



Romans 7:13-25, 8:1-4.  
24 Law & Spirit  
July 7, 2019

Let's pray and ask God to change us through the reading of His Word.

Today we will finally make the switch into Romans 8... which seems crazy because there is still a lot of chapter 7 to cover. This book is dense enough that we could spend the entire summer just on chapter 7 and DEFINITELY even

longer just on chapter 8, but I think that we would do well to treat it more as a whole today, and pull out a couple of the most important things rather than going through every single line with a fine tooth comb.

Let's read Romans 7:13-25, and then into Romans 8:1-5.

**<sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. <sup>15</sup> For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. <sup>16</sup> Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. <sup>17</sup> So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.**

<sup>21</sup> So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. <sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> 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.

**Now we will turn the chapter, into 8 and read just the first four verses. Hear this now, before we read it: YOU CAN NOT READ ROMANS 7 and then stop before you get into Romans 8. if you do, you miss Romans 7, and you will likely just make up what the beginning of Romans 8 is talking about. They go together. Romans 8:1-4 is the answer to the problem in Romans 7.**

### **Life in the Spirit**

**8 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.** <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> 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.

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The passage we just read in Romans 7 is one of the most comforting yet CONFUSING passages in all of the Bible, because Paul tells us “okay... I want to do good, but then I do bad. I know what I am supposed to do... but then I don’t do it.” - and obviously, hearing the Apostle Paul’s inward struggle certainly should give us some comfort as we navigate a life in which we *too* know the right thing to do... we know what God has called us to do... we know what the “Christian thing” is to do in most instances, but *sometimes* we don’t do them.

But I want to remind you of something very significant that Drew and James said last week as they were teaching on the first part of Romans 7.

Romans 7 is NOT a picture of what a Christian life is SUPPOSED TO LOOK LIKE. So, even though it is comforting that Paul is identifying with something that we too relate with... God does have more for us than just a life in which we always do what we don’t want to do. Paul was connecting

with the struggle of the day... all the Philosophers were already saying what Paul says there...

BUT What Paul is saying is actually bigger than that. It is bigger than just an excuse to be like the rest of the world... because everybody struggled with right and wrong...there was a common Hebrew phrase "*yetzer hara*" we have taught on this before - it means "the evil inclination" - it was the idea that good and evil are always at war with each other, and that human nature is often drawn to that which is evil... it seemed to be the story of Israel at that time... they knew right from wrong, and yet they constantly swayed toward what was wrong.

But Paul is not trying to make you feel fine for the times that you followed the evil inclination.

Christ didn't just die so that you could do the things that you don't want to do! Christ died so that you could have wholeness... and until you are able to see this thing from a bigger picture than just that of you never able to get out of a sinful pattern that you have let control your life... you will never experience the true Resurrected life that Paul in Romans 6 says that ALL CHRISTIANS HAVE ACCESS TO.

Christ died so that you could live a life in which you can get to the end of the day and you sit back on your couch and reflect and realize "God opened some amazing doors today for me... man... I battled through some tough things today but those things were shaping me and helping me to become who I need to be TO FACE TOMORROW...

and the trials and the struggles that will come with the next day.

Yes, Paul did things that he did not want to do... and sometimes you will too. But the Gospel is more than just you struggling through every day, sinning your way to Heaven because Jesus did something amazing for you. Contained in the Gospel is the HOPE AND THE REALITY of every single thing that YOU NEED TO BE WHO YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE TODAY.

I can't help but reflect on what James was saying last week about coveting. Paul says in Romans 7:7 that "had the law not said "thou shall not covet" I

would have never known what it even was to covet... but then a couple verses later Paul says "THE VERY COMMANDMENT THAT PROMISED TO BE LIFE TO ME, PROVED TO BE DEATH TO ME" - well what is that?

The 10th commandment was NEVER "THOU SHALL NOT COVET..."

The 10th commandment clearly is THOU SHALL NOT COVET THAT WHICH DOES NOT BELONG TO YOU... THAT WHICH BELONGS TO YOUR NEIGHBOR.

The rabbi's said that all of the commandments were contained in this one, and in fact they actually considered the 10th commandment to be a reward, NOT A COMMAND.

This is a huge point to understanding the rest of this section, which is why I am taking a couple minutes re-emphasizing it now before I get into today's passage.

The Hebrew word "covet" that we get in the ten commandments is the word "*chamad*" - and it doesn't mean "to want what is not yours" - it means to DELIGHT.

