

Series: Romans
Title: Free to Marry Another
Text: Rom 7: 1-6
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In Romans 7: 4, the apostle Paul says a word that I never noticed until recently. The word is “also.”

Romans 7: 4: Wherefore, my brethren, ye ALSO are become dead to the law by the body of Christ;

In Romans 6, Paul declared the believers are dead to sin by the body of Christ. Therefore, we are freed or justified from sin.

Romans 6: 6: Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7: For he that is dead, is freed [justified] from sin...11: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin...

Being risen with Christ and having Christ reign in us by the new birth through faith through the gospel we are freed or set at liberty from sin's dominion over our persons.

Romans 6: 17: But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18: Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

So Paul showed that it is impossible for a believer to continue in sin because “*how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?*” (Rom 6: 2) Then in chapter 7, Paul declares something else we are dead to.

Romans 7: 4: Wherefore, my brethren, ye ALSO are become dead to the law by the body of Christ;

The same as chapter 6 assures every believer that sin shall not have dominion over us because we are dead to sin, chapter 7 assures us that the law has no more dominion over us because “*ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ.*”

Proposition: God gives this assurance to every sinner who trust his dear Son—“Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace!” (Rom 6: 14)

Romans 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? 2: 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. 3: 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. 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 [shall] bring forth fruit unto God. 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. 6: But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should [shall] serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

A KNOWN FACT

Romans 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?

Paul is not only speaking to Jews, he is speaking to all “brethren.” He is speaking to believers, both Jew and Gentile, who know the law.

As long as a man is alive, the law is alive to the man—*“the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth.”* This is true of all law. The laws of New Jersey and the laws of this country have dominion over us so long as we live.

The same is true of the law of God given at Mt Sinai. As long as we live in the flesh, the law of God has dominion over us. The law demands perfect obedience and death to all who disobey.

It was not the ceremonial law that condemned us as guilty sinners, it was the moral law written on tables of stone that declared us guilty. Therefore, Paul calls the moral law *“the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones”* (2 Cor 3: 7). God gave the moral law at Mt Sinai to reveal to his people our great offense in breaking his one law when we sinned in our father Adam in the Garden. Adam and his posterity were bound to obey that one law in the garden under that legal covenant. But when Adam broke that law, all his children in him broke that law.

Therefore, God gave the moral law at Mt Sinai *“that the offense might abound.”* (Rom 6: 20) The moral law declares all Adam’s posterity guilty. Therefore, when writing to the Corinthians the apostle Paul called the moral law *“the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us.”* It was against us and contrary to us because it declares every son of Adam guilty and we can only be free from it by dying eternal separation from God. That is why Paul calls the moral law at Sinai *“the ministration of death”* (2 Corinthians 3:7; Romans 2:14-15; Galatians 3:10).

Galatians 3:10: For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

James 2: 10: For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

So the law of God, which declares all sinners guilty, has dominion over a man as long as he lives.

AN ILLUSTRATION USING MARRIAGE

Romans 7: 2: 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. 3: 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.

There is a scriptural exception to this law in the case of fornication or abandonment. But Paul is not dealing with that here. So we will not deal with that here. (Mt 19:9; 1 Cor 7: 15)

Paul is illustrating how the law of God must be honored. He uses the law of marriage as the example. The law of marriage must be honored—*“a woman is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth.”* If her husband lives and she is married to another man then she breaks the law and is guilty of adultery. But *“if the husband be dead, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.”*

Be sure to get the point! Paul is illustrating how that every sinner by nature is married to the law of God. The law of God is a strict husband. It shows us no love, no mercy, no forgiveness. It is a husband which only declares to us that we have broken his commands. The law is a husband which inspects, not only our outward deeds, but even the thoughts and intents of our hearts. It is a husband that no sinner can please.

As the wife is bound to her husband, every sinner is bound to the law so long as we live. Justice has got to be carried out. We must be slain by the law. So the law has dominion over us until it executes us. The only way for us to be free from the law is we must die. But once justice has executed us, we are free from the law, so that it is lawful for us to be married to another husband.

