

ROMANS 7

Message 6

Words: 3503

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Scripture: Romans 7:1-6

INTRO: We are looking at the believer's release from the law. Romans 1 showed that all Gentiles are sinners. The Gentiles who did not have the law of God were under the law of conscience. The Jews who had the law were under the laws revealed in their Scriptures. And Romans 3:19-20 then says this:

*19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

*20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

To save man, God had to deliver man from the condemnation of the law. That condemnation was that all have sinned and therefore all are condemned. So man had to be released from the condemnation of the law. Romans 8:1 says the believer is no longer under condemnation. How did that happen?

Well, that is what Paul shows in Romans 7:1-6. In verses 1-3 Paul illustrates how the believer is set free from the law. Then in verses 4-6 he gives the application of the illustration. In verse 4 he gave us the purpose of our release from the law. He said:

*4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.*

Why did God need to deliver us from the condemnation of the law? All we could do was produce more fruit to death. So God would justify us by faith, and then sanctify us, or make us holy by faith. So we had to first be delivered from the condemnation of the law so that we could live and bring forth fruit to God.

In verse 5 he describes our need for release from the law. He says:

5 *For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.*

As long as we were not delivered from the law we were in the flesh and our sinful passions were aroused by the law and worked in our members to bear fruit to death. So in verse 6 Paul now shows the results of the believer's release from the law. He now says:

6 *But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.*

We begin then with verse 6 this morning.

## 2. The Applied (4-6)

### c. The results of Release (6)

Paul completes the application of the illustration like this:

6 *But now we have been delivered from the law,*

Every verse begins with a conjunction. Verse 1 said, "Or did you not know..." Verse 2, "For the woman..." Verse 3, "So then..." Verse 4, "Therefore..." Verse 5, "For..." Verse 6, "But..." When we were under the law all we could do was bring forth more fruit to death, "But now, having been delivered from the law..." It is my view that when it says the believer is not under the law or he has been delivered from the law, or he is dead to the law, it is the condemnation of the law that is referred to. So 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."

And how were we delivered from the condemnation of the law? Paul goes on to answer by saying that we have died to what we were held by. And what were we held by? By the law! It said, "If you fail me in one point, you are under my condemnation. You are cut off

from God. You are condemned!" But now we have died to that which held us under condemnation. And why did we need to be delivered from this condemnation? Well, let us read on in verse 6:

*having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.*

We have been delivered from the law in order that that we should serve in newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. When we were in the flesh we brought forth fruit to death, "But now..." After we repent of our sins and receive Christ as our Saviour, now we are delivered from the law. How so? We have died to that by which we were held. The law said, "If you disobey me, you must die." We have all sinned, and therefore we must all die. This death is spiritual death, leading to physical death, resulting in eternal death or hell fire. "But now..."

Consider now the word "to serve." There are three NT words translated "to serve." There is the word *diakonew*. When you have friends in for a meal, as hosts you serve them. You make the meal and serve them. This kind of service is service rendered which is not for pay. Our word for the office of deacon comes from this word. This kind of service is that which falls to us without receiving pay for what we do.

Let me give you a biblical example. We go to Matthew 8. Jesus spent most of His time in the region of the Sea of Galilee. Some years ago when we visited this area the Sea was very low. It was starving for water. Today it has filled up again. And here Jesus visited the Apostle Peter's house and Peter's wife's mother was sick. So look at verses 14-15:

14 Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever.

15 So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.

After Peter's mother-in-law was healed she served them. If it was meal time, she would have prepared a meal. If it was not, she might have served drinks and a snack. This was proper and right and was not for pay.

Then there is the word *latreuw*. This is service which you choose to do and it either receives wages or it reaps benefits. Let me give you one example. Turn to Luke 2. When Jesus was born and His parents brought Him to the temple to perform those things required by the law there was a certain elderly woman there who served God in the temple. We'll read verses 36-37. It says:

36 Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity;

37 and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

This elderly woman served God with fastings and prayers night and day. The word used for prayer here is that she was asking for things. She is serving God in order to receive things. No doubt she prayed for the nation and the needs she saw in the people around her. She was not obligated to do this. She chose to do this and she expected to receive things because she did it.

"But," we might ask, "how is this serving God if she received things for it?" In order for God to do many things He wants to do, it requires prayer and sometimes fasting. God

cannot do many things because there is no burden to pray. And to pray is a service to God. This past Wednesday we began prayer meeting again. Praying for the needs of others and the nation and the church is a service to God. It is a hard service. Very few churches have a prayer meeting any more. It is one of the most difficult services to God.

So there is service without pay and then service for pay or for reaping benefits of some kind, and last, there is service required without pay but it is required. It is that which we call slavery. Contrary to the thinking of most, slavery is not wrong. It is the treatment of slaves that is so often wrong. When you round up people by force and make slaves out of them, this is what is wrong.

There were a number of ways in Bible times how one might become a slave. Turn to one example given in Exodus 22. There are many things the laws of our land could learn from the Bible. Here is what verses 2-3 say:

*2 "If a thief is found breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there shall be no bloodguilt for him,*

*3 but if the sun has risen on him, there shall be bloodguilt for him. He shall surely pay. If he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.*

So if a thief is caught, and he has nothing to pay for what he has done, he is to be sold into slavery. He would have to work off his debt. Look at the damage done in the US in the rioting. If all those were caught and put to work until they had paid for the damage they had caused, the country would gain from their work instead of feed and clothe them in jail.

