

## Study 8 – The book of Romans by Neville Clark, 2016

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Reading: Romans Ch 7

### “The purpose of the Law”

We concluded at the end of Romans Ch 5 a major section of the epistle and in our last class we commenced Romans Ch 6 which of course commenced the next major section of the epistle. Ch 6-8 of the epistle to the Romans is that section concerning the righteousness of God with believers. What is the argument of the apostle? In this section, he is going to talk all about the Law. The Law had a purpose, and the purpose of the Law was very clear. In Ch 3:19 of Romans, he says, that “all the world might become guilty before God.” So the critical purpose of the Law of Moses was to expose sin, so that man could identify just what kind of a creature he was, and that was its purpose.

The solution to man’s problem would of course come by the Lord Jesus Christ by our identification with the righteous life of the Lord Jesus Christ. We might do that in baptism initially, but of course, by copying the Lord’s lifestyle we might identify with him. Therefore, our conduct, our righteous deeds if I could call them that, are not an indication of our righteousness, they are not the things that will get us salvation, they are an identification with the Lord’s righteousness. We have no righteousness in an outright sense of our own, but inasmuch as we copy the conduct and the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, we line up behind him and will be saved in the mercy of God on the basis of his righteousness and not ours.

Well, the Jew took one look at that of course and said, ‘we are hopeless.’ The Jews response was to throw up his arms and say ‘well if that’s the case, if the Law of Moses no longer applies, inasmuch as that we are now in Christ, what’s the point of having any law, why have any governments whatsoever in life. And if grace, Paul, grace triumphs over sin as you say, and there is no sin too great for the grace of God, then why wouldn’t we sin even more and give God the greatest opportunity to demonstrate that grace in our lives, so that we, in fact, can become God’s helper by the more sin we commit?’

### The relationship between Grace and Sin

Well, this then is spoken to in Chs 6,7 and 8. And you will see the very first major section there, the relationship between grace and sin, how Paul answers these allegations, if the Law of Moses is done away with in Christ, then there is no Law. If any sin can be forgiven, if the grace of God outruns the wickedness of sin, then just sin even more to bring about the greater abundance of the grace of God, those allegations, or those questions by the Jew are answered in three ways, by three examples. The example of baptism, Ch 6:1-14, the death of an old life and the commencement of a new one. The example of employment, Ch 6:15-23, the end of an old master and the beginning of a new one, and thirdly, the example of marriage in Ch 7:1-6 the death of an old husband and the marriage to a new one. Each of these examples you will see in their own way, demonstrating our identification with the Lord Jesus Christ. And just as you consider what those examples mean, it is ludicrous isn’t it, to presume that just because the Law of Moses is done away there is no law, that we can live an ungoverned and licentious life, it just doesn’t make sense at all. Therefore, says Paul, under no circumstances can we go back to our old way of life, or become completely lawless in that sense, and expect that God’s grace will save us. Our works don’t achieve our salvation, our works prove our identification with the Lord Jesus Christ, it is His works that will save us, and clearly, if these examples mean anything to us in life, they do not mean licentiousness or an ungoverned life.

### The Example of Marriage

Chapter 7 then, commences the third of those three examples. As I said, Ch 7:1-6, the example of marriage, and he begins in a familiar way. “Know ye not,” he says, Ch 7:1, “Know ye not, brethren, for I speak to them that know the Law, how that the Law has dominion over a man as long as he liveth.” Now I say, “he begins in a familiar way,” this is a characteristic expression, this expression “know ye not,” it occurs three times, because there are three examples here in this section. You will find this ‘know ye not’ phrase in Ch 6:3 in relation to baptism. You find it again in Ch 6:16, in relation to a new employer, and you find it here, of course, in relation to the example of marriage. It literally means, ‘don’t you understand’ as if these are elementary principles, which of course, they are. But who is he speaking to in v 1 here? “I speak to them that know the law.” Who were they that “knew the law?” If you haven’t got it in your margin, just make a reference, Ch 2:17-18, and come back there, because you have it specifically defined. He is talking to the Jewish portion of the ecclesia. You will appreciate this was a mixed ecclesia, and it is the Jewish quarter, or perhaps the Jewish

half of the ecclesia that had raised this question. "Them that know the Law." Ch 2:17 says, "Behold, thou art called a Jew and resteth in The Law," you see? and makest thy boast of God and knowest his will and approveth the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of The Law." So "them that knew the Law" were the Jewish believers in the ecclesia of Rome, so this is an issue now, the third example is an issue particularly designed, particularly calculated to appeal to the Jewish portion of the ecclesia.

### **The Example of Baptism**

Why? Why do we need to especially make an example for the Jews? Do you remember the argument of Ch 6, Ch 6 has got the first two of these three examples of identification. But do you remember that Ch 6 had two big questions in it? The example of baptism, for example in the first half of the chapter answered a question. The example of the service of a new master in the second half of the chapter answered a second question. The first question was in Ch 6:1, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" that is, shall we abandon ourselves to lawlessness? Well, he says, 'no you shall not' and he gives the example of baptism. Then the second question comes in Ch 6:15, "Well then," he says, "Shall we sin because we are not under the Law but under grace?" Now this is a different question to verse 1, it might appear to be the same, but v 1 said, "shall we might continue in sin" v 15 says "All right, if we can't continue in sin, if we can't abandon ourselves to sin, what if we sin 'a' sin, or 'a class of sins?' And he is going to answer that question in two ways, a new employer, a new husband. So that latter two of these three examples are an answer to v 15.