They considered it a reward, because they said that IF you keep the first command... and you make God first in your life.. if you keep the sabbath and you rest... if you honor your Father and Mother... if you don't commit adultery or murder...

if you live the type of life that God has intended for you, YOU WILL HAVE A LIFE THAT YOU CAN DELIGHT IN... you will have a life that you can covet and you won't for even a moment want someone else's life.

The 10th commandment is a declaration that you can be whole... you can have peace, and joy and delight in the things that God has given you.

Is that not the ultimate reward IN THIS LIFE? To have the life that you can delight in, without ever having to look over the fence and wonder if WHAT your neighbor has is better?

That is the intent of the 10th commandment. Delight in your own wife, and you won't desire another. Delight in your own field, and you won't always be looking at the one that your neighbor has... Delight in your own garden, like the one our community is cultivating at the Reconciliation Table lot... and you won't always be thinking about the life you don't have. You will be resting in and delighting in the life that you do have.

God has given us so much. He is doing so many amazing things in our community and in our city and in our church right now... and we can take the time to recognize that... and if we allow ourselves to truly see what He is doing, I am telling you... you will be DELIGHTED.

But for most people the 10th commandment is NOT A REWARD... because they have not done the other 9... they have NOT done the things in life that God has laid out for them, in which God has promised IF YOU LIVE THIS WAY... IF YOU LET GOD BE FIRST AND YOU LISTEN AND OBEY... you will have wholeness.

That is the heart of the whole law... How do we get to a place where we are healthy? How do we sort of the things that need sorting so we can have the life that we have the potential for?

and you get these areas that it shows you: this is not healthy... this is not healthy... dig into this one a little and see what it reveals in you.

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**But hear me here:**

I am learning this more and more in my own life... in my family and with my marriage.

Sometimes what happens in life, is we work out symptoms as if they are the cause of what is going on... but the symptoms are there to SHOW US WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING.

So, Dawn and I could be going through something... and to me, I will want to work out that exact issue at hand and in my mind if that gets sorted out

then I think we won the day... but what Dawn will do often is she will show me how the thing that has happened is a result of something deeper that is HAPPENING... and is having an affect on our marriage... and so she will prompt me to do the hard work of figuring out what is happening at the root of it.

So to Dawn, she actually thinks its a good thing when things happen that cause tensions because they are illuminators to bigger issues, and if those issues are never brought to the surface then we will never be able to bring healing to them.

That is what the law does!

Its like when someone goes to the doctor for something basic... a cough, a cold... a bruise... and they think that they are fine and its really not a big deal but really they have cancer...

ITS NOT A BAD THING THAT THEY WENT TO THE DOCTOR FOR THE BRUISE... if they had not paid attention to the symptom, then they never would have found the root of the problem, and BECAUSE THEY DISCOVERED THE ROOT, they could then work to fix it.

The law itself shows you the specific symptoms of a much bigger problem... the problem of Sin as a force... an entity... a being in your life that has control... and its whole purpose is to rob you of your wholeness, so that you can't be who you are supposed to be or delight in the things you should be delighting in.

We will see in a moment that that is exactly what Paul is saying that the law ultimately does... it takes all of the symptoms... the things we may call "sin" and it actually seems to MAGNIFY THE PROBLEM so as to show us the root...

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So Paul uses that commandment as a way of saying "okay... what the law does is it shows me what is in me that is not good.

It shines this bright light on the areas of my life that are not as they should be... that are weighing me down... that are hurting me.

And it's not the light that is the problem! The fact that it's showing me the parts of my life that need to change, that is supposed to be something that helps us resolve our lives and come to a place that we can heal. The problem is, that people use that light as a weapon against others...

and... they allow that light to not only expose to them the parts that need to change, but many people actually allow themselves to be condemned by the very light that was giving to be their guide. Remember, the ten commandments were a marriage *ketubah*. - it was a covenant agreement between God and Israel... and the law was given as a guide to Israel for how to be human in a world where all that they had ever known was slavery... All Israel had prior to the law was a false sense of what it means to be human, as Egypt oppressed them their entire lives.

and that is where Paul is at in this thing. He is not saying that the law is bad... He is saying that the law was created for good, but yet it also gave sin an opportunity... and sin took that opportunity.

look closely at v.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.”

what the law does... is it actually makes sin - SINFUL BEYOND MEASURE. It puts sin all in one place because if it is all in one place... one incomprehensible place where you can't help but look at this thing in it's entirety and realize “I am just so far beyond lost... I am so far beyond ever being able to dig myself out of the mess that I have created”

if we can get it there... if you can put it all IN ONE PLACE...

then it can be dealt with all at one time.

