

A Return to Functional First Century Christianity - Part 3

by Peter Brandon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith and the Spirit of God in overcoming sin and achieving sanctification, rather than relying on the law.

Duration: 59:47

Scripture: Romans 6:2, Romans 7:6, Romans 7:14, Romans 7:18, Romans 7:24

Topics: "Living By Faith", "Victory Over Sin"

Description

Peter Brandon emphasizes the significance of Romans 6 and 7 in understanding holiness and the struggle against sin. He explains that baptism symbolizes our death to sin, and that true victory over sin comes through faith in Jesus Christ, not through the law. Brandon discusses the internal conflict believers face, highlighting that while the law reveals sin, it cannot sanctify us; only the Spirit can empower us to live righteously. He encourages believers to trust in God's grace for victory over sin and to serve Him in the newness of the Spirit rather than the oldness of the law. Ultimately, he reassures that the struggle with sin will continue until we reach heaven, but through Christ, we can find victory in the conflict.

Transcript

If we can get through this chapter tonight, we shall do very well together. Now we've looked at Romans 6 and we've seen that's the blueprint for holiness. And the operative verse is verse 2. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? And we notice that baptism symbolises the fact that we have died to sin.

The cross proves the fact that we have died to sin. The resurrection confirms the fact that we have died to sin. And faith appropriates the fact so that we reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive unto God.

Then the second reason why we shouldn't go on sinning is because we should be gilded to God. And we have noticed the nature of yielding, verse 13. We have seen the principle of yielding, verse 16.

Again, we have seen the privilege of yielding, verse 17. The extent of yielding and then we saw... Now tonight, we're going to look at a vast chapter. Now quite frankly dear friends, I must say that there are various opinions concerning this chapter.

Some believe this was Paul in his unconverted state. And sometimes when I read this chapter, I can see their point. Others like Martyn Lloyd-Jones believe that there are five Pauls in these five eyes.

An unconverted Paul. A confused Paul. A converted Paul.

A carnal Paul. And a defeated Paul. Now it's very cleverly put together.

But what I feel personally is this. That this is Paul as a Christian under grace. But trying to serve God the law way.

And he was totally defeated. And therefore now he learns to utilize the power of the Spirit of God. You see, the law never saved the soul.

And the law will never sanctify a saint. The same principle of faith that saves you, is the same principle that's going to make you holy. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God.

Now we're all clear about that. But the scripture says, the just shall live by faith. Therefore the same faith that saves us, is the same faith that sanctifies us.

Now I know lots of people find this chapter difficult. But we shall try and simplify it. But to put it very simply, there is nothing complicated with New Testament Christianity.

Just as you trusted the Lord to save your soul. If you're going to be holy, you've got to trust him to make you holy. And there comes a moment in your experience when you actually say, Lord, I'm going to trust you now to make me victorious.

Another thing that I feel I must say before we go into the exposition of this chapter. The conflict will never cease. The only time the conflict within you will cease is when you get to heaven.

Or should the Lord Jesus come. We're not going to speak about the cessation of the conflict. What we want to speak about is victory in the conflict.

Now most of you will know that the Evangelical Church has been split over and over again because of manifestations of the flesh. People get angry. People get jealous.

Now these are the things that have split the Evangelical Church. Now once we can learn the basis of Romans 7, it will be a tremendous blessing to us all. Unfortunately, your speaker went for 8 to 10 years through deep agony of soul.

And no one really basically came to me as a young man and explained the nitty gritty of this chapter. Now what I want to do is to give an exposition but to bring it right the way down to earth. So that we really know the way of victory.

Now let's read from verse 1 and then after the reading we'll start the exposition. Verse 1 of chapter 7. 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. For the woman which hath a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth.

But if the husband be dead, she is loose from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, 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 adulteress, though she be married to another man.

Now that is the illustration. If you're a little sophisticated, the right word is the analogy. But we shall all understand what he means by an illustration.

A woman is married to one man, and the man is Mr. Law. And he's a very fine man, but she cannot come up to his ideal. Then you will notice the husband dies, and then she is free to marry another man, and as we shall see in the illustration, she is married to Mr. Love.

And she's going to serve him in a different way. Now you will notice now that he's going to apply the illustration. Thus for, wherefore my brethren, ye 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.

Now in the illustration, note this, it's the husband that dies. In the application of the illustration, it's we who die. You see the law is not dead, it's there.

But every Christian has died to the law where of holiness. Then he goes on. For when we were in the flesh, the motions, the passions of sin, which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

But now being 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. Now may I say this with emphasis, that verse six is the key verse. And the key phrase is this, that we should serve in the newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

Why? The oldness of the letter was linked with Adam. The newness of the spirit is linked with Christ. Now we've got to learn to serve him in a new way.