But here's the interesting thing, v 15 says, "Shall we sin because we are not under Law?" The answer to "shall we sin" is the answer of a change of employer, because we are not under Law, is answered in Ch 7:1-6. This was the question from the Jews you see? "Shall we reserve one portion of our lives to ourselves because we are no longer under the Law of Moses?" "Well," he says, "how can you say can we reserve a portion of our lives for ourselves, you've changed employers. You no longer work for the old company. How can you go and work one day a week for the old company when you are fully employed by the new, that won't work. And as for being no longer under the Law, think what you are saying," and here's the answer coming in Ch 7 and this, and in fact, I am going to suggest to you, is the surprising answer the Apostle Paul is going to give here, as he commences Ch 7 We are answering the question that "we are no longer under Law." What did that really mean? Well, I am speaking to you who know the Law, he says. If the key word of the second half of Romans 6 was the word "servant," which it is, just cast your eye down v 16,17,19,20 and so on, the key word of the opening verses of Ch 7 is the word 'Law.' V 1,2,3,4,6, and it is only a six verse section and five verses out of six has got the word 'Law' because we are answering the question that we "are not under Law," Ch 6:15. Now I am labouring the point. Why am I laboring the point? Come with me to 1 Cor 15, here is a critical principle that you have to appreciate and which in fact is going to unlock the whole of Romans Ch 7. Now these are verses, I am going to go to 1 Cor 15:54, these are verses that you know well, you can recite, perhaps you have never thought exactly about what they mean. 1 Cor 15:54, this verse you know, this is an easy one, "When this corruptible shall have put in incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory." So when this body is changed for the body to come, death is swallowed up, that we understand. What about this, "Oh death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory." Well that's not too hard either, when death is abolished in immortality, it no longer has a sting, and the grave no longer has victory because immortals can no longer die.

### **"The sting of death is sin"**

All right, what about this. "The sting of death is sin," what does this mean? "The strength of sin is the Law," what does that mean? Well, if I was to re translate it it might help you, 'the sting of death is caused by sin,' or 'the sting of death is in sin.' And 'the strength of sin is the Law,' that is 'the Law gives sin its strength.' So the Law gives sin its strength, and the sting of sin is death. That is to say, sin bites you and you die. So the sting of death comes from sin, but sin gains its power from the Law. The word "strength" here in v 56 is the word 'dunamos' from which we get the English word dynamo, it means energy, and this is the point, sin draws enormous energy from Law. Now does that make sense to you? Sin draws energy from Law. Well yes it does, because as soon as we have a prohibition in life, sin opens its eyes and comes to life. The moment I say to you or you say to me 'thou shalt not' there is a part of you that opens its eyes and says 'why not?' 'what if I do?' How dare you tell me not to do this or that? So you see, as good as the Law might be, as wholesome as the Law might be, as educational as it might be, it could have some very counter-productive effects in the face of sin, that's the real story of Romans Ch 7, now come back there. Do you want to see some key words in those verses that we have just read, death, sin, law, look at this, Romans Ch 7, the apostle has set himself to make this point, because this is going to be the crowning point for the Jew.

The Jew, you see, rested his whole life in the Law of Moses, his whole national identity was based on the existence of the Law of Moses and his attachment to it. What if we were to find that the Law of Moses had some extremely counterproductive effects? What if it not only couldn't save him, but incited him to sin even more? What if we were to find that, you see, "I'm speaking to them that know the Law." And look, I will show you that in Romans Ch 6 and 7. Three times, Ch 7:1 talks about 'dominion,' "the Law has dominion over a man as long as he liveth." In this section 'dominion' only occurs three times, only three times. Ch 6:9 we have the "dominion of death." Ch 6:14 we have the "dominion of sin," Ch 7:1 we have the "dominion of Law," what do you think of that? "The sting of death is sin," the "strength of sin is the Law," you see? These three great words death, sin, Law are all related to each other, are set up for us in the three examples of Romans 6 and 7. He's going to give three demonstrations, you see, to demonstrate that in Christ we are no longer under the dominion of death, we are no longer under the dominion of sin, and we are no longer under the dominion of Law, that's it, that's his point. Now what's this illustration showing in Ch 7. V 1 "Know ye not, brethren," he says, "for I speak to them that know the Law, how that the Law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth."

