

The Blueprint: Building a Framework that's Grounded in the Gospel!

Week 4: We are No Longer a Slave to our Past

Romans 6- we are no longer bound to sin.

Romans 7- we are no longer Married to law.

Romans 8- We are no longer a slave to our past.

Illustration: Did you know that in water-safety courses a cardinal rule is never to swim out to a drowning man and try to help him as long as he's thrashing around. To do so is basically to commit suicide. As long as a drowning man thinks he can help himself, he's dangerous to anyone who tries to help him. The reason why is because his tendency is to grab the one trying to help him and the result is, he ends up taking them both under the water in the process. The correct way to rescue someone who's drowning is to stay far enough away to where he can't grab you. And then you wait. And when he finally gives up and quits thrashing around, you make your move. At that point, the drowning man won't work against you. Instead, he'll let you help him.

After reading this it hit me the same principle applies in our relationship with the Holy Spirit. Until we give up, we aren't really in a position to be helped.

Q: So, the questions that I have for us today is have you given up ownership of your life and heart to the Holy Spirit who wants to live within you? Because until we surrender, we can't experience His power. Our lives will always feel empty or incomplete.

I. Over the past few weeks we been discussing The Blueprint: Building a Framework That's Grounded in the Gospel.

II. (Summarize last week – Romans 6) - P. Craig-In Christ we are free from the penalty and power of sin. Under a new authority, domain, and covenant. The law heightened our awareness of sin, but grace taught us that where sin abounds grace super abounds. Dead to sin means we are no longer in covenant with sin or attached to sin (Me). If we're connected through death, we'll certainly be connected through his resurrection. Sin no longer has authority over us. We have the power over sin (me).

III. Today as we continue in the book of Romans, we will see that Paul in his letter is teaching that we are no longer married to the law (Rom. 7) and with the holy spirit we are no longer a slave to our past (Rom. 8).

Scripture Reading: Romans 7:1-6 - 1 Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? 2 For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. 3 Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress. 4 Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. 5 For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

A. Note that Paul is not giving an extensive teaching here about marriage, remarriage, or divorce, but an ILLUSTRATION to those who know the law and have an understanding of covenant relationship.

1. In A Sense, Paul is saying Coming to Christ Begins Our SECOND (Spiritual) Marriage (1-6). Our first “(spiritual) marriage” was like a WORKS-based failed relationship. But we died in Christ and are REMARRIED to Christ with a grace-based Covenant. That is what he means when he says that when a man dies, he becomes free from the old law and from the commandments. Just as a widow is set free from the covenant law of marriage with her deceased husband. She is no longer bound to the old relationship.

For example: Many Jewish believers continued to use the Law as though they were still living under the Old Covenant.

B. The problem is law leaves things incomplete and (subject to man’s interpretation or past experience, study or case law).

1. The law points out the problem of sin; it doesn’t provide a solution.
2. “The law is the light that reveals how dirty the room is, not the broom that sweeps it clean.”
3. Proposition: Paul’s point in this text is that the only way to be released from the Law was to die to it, and to be united to Christ. (The Law is one for one. Christ is one for All)

The Law and Sin: Romans 7:7-25 - 7 What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” 8 But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. 9 I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive, and I died. 10 The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. 11 For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. 12 So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. 13 Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. 15 For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. 17 So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, 23 but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

C. This passage of scripture in Romans 7 sets forth the truth illustrated by Augustine’s experience: Human nature is inherently rebellious. Give us a law and we will see it as a challenge to break it.

1. In his Confessions, Augustine (354-430), the well-known theologian, reflected on this attraction to the forbidden. He wrote, "There was a pear tree near our vineyard, laden with fruit. One stormy night we rascally youths set out to rob it. We took off a huge load of pears -- not to feast upon ourselves, but to throw them to the pigs, though we ate just enough to have the pleasure of the forbidden fruit. They were nice pears, but it was not the pears that my wretched soul coveted, for I had plenty better at home. I picked them simply to become a thief. The desire to steal was awakened simply by the prohibition of stealing."

2. In Galveston, Texas, a hotel on the shore of the Gulf of Mexico put this notice in each room: No Fishing from The Balcony. Yet every day, hotel guests threw in their lines to the waters below. Then the management decided to take down the signs -- and the fishing stopped!

D. The Problem Is Not with the Law, It Is with US (V:12-25).

God's Law is GOOD (12).

