

## INTRODUCTION

You need to know and understand this because—

- (1) It is God's Word
- (2) Paul said its essential to God's Righteousness in the Gospel
- (3) Therefore essential to the Roman church's—and ours—maturity, unity, and ministry

➔ Dealing with how a Christian deals with sin—that's important!

Paul emphatically states Christians are under jurisdiction of grace, not the Mosaic Law.

Someone could get the idea that since sinful passions are aroused by the Law (v. 5) that the Law is sinful.

Paul emphatically says “NO!!!” and makes two basic points—

- (1) The law is holy, just, and good
- (2) Despite this sin misuses the Law to stimulate yet more sin

His point, then, is that you can't rely on the Law to deliver you from sin.

- Paul will illustrate this from his own life (7:13-25)
- and then teach that believers defeat sin by depending on the Spirit (8:1-17).

### 1. Despite the Law's Character, It Cannot Deliver from Sin

#### 1) The ML Declares God's Righteousness, 7

- Sin was always in the world
- God's Law makes clear that sin is against Him
- Sin then becomes transgression—in your face, conscious, deliberate
- Example: The root of all sins—covetousness/selfishness
  - (1) Sinner is in #1 position—idolatry
  - (2) Treasuring, delighting in something/one other than God
  - (3) God isn't the greatest desire, treasure, or delight

#### 2) Sin Uses the Law to Produce Evil, 8

- Twice we're told this (vv. 8, 11) – idea is that of a starting-point, base of operations
- Sin doesn't submit to the Law, it takes it, twists it, perverts it
- God gave it for good, sin twists it for evil
- “*Apart from the Law, sin was dead*”

- (1) Not non-existent, but sleeping, hidden, unknown, unseen
- (2) Snakes lay hidden in the dark – turn on the light! (Or you ☺)
- (3) When you're told don't do something, what urge do you suddenly have?
- (4) Prov 9:17 *"stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant."* Sinful human nature responds to "thou shalt not" with a gleeful "I shall!"

### 3) The Law Had Life in View, 10a

- On Mt. Sinai God promised life to Israel if they obeyed
- Hypothetically this is what would happen
- The law wasn't given to bring death, but to show Israel righteousness and peace
- Because of sin this is impossible
- Gal 3:12 *"yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them'"*

### 4) Sin Uses the Law to Bring Death, 9-11

- Three times we read in these verses *"I died...death...killed me"*
- The law didn't kill, sin kills (11)
- *"I was alive once without the law"*
  - (1) Didn't know God's character and commands
  - (2) No trouble in your soul, no guilt, nothing confronting your desires as wrong. God-ignorant unbelievers happily go their way

### 5) The Law is Holy, Just, and Good

- Holy—God it's author, bears his character
- Just—can't be charged with wrong doing
- Good—it's giver is good
- By way of contrast, sin is evil, wicked, and destructive

### Summary—

- (1) Indwelling sin is always present, reigning supreme and unhindered
- (2) You think nothing of it for you know nothing else
- (3) You have some sense of right and wrong via conscience, 2:14-15
- (4) That, however, is easily dealt with by sin which holds sway, cf. 1:18
- (5) When God your Creator declares his character and will in his Word and identifies your sin as transgression, you may inwardly feel guilt but controlling, indwelling sin springs into action
- (6) Instead of sin settling down it recoils, attacks, deceiving you into further sin in response to God's Law

- (7) Rather than subduing sinful lusts, sin uses the Law as a tool creating more. You lust after what you are told not to. You abhor what you're told to love.
- (8) Rather than following God's Law to live your sinful heart twists and perverts it and leads you to death.
- (9) Thus the problem is not the Law but your sin.
- (10) God's law is holy, righteous, and good, but it can only declare, define, and condemn sin, it cannot deliver from sin.

☞ The answer for dealing effectively with sin does not lie with the written code of the Law but with the living Word who indwells believers' hearts.