### **The Law of Marriage**

It's a general principle of course of all law, that it operates in life and it terminates in death. That's true of Jewish Law, it's true of Roman Law it is true of today. Which Law are we talking about? Well, all Law, but he is going give by example, the law of marriage. "For a woman that hath an husband she is bound by the Law to her husband as long as he liveth, but if the husband be dead she is loosed from the law of her husband." So the law of marriage is a classic illustration of the point that law applies in life but not in death. Marriage is a classic example of that. The law fastens a wife to a husband for the duration of the life of the husband. When he dies she is discharged from that law. V 3, "But," he says, "while her husband liveth if 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 adulterous, though she be married to another man," you see? If she remarries while her spouse is alive, it is adultery, if your spouse dies, you are free to remarry, it is not adultery, that's his point. You are discharged from your responsibility by the death of your spouse. Well, there's the law, in this case, the law of the husband, what does it mean, what's his point? V 4, "Wherefore brethren," so there's the law, the example, and here's the application. The example, vv 1-3, the application in vv 4,5,6. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also have become dead to the law by the body of Christ that she should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead that we should bring forth fruit unto God." And before I explain that, here is an interesting point, you can see immediately that this is speaking about the change of a husband. We are married to Christ, and the remarkable thing about Christ, of course, that you found in Ch 6:9 is that "death hath more dominion over him," so being married to this husband will never be discharged, because this husband, in v 4, will never ever die, but you can't get unbaptised. You can't disannul your marriage to Jesus Christ. He will never die. There's the first point.

But now look hard at v 4, because it presents us a problem. In the example of vv 1-3, the first husband dies, and that liberated the wife to marry a second husband. In the application of that example in v 4, the believer dies. But the believer in v 4 would be the counterpart of the wife in vv 1-3. So you see, it is a different person has died, the example doesn't quite work, it would appear. In v 2, the husband dies, and in v 4, we die. It doesn't quite match exactly. Well, it is not very complicated, what he is actually trying to say in v 4-6, he's trying to say this, before you were baptised you were married to the Law, or to an old way of life. In baptism, that old way of life has died and you've married a new way of life. He calls it here, an old husband or a new husband. So therefore in this application, the two husbands from v 4, the two husbands are two lifestyles of this person. They were married to an old way of life before baptism, they are married to a new way of life after baptism, so the believer is the woman and the two husbands are the two lifestyles. You can see that all three characters are really part of the believer, either the woman or the husband. Brother John Carter calls it "the individual consciousness of the believer," that's the woman married to this way of life or that way of life. Let me put it on the screen. This is how it works. The wife is the believer, or the "individual consciousness of the believer" as Bro Carter calls it. You want a phrase from Rom 7, v 25 says "I myself," Paul, he says, "I myself," this is me, that's the wife of v 4 of Rom 7. The first husband is the old man of the flesh, sin, our life before baptism. The second husband, Christ, the new man of the spirit. In Peter's epistle, 1 Pet 3:4, Peter calls him "the hidden man of the heart," this is the second husband. The basis of the first marriage was "the law of the husband," it says in v 2 or the Law of Moses v 4. That was what united the first husband and wife. Now what are we saying? We are saying that before baptism, those who know the Law, the Jewish proportion of the ecclesia, they were married to sin, and the marriage relationship if you like between them and sin was the Law of Moses. Now you can see Jewish eyebrows raised a that. 'How can it be' 'How can it be, that is you were a servant of the Law of Moses, you were married to sin. He is going to expose it later on in this chapter because the Law inflames sin, even the Law of Moses, inflames sin. It was a problem.

The marriage bond to the second husband is the Law of Christ, the phrase “the Law of Christ” appears in places like 1 Cor 9:21, it doesn’t appear here, but if you want a definition from Romans, then Ch 7:6 calls it “the spirit of the Law,” as opposed to the “letter.” So before baptism, they were married to the “letter of the Law,” they were servants of the Law of Moses, servants of sin, united to it by the Law of Moses. After baptism, they were united to Christ by the “spirit of the Law.” The fruit of the first marriage, of course, was death. The fruit of the second marriage is life, that is the difference, this is the marriage state being spoken of here. Now this is going of course to beg the next question because he has just said a few things in by way of the implications of this example that are going to outrage the Jews.

Are we saying that the Law of Moses therefore is sin? Is that what we are saying? Because you can imagine the Jewish response to this, well look at v 5, “For when we were in the flesh, the motions or as your margin says, the passions of sin the motivations of sin which were by the Law of Moses did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. “When we were in the flesh”. What does it mean “when we were in the flesh?” That is, in our old way of life prior to baptism we were under the governance of the Law of Moses. This phrase “in the flesh,” appears in Ch 8:5 as a contrast to “being in the spirit.” So it is our old way of life under the Law of Moses prior to baptism, and under the Law he says, sin worked in our members. The word ‘work’ in Rom 7:5 is the word *energeo* from which we get the English word energy. What is he saying? He is saying the Law energized our members to sin and fired us to sin, he says, because it gave us a prohibition which aroused sinful tendencies.

The Law, in a manner of speaking, created sin, where perhaps sin didn’t exist before, and so wicked was sin, that it used the Holy Law for its purposes and energized the flesh rather than destroying it. “The strength of sin is the Law.” Sin takes enormous strength from any law, that’s his point, you see, that’s not just a feature of the Law of Moses, think about life, think about your life, you are driving on the open road at 110k and hour, perhaps you are driving to Mildura, which I’ve done before. You come to a little town, the signpost says 60k, you look around and you say, well, you don’t look around, sin looks around, using these eyes, sin looks around and says 60k, it’s 5 am, there is nothing on the road, what do you mean 60k I can see the next 110k sign in the distance, conscience says ‘60k,’ sin says, ‘what’s the error in my speedo? 10%, Ah, so 60k really means 66k.’ ‘60k.’ But sin’s pretty smart, so sin will say ‘just keep talking we are doing 80k, Oh look, 110k.’ Tell me that’s never happened to you? Happily, the nice man at the Transport Department take a photo of you so you never forget what the old man of the flesh looks like. Funny thing they never take photos of the new man of the spirit, they only take photos of the old man of the flesh. And sin thought it had won, well welcome to the real world, that just cost you \$200. But you see, the point, sin doesn’t like a prohibition and will quickly figure out any justification to disobey that prohibition, whatever it might be, and the justifications are extremely plausible, there’s no-one on the road, not only that, it is 5.00 in the morning, nothing is moving, the sun’s not even moving. Now that is a trivial example, I could give you some less trivial examples and you can think of them yourselves, but the point is, the presence of a law generates an enormous wave of energy to break that law so that the mere service of a law, for the sake of law, binds you to sin, that’s Paul’s point in v 5. The motivations of sin are incited by law.