1. **God's Law reveals God's will.**
2. **The Law does not create our sin, it reveals it.**
3. **All Scripture is inspired and profitable.**
4. **God's commands cannot be anything less than good.**
5. **The problem is with our limited minds and corruptible heart. The Jewish leaders of Paul's time are a great example of obeying in oldness of the letter. Many of them did obey the letter of the Law, but in their evil, they twisted the meanings of the letter. Examples:**
 - a. **The man who asked Jesus who was his neighbor.** He knew the letter of the law, but he didn't want to show love to everyone, so he defined neighbor in a way convenient to himself. A person obeying in spirit, isn't trying to justify not showing love to someone who may or may not be a neighbor, but is instead thinking of how to love others in action.
 - b. **Those who called out the woman adulteress.** They were following the letter of the law, but their motivation was to trap Jesus. They were punishing this woman out of hate for Jesus rather than zeal for following God's law. Their action was technically obedient, but wrong motivation.
 - c. **They wanted to kill Jesus so they were considering a way they could do it legally.** They kept trying to trap Jesus and finally were excited that Jesus compared Himself to God, thinking He had blasphemed, and they finally found their way to murder Him. Blaspheming was worthy of death, but righteous elders would try every way to discourage someone from doing it (yes, Jesus wasn't of course, but from their angle) rather than trick someone into doing it so they could then murder the person.

The point is they had an evil desire and then tried to twist the Scriptures to give them permission to do evil disguised as good.

E. This isn't new the Bible says:

1. that **the devil quoted and twisted scripture to tempt Jesus** as he fasted for 40 days and 40 nights just before he went out to begin his ministry.
2. People have always struggled with following the law. **Even with just one rule of Obedience the first man and woman's hearts were swayed to rebel.**
3. **Old Testament law actually had 613 commandments.** 248 positive acts and 365 negative commandments to abstain from certain acts. The 10 that most of us know are the ones according to Exodus 20 God Spoke to all the people the words of the covenant. **But if faced honestly, the Law shows us that we are hopelessly LOST in sin (13).**

F. Most people determine how "good" they are by comparing themselves to others. The Law, however, is God's rubric. God grades on a curve thinking. Obedience to God can reveal a person's relationship with God but cannot create it.

G. We are FICKLE and have two distinct INCLINATIONS (14-23).

1. **Sin is personified as a force living within us; sin nature, the flesh, a part of us.**

2. We are responsible for the things we think or do. Not a cop out. We choose to let sin reign.
(Response—Ability)

3. Vs. 18-19 is the crux of the matter.

4. An important sign of spiritual maturity is coming to terms with the fact that our hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked. And that our sinful minds rearrange our memories of the past so that we are less the culprit than we were. Without Christ actively working within, man's heart is hard.

Example: For centuries they have been surrounded by Christianity, but Christ has not penetrated. Christ does not breathe within them.” The movie scene actually points out a significant spiritual truth – It is not enough to be exposed to Christianity. Man is in desperate need of a heart transplant. Man may look good on the outside, but it is not what is on the outside that counts. It's what's inside.

Ezekiel 36:25-27 - Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Jeremiah 17:9 - “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”

a. When we honestly face our sinful and deceitful, insidious bent, we can be more alert to it and check it more often, if we live in denial, we make little or no progress.

H. At the same, time, we need a focus beyond sin managements. It is only through Jesus Christ that we can be delivered from this tangled MESS and address the problem with us (24-25). This is why our focus has to be a positive relationship with God, beginning with being justified by grace and working from a position of security, acceptance, and empowerment by the Holy Spirit. Romans 8 will develop this Life in the Spirit theme.

Romans 8:1-11 – 1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

1. Jesus, however, forgives our lawbreaking and gives us the Holy Spirit. He imparts a new desire and ability so that our greatest pleasure becomes bringing pleasure to God.

2. Speaking to a large audience, D.L. Moody held up a glass and asked, “How can I get the air out of this glass?” One man shouted, “Suck it out with a pump!” Moody replied, “That would create a vacuum

and shatter the glass.” After numerous other suggestions Moody smiled, picked up a pitcher of water, and filled the glass. “There,” he said, “all the air is now removed.” He then went on to explain that victory in the Christian life is not accomplished by “sucking out a sin here and there,” but by being filled with the Holy Spirit.

3. The Holy Spirit is our seal, or guarantee, of the promise of the resurrection.

Ephesians 1:13-14 (ESV) - 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

In ancient times, a monarch would have what was known as a signet ring. It was a ring that was unique to him. If he were to give an edict or command to the people, it would be folded or rolled up, and then wax would be poured on it and the king would then push his signet ring into the wax. This would be his seal; proof that it originated from him.

a. That’s what the Holy Spirit is to the believer. He is the proof that we belong to Christ.

b. In addition to being the proof that we belong to Christ, He is also the guarantee to our eternal inheritance.

(1) He is guarantee that we will be resurrected, and we will receive new and glorified bodies in glory!

(2) He is the guarantee that we have a place reserved for us in heaven.

4. And because we have this seal, this guarantee, we can be assured that we will reign with Christ in the Kingdom.

5. He is proof that we are the genuine article!

I. Conclusion: I started off this message by asking the question “have you given up ownership of your life and heart to the Holy Spirit who wants to live within you?”

A: If you have or if you are ready:

- START REMINDING YOURSELF AND THE DEVIL THAT YOU ARE NO LONGER CONDEMNED!
- START BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT AND NOT THE FLESH.
- REMEMBER THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS YOUR SEAL OR PROOF THAT YOU BELONG TO CHRIST.

1. May the Love of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit forever be what fulfills your heart.