

Romans 7 Under the Microscope

by Eli Brayley

Eli Brayley's sermon explores the relationship between the Law, sin, and the transformative power of grace through Christ, emphasizing the freedom believers have in the Spirit.

Scripture: Romans 6:6-7, Romans 6:11, Romans 7:4-6, Romans 8:2, Romans 8:12

Topics: "Life Under Law", "Spiritual Freedom"

Description

Eli Brayley delves into Romans 7, explaining how the Law has dominion over man as long as he lives, but through Christ's death, believers are freed from the Law and are now dead to it, able to serve in newness of spirit. Paul describes the struggle of being under the Law, where sin works in our members, leading to death, but through Jesus, we are delivered from the power of the Law. The sermon emphasizes the importance of living by the Spirit, mortifying the deeds of the body, and yielding to God to be instruments of righteousness, no longer under the dominion of sin but under grace.

Transcript

Right away in 7:1 Paul points out who he is speaking to and about: "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?" He's talking to them that KNOW the Law.

What does he mean, the Law has dominion over man as long as he lives? Does this suggest as long as we live sin has dominion over us? Not so. Remember: "He that is dead is freed from sin." (Romans 6:7). This is not talking about physical death but death to self, as we see in it's context: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Romans 6:6) Brothers, this verse 6 is imperative!

Romans 7:2-3 then goes on to explain how a woman is bound to her husband by law so long as he is alive. This is likened to our relationship with the Law.

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Romans 7:4) Here is mentioned this death again, not a physical one, but a death to the Law... and why? Because of what Christ did on the cross! Jesus' death wrought about OUR death! This is not physical as we know... His death snapped the power of the Law over us. We are considered dead to it because of Christ.

"For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." (Romans 7:5) Now we jump to a past tense... When we were still in the flesh, the Law was at work in the members of our bodies producing death. THIS is the condition of the Romans 7 struggle. The Law working fruit unto death in us - sin. "For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23)

"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 the oldness of the letter." (Romans 7:6) BUT NOW we are delivered... being dead... that the members of our bodies serve in a new way, not in the old way, trapped by the Law.

Now Paul shifts the topic. He begins to talk specifically about the Law, since to this point he has made the Law sound something terrible. Paul reminds: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. 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." (Romans 7:7) The Law was beneficial in revealing sin to us, though because of our sinful nature, the knowledge of sin worked death in us... just like in the Garden of Eden with the Knowledge of the Tree of Good and Evil. Once we knew what good and evil were, we chose evil. We suddenly fell captive to the power of the Law.

"But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." (Romans 7:8-11) This text reads as if Adam was writing it. Powerful!

The next two verses reinforce this thought, and shows us that sin is by the Law now "exceedingly sinful." This is no light thing by which God shrugs away. The full wrath of God was upon the shoulders of Jesus Christ at Calvary.

Now in verse 14, Paul assumes the position of a man under the Law, hence the present use of tense. We know he is talking about someone under the Law because of the content of the subject. It is "the law working in his members bringing forth the fruit of sin." There are more clues to this which we find later on...

"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." (Romans 7:14-20) Here is the miserable condition of this Law. The next three verses nail this point home:

"I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But 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." (Romans 7:21-23) This is painfully clear. Paul has just pinpointed the condition of 7:5.

The cry and the remedy! "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 7:24-25a)

Paul then sums up verses 14-20 in verse 25b: "SO THEN with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." The mind serves God, the body does not. It is not that this is the final condition after Paul exclaims "thanks be to God!" It's almost like Paul couldn't wait until the end to write verse 25a because the condition of being under the Law of death is so horrible! (Of course, this is my speculation!) Regardless, verse 25b takes us back into the deathtrap.

Now here you may argue: "This is not so!" We come now to the dilemma: Is this our condition? Do we now serve God IN THE SPIRIT but remain under the Law IN THE BODY? The answer is a strong no. Remember Romans 6:6?:

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Are we still under Law? "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." (Romans 7:5) No, next verse: "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 the oldness of the letter." And that is the key... being dead. "He who is dead is freed from sin." (Romans 6:7)

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20) Everything around this verse is wonderful, verse 17, 18, 19, 21! Read them sometime!

NOW we can move on into Romans 8! "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Romans 8:2)

This is vital: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:3-4) Read this in view of 7:7-11... Adam and the knowledge of good and evil. But now, Christ has made it so that the righteousness of the Law CAN be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit!

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Romans 8:11)

What then do we do? "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8:12-14) So then brothers, we live by the Spirit of God!

Thus it is possible to "mortify the DEEDS of the body."

Brothers, I conclude with this Scripture:

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." (Romans 6:11-14)

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