AND THAT IS THE POINT OF THE LAW.

Paul's point in Romans 7 is that he can't keep the law. He wants to, but he keeps failing... and Israel was no better. They knew right... yet they did wrong... it was always their story.

and it had to get dealt with.

Notice this transition into chapter 8. it says THEREFORE. People love to quote Romans 8:1 - there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus... and it is one of the most significant passages in all of Paul's writing but it is not just because there simply is no condemnation for those who are in Jesus Christ.

Paul is talking about the law, that has forever condemned everyone  
BECAUSE NOBODY COULD EVER LIVE UP TO IT.

and the only reason that Paul can say what he says in 8:1 is because he first understands what he says in 8:3.

Because in verse 3 there is something that IS condemned.

And it's not you... and it's not me... and it's not the law... and it's *not* Jesus.

This is the thing that Paul has been building to this entire time... in everything in chapter 1 and 2 when he lists everyone... everyone is guilty... this is what he builds too through chapter 7 when he says that he, like Israel... was constantly reminded by the law that he can't keep it... its all leading to this moment where we BRING SIN ALL TO ONE PLACE, AND CRUCIFY THE ENTIRE THING.

Galatians 3:21-26 really helps us understand this concept. Lets read it together:

"Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. <sup>22</sup> But **the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin**, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.



<sup>23</sup> Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. <sup>24</sup> So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, <sup>26</sup> for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.”

The scriptures actually imprisoned everything under sin, so that Jesus could deal with it all at once. It showed everyone that righteousness would never be achieved by it, because it showed them all of the ways that they failed it... it shined a light on specific *surface areas* that prove that something deeper is going on...

now look at Romans 8:3 - “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 (a sin offering), **he condemned sin** in the flesh”

There are a couple things in here... first of all, the literal translation here, even though our translation misses this... it says that God sent Jesus in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a SIN OFFERING.

And He condemned sin in the flesh.

The sin offering offering is described in Leviticus (4) and in Numbers 15... now, in ancient Hebrew culture, there were several different offerings with several different purposes... there was a “burnt offering” there was a “grain offering” there was a “peace” offering... a lot of different kinds of offerings but one of the things that made a SIN OFFERING unique was that it was an offering to make right the sin which you did NOT WANT TO COMMIT... but did.

In Numbers 15, we get the laws for intentional and unintentional sins and the offering that you make for an UNINTENTIONAL SIN... a sin that you did not first set your heart upon and then go and do...

a sin that you didn't want to do, but yet still found yourself doing...

the offering for that is what was called a SIN OFFERING.

Romans 7, more than any other place in the New Testament, is a testimony to the fact that we do the things that we don't want to do... we fall into sins that we don't necessarily set out to fall into... and yet the entire thing is brought together in 8:3 when we finally see that for the very things that we did not want to do... Jesus was the exact offering that the law required for sins of that nature.

Look very closely at this verse. Look very closely at what it is saying. God has done what the law could not do, and He did it through Jesus... through Jesus, God CONDEMNED SIN.

This is incredibly theologically important. God did not condemn Jesus. Jesus FULFILLED THE LAW... thus making him the only vessel by which the sin that the law put a light on could be dealt with... and through His flesh sin was condemned ONCE AND FOR ALL when it DIED WITH JESUS.

To condemn means to be DECLARED GUILTY. So another way to read that first line in Romans 8 would be "therefore, nobody is declared guilty who is in Christ" - because SIN WAS ALREADY DECLARED GUILTY.

Remember Romans 1:18?

The character of God is revealed against unrighteousness and injustice.

God cannot forever stand by while the injustice reigns supreme...

God cannot forever stand by while people remove Him from everything... God cannot forever stand by while the body of sin rules the world and robs His people of their purpose. His character won't let that happen. And so once and for all, He did something... HE DID AN ETERNAL THING...

He put sin onto the flesh of Jesus and He condemned sin once and for all.

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We have now come to the place when the character of God is revealed once and for all... And the theological implications of this are enormous.

The idea that God's wrath fell upon Jesus himself... like, God had to put his anger somewhere, so He put it on Jesus... it is a common teaching but misses the entire point of the Gospel.