THE GOOD NEWS

Romans 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.

Believer, the same way we became dead to sin, we became dead to the law—*"by the body of Christ."* By the Son of God taking a body of flesh like unto his bride and representing us as our Head, Christ's obedience to the law is our obedience to the law and Christ's death to the law is our death to the law.

Galatians 3:13: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

Wherefore, my brethren, not only does sin not have the reign over us anymore, neither does the law—*"For ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ."*

Indeed, our Lord Jesus fulfilled all the types of the ceremonial law as well as the moral. But the ceremonial law was a shadow of *"good things to come."* It was the moral law—the ten commandments engraven in stone—that cursed us, declaring us guilty. Therefore, it was that first husband which was *"the ministration of death"*. But by Christ taking the place of his bride, Christ honored the law, establishing it in full for his people.

I have said this to you many times and I love to think on this. Christ said that love for God and our neighbor is the righteous fulfillment of the law. Romans 3 says that the law bears witness of the righteousness of God, even the righteousness which is by the faithfulness of Christ Jesus the Son of God. (Rom 3: 21) The law bears witness that Christ manifest it's perfect, righteous love. He loved his Father and loved his elect so much that he was willing to lay down his life for both. Christ bore the sin of his people and bore our curse that he might honor and establish the law. Doing so, he declared the righteousness of God while saving his bride from our sins. That is the love which is the righteous fulfillment of the law! Christ alone is the only one who ever established the law!

We see an illustration of the law bearing witness that Christ is righteousness back when Moses was about to die. Moses represents the law. Joshua (Jesus) represents Christ. Law cannot deliver us into heaven therefore Moses was not allowed to deliver the children of Israel into the promised land. Christ alone delivers his people into heaven therefore Joshua was the one God used to deliver Israel into Canaan. But before Moses died, he laid his hands on Joshua—he bore witness that Joshua was full of the Spirit and wisdom of God—that he approved of Joshua, that Joshua would deliver God's people to the promised land. It typified the law bearing witness that Christ is the fulfillment of its holiness, justice and goodness as well as the Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption of his people.

Brethren, contrary to the accusations of those who pretend to keep the law, God's people are far from being antinomians—anti-law! We believe that we establish the law only through faith in Christ because Christ is the only one who ever kept the law so that it is honored and magnified. Those born of God take sides with the law, agreeing with it that, in our flesh, we are guilty sinners. We confess that Christ alone is all our righteousness!

Now, all for whom Christ died, are no longer bound to that first husband the law. We are free from the law *"that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."* When Christ arose to newness of life, Christ's bride arose to newness of life, married to him, one with him. God has been declaring this union since he patterned the first marriage of Adam and Eve after the marriage of Christ and his bride.

Ephesians 5: 29: For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

The believers marriage to Christ is a lawful union and God hates putting away so this marriage will last forever. Christ was speaking of his bride when he used Hosea to picture his this marriage when he said,

Hosea 2: 19: And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. 20 I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.

Isaiah 54: 5: For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LAW AND GRACE

First, not being under law but under grace means now all our fruit is produced—not by our flesh—but by the Spirit of Christ our Husband—**Romans 7: 4...[he said he married us] that we should bring forth fruit unto God.**

All our fruit is by the Spirit of Christ our Husband. When you read the second half of Romans 6, the things Christ commands are the things the Spirit shall surely produces in those born of God. Christ makes us willing and delight to yield unto him. Now we have “become servants to God” and we “have our fruit” which is result of being made holy and the “end everlasting life.”

Galatians 2: 20: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

The life we now live in the flesh we live by the faithfulness of the Son of God working in us both to will and do of his good pleasure. All our fruit is of the Spirit of God and we have already been crucified with Christ.

Galatians 5: 22: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23: Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24: And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Secondly, to be under law is to live unto ourselves, serving from a sinful heart, serving by the letter of the law—**Romans 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.**

When we “were” in the flesh, “*the motions of sins did work in our members*”—everything we did outwardly came from the sinful passions and affections of our carnal mind. It may have appeared good to men outwardly but it came from the lusts of our depraved heart. “*Every imagination of the thoughts of our hearts was only evil continually.*” And God looks not on the outward appearance but on the heart.