### **The motivations of sin are incited by law.**

What is the antidote? Well, I will show it to you, I want you to turn it up, Gal 5:6. Here is the antidote, sin is energized by law he says in Rom 7:5. What’s the antidote? Gal 5:6 “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision but faith which is energized by love.” Same word, the word ‘worketh’ in Gal 5:6 is the same as the word ‘work’ in Rom 7:5. So the opposite of sin being energized by law is faith being energized by love. This is the complete difference between serving the old man of the flesh and the new man of the spirit. This is the difference between keeping the letter and keeping the spirit of the Law, you see, that is the consequence of changing husbands, these are diametrically opposed, these two husbands. And if we really are married to this second husband, come back to Romans, if we really are married to that second husband, that’s got to be our attitude. Laws will still exist. They exist in society, they exist in the ecclesia, they are here for the benefit of the community. Laws are not arbitrary, the old man will keep the law grudgingly, reluctantly, apathetically, the second husband will exhibit a joyful, and willing and enthusiastic compliance of love, that’s the difference between these two husbands, very, very different characters. Can you believe the question that says ‘shall we sin because we are not under law?’ Think about these two husbands, do you really want to be like that first husband. V 6 of Romans Ch 7, “But now, we are delivered from the Law that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter.” ‘Newness of spirit’ here in Ch 7:6, is the parallel to ‘newness of life’ in Ch 6:4. That doesn’t mean that because we are not under the Law of Moses we are not under any law, but we are not looking for no law, we are looking for a new master, we are looking for a new husband, we are looking for a new

disposition. We serve a new law. You want to know what that new law is? It is written there in Rom. 8:2, it is the law of the spirit of life, that's the true spirit of the Law of Moses, that joyful, willing enthusiastic submission to God's laws, you see. You can see however, by this explanation, by this third example, the apostle has now lit the powder keg. Look at Rom 8:7, "What shall we say then," now here is the anticipated rejoinder of the Jew. "What shall we say then, is the Law sin?" by which he means, 'is the Law the cause of sin?' Sounds alarming. Look what we have just said in Rom 7:5, the Law aroused sinful tendencies, there is no question about it, so from a Jewish point of view, this is a very serious question, "is the Law sin?" they say. "By no means" says the Apostle, "Nay, I had not known sin but by the Law, for I had not known lust, except the Law had said Thou shalt not covet."

The Law was not a sinful thing itself but whenever Law was present, or is present, sin is identified which wasn't identified before, so in that sense, the Law increased the amount of sin that is in the world, increased the amount of sin that is in a person's life by virtue of the fact that it now created an awareness of sin. So Paul says, look carefully at v 7, he says, 'I always knew it was wrong to steal, I never knew it was wrong to want to steal,' that's what covetousness is isn't it? 'I always knew it was wrong to steal,' he says, 'what I didn't know was that it is wrong to want to steal.' Now it was always wrong, all the Law did was highlight an existing problem. This flaws him now. He says 'Oh, I'm further from God than I ever realised.' V8, and the problem gets bigger, "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence, for without the law, sin was dead." As soon as the Law entered his life it showed just how much sin was in control. It created prohibitions that weren't there before, and rather than limiting sin, sin rears up, like a snake, and now goes on the attack, doesn't it. It says that "sin took occasion," v 8, that is a critical term. This word "took occasion," the phrase "took occasion" means 'a base of operation.' Sin established a base of operation. It is a military term, it set up a camp, a military camp. Sin got fully prepared and fully equipped and armed as soon as this prohibition entered into your life. Sin arms itself and it is going to go on the attack, you see, the minute you say 'no' sin takes offense, it entrenches itself, it mounts an attack, and digs in. That's what sin does, establishes a base of operation. So covetousness might not have been a big problem in Paul's life before, in comes the Law and says 'thou shalt not covet,' all of a sudden sin wakes up, you see, and now you want what's forbidden. You want to know why you shouldn't want something. But look carefully at v 8 "sin does not take occasion by the Law, it takes occasion by the commandment." We don't all have a problem with every prohibition, you've got a problem with this one, I've got a problem with that one. Sin, being what it is, however, will justify breaking this commandment on the basis that you keep that commandment. Sin's got a problem with one commandment or other. We are not completely ungoverned. It picks and chooses, you see, we call that Judaism.