- When you rely on the written code to deal with sin you do so all of yourself, you will always fail. The Law requires works, perfect work—it is not of faith. there is no power or ability within you to effectively fight sin, and the Law gives no help either.
- Christ, however, has defeated sin, and by your union with him you are dead to sin and the Law which sin uses. By Christ you are dead to sin and can thus live to righteousness.

## 2. Four Kinds of People

### 1) The Happy Pagan, 1:18-32; 7:9a (This phrase from Morris)

- Don't know God and his commands, you have no trouble in your soul, nothing confronting your desires and actions as wrong
- No remorse, enjoy evil and wickedness, think it's a-ok

➔ Hear God's character and commands, see and repent of your sin, trust in Christ!

### 2) The Smugly Self-Righteous, 2:17-29

- You know right from wrong from the Bible
- You believe your good living will gain you eternal life

➔ Repent of self-righteousness, trust in Christ alone!

### 3) Self-Relying Saints Struggling with Sin, 7:13-25

- Truly saved by grace
- Got eyes off Christ
- Started thinking/believing that it's all up to your effort—do, do do, don't, don't, don't
- Consequently great guilt, struggle, feelings of failure

➔ Next point! 😊

### 4) Spirit-Dependent, Sin-Killing Christians, 8:13

- Truly saved by grace
- God’s Word teaches sin and righteousness, Christ’s character and commands
- You depend on the Spirit not yourself
- You thereby actively work to kill sin

You can’t rely on the ML to defeat sin, because (1) that’s not what it was designed to do, and (2) you will never kill sin

Defeating sin isn’t by your obedience to the written code of the ML but by **faith** in the living Word who indwells believers’ hearts

The reaction we can have to this can be strong, but we must keep this fact in view—it is our reaction to what Scripture says. **We must thus have our reactions controlled by faith in God’s Word**. This cuts both ways—

- Those who would say “**since the Law can’t defeat sin and since we’re dead to it, phooey on the Law altogether**” must remember that the problem wasn’t the Law per se, the problem was sin. God took care of sin, however, wholly changing not only our relation to him (no longer by law but by grace) but our attitude toward and ability to respond to his declared Word of his character and commands. Just because our sin nature twists and perverts what is holy, righteous, and good doesn’t justify throwing it out in the name of “grace”!  
*“All Scripture is inspired...”*
- Those who would say “**since the Law is from God Christians are still ‘under the law,’ but only its moral aspects**” must remember that the Law is an indivisible declaration of God’s character and commands to Israel. The effort to trifurcate the law into moral, civil, and ceremonial aspects is artificial and fails to recognize that all three aspects are inherently intertwined. If an Israelite broke the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment that involved civil and ceremonial responses. Likewise, failures in civil/ceremonial aspects were also moral failures, for the civil/ceremonial commands were from God, and to disobey God’s command is a moral failure!

**One reason to attend as many services as possible is to learn as much of God’s Word as possible**. The more you learn God’s character and commands, the more conformed to Christ’s image you can become by the Spirit’s help. True, if you don’t want to have sin in your life pointed out, the thing to do is stay home and turn on a radio, TV, or internet preacher who’ll tell you what a great life God has planned for you, and if you just do these 12 easy things you’ll have the greatest life you could ever imagine. But **that is covetousness, not Christ**.

“Nothing is more inconsistent with true religion than self-complacency. Because the more holy we are, the clearer our views of God’s law; and the clearer our views of the law, the deeper our sense of sin, and, consequently, the greater must be our humility.” (Hodge)

- As you learn more of Christ’s character and commands,
  - You will learn how un-Christ-like you are in your own day-to-day living (especially with desires—“covet”),

- and as you respond rightly by faith depending on Christ and the Holy Spirit and not your own works,
  - You will truly love the Law with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength.
  - This is true religion, and anything short of this, being content in ignorance of Christ's character and commands, is self-complacency and false religion.
- **The true work of grace isn't self-righteous**, it hears God's Word and responds with faith in Christ and dependence on the Spirit
- **The true work of grace doesn't sit**, it now views Christ's declared character and commands with a zeal and intensity to grow more like Christ and less like the world by the Spirit's help and personal discipline.

**Be a Spirit-dependent, sin-killing Christian!**