Emancipation from the Law

Romans 7:1-13

Introduction:

In 6:14 Paul makes a statement:

“For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”

Then he develops a parenthetical section in which he gives a rebuttal to the idea that believers should sin because they are not under law but under Grace. This extends from 6:15 – 23.

Now he comes back to “sin shall not have dominion over you” (6:14; 7:1)

I. The Spiritual Man and the Law – 7:1-6

[The Spiritual man is a believer whose life is controlled by the Holy Spirit.]

A. The Authority of the Law – 7:1

* He knows that the law’s power ends at death.

“Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?”

Remember, Paul is writing to a Jew/Gentile church in Rome. He asks them a question, “Do you not know?

Someone has said, When Paul asks that question, the proper answer usually is, “No”. This time it seems to be, “Yes” He is not speaking only of the Law, but of law in general. It is almost a truism. i.e. “Everybody knows that!”

B. The Analogy to Marriage – 7:2-3

“For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of *her* husband.”

This is true, not only for the Mosaic Law, but for all of their law. Some marriages of that day were not very good and the husband’s death was a relief. (Just like your marriage to the law before you met Jesus.)

Our marriage vows express that view, “As long as you both shall live”

* He shows that the law’s power ends at death.

“So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.” (7:3)

He has Discovered:

a. A More Thrilling Way to Victory – 7:4

“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.”

He is no longer trying for victory any more than he is trying for salvation. The death of Christ is his death. Therefore, the law has no power over him. Not only has he died with Christ, he has been raised with Him. No more fighting the law, just yielding to Jesus.imHHHHnnnmm

b. A More Thorough Way to Victory – 7:5-6

“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.”

The Law’s “thou shalt not” stimulates the mind to do it. “Do not walk on the grass”

Does that make you want to walk on at least the corner?

Dr. Ironside writes, “I see on the subway platform a sign ‘no spitting on the floor’ and all around there is spit. I go to someone’s home and there is no sign and there is no spit.

The law arouses the passion to do the sin. Like Satan in the Garden of Eden:“God is trying to keep you from something good. Try it and see!”

As Steve Brown says, “It’s a lie from the pit of Hell. It has the spell smoke on it”.

“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.”

At salvation, the change in our lives is not just in the future, it is also in our present. We have exchanged masters. We have a choice of whom to serve. Before, we had to serve the law. Now, it is possible to serve either the law or the Spirit. So, the spiritual man is delivered from the Law.

II. The Natural Man and the Law – 7:7-13

The natural man is defeated by the Law. There has been much discussion about this section.

1. It represents the period between the Fall of Adam and the giving of the Law.

2. It seems to me that it represents Paul’s personal struggle with the law during his unconverted days.

The verbs are in the past tense and in 14-25, where Paul is dealing with his experience as believer. the verbs are in the present tense.

A. Law Reveals the Fact of Sin – 7:7

“What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, *“*Youshall not covet.”

Is the Law sin? μὴ γένοιτο No, where did the Law come from? Would God give us sin?

Paul says later: The Law is holy (v.12) and spiritual (14). The Law revealed his sinful nature, “I would not have known sin except through the law.”

The 10th and final command tripped Paul up. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor. Without some criteria of truth, every man does that which is right in his own eyes. God’s Law is that criteria.

B. Law Reveals the Occasion of Sin – 7:8

“But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire.”

It is possible to keep first 9 commandments, at least to your own satisfaction. The rich young rules could say, “all these I have kept from my youth up.” Or “according to the Law I was blameless”

But #10 tripped him up. This does not mean that Paul was not a sinner; he just didn’t realize that he was. Maybe in his early life he was taught objective sins, but had not thought about sins of the mind and thoughts.

C. The Law Reveals the Power of Sin – 7:9

“I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.”

Paul is not saying that he was alive spiritually before this revelation. Now he realized that he was a sinner. The sin is within himself and he, himself, cannot get rid of it. Otherwise, we should not tell people about sin. Then we condemn them to Hell.

He was lost just as every son of Adam is lost, because he was born that way. It is like my lawn: when the sun shines on it, it brings weeds and little flowers, etc. The sun does not bring them; they are already there. It simply causes them to come out.

D. Law Reveals the Effect of Sin – 7:10-11

“And the commandment, which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me*.”

It had power to reveal sin but no power to remove sin, for even the sacrifices of the Mosaic system did not take away sin.

Hebrews 10:4

“For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.”

The law does not reward us for keeping the commandments it only punishes us for breaking them. There is a death penalty associated with each of the 10 commandments.

Did you ever get stopped by a policeman and taken into court and given a prize for your good driving?

E. The Law Reveals the True Character of Sin – 7:12-13

“Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.”

There are at least 15 words for sin in the Old Testament and about the same number in the N.T. With that many words for sin it is obvious what God thinks about sin. It is exceedingly sinful -- The high and holy standard of behavior demanded by the law leaves the sinner exposed, lost and defenseless.

The law can’t save. It just reveals sin -- Like the commercial: Bank is being robbed. The “guard” say “I don’t do anything about it; I just report it; there’s a robbery.”

That is what the Law says, “You are a sinner. You are going to hell.” But there is a solution. John 3:16

Conclusion: