sinful flesh. Sin entered through one man, and Righteousness entered through one man; Christ condemned the flesh and triumphed over it. The righteousness of the law can now be fulfilled in us, if we are born again in Christ. We inherit His nature, the divine nature of love. If we have the spiritual part of the law, we will fulfill the letter. We are in the Spirit if the Spirit of God dwells in us:

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”—Romans 8:9-10.

If we have Christ dwelling in us, our body is dead; we have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts, and the spirit of life has made us free from the law of sin (its ability to use good to kill us). This is how we are delivered from the Ten Commandments which are holy and just and good. Paul tells us that this is active spiritual warfare:

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”—Romans 8:13.

We are to put to death the temptation to sin and put to death the desire to sin. We lay hold of the sword of Truth and condemn the desire. Paul then explains, in great detail, about how we are heirs of Christ; he also tells us that being an heir is conditional:

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with

Him, that we may be also glorified together.”—Romans 8:17.

We are to be partakers of Christ’s sufferings, and what were these?

“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.”—1 Peter 4:1-2.

We suffer through the desires of our flesh, the sufferings of temptations, without obeying them; thus, we cease from sin. Instead of obeying the flesh, we obey the Spirit.

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”—Romans 8:18.

Heaven is cheap enough. We ought to choose to suffer affliction with Christ than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. The pleasures of sin will bring death, but the sufferings of affliction will bring life through Jesus Christ.

### Conclusion

Paul indicates that this experience is a continual one. It is not a one-time event, but a daily walk. It is a daily crucifixion, not a daily execution. Crucifixion was not a quick death; in the same way, suffering through our temptations and enduring them through the love we have for Jesus is not quick or easy, but it cannot be compared with the glory that God will give. Jesus endured His cross because of the love He has for us, and we endure our cross because of the love we have for Him. We are delivered from the law; sin no longer has the power to force us to break it. Praise God!

*For a finished work*



**Jonathan Taylor**

*Wisdom is justified of all her children. -Luke 7:35*

*More Food for the Little Flock —*