These motions were “*by the law*”—the law did not produce these sinful motions; but the sin of our wicked hearts was provoked and aggravated by law because it commanded righteousness we hated and forbid sin we loved. Paul said “*it wrought in me all manner of concupience*”—desire for what the law forbids. But, remember, when Paul was Saul of Tarsus he did not appear outwardly immoral. He appeared outwardly obedient. He said as far as the eye could see him outwardly he was “*as touching the law, blameless.*” But his best outward law obedience was from a depraved heart desiring what the law forbids.

Romans 8: 5: But they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh...6: For to be carnally minded is death...7: Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be 8: So then they that are after the flesh cannot please God.

We served after the letter of the law because we were only trying to escape hell. It was all from legal motives of a dead heart. We were either serving from a guilty conscience trying to make up for our sins or in pride and self-righteous arrogance thinking God owed us something for our works. Paul described his law-keeping as covetousness. He desired to be seen and praised of men while he was trying to steal God’s glory, praising himself for the works only Christ can do in perfection. It was all spiritual adultery of trying to come to God by the works of the law. The unregenerate religious sinner breaks all God’s commandments by trying to keep them rather than submitting to the law and confessing that in our flesh dwells no good thing. So from our fleshly heart we brought forth in our members “*fruit unto death*”—all our very best religious deeds were dead works. That is being under the letter of the law.

Three, being under grace is having the Spirit of Christ in us. Now, we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit; now we serve in newness of spirit—**Romans 7: 6: But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should [shall] serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.**

Since Christ has honored and established the law and we in him, the law that bound us is dead unto us. We are delivered from the law. We are free to be married to Christ our Husband who loves us and provides us with everything that first husband only demanded but never gave. For the first time we discovered what it is to be under the rule of faith which works by love!

Free from the law o happy condition
Christ hath bled and there is remission
Cursed by the law, ruined by the fall
Christ hath redeemed us once for all

Suppose a woman’s first husband was harsh and ruled her with an iron fist in bondage and terror. But he died and all his dominion over her died with him. All his authority over her ceased. Then she married a husband who is affectionate and loving and provides all for her. Would she not seek to please her new husband simply because she loves him and is thankful? Would she not live for him rather than going back to her dead husband’s grave to put herself back under his bondage? The rule of love is far superior to the cold,

loveless rule of that first husband that only pointed out her faults and made demands she could never achieve.

Likewise, by creating in us a new spirit—in righteousness and true holiness—the blood of Christ has purged our conscience from dead works to serve the true and living God by the constraint of his great love for us! He has given us the Spirit which is of God; that we know the things that are freely given to us of God; We know we have not “*received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him.*” (Rom 8: 15-17) We know that in Christ we have no sin; God remembers our sins no more.

Therefore, serving in newness of spirit means “*They that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit;*” (Rom 8: 5) We no longer go back to Mt Sinai to entangle ourselves again with the yoke of bondage. Our flesh is mortified and our new spirit motivated by hearing what Christ our new Husband has done for us. He such a wonderful, loving Husband to us that we are constrained by his love to serve him, not because we have to, but because we want to!

Imagine my wife and I were not married. Suppose I hired her to clean my house. Every day she showed up because it was her job. I gave her a list of things to do and she did them because she was working for a wage. Then we fell in love and I married her. After that she dwells with me and I with her. She no longer does things because she has to to earn a paycheck. She knows how much I love her and she loves me. Now she is constrained by love. She does what she does because she wants to please me and does not want to dishonor or disappoint me. That is an illustration of newness of spirit.

2 Corinthians 5: 14: For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

“*To be spiritually minded is life and peace*”—in Christ, by Christ and from Christ as we set our affection on things above, not on the things of this earth. Our affection is on Christ at God’s right hand where we dwell in him and look with a sure hope to that day when Christ shall return and we shall enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb!

Galatians 5: 1: Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. 2: Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. 3: For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. 4: Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. 5: For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6: For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Amen!