And what is this new way? It's three things, it's faith's way, love's way, and the spirit's way. Faith's way is the practice, love's way is the principle, and the spirit's way is the power. And if we can learn to utilize those three facts tonight, we'll go home singing the praises of God.

Now from seven right down to thirteen is a masterly exposition of the law. Now notice what he says. Now you will notice the pronouns from verse one to six are all in the plural.

It's we, we, we. Now the pronouns change from the plural to I, I, me, me, and there are thirty-two I's and twelve me's in this chapter. Now you will notice from six to thirteen that the pronouns are all personal, and they're put in the past tense.

Now that's very important to see that. 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.

But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence, that means lust. For without the law, sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandments came, sin revived, and I died.

And the commandments 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. Wherefore the law is holy.

Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good, that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. Now from 14 to 25, it's the apostles experience under the law.

Now here is a strange thing. He wasn't under the law, but somehow he thought that he could get saved by faith and sanctification by works. You will never do it.

And there are literally hundreds and thousands of God's people who have been saved by faith, but trying to get holiness the law way. And my dear friends, you will never do it. All it will do is to bring a sense of brokenness and defeat.

Then you can be introduced to a new law called the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Now notice this experience of the apostle, and I'm quite sure this fits in with most of us. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

For that which I do, I allow not. And what I would, that do I not. And what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that 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.

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.

O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So here is the victory. So then with my mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

Now we'll read the next two verses, although we shall expound these tomorrow night. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Now the Lord will bless to us the reading of his words. Now we're going to look at this chapter in an upside down way in order to make it simple. First of all we're going to look at this masterly exposition of the law that's seen from 7 to 14.

Then we're going to look at this painful experience of the apostle being under the law and being broken. And then we're going to look at the analogy right at the end because I feel that is the secret. And if you don't mind I'm going to give you an expanded illustration of the analogy.

And we're going to finish with a lovely love story. Now first of all the exposition. Look at verse 7. 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. Now notice the difference. In Romans 2 and 3 the law is applied to show to us the evil things that we do.

In Romans 7 the law is applied to show to us the evil person that we are in the sight of God. In other words he's not talking about sins. He's talking about sin and especially the sin that's in the flesh.

Now please note that. Now the Ten Commandments always define sin. Sin is not the violation of a sensitive conscience.

Sin is the violation of the law of God. Now you will notice quite easily that if children tread on the grass there's nothing wrong with it. But then there comes a time when you put fertilizer on the grass and it looks very good and then you put up a notice.

Please do not step on the grass. Trespassers will be prosecuted. Now if a child then sees the law and treads on the grass that child becomes a transgressor.

Before the law was given there was no transgression. But the moment the law is given there is a transgression. And so you can see the law brilliantly defines sin.

Another thing that I must say and I must say this quickly. There's nothing sinful with the law of God. It is holy.

It's just. It's good. It's spiritual.

And the law doesn't die but praise God we shall see in a few moments the Christian dies to the law principle of holiness. Now if you look at verse 8 you will see that the law stimulates sin. But sin taking an occasion by the commandment wrought in me all manner of lusts.

For without the law sin was dead. Now what does that mean? If you put up a notice keep off the grass and you watch people and you will see them doing this. Putting their foot on it.

Before you had the notice they probably wouldn't bother. But the moment you put the notice up they want to tread on it. If you put up a notice wet paint do not touch.

You'll watch children and when no one's looking they'll touch it. You see the law provokes and stimulates sin. Why? The sin is within us and the moment law comes it shows the rebellion that's within us.

So that's quite clear. For I was alive without the law once but when the commandment came sin revived and I died. Now what does that mean? Does it mean that the apostle was 1500 years old? That's ridiculous.

Because when he wrote this epistle he was 45 years of age roughly. So what does he mean he was alive without the law? Before he was converted in Philippians chapter 3 he did a little bit of boasting. And he said concerning the righteousness of the law he was blameless.

Now probably he was the only man in history apart from the Lord Jesus that could say that. The apostle when he was Saul of Tarsus did have a few little moral muscles. But when he became a Christian he saw the Ten Commandments through the lens of the Sermon on the Mount.

Now what's the difference? In the Old Testament God was concerned with the action. In the New Testament God is concerned with the thought that promotes the action. So in the Old Testament it is thou shalt not commit adultery.

In the New Testament the Lord Jesus said if you look in order to lust you have committed adultery in your mind. So it's the thought. Now who's innocent? Again in the Old Testament it says thou shalt not kill.