Sin loves Judaism. Can you see why? Because if Judaism were permissible in the Truth, I could justify I could justify an unrighteous action on the basis of a previous righteous action, sin would love that, because that would allow it to pick and choose which commandment it kept, wouldn't it? It would be a mistake to think that all of this only falls in one commandment, we are immediately at war on a number of fronts as soon as sin enters our lives. The fact is, that sin's taken occasion, it is now going to attack us on every side, in many directions all at once, that's what is going to happen as a consequence of this, because lust is now inflamed, you see? You want to know the cause of the problem? Ch 8:7, "The carnal mind is enmity against God," the word "enmity" means 'hostility,' or 'hatred.' "It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed, can be." There is a part of the character of every one of us which is untameable. Now I went to Monarto Zoo and we were sitting in the bus and we were driving past these Mongolian horses, and they are just like horses, right, and they are just eating grass, but they've got really big heads, and somebody said, "What's the big deal about Mongolian horses?" "Oh, well, they were almost extinct." "Why?" "Well, they've been shot out of existence," Why? "Because they are good to eat." "Why can't you use them to ride on?" "They've got a wild gene." That's what they said, "They've got a wild gene." You can't domesticate them. They will not work for you. Shoot them and eat them, feed them to the dogs, get a proper horse. So they are trying to preserve them and breed them. Sin has got 'a wild gene' if you like. It is uncontrollable, it is undomesticatable, it will always and only do what it wants. You can't tame it, you can't rule it. It is going to fight every law you give it, like that horse. You can put a bridle on them and he will try and chew through it. You'll never use it in fact. Well, without the law, at the end of v 8, "sin was dead." Of course it was, because until the law came you were ignorant of sin. He doesn't say, by the way, he doesn't say at the end of v 8 that without the law, sin was non-existent, it wasn't non-existent, it was there it was just undetected, that's the point.

Now you might say, 'Well, what's the solution to this problem?' Come with me to Gal 5. Galatians is like the 'little Romans' it's got much the same argument in Galatians except in a more succinct form. You might say, 'Well, here's the solution to the problem, let's stop making laws. Let's not have any laws in society, let's not have any laws in ecclesial life. If we don't have laws, then we won't inflame sin, everything will be much

better.' Do you really believe it? Look at Gal 5:13, now I just showed you first 6, now look at v 13. "Brethren, he says, ye have been called unto liberty only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh but by love serve one another." So what do you think would happen in ecclesial life if we had no laws at all? What do you think if we had liberty, for example, what do you think sin would do with that? Well I can tell you, it says in v 13 "It would take occasion." Well, what do you think the word 'occasion' means? It means the same as it meant in Romans. It is the same word as, v 13 "occasion" it is the same word as you found in Rom Ch 7. So if you make a law, sin will set up a base of military operation, if you make no law sin will set up a base of military operation, do you see that? He says, "Don't let liberty" or the absence of law, "allow sin to set up a base of military operation, sin will exploit any weakness of any kind, always and only, because it is not subject to law. In the absence of law, it will do whatever pleases it, it has got a wild gene, it is ungovernable and uncontrollable. Back to Rom 7. So now you know, brothers and sisters, you've got a tiger by the tail inside of every one of us.

Rom 7:9, "I was alive" he says, "without the law once but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." Now, here's the question for you, When was Paul alive without the law? The answer is, In childhood. He is speaking about himself, this now becomes Paul's autobiography. It was a time, you see, when I was young, I didn't really know the Law, but then the commandment came, when? My Bar Mitzva at 13 years old. And sin revived, this latent force in me that I never knew existed, sprang into life and I died. I mean, when sin was dead in v 8 I was alive, when sin came to life, v 9, I died. I was completely overcome and I found myself sentenced to death and condemned by the Law. Well, it destroyed me v 10. 'And that commandment, that commandment which was ordained to life I found to be unto death. I thought the Law was going to help me, in fact it was the reverse. All my life the rabbis have been telling me the law could save me, it is not true. I'm beginning to realise it is not true, he says, not just because the Law was never intended to give eternal life, but even if it could have, no-one could keep it. The case is hopeless. Where have we got to? "Is the Law sin?" v 7, On the contrary, the fact that sin fights against Law so hard proves the the very opposite. And I might say, v 11, sin doesn't fight cleanly, for sin "taking occasion by the commandment deceived me and it slew me" it deceived me, sin lies to me. Sin says, 'it doesn't matter it's 5 in the morning, you can do whatever speed you like through this little town, no one will see, it won't hurt anyone. Click! Sin tricks you, it lies to you, that's what sin does. It has all these justifications. Sin says things like, 'this or that activity is acceptable and my conscience is clear. It's all right, if it is fine with your conscience, you'll be fine.' Well what does that prove? It might simply prove you've got an immature conscience. Sin says, 'this or that activity is acceptable because other people do it,' maybe other people that I like. Well, what does that prove? That we should measure ourselves by ourselves? What about this thought. Sin says, this or that activity is acceptable because I have done other good things, well, that's Judaism, that's pure Judaism, as if a righteous deed on one day can justify an unrighteous deed the next, that's certainly how sin thinks, sin loves Judaism as I have said before. Prov 19:3 "The foolishness of man perverteth his way and his heart fretteth against Yahweh. Somehow or other we are sooner or later going to find ourselves blaming the Truth for things that go wrong in our lives. It is the ecclesia's fault I am like this. If this brother or sister hadn't said this or that to me I wouldn't be doing this, there's the deceitfulness of sin, call it for what it is, just say, 'I'm like this because I am grumpy,' 'I am doing this because I want to.' Call it what it is. Just be honest with yourself. There might be circumstances, of course there might be circumstances, but circumstances don't alter God's law and sooner or later Christ is going to come and he's going to hold us up against this book and at that time that will be the only circumstances that matters.