God so LOVED the world that He sent His only Son. And His Son DID NOT SIN... though He was completely capable, in the human flesh... of sinning. He was tempted and tried just like we... only He lived without sin.

And He came to save us... to rescue us... to redeem us... and yet we killed Him... and according to everything that we have read in Romans... though Jesus never sinned... when He was crucified, SIN WAS CONDEMNED. It was declared guilty and was put to death...

But Jesus himself was never guilty.

When God looks at Jesus, He declares Him RIGHTEOUS... and because YOUR SIN HAS NOW BEEN CONDEMNED IN THE FLESH OF JESUS... now, when God sees you... He sees Jesus.

and that is how He is able to declare you righteous.

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Finally, in closing... we must remind you that Death didn't just occur so that you could stop sinning. Jesus didn't die on the cross to make you stop sinning. Jesus died on the cross so that sin could be condemned, give you the ability to live out the type of life that you were created to live out... and there is only one way to do that...

verse 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."

as long as you live your life in your own flesh, you are going to keep going back to your old ways. You will keep doing what you don't want to do, and the law will always remind you of all of the things that you simply will never live up to.

But there is another way to live... and it is according to the Spirit. It is to let the Holy Spirit take shape in you life and work through you and speak through you and guide you and lead you to the places that you would never go on your own.

And Paul is about to dive head first into how this looks... and how through the Holy Spirit, we can actually experience freedom and can actually be people who help others find freedom...

by the Holy Spirit, we can actually work for justice in a world that often has so little of it...

by the Holy Spirit, when our world feels like there is no way... a way is made.

And we NEEDED to take today to bring some closure to the concept of our flesh... but I want to encourage you this week as we prepare to get into some incredible scriptures these next few weeks... to seek the Holy Spirit in your life... Because HE REALLY IS EVERYTHING.

We don't have the law anymore... but in the same way that the law shined a spotlight on the things in our lives that needed to change, the New Testament tells us that it is the Holy Spirit's job to convict us... to help us sort out the areas that are keeping us from being who we are supposed to be... that are keeping us from wholeness.

The law showed us the best way to live, the way that if we could follow it we WOULD have a life that we delight in, so we wouldn't want anyone else's... but now the Spirit does that. It brings wisdom. It guides us through the difficult things.

The whole problem in the Garden of Eden was that God wanted to teach Adam and Eve about his true knowledge... about His wisdom... He wanted them to live in HIS UNDERSTANDING OF GOOD AND EVIL and He wanted to give that to them, HE HAD A LIFE THAT HE HAD DESIGNED FOR THEM... a best way to live...

but instead they tried to TAKE IT ON THEIR OWN. They opted to be their own gods and write their own rules.

That is why we needed the law in the first place... because someone tried to figure it out themselves, and humans have been doing it ever since.

But Romans 5 makes that very clear that Jesus undid Genesis 3. And those who are in Him don't have to live that way anymore... and one thing that Jesus said in John 14 was this "I have to go, so the Spirit can come" - He explains that when the Spirit fills us we have the power that Jesus has... when we live Spirit filled lives, we are actually truly able to live lives that reflect Jesus... that bring hope to the broken areas...

The Spirit of God brings peace to the situations that feel totally broken... and when you allow God to fill you and use you... you become that vessel of hope who now gets to be a part of God bringing justice and hope and equality and peace and unity to the world. All of the things that the law would have done if we would have kept it, but nobody could.

Without the Spirit, we still will never be who we are supposed to be. We will never live the life that Jesus lived... He was filled with the Spirit His entire ministry - and He operated in that filling every moment of His life. He didn't turn it on and off depending on the day or depending on the circumstances or depending on what seemed to be at stake that day.

We need to Spirit.

Paul in another place says "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is FREEDOM"

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I believe that we are entering into a season as a church that WE won't make it through without the Holy Spirit as our guide... but with His help, I believe it has the potential to be the most significant season we have ever experienced. I believe more people will encounter God than we can even imagine... BUT IT HAS TO BE A MOVE OF THE SPIRIT... OF US BEING

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT, AND THEN FLOWING IN THAT FILLING SO THAT OUR LIVES CAN BE AN OUTPOURING of what the Spirit has put IN US.

We fulfill the law when we love one another... when we love our neighbor as ourselves... and Paul says that WE CAN DO IT... WE CAN FULFILL THE LAW - but we can't do it by flesh, like Israel tried to do... we can only do it by Spirit.

Spirit fill us today. Make us new... Make us who we were created to be.