But John says if you hate your brother you're a murderer. Can you see the point? In the Old Testament God is concerned with the action. When the Lord Jesus came and the greater maturity came through his ministry God is concerned with the thought that promotes the action.

Therefore the apostle saw the Ten Commandments through the lens of the Sermon on the Mount and he said sin was revived and I died. Now when you look at verse 10 you will see something quite serious. And the commandment which was ordained to life I found to be unto death.

Why? The Word of God makes it quite clear when we love the Lord God with every propensity that he has given to us we shall live. But the moment we break one of those commandments we die. And therefore the law writes across the whole world universal guilt.

The law was given that every mouth may be stopped and that the whole world might become guilty before God. Look at verse 13. Was then that which is good made death unto me? But sin that it might appear sin working death in me by that which is good that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

In other words when we break one of the commandments we are not like breaking one of the rules of the road. We are breaking the royal commands of God. And therefore the Ten Commandments was given to us to show to us the deadly seriousness of sin.

The utter wretchedness of sin. Now I wonder could I share with you about. You will notice in modern preaching we have all soft peddled concerning sin.

And we are not seeing the conviction of sin that we should do. If you read through the Wesleyan Revival. If you read carefully the Finney Revival.

You will see that people came under heavy conviction of sin and they were broken. And therefore the whole of their lives were changed. And the whole of townships were changed.

Because people came under this heavy conviction of sin. Now that is what we need in this modern world. That is why when we preach the gospel we must not throw away the commandments.

We must use it in order to convince people that they have sinned. And then God uses it to show to us the utter wretchedness of the flesh nature that is within us. But we shall never get sanctification through the law of God.

There is another one. Now you will notice from 15 right to the end. Paul gives us an experience that he had under the law.

And you will notice now what he says. Verse 14. For we know that the law is spiritual but I am carnal, fleshly, sold under sin.

For that which I do I allow not. For what I would that I do not. And what I hate that I do.

Now that was his mind. Now look at his actions. Verse 16.

If then I do that which I would not I consent unto the law that is good. Now then it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me. Now notice his will in verse 18.

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.

In other words his will longed for holiness. But how to fulfill it he found impossible. Beloved I am sure of this.

That many of us have gone through the Roman 7 agony. I remember going into my bedroom weeping saying Lord I've done it. I remember there was a time when I doubted whether I was saved because of my failure.

Now I don't want you to be shocked but I do want to be honest. Because of the lack of the reality of Christianity in my own life. Even as a preacher I was thinking of jettisoning my own calling in preaching.

Because of failure. And if you're going through that failure then the preacher knows something about it. Now why do we fail? We shall see in a few moments.

We try to get holiness the law way. By struggling striving we shall never do it. All that will happen as we shall see in a few moments.

We shall blurt out oh wretched man that I am who shall deliver. Now Paul then discovers 4 laws. And really the psychology here is profoundly brilliant.

First of all he discovers a law as a principle. Look at verse 21. I find in a law that when I would do good evil is present with me.

And we've all discovered that since we've been saved. We want to do good. We long to do good.

There is an insatiable yearning to do good. But evil is ever present with us. That's a principle.

Then he sees a precept. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. Now that means the 10 commandments.

10 laws that should govern the conduct of people. And he calls them holy just and good. But then there's another law.

I see another law in my members. Warring against the law of my mind. Now what is this law of my mind? It's the law of a believer's mind which longs for holiness.

Now beloved I must say this. If you have no longing for holiness. It's a sure sign you've never been saved.

But if you have this insatiable longing for holiness. Holiness although defeated. Be sure of this.

You're born of God. Every believer when he receives the Holy Spirit. Is prompted to live a holy life.

And therefore the law of your mind says. You must keep those commandments. You must live a holy life.

And that's the sure sign that the Spirit of God is within you. And then there is this other law. And to bring me into captivity.

To the law of sin. Which is in my members. And then he says.

Oh wretched man that I am. Now what is that law of sin? Inside us all. There is something that's monstrous and vulgar.

Called flesh. The flesh is the seat of all sin. The flesh is the throne room of all sin.

The flesh is also the seed plot of all iniquity. Now our behavior patterns differ. But our flesh is the same.

Now if it were possible for you. To take out your flesh nature. And if you could see it.

You would have a ghastly shock. You would see something. That's monstrously vulgar.

And I feel sure if I may use drama. You would say something like this. Oh dear I never knew that monster was.

You see the law of sin. Is a thousand times bigger. Than the law of our mind.