### **The real problem is flesh**

So the real problem is not Law, the real problem is flesh. V 12, "Wherefore the Law, that's holy, and the commandment holy and just and good." The Law is holy because God who gave it is holy, it says so in 1 Pet 1:16, "Be holy for I am holy." The law is just because the God who gave it is just. Psa 145:17, "God is righteous in all his ways, and the Law is good," the word 'good' means 'beneficial,' because God is good, Psa 119:68. In contrast, I might say, to the heart of man, v 18 "no good thing," "no good thing" in the heart of man, so the problem is not in the Law, the problem is with man. Well, the question then becomes, how could something so good, how could the Law which is apparently so good, have such dire consequences? Well, v 13, "Was then that which is good made death unto me, by no means," he says, "that sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good, that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." What's he saying? He is saying this, it is not the Law that killed you, Paul, it is sin, the Law simply showed you how bad sin was, and how pervasive it was in your life, and it simply exposed sin for what it was, by the commandment, he says, "that sin by the commandment might be exceeding sinful, and look at the conflict, can you see the war that has been developing down these verses. In v 8 sin established a base of military operation because of the commandment. In v 11 it used all manner of dirty tricks because of the commandment. It established, in v 11, another base of military operation, and this is deceptive, military operation, but now in v 13 the Law fights back, you see, in v 13, the Law fights back and it turns the spotlight

on sin and this dark creature that has been lurking in the shadows of your heart and mind is all of a sudden illuminated by light - boo! V 13, there he is, scuttling for cover, scuttling for cover, back into darkness because of his evil deeds, sin hates law. Why does sin hate law? Because it puts the spotlight on sin and removes all his camouflage, you see, and you see this naked creature in all its deformity, running back into the corner of your life, that's what the Law does to sin. Now we are talking about sin here, you will appreciate that sin is personified in my description and extended the personification, calling sin a creature running around in your life, but you will appreciate that the word 'sin' here in v 13 is not talking about an actual transgression, it is talking about human nature. It is talking about the substance of what we are.

You will appreciate that throughout this section, and throughout the rest of the books of the New Testament often, the word 'sin' as brother Thomas says is used in two principal acceptations. Sin can either mean 'an act of unrighteousness committed' like murder, that is an 'act of sin,' or it can mean 'human nature,' that which causes you to commit sin and the fact that you've got a nature that is inclined towards sin, invariably leads you into committing an actual transgression, by metonymy, your nature is called 'sin.' Here's the thing to appreciate. The nature you have isn't 'a' sin, you don't need to be forgiven for your nature, you need to be forgiven for the transgressions you commit. There are two manifestations of sin. The transgressions you commit, how do we solve that? We forgive them. Human nature, it's a personification of sin, how do we solve that? We change it, we replace it with immortality, no point in forgiving this. Now the reason I raise that is that has become a controversy in the brotherhood "Andrewism" which is a false view of the atonement, basically makes human nature a sin of itself, meaning you've got to be baptised for the sins you have committed and you've got to be baptised for your human nature, you've got to be forgiven for your nature. Bro Thomas says, it is your misfortune, not your crime, your crime is in letting this run your life, that's what you will answer for. Well, you forgive transgressions, we change nature, you see? You just want to be aware there are two meanings of sin, as you read through places like Rom Ch 7. Understand that for everything we have said here, can you see the apostle Paul wrestling with this situation. We are very familiar with the fact that in his early life he persecuted the ecclesia, and how! But when you look closely, there is a certain contradiction in everything that Paul did before he was in the Truth, and it appears as though Romans supplies the answer. Think of it like this. Gal 1, here's Paul's confession about what drove him in his former life. "You've heard of my conversation in times past in the Jews religion, that beyond measure," he says, "I persecuted the ecclesia of God and wasted it. I profited in the Jews religion above many of mine equals in my own nation, being more extremely zealous of the traditions of my fathers." I loved the Law of Moses and I thought I was conducting myself blamelessly in pursuit of the ethics of the Law of Moses in destroying Christianity, yet as soon as I was confronted by the Lord Jesus Christ, it is hard for me to kick against the pricks. He admits immediately, that there was something inside of him that says 'I haven't got it all together. I am getting letters from the Sanhedrin to chase these believers all the way up to Damascus, but there is some part of me that is dissatisfied with what I am doing, and the more dissatisfied I become, the harder I persecute the ecclesia.' What had gone wrong, because you appreciate on the Damascus road, he converts in a heartbeat, doesn't he? Because he knew, he knew he couldn't justify what he did, why not? The answer is in Rom 7, this is his confession, look. He was innocent as a child, v 9 says, but he becomes aware of lust because of the entrance of the Law into his life. V 10, he believes the Law can save him, that is he believed the Law could give him a relationship with God and eternal life, because that's what the Rabbi's taught. V 7, he develops a deep love for the Law, v 8, but he found the Law actually inflamed sin. It created problems in his life that weren't there before and he couldn't understand that. And then, v 11, he becomes very frustrated at his inability to avoid sin, because sin had set up a base of operations against him. He knew the Law was right, v 12, and he knew he was wrong, but he couldn't understand why such a holy Law had such a devastating effect in his life, and he realizes in v 13, that Law, in fact is condemning him to death and he is fighting and fighting it. He feels as though he is now controlled by sin in v 5, sin is a far bigger animal than he ever realized, "the motivations of sin in my members," he speaks about here. He comes to the truth v 6 changes husbands, delivered from the Law. That's why it was so quick, you see, on the Damascus road.

