

Law is good. Anarchy is bad and can't work for an orderly society. Rex Lex (Samuel Rutherford), not only demolished the pretensions of those who held anarchy to be good, but in particular asserted that the rule of kings was capricious and unlawful. He held to what we would call the "rule of law".

Law always has a bit of a menacing character to it. Someone can sue you and take your wealth from you, the government can enforce unjust laws. You can be put into prison as a result of the process of Law.

The average Jew of Paul's day had some of these feelings about Law but, at the same time a profound respect, knowing that the Mosaic Law came directly from God.

**The Law is:**

- 1) The expression of God's righteous character. "I am the Lord your God . . ." [Ex 20:2]
- 2) A tool for the repression of sin in the individual and society and a general directive for the good ordering of sinful people.
- 3) A mirror for believers to cut through the deceptions of our sinful nature. Heb 4:12.

**intro 1.** Paul has already made several statements about being under grace and no longer under the law:

**Rom. 6:14**

**Rom. 6:15**

**intro 2.** Any Jew upon hearing this would go nuts. He would assume that Paul is abrogating the Law of Moses, which he/she could not entertain in any way. **Acts 21:28.**

So there is a real need to explain the relationship of the law to the gospel.

Even in the decision of the Jeru council there was an acknowledgement of the importance of this:

**Acts 15:21** "For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath."

Earlier there were accusations against Jesus. "Why don't your disciples follow . . ."

### 3 attitudes to the law

- 1) legalist - minding your P & Qs
- 2) antinomian/libertine - does not want any constraint by the law.
- 3) n.t. believer - properly respects and obeys the law, but from a motivation of love.

Now the structure of Romans 7 is written to speak to each of these groups. Not that he labels them or names them, but they are there in the background nonetheless.

#### There are 3 distinct parts:

##### 1) first part

vs. 1-6 - this is primarily for those who know the law. Paul asserts that the Law no longer has dominion or lordship over us. We have been delivered from its tyranny by the death of Christ. We are still in bondage, but in bondage to Christ in the power of His Spirit.

##### 2) second part

vs. 7-13 - He defends the law from unjust criticism and misunderstanding. Paul argues that the problem of sin and death in our experience is our sinful nature, not the law itself. The law itself is good, but our sinful nature perverts it

##### 3rd part

vs. 14-8:4 - describes the experience of the true believer. Inner conflict and yet assurance of ultimate victory over the sinful nature.

Flesh & Spirit at war with each other Gal. 5:17

mind & sinful nature - 7:25

law of my mind/ law of the sin

The burden of Paul's message to each kind of person is important:

- \* to the legalist, the death of Christ as the means by which we have been delivered from the law
- \* to the antinomian he emphasized the fact that the sinful nature is the enemy, not the law.
- \* to the faithful believer, he emphasizes the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit as the key to obeying the law.

So let's look at the 1st section which we will call the Hardness of the Law and

it comes in 3 pieces.

### 1. The principle: vs. 1

- a) Don't you know - a way of saying, "you know it's obvious that . . ."
- b) He then states what in fact everyone does know - that the law is only binding on those that are alive.
- c) the word for bind/has authority over (NIV) - the word is the word "lord it over" used by Jesus to describe the rule of secular rulers of that day. [mark 10].

### 2. The illustration vs. 2-3

- a) example that everyone would understand. The illus is really easily understood. If one of the married couple dies, the surviving one is no longer bound to that marriage.
- b) "that law" is what he has described in vs. 2 as "the law of marriage". Now remember that we have died by virtue of being united to Christ.

### 3. The application - vs. 4-6

- a) in simple words the appl is this: just as death terminates a marriage, so death has ended our bondage to the law.
- b) "likewise", you died to the law through the body of Christ - a ref to Christ's death on the cross - here's the kicker - so that [purpose] you might belong to another. \*\*\*he continues the picture of marriage!
- c) What Paul is saying is that Christ death, in which we participate by faith, leaves us free from the bondage to the law and joins us (as in marriage) with Christ in his resurrection life.
- d) not like being under the bondage of the law, which only led us into more sin because of our sinful nature, but directed by the Spirit who empowers us the obey God's law in a new way.

### The application application

1. Do we as Xtians still have to keep the Law? Answer: No & Yes.
  - no, in the sense that our acceptance and justification does not depend on our keeping the Law. Christ's death on the cross fully met the demands of the Law. The Law no longer lord's it over us. We are no longer in bondage to it.
  - However, our new life is still a life of bondage. We still serve, we are still slaves - but the motive and means our service have radically changed.
2. Why do we serve? Not because the Law is our master and we have to, or

get zapped. But because Christ is our husband and we want to please him.

\*\*\* Not because our keeping the Law leads to salvation, but because our salvation leads to obedience to the Law!

\*\*\* The Law says do this and you will live. The gospel says, “you live”!, so do this.

The motivation is completely different.

3. How do we serve? Not in the old way of a written code, but in the newness of the Spirit. That is, not by obedience to a written code, but by surrender to an internal Spirit.