And you see hundreds of Christians. Are trying to overcome sin power. With will power.

You can't do it. And you'll be utterly defeated. And here was a man that knew the law.

Who was brought up with the law. And he found it very difficult. To bring himself under grace principle.

And we find him trying to improve himself. But he is utterly defeated. And that's when the Lord gave victory.

It is when. We begin to see this great fact. Oh wretched man that I am.

Who shall deliver me. From the body of this death. Now quite frankly.

At that moment the apostle wanted to die. He was defeated. He was broken.

He was struggling to get holiness but failed. This isn't hypothetical language. It's too real.

This is the language of a man in deep agony. Feeling that he was in serious trouble. Longing for victory.

And yet being utterly defeated. Now could I ask a question. Do you feel that you're there? Do you feel that your life is wasting away spiritually? There's no victory.

And when we're there hungry for victory. Then the Lord can bless us. Now we must ask the question.

Why does the Lord allow us to have this period under the law? Why does he allow us to go through this awful conflict? What's the purpose of it? Why doesn't he eradicate the flesh? And give us automatic victory. What a testimony that would be. Well if you notice.

God always tests us. In the garden of Eden he put two trees. Two trees.

And in your life. There are as it were two people living inside you. That's why we're all schizophrenics.

There's this ugly thing called flesh. And this beautiful thing called spirit. And they're at loggerheads.

Do you know I said to one of those punks 18 months after he got saved. How are you getting on Simon? I think I've mentioned this before. But I'm going to mention it again.

He says alright. But there's a terrible punch up inside me. Now I thought that was lovely.

You see he realised there was a battle going on inside him. And Paul puts it like this. The flesh lusts against the spirit.

The spirit against the flesh. And these are contrary one to another. So that you cannot do the things that you could.

Now why do we have that conflict? Number one. To expose the evil presence of the flesh. You see when the Holy Spirit came upon the Lord Jesus.

He came upon the Lord Jesus as a dove. Why? There was no flesh in him. He was all pure within.

And fair without. But when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples. He didn't come upon them with a cloven.

He didn't come upon them as a dove. He came upon them as cloven tongues of fire. Why? That fire was to expose the very presence of the flesh.

And give them power to crucify. And so that's why we have the battle. The first reason.

The second reason why we have the battle is this. To show us that we are totally unable to change the flesh. You may read the Bible thoroughly and regularly.

And that's a splendid Christian exercise. But it won't change the flesh. You might spend long hours in prayer and fasting.

And that's an excellent exercise. But it won't change the flesh. You might pass your body through most stoical exercises.

Like Martin Luther did. But that will never change the flesh. In fact you can wrap around the flesh lovely white garments of self-righteousness.

But it's still the flesh. You can give it a cap and gown and call it a BD or a DD. But it's still the flesh.

You might glamorize it and make it look lovely. But it's still the flesh. And may I say this.

You can't even starve. It won't be starved. There's too much in the world for it to feed upon.

So what can we do with it? My dear friends you can do nothing with it. There's nothing that we can do to change the flesh. And the Spirit of God doesn't want to change it.

He'll open your eyes to see that the Lord has condemned it. And he'll give you the power to mortify it. And that's a different thing altogether.

So the second reason is to show our inability to change the flesh. The third reason is to give us a profound hatred for the flesh. That which I do I allow not and what I hate that I do.

In other words the Spirit of God works on you. So that you look at the flesh and all the manifestations of the flesh. Can I use some cockney parlance? You hate the living sight.

And the more you hate it the better. Must be no compromise. Now what does that mean? If I love my besetting sins I will never get victory over them.

If I make excuses for my bad temper. If I make excuses of my lust. If I make excuses of my lies.

I shall never get victory. If I look at my besetting sins and see where they come from the flesh. And positively hate them.

Loathe them. Then I'm next door to victory. I remember leading a man to the Lord in Motherwell.

And it was one of those great nights when the Spirit of God passed over the meeting. I was having great difficulty preaching. Words were not tumbling out of my mouth.

They were coming out in an awkward way. One or two people were leaving the congregation. And then half way through my address I looked down.

And I saw part of the congregation weeping. And then I realized this. And I closed the meeting.

And the souls that were saved that night. Of one young man got gloriously saved. I went back two years later.

And he stayed behind. And he had a sorry story to tell. He says Brother Peter six months after my conversion.

It was six months of walking on air. But he says all the old sins have come back. Really? Yes.

What kind of sins? Temper. Really I said. Yes.

A desire to drink. Really? Yes. In fact he said I've used blasphemy.

I said you haven't. He said yes. And then his eyes started to fill with tears.