All that to say that there were numerous ways in which one might become a slave and there were godly rules on how to handle these cases.

So let me show you how it was for a slave from the words of Jesus Himself. We go to Luke 17. Jesus describes how it was for slaves. By the way, the word for a slave is *doulos*. We begin in verse 7:

7 *"And which of you, having a servant (doulos) plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'?"*

8 *"But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'?"*

9 *"Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not."*

10 *"So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'"*

All three of these words can be used of Christians. Here is how Paul begins Romans 1:1, "Paul, a servant (*doulos*) of Jesus Christ..."

Now we go back to Romans 7:6 which says:

6 *But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.*

We were delivered from the law so that we might serve in newness of the Spirit. So I ask you, which word for "serve" do you think is used here? To serve God without pay because it is our duty to do so? To choose to serve God because we will reap some benefit from it? Or to serve God because we are a slave?

Well, the word is *doulos*, meaning the service of a slave. Now let me give you two kinds of

slaves. There was the slave who was made a slave for some reason such as he had debts he could not pay. He had no choice in the matter. He is the kind of slave Jesus described in Luke 7:7-10. But there was another kind of slave. Turn to Exodus 21. We begin in verse 1:

1 *"Now these are the judgments which you shall set before them:*

2 *"If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing.*

3 *"If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him.*

4 *"If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself.*

5 *"But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,'*

6 *"then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.*

In these verses we have the description of the Christian as a slave of Jesus Christ. The true Christian says, "I love my Master. I will not go out free. I do not want to serve the flesh and the pleasures of this life. I love my Master with all my heart, all my soul, all my mind, and all my strength. I will serve Him and Him alone all the days of my life."

Here is the sum total difference between true Christianity and all other religions. Now let us read Romans 7:6 once more:

6 *But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.*

So let me now describe service under the oldness of the letter. It goes like this: Thou shalt do this and this and this, and thou shalt not do this and this and this and if you fail in any point, you must die. It is pictured by the rigour of service required by Pharaoh of Israel in Egypt. And it got worse and worse, and if they failed they were flogged and many died.

But the slavery under which the Christian is, is the chosen slavery of service in newness of the Spirit because we love our Master. I think we could draw some likeness to the difference of serving under communism or serving under capitalism. Let us say you are a farm worker under communism. You do what you are told to do when you are told to do it and you get the same pay as the next person. There is no chance to succeed. There is no personal ambition. Soon you try to get away with as much as possible and you try other ways of getting some fulfillment out of life and it will almost, if not always be illegal.

But under capitalism, if you work hard enough you might buy your own farm. Now you walk on your own land. When seeding time comes you are ambitious to get seed in the ground as soon as possible. When harvest comes you are anxious to get out there and reap the harvest. And when you are done, you are content and fulfilled. And sometimes things go wrong and you try even harder. You know you will reap according to what you put in. The difference between the service of these two is like night and day.

The difference between serving in the oldness of the letter and serving in newness of the Spirit is like that. Now I want to demonstrate that by teaching through this with some



overheads. There are some major truths we need to understand in order to understand this chapter. We have already looked at the law to some extent.

In our verse, serving in the oldness of the letter is serving in the flesh. I want you to follow with me now through some verses beginning with Romans 7:5:

*Ro 7:5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.*

*Ro 7:25 I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.*

*Ro 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

*Ro 8:3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,*

*Ro 8:4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

*Ro 8:5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.*

*Ro 8:8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

*Ro 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells*

*in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*

*Ro 8:12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.*

*Ro 8:13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

So we must understand what this "flesh" refers to. Second is the word translated "mind." Look at 7:23:

*23 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.*

Here we are introduced to a war that takes place in the mind, and in this war, the believer is taken into captivity to the law of sin.

Then look at verse 24-25:

*24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*

*25 I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.*

Now look at Romans 8:7:

*7 Because the carnal (fleshly) mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.*

Let me just mention that the words translated *mind* in verses 24 and 25 are not the same as the one in 8:7.

Now look at Romans 8:8-9:

*Ro 8:8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

*Ro 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*

Here is the difference between serving in oldness of the letter and serving in the Spirit.

So I want to show us the nature of man and the relationship between the flesh and the mind that are spoken of in our passage and of being operated by the flesh or by the Spirit of God. It is helpful to understand this for that which lies before us in Romans 7.

CONCL: So to conclude, our verse has been Romans 7:6. It says:

*6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.*

Those who serve to be saved serve under the oldness of the letter. If I do this and this and don't do that and that, then I will be saved. One might view the difference between these two services like this: Those who serve under the oldness of the letter serve to gain eternal life. Those who serve in newness of Spirit serve because they have already been granted eternal life. The expression, "eternal life" is sometimes viewed as having to do with endless time. But eternal life has more to do with quality of life, than quantity.

Those who serve because they have the assurance that the Lord has granted to them eternal life on the basis of repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, serve out of gratitude for what they have received. Those who serve so that they might some day be saved because they served never have assurance of salvation. They must continue to work and they never know when they have done enough.

The person who has truly repented and truly puts his or her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, most gladly becomes a slave of Jesus Christ.