

# May 30, 2021 - David Baumgartner

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Preacher: David Baumgartner

[0:00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church. Knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. Well, I'd like to wish you all a happy Memorial Day.

Again, we honor all those who gave it all for this country. We also have an exciting time. Max Talley is going to be sharing his thoughts about a mission trip that he experienced in the continent of Africa.

But before that, we are in a study in Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome. So if you have your Bibles, please turn with me to Romans chapter 7.

It's a very brief passage this morning. It's really a continuation of last week's. In fact, it's a bridge from last week to next week, what we'll be talking about.

But we're focusing on the believer's sanctification. If you look with me, actually, in chapter 6, verse 11, Paul's words, he says that you must consider yourselves dead to sin.

[1:07] And what? Alive to God. In Christ Jesus. So, as we go on, here we see Paul's goal for the believers in Rome.

And I would say that it's our goal as well. He says in verse 13 of that same chapter, I would say that's a worthy goal.

What a good way to live your life as an instrument of righteousness for the Lord Jesus, considering all that he's done for us, and even just to worship him as an act of worship that we would live that way.

But I'll tell you what. It's one thing for a believer to understand that our identification with Jesus, by virtue of that, that we are dead.

We've died to sin. But let me ask you this. How are we to deal with the sin nature that remains within us? Not only does it remain, it hinders us.

[2:21] I would say that this is the struggle of every believer. And believe it or not, there are some people who look to the law for help.

Isn't that amazing? Considering all that we have studied about the law, these people will seek the law for help. And I might want to ask, how does that go? Is that working for you?

Let's read chapter 7. We're only going to be looking at the first six verses here. He begins by saying, Or do you not know, brethren?

For I'm speaking to those who know the law. That the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living.

But if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then, if while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress.

[3:27] But if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God.

For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

But now we have been released from the law, having died to that which, that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

Heavenly Father, it is so wonderful that we can come here and read these words that were penned some 2,000 years ago, but Lord, they still apply to us today because they speak of Jesus Christ and what he did for us.

Lord, we're so grateful for that. We ask that through the power of your word, Lord, and the ministry of your spirit, these words would come alive to us today and that you would be exalted in our very midst, Lord, because you are worthy.

[4:55] We are yours and we thank you for that. In Christ's name we pray and God's people said, Amen. I want you to notice first off here that this passage is directed to those who know the law.

Now what's he talking about? Well, of course, this would be referring to the law of Moses, but we also have to realize the audience here that not only Jews but also the Gentiles in Rome and they too would know something about laws.

I mean, consider they lived in the capital city and this is where laws would be debated and enacted for the entire empire. And what about the law?

Well, we've already covered that indeed one of the purposes of the law was to what? curb or restrict crimes, misdeeds. You know, a couple of weeks ago my wife and I spent a little time in Utah.

We were visiting the sites there and we had been there in this little city called St. George and it occurred to us after a few days that, you know what? We haven't seen a single police car.

[6:04] And we thought, wow, that's great. Why is that? Well, it's because there's very little crime in St. George. Now, how about the other saint?

St. Louis? Well, I just ask you to turn on the TV and you'll get your ears full. But in St. George, it seems like they've really got the law laid down really well.

And I'll tell you what, that was good for us, friends, because there was a time we left our windows open, our car was open, and we came back and everything was still there. Praise God for that. But I want to ask you this.

Does the law make a person or can it make a person closer to God? Can it? In Paul's day, the typical Jewish view was yes, it can.

It was believed that the law was actually a means of achieving salvation and spiritual growth. You may have heard this before, that there are some 613 laws in the Torah.

[7:11] It's the Old Testament here. It's unclear how that number was derived because there's so much duplication. But that's what was determined. 613.

And so they have this saying here, the more Torah, the more life. Is that your experience? No. So over the years, if you have that kind of mindset, the Jewish religious leaders came up with what? More and more laws. Have you heard of the Mishnah? Yeah, that's a collection of what's called the oral law from the rabbinic teachers.

And in addition to that, you have the Talmud, which is nothing more than a commentary on all these rules and regulations in the Mishnah. Thousands and thousands of details focusing on minutiae of just man-made laws.

And so, it's the belief that if a person does these things, that they're a good person and they're deserving heaven.

[8:21] And friends, they're not the only ones. They're not. They're not the only ones. In fact, this mentality forms the basis of almost every religion out there except Christianity that you deserve God based on what you do.

Maybe you've heard this motto. Used to be mine. I don't smoke. I don't chew. I don't go with girls that do. I want to ask you this.

Why is legalism so attractive? Why is that? Well, it's because it appeals to man's sinful nature. One of man's basic desires is to be in control of his own destiny.

And that includes our eternal destiny. And so salvation by works appeals to man's pride and his desire to be in control.

Usually, a legalist will focus only on those rules that he has no trouble keeping. But friends, this is only an illusion because in reality, and we've already covered this before in Paul's letter to the Romans, that no one can keep the law perfectly.

[9:37] As we've seen in Romans, the purpose of the law is to reveal our sinfulness. The law should not make us feel good about ourselves. No, rather, it should lead us to see our need for a Savior.

That's what the law ought to do. And not only that, in our text this morning, Paul is going to contend that the law actually increases sin.

That sin is provoked. It's stimulated by means of the law. Let's go ahead and dive in here, this short passage. Look with me, verse 1.

Paul says, Do you not know, brothers, for I'm speaking to those who know the law, that the law is binding? In other words, it has authority on a person only as long as he lives.

Well, this truth is self-evident, especially by those who know the law. And so Paul here, next, he offers an illustration of a husband and a wife in marriage.

[10:41] Look with me, verse 2. For a married woman is bound by the law to her husband while he lives. I'm just basically saying what it says here. But if her husband dies, he goes on, she's released from the law of marriage.

So here's a simple illustration. Those of you who have been married or maybe you are married now, you may recall your own wedding ceremony. Maybe you guys, it's fresh in your memory here. You both recited some vows. You made some promises to your future spouse because she's still future at that point. I promise, I'm going to do this.

I'm going to do that. I think many of us have forgotten some of those things. But what did it end with? Till death do us part. So in other words, as long as you're both alive, you're both under the law of marriage, that relationship there.

But here's the key. If and when either of you die, what happens? The marriage vow no longer applies. And so you look to verse 3. Accordingly, he says, if the husband dies, she is free from that law.

[11:50] So, here's the application. Verse 4. Likewise, my brothers, you also have died what? to sin? Yeah.

But he says here, you've died to the law. In other words, literally, in the Greek here, it means you have been put to death to the law. You didn't kill yourself.

No, this was God's doing, friends. I think it was said this morning here during our Lord's Supper. It was God who planned your salvation. It was God who carried it out.

It was God who redeemed you. It was God who put you in Christ. And when you died with him, the law no longer had authority. No longer had dominion over your life.

And so, what's the result? Paul notes these two things here. Look with me, verse 4. Christians belong to another. Well, who's that? Him who was raised from the dead.

[12:53] Of course, that's talking about Jesus. Believers are united to Christ. He purchased us. The scriptures call us, refer to the church as his bride.

So, what a wonderful truth that is. But here's another thing. In order that we might bear fruit to God, what a blessing that is. Knowing Jesus and making him known.

Paul, notice here, Paul includes himself in this. He says, we might bear fruit. Again, the goal here is for the believer to bear fruit for the Lord.

What does that look like? We can think of a couple ways. First of all, you may think about your mind, your attitudes. We have the evidence or the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

It's in Galatians chapter 5. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

[13:57] But notice how he ends that. Against such things, there's what? No law. No law. But not only with our attitudes, how about in our actions?

There's a passage in Hebrews that says, through him, let us continually offer up the sacrifice of praise to God. That is the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

And then in Paul's letter to the Philippians in chapter 1, it's my prayer that you would be, here he is, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise to God. What a way to live your life. To be able to have fruit for God. Stuff that endures. Fruit that will last forever.

because it has an impact on people. And here's the truth, friends. Only those who are spiritually alive, those who are in Christ, can actually bear spiritual fruit.