He's had a great conflict, and what you've got here, brothers and sisters, between verse call if 4, and v 13 of Paul's autobiography about why he was like he was. And I make that point, because in v 14, the tense changes. We've been talking in the past tense up until the end of v 13. So verse 9, "I was alive," v 11, "sin slew me." As soon as you get to v 14, it is the present tense. V 14, "I am carnal" v 15 "I do," you see? The tense has changed, and Paul is going to speak now in v 14 onward about life in the truth and the internal conflict he has in his own mind.

Now I might say that this has generated a fair bit of debate in the brotherhood as well. The question has arisen in the brotherhood when you come from v 14 through v 25 is, Paul is going to talk about a 'warfare in his members,' surely he's talking about a conflict he had before he came to the truth, what kind of a Christadelphian would even contemplate having a struggle that we are reading about in vv 14-25? Well let's

be frank, baptism doesn't rub out human nature, it simply changes your allegiance, it simply changes your identification, and it highlights the struggle. It highlights the struggle. In fact is, we still struggle with sin even after baptism. So any struggle the apostle had before his baptism was still continued afterward, the difference is that after baptism he's identified with the righteousness of God rather than trying to establish his own righteousness by the Law of Moses.

So there is no question, vv 14-25 are definitely after Paul's baptism, and this is not a difficult section, the exposition is very simple, and you will know it well, I'm not going to take long now to complete this chapter. This is Paul's experience and it is the experience of all of us. V 14, "We know that the Law is spiritual but I am carnal, sold under sin." When he says here he is "carnal," he doesn't mean he is dominated by the carnal mind, he wasn't, but he was fleshly, he had a natural mind, you see, and his natural mind hindered him. Rotherhams calls him here, when he says "I am carnal," Rotherhams says, "I am a creature of flesh." V 15, "For that which I do I allow not, for what I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that do I." He says, 'Look, I'm like a slave,' and you will notice in the first line of v 15, "that which I do, I allow," and by the word 'allow' in your margin, it says 'know.' 'I do things and I don't even know why I do them. It's like remote pilot, I don't want to do it, I hate it, I do it anyway, and having done it I can't explain why I ever did that,' he says. 'Why do I do it? Because I am sold unto sin. V 14 Because the master says so and I am a slave and I just obey him and unless I concentrate on it I am bound to obey him.' The interesting thing in v 15 is that the word 'do' appears here three time, but there are three different words for the word 'do' in v 15. I am going to tell you about these three words 'do,' here the meanings are on the screen, and I am going to show you where they actually occur, so don't try to color them in just for the moment. "For that which I do," the word is *catergazomai* which means 'accomplish,' that which I accomplish, I don't understand or, I know not. "For what I would, that I habitually do I not, but what I hate, that do I as a single act," you see? Three times the word 'do' exists in v 15 and it is three different Greek words. The first one means 'bring to completion' or 'accomplish,' the second word "do" *'prasso'* means to perform habitually, and the third word 'do' *'poieo'* means 'to perform a specific act.' So what he is saying in v 15 is 'that which I do accomplish,' he says, 'I don't understand but what I would, that I habitually do not, but what I hate I specifically do,' that's what he is saying. And here's the words all the way through Rom 7, these three Greek words, and it is helpful to color those words in, and then read the verse by saying which of the English words I have given you. It does change how these verses exist.

V 16, "If then I specifically do that which I would not, then I consent to the Law that it is good." If I do that specific thing that I don't want to do then at least I declare the Law is good because I am hating what I am doing he says. V 17, "Now then, it is no more I that accomplish it, but sin that dwells in me." Looking at it logically he says, it is not me that is accomplishing these things but it is sin that resides inside of me. It is not my accomplishment he says, in fact I disown it, I don't even agree with what I am doing. It is like sin has manipulated me and sent me down a certain track. I don't know how it happened, but I don't like what's happened. What that means is that I am an unwilling slave, I am not really a servant of sin, I'm not serving voluntarily, I am being forced against my will, I don't want to do what this master says, which means, Ha! I'm not really a servant at all. I am a soldier. You see the difference? I am actually fighting a war he says. That doesn't make anything easier, but it does change things. Sometimes I lose the battle, but no matter what happens, I am never going to be the voluntary servant of sin, because the moment I surrender I know I am doomed. So if I find myself going down a path that I don't agree with, it just means that sin has won the battle, sin has not won the war, I'm dragged there kicking and screaming, I can't even explain how it happened, he says. And to explain the simplicity of that vv 17-25, the apostle divides himself in two, and you might be familiar with the 'I's' and the 'me's' of Rom 7:7-25, when we read the word "I" from the this point forward, most often it is relating to Paul's spiritual mind, when we read the word 'me' most often it is relating to his carnal mind. So v 18, "For I know that in me," that is in my flesh, there's the carnal mind, "dwells no good thing, but to will is present with me" carnal, but how to perform that which is good I," spiritual, "find not." He says, I've got a disposition which leads me to sin and I struggle to combat that, but it is a combat. V 19-20, he appears to be repeating himself. You might observe that V 19 is the opposite to v 16 and v 20 is a parallel to v 17. V 19 says, "I don't do the good that I would," V 16 says, "I do the bad that I wouldn't," you see, v 19 and v 16 are opposites, but v 20 is a repeat of v 17. It is not me that is doing it, it is sin. So v 19, what is he saying? "For the good that I would, I do not," this is specifically, do not, "but the evil that I would, I habitually do."

