**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Sermon

*Romans Series - Chapter 7*

***God’s Good Freedom***

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September 1st In the Year of Our Lord 2019

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS text is quoted)

 In reading Romans 7, many people become dizzy. There is a pattern of thought presented by Paul that requires a Jewish understanding of God and Scripture. When Paul declares that he is speaking to those who know the law (verse 1), he is preferencing his next statements. So, Christians today should take note of this declarative by Paul. At this point in the reading of Romans, the reader should study a bit on the Law/Torah and the history surrounding the Law.

 The Jews in the time of Jesus had been in Jerusalem since their return from Babylon. Remember that Cyrus the Great, the Persian King who defeated the Babylonians, issued a decree in 536 B.C. releasing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple (Ezra 1).

 Since that time there had developed a deep abiding practice of the Law in order to satisfy God. This was an attempt to please God so there would not be another deportation. To bring things to boiling point, the Romans had become occupiers of Judah. This was not as bad as a deportation but not good.

The Jewish leadership had many concerns in responding to Jesus. Jesus was seen by the people as a prophet and a worker of miracles. And some had ‘bought into’ Jesus’ claim that he was the long-awaited Messiah. The Jewish leaders did not want their own authority eroded by a peasant iterant backwoods preacher. They also had a misunderstanding of the Law. They were determined to keep the Law in order to keep peace with God. However, Jesus taught that they were too zealous and overburdened the people with a too strict application of the Law.

Paul ~~is~~ writes to those coming from a Jewish belief system that were steeped in adherence to the Law to keep peace with God. Even though the Jewish converts recognized Jesus as the Messiah, they had not fully transitioned away from the Law making a person righteous to faith as witnessed in Abraham. They had not fully seen or accepted the witness of the Cross and Jesus’ work that paid the price for our sins once and for all.

**Romans 7:1** Or do you not know, brethren

**(for I am speaking to those who know the law),**

that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives?

**Example: Paul uses the illustration of a married woman ~~is~~ still being under the contract of marriage as long as her husband lives. Paul is teaching that the law is dead, and therefore, the Jews are free to go to Christ.**

 2 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.

 3 So then, if while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress;

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.

 Old Testament Reference (Lev 20:10)

 4 **Therefore**, my brethren,

you also were made **to die to the Law**

**through** the **body of Christ,**

so that you might be joined to another,

to Him who was raised from the dead,

in order that we might bear fruit for God.

 5 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.

 6 But now we have been released from the Law,

 having died to that by which we were bound,

so that we serve in newness of the Spirit

and not in oldness of the letter.

Paul equates the Law to a husband that has died. Thus, the woman is free to remarry. She is released. In this case, the Jews who had been married to the Law are now free to come to Christ, because the Law is dead. From a Jewish perspective, that being Paul’s, Christs’ fulfillment of the law was accomplished by Jesus’ sacrifice on the Cross. Jesus was the unblemished lamb to pay the price for all our sins. Jesus made the one-time sacrifice to accomplish what the law could never do. The Law was never intended nor had the power to remove the debt price of sin (Hebrews 10). Believers need to memorize Hebrews 10:11. In reality, Believers need to become conversed in chapters 9, 10 and 11. Hey, what about the whole Bible? Small portions at a time. Starting in Hebrews is foundational.

**Hebrews 10:11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;**

**Romans 7** continued

 **7 What shall we say then?**

Is the Law sin? May it never be!

On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."

 8 But sin,

taking opportunity through the commandment,

produced in me coveting of every kind;

for apart from the Law sin is dead.

 9 I was once alive apart from the Law;

but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;

 10 and this commandment, which was to result in life,

proved to result in death for me;

 11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

 12 So then, the Law is holy,

and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

 In the beginning, God decided what is good and bad. Without God to establish what is good, there wouldn’t be any baseline for human behavior. The Law demonstrated that God established a baseline. God demonstrated his foundational good throughout the creation from the beginning for all the world to see and everyone is without an excuse. God has revealed to everyone what His good is (Romans 2:18ff).

This is the convicting point. Paul states the law came and killed him. This happened because the Law identified the specific bad, the wrong, that was against God’s good. This is why the Law is holy and righteous and good.

 Paul teaches that apart from the Law sin is dead, meaning that if God would not have established what is good (The Law) then sin would not be. Meaning that Adolf Hitler’s actions could not be considered bad, because in a world with no foundational determination of good and bad then anything is permissible. There isn’t any judgement of what is right or wrong. Sound familiar?

 This is exactly what the atheistic world is. They reject God and his established good. So, they haven’t any moral ground on which to live. They only have their own self-determination.

 I was listening to a debate (online), and the atheist was debating an Islamic Imam. The atheist quoted a well-known atheist, Christopher Hitchens, (now deceased) who challenged Christians to name a moral act a Christian could do that an atheist could not. The context of the question was redirected towards the imam, being a person who believed in a god. The imam had no response. This was said: Islam does not provide a response to what God established from the beginning as good.

 What is the Christian response to the Hitchens’ question? Simple, the atheist cannot pray to God for their neighbor. The atheist cannot have compassion for their neighbor, mourn for their neighbor, the way God has planned. The atheist does not humble themselves before God and therefore cannot mourn for their neighbor. The atheist cannot be comforted by God because they won’t allow God to comfort them which would be participating in a moral act.

Atheists do not hunger and thirst for righteousness, as God determines, so they will never be satisfied. This is a moral act.

Atheists are not pure in heart and they will never see God which is another moral act.

Atheists do not see people as created in God’s image, and therefore, people are expendable for the atheistic worldview. We see this in every atheistic culture around the world in communist and dictatorship governments.

**Matthew 5:1-12** 1 When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

 2 He opened His mouth and *began* to teach them, saying,

 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

 5 "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

 6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

 7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

 9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

 10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

 11 "Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

 12 "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**Romans 7** continued

 13 Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me?

May it never be!

Rather it was sin,

in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good,

so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

 14 For we know that the Law is spiritual,

but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand;

for I am not practicing what I would like to do,

but I am doing the very thing I hate.

 16 But if I do the very thing I do not want to do,

I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.

 17 So now,

no longer am I the one doing it,

but sin which dwells in me.

 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh;

for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

 19 For the good that I want, I do not do,

but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

 20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want,

I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

 21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me,

the one who wants to do good.

 22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,

 23 but I see a different law in the members of my body,

waging war against the law of my mind

and making me a prisoner of the law of sin

which is in my members.

 24 Wretched man that I am!

Who will set me free from the body of this death?

 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

 So then,

on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God,

but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

 Without God’s establishment of what is good, humanity dies forever. Meaning eternal separation from God. Choosing to surrender to God gains us eternal life with Him. Everyone has an eternal life. The question is. . . with who? Surrendering our hearts to God is how we get life back after we willfully sinned like Adam.

 **Romans 8:1-4**

**1** Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

 3 For what the Law could not do,

weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*:

sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh

and *as an offering* for sin,

He condemned sin in the flesh,

 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us,

who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

**AMEN**

Sermon series continue in Romans 8 next Sunday.