[15:03] Only those. And Jesus said in John's Gospel account, chapter 15, Jesus said, abide in me and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit. And then he ends with, apart from me you can do nothing.

Now that's the believer's life. And I hope that that's all of what we would give our hearty amen to. But look at what the contrast is in verse 5.

He says, for while we were living in the flesh our sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit for what?

For death. This describes a person before he or she was saved. And this is the first time we see that word the flesh used.

[16:08] Now that can refer to just the material that covers our bones for instance. you may in John's gospel account spoken of Jesus that the word became flesh.

But here this is referring to our sinful nature. In other words that part of us that opposes God. It opposes the spirit of God.

And this is what we deal with. You see there was a time when you and I were controlled by our flesh. Our sinful nature was what?

He tells us it was aroused by the law. It wasn't suppressed by the law. It was aroused by it. The law intensifies. It aggravates our passions for sin.

You might want to ask how it does that. We're going to see more next week on this. But not only did our sins become transgressions because it violates an established law.

[17:10] our sinful passions were actually given power. They were given authority. Sins were aroused. That word there is the word we get energized.

They were energized. Sin became a tyrant at work in our members. That would be our body parts our limbs our hands our eyes whatever else you want to call it.

This is what it means friends to be slaves to sin. That's what it means. Maybe for you that are here today how would you describe your life before Christ?

Before you had a relationship with the Lord? Maybe sinful passions? Does that word fit? Did the law keeping the law did that remedy your situation?

No. It only made it worse. If we look at verse 6 here's my last verse for this morning. But now oh but now praise God for that.

[18:15] But now verse 6 we are released from the law having died to that which held us captive so that we may serve in the new way of the spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

This passage here along with the others that we've studied in Romans it should make us realize all the blessings that come to us because of who Jesus is and what he's done for us.

And they're there only because of Christ. We didn't make these up. No it's because of him. And we're called to this new life to work unto him.

To give our lives to him. To serve in the new way of the spirit. It's a privilege. And one of the very ways that we can do that is telling others about the new life that was made possible only through Jesus.

Naturally we want to tell others the good news don't we? Isn't that natural? That we want to tell others the good news? What happens to you when something good happens? You want to tell others.

[19:28] What should be our message therefore? our message is that we're blessed that we're set free by the law. I'm sorry set free from the law.

Got to scratch that on that tape. I'm reminded by a dear brother Sean Collins. Anybody remember Sean? Yeah many of you did.

Sean died at a fairly young age. I think it was like in his 40s or something like that. But I actually have Sean's story here that he told. Sean loved the Lord and he loved sharing Christ with people. And Sean came from a very difficult background and he was able to use his background as a platform to speak to others. And he has this story.

In sharing Christ with others he had a story that he would tell people. And here's how the story went. There are two families. In the first family there is a father and a son.

[20:31] The father to this son says to you son, son as long as you do what I say you will be my son. But if you don't do what I say I'll kick you out of the family and you'll no longer be my son.

Let's kind of let that sink in here for a little bit. In the second family there is a father and a son. son. In this family the father says to the son, son I love you unconditionally.

No matter what happens you'll always be my son. If you do wrong I will discipline you but you will always be my son. Now here's a series of questions that he would ask people.

After this story I like to ask these questions. Consider this. which son A or B will which son will out of gratitude want to be like his father?

Yeah the second. Which son number two has more anger bitterness and rebellion toward his father and will grow up with a lot of personal problems to face?

[21:49] Yeah it's the first son. Number three which son will grow up doing more good in the short term? You may be surprised by that but it's actually the first son because he's still trying to please his father but then he realizes that he can't.

Number four which son will grow up doing more good things in the long term? Which family would you rather live in? And the last question which of these families do you live in right now?

You see friends brothers and sisters living according to works whether it's in a liberal church that teaches salvation by works or if you're living by the Mosaic law doesn't lead to life.

It leads to death. It leads to studying more and more about the minutia of what we shouldn't do, of why we shouldn't love.

Our message is that we're blessed, we're set free from the law. People for whatever would be for work.

[23:14] They saw long ago food over men a two of what they'll be under using reliable hold of their and scriptures and well, we're able tolya