Now look at that verse carefully because he introduces another word here and as soon as you see it, it will explain everything, it is the word 'evil.' "The good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do." It explains everything. What does it explain? Where do the words good and evil first appear in Scripture? Gen 2:17. What happened in Gen 2:17? Wow, there was a tree in the midst of the garden, what was it



called? It was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but what does it mean, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Well, the word knowledge means "experience," it was the tree of the experience of good and evil. Well what does that mean? What would happen if you ate it? The result would be that you would experience good and evil. What does that mean? It means, very simply, Rom 7, you would inflame a lust inside of you and from that point forward, you would experience the warfare of good and evil, so there was a fruit on that tree that looked extremely appetizing and the snake said 'Don't worry about it, just eat it and if you eat that you will have the same experience as the angels,' Well, good luck with that, because look what happened, instantly was aroused a latent tendency in the first human pair, evil came alive and instantly there was a conflict now an enmity between good and evil. This is it here, and it never left the human race.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil created the problem of good and evil in Rom 7:19, and that's what you are reading, the most harmful decision ever made in the history of mankind. V 21, "I find in the Law that when I would do good evil is present with me." What's the Law? What's the Law of v 21? It is the law of sin at the end of v 25. V 22 "For I delighted in the Law of God after the inward man," he said. This is the opposite of the Law of sin of v 21. V 23, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." You might like to put beside your margin v 23 in big letters, Gal 5:17 "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things ye would." Didn't I tell you that Galatians was the 'mini-Romans?' That is exactly the point of the conflict of v 23. "O wretched man that I am" v 24, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The word "wretched" means 'to endure pain or hardship from effort.' The only other place that this word "wretched" occurs in the New Testament is in Rev 3:17, speaking of the ecclesia of Laodicea, they were "wretched, poor, blind and naked," and they didn't know it. They didn't know what their true condition was, and that's the difference, you see, because in v 24, the apostle Paul does know what his condition is, he knows what he was like and that meant that he had the ability to fight it. Knowledge is power isn't it? He understands exactly what sort of man he is and he can go to war against that. Laodicea was doomed. "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" he says. Rotherham says, "this body doomed to death." Phil 3:21 "this vile body." It was a body of humiliation, that's what he bore. No remedy for that body, actually. It is ruined because of the events of the garden of Eden. It has been ruined ever since, there is no ability to reform this body, the solution is deliverance. You've got to be delivered from this body. You can't solve human nature, you've got to kill it, you've got to replace it with immortality, you need deliverance from this body. The deliverance will come when it is replaced with a glorious body, you see? In the meantime, we've got a warfare, "but I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind," he says, "I myself serve the Law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin." "I thank God," he says, of course he does.

If he was still under the Law of Moses, his case would be hopeless, but he has lifted himself hasn't he, above the continual focus on 'touch not, taste not, handle not,' he is living on a higher plane, he is a different man, he's married to a different husband now. "With my mind I serve the Law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin," Don't misread that, he is not saying that he serves God and sin, no man can serve two masters, we know it from Matt 6, what he is saying is there a raging conflict within him and in this life at any one moment of time, either one side is prevailing or the other side is prevailing, but it is a war and the war is see-sawing back and forth in his life, just like it is in your's and mine, but despite the back and forth of that conflict, there is no doubt about Paul's allegiance. "I myself, I myself, serve the Law of God," that's where my heart is, that's where my heart is, he says. How does he do that? Col 3:1, "If you be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above. Set your affection on things above not on things on the earth," and as you do that, in the words of v 5 of this chapter, "mortify your members which are on the earth." So we have failings, we've got a conflict, sometimes sin will prevail. For the Godly man or woman, you may not know how you got in the situation you got in, because you don't do it willingly, sin just takes over, it has set up a fortress, it has set up an embattlement against you and it will take you as often as it can, whenever it can, however it can, it will lie to you, it will cheat, it will deceive you, it will justify by duress, it will do everything it possibly can, because it is not subject to the Law of God. The issue is, however, not to serve it willingly, to serve it if you do and you will, kicking and screaming, reluctantly, remorsefully, because it is a warfare, it's got to be a warfare, because if you give up the warfare, it is all over, sin will win, and it will have it's victories, it might win a battle, it might win many battles, but in the mercy of God, brothers and sisters, it won't win the war.

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