He said I can't be saved can I? I said tell me John. Do you hate your sin? And you know what he did. He gripped his face as only a Scot can do.

In the tightest ball that was possible. Until I saw the whites of his knuckles. And he hit his hand as though he was going to knock it into.

Hate it. Hate them. Oh I said hallelujah you're saved.

He said what do you mean? I said there's two natures in you. There's the old that's giving you trouble. There's the new that's teaching you to hate sin.

And he came into glorious assurance of salvation. That's the proof that you are saved. Because you hate it.

And then lastly he stimulates within you. An insatiable desire for victory. So that you will say something like this.

Lord if I don't get victory I don't want to live. I won't mention the man's name. But he's a man that's been mightily used in the British Isles.

And his dear wife died. And he went to pieces. Then he picked himself up.

And took a mission in Belfast that was being used of God. And I went to see him. And I've never seen a man so depressed in my life.

He said Peter all that I have taught. All that I have preached seems to be a failure. And I can't go on.

I said what do you mean dear brother you can't go on? He said I'm thinking of suicide. I said when? After this mission. And it was a large mission.

But I said John why wait till after the mission? Do it now. What he said now? Yes. What do you mean Peter? I read this verse to him.

I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live. Yet not I but Christ liveth on in me.

And then by divine revelation. He saw himself defeated. Confused.

Battled. On the cross. Finished.

Oh he said thank you. Hallelujah I have died. I said yes.

He wanted to die. But he died by substitution. And that was the means of mighty revival in that man's life.

Now that's what we have to do. We have to go back to the cross. And see that the Lord has finished with us completely.

So that he starts all again bringing us into new life. Now what about this analogy? We'll talk about the power tomorrow. Because I do want to go.

Now what about this analogy? Now it's all about a girl that's married to a man. And this man quite frankly is too immaculate for her. And he dies and she's free to marry another man.

And she marries another man. And she serves him in a different way. In which she served her first husband.

Now says the apostle. Through the death of the Lord Jesus. We have been taken completely out of the Adamic family.

And we have been put right into the Lord Jesus's. Now we are no longer married to the law. But we are married to the Lord Jesus.

And we have to serve him in an entirely different way. We don't serve him now the law way. We serve him in love's way.

And the spirit's way. And faith's way. Now I may say that to you but it won't click.

But if I amplify the story it will click. And what I want to do now. Is to just amplify that parable.

And make a story of it. And fit all the teaching in. Here is a woman by the name of Ruth Luz.

She doesn't know this. But the word Luz means a heap of ruins. Her father's name was Sarx.

And that's the Greek word for flesh. But he changed it because he was a crafty man. To the word Luz.

So that she wouldn't know. She is a very beautiful girl in fact. One of the most beautiful girls that ever lived.

Externally. But she doesn't know the propensity of evil that's in her. One day she meets a man called Law at a place called Sinai.

And she falls in love with him. And then there is a proposal for marriage. And he marries her on this one condition.

I shall give you ten commandments. Will you promise to keep those commandments. And then we'll be happy ever after.

And she looks at them. And she says full heartedly. Oh yes.

I can keep those. They are very simple. And so she is married at Sinai.

And she is put into a beautiful house. Called the house of Moses. In this house there are two mystical rooms.

One is called the Numa room. That means spirit that's left locked. She can never get a key into it.

And the other is called the Sarx room. In which her father was to live. Mr Law goes away.

And in every room there are the ten commandments. And underneath this too. And your soul shall live.

But the more she tries to keep those commandments. The more she breaks them. And when he comes home.

Immediately those commandments are broken. And the house gets into a mess. And when he looks at the house.

She can see that he is very unhappy. And very grieved. In fact one day he went into the Numa room.

And she could hear him weeping. Her father had a talk with her and said. You came into this home.

One of the finest homes in the world. And look at the mess you have made of it. You must improve.

Why don't you try and keep those commandments. And when he said that. There was a deathly chuckle in his voice like that.

She looked. She said father why did you do that. And in a whisper he said.

The more she tried. And then she said. The ten commandments of love.

You were married to a man. Your name is love. It's not really love.

You are great great great great. All that evil in your life. You would have had it.

I know that you are only God. No laws. No.

And when she got in. Lock him in. Never.
Never. Never let him out. The moment he comes.
And when he is in. She got on wonderfully. The old wife says.
Is that you dying father. Yeah yeah. And everything I do.
I do out of love. She let him out again. Although you failed.
So bound up in. Bring back the. Show him what you can do.
Bring back the old rules. All that. Throw me out.
Divorce me. Pour them all down.

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