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Living Hope EFC

Art Smith

The Christian's Struggle with Sin! Romans 7

ILLUS: Don't Blame the Clock

A famous preacher, many years ago had a clock in his church that was well known for its inability to keep time accurately. Sometimes too fast, sometimes too slow, it resisted all attempts to solve the problem.

Finally, after its dubious fame became widespread, the preacher put a sign over the clock reading, "***Don't blame the hands, the trouble lies deeper.***" - Green, 337

In Rom. 7 Paul addresses the similar problem in every Christian.

- **7:15,21-22** We desire to live for God, but there's a deeper problem.
- *My mouth, hands, feet, eyes – are not doing what I want them to do!*

It is interesting that Rom.7, lies between Rom.6 & Rom.8.

- Rom. 6 & 8 are chapters about living in **victory** over sin! (**6:14**)
- Rom. 7 brings us to the reality of **our struggle** & often failure with sin.

POINT: Knowing (6:6) is not enough in itself to deliver us from sin.

Sadly, until there is real failure (ch7) we often do not progress into Rom.8

Romans 7 is an explanation of the Christian life lived on the basis of "law keeping," or "trying to be a good Christian in our own strength."

...And – why this is impossible to do! There's a deeper problem!

Rom.7:1-3 Understanding the Principle of Law.

POINT: Man's relationship to law is determined by life & death.

- While we live, we are under the government of laws of our land.
- When we or another die, laws cease to have any bearing on us.
- **Law's jurisdiction is terminated by death.** Same principle as in 6:6-7.

Q: Why does Paul bring this up? (He is not finished with this topic.)

> Because the default program of the human nature, non-Christians & Christians alike, is thinking we can please/ serve God on the basis of law.

- In 3:19-20 Paul had explained that law couldn't save anyone from sin
- In 3:21 he announced God's r'ness is given us on the basis of faith.
- In 5:20 he stated that the Law was given so sins would increase.
- And in 6:14 Sin's mastery ended *because*, "we are not under law."

POINT: Law never could make us r'ous before God – in the first place. Once we become Christians, law has no more ability to make us good than before. **Law has its purposes, but making man r'ous is not one.**

Rom.7:4-6 We died to law and are married to Christ.

1. (v.4) The Christian (Church) has been separated from “law” by death, so that we can marry Another & live a new life. HOW?

- **Christ** died to law's jurisdiction, and lives unto God (**6:9-10**).
- *Law said:* “Wages of sin = death.” Christ took our sin, satisfied Law, came back to life – immortal, incorruptible, sinless, living to God.
- **Christ is forever separated from any former/ future demand of law.**
- WE, in Christ's body, receive termination in our relationship to “law.”

ILLUS: “Law” was our first husband. Death ended our relationship to law. Now, we are free to marry another. We are married to Christ.

Every man ever born is subject (married) to God's Law –by nature of the fact that God is our Creator & we are His subjects. God's law demanded that we obey Him 100%. **Sin interrupted this possibility**, so now, while law properly demands allegiance to God, *sin keeps us from complying*. The only thing Law can now do is reveal our failures & our judgment.

As long as we're related to this principle of “law” (Gal.3:10), we're doomed. And the only way to end our relationship to law, is **to die** to it.

ILLUS: If you live in Russia, the only way to be free from its Gov't is to renounce citizenship and become a citizen of another country.

We could not marry Christ until we died to our first husband, Law.

ILLUS: The 1st Cov't had to end before the New Cov't could begin.

Hebrews = The Supremacy of Christ over the Law (1st Cov't).

(1) The Law was totally ineffective in forgiving sins & giving eternal life.

- The priesthood was ineffective –7:11, 5:1-3.
- The Law was ineffective –7:18. Temple = only a shadow -8:5.
- Sacrifices could not clear us of sin –10:3-4.
- The First Cov't had to be ended & set aside – 8:7-13

(2) Christ was God's means of giving man eternal life (New Cov't).

- **9:12-15, 10:14-18**

POINT: The Law is a schoolteacher to lead men to Christ.

Christ is God's means of salvation, complete to the **inner** spirit of man.

- This salvation could not be applied until the 1st Cov't ended.
- **By faith in Him, we enter the New Cov't of grace, and also die to any relationship to the 1st Cov't, Law. – Gal.2:19-20.**

OUR NEW MARRIAGE is not based on LAW but on LOVE/ SPIRIT!

- Joined to Him = we have entered New Life, **Rom.7:6. Heb.12:22-24.**
2. (v5) Under the law, our sinful passions were only exasperated.
3. **Joined to Christ, we can NOW produce fruit for God.** (Rom.6:11-13).

Moule: The **common ground** of both law and grace is **our obedience**. Law does so by the letter, by prescribing its own inexorable terms. Gospel does so by the Spirit, by the divine plan of redemption, which brings direct upon the soul the influence of Christ's Spirit...The Gospel both intends and effects the submission of the will to God's will," 126.

Rom.7:7-11 Law gave sin its opportunity to deceive & kill us.

1- (vs.7) NOTE: Law is not sin. *It is important* - with all this talk about how law condemns, brings wrath, arouses & exposes our multiple sins – that we don't think that God's Law is somehow defective or bad.

- Law performs the function for which God sent it: to reveal His character and moral standard to man, so man would see his sin & repent and stop sinning.
- PAUL – "I wouldn't have recognized sin without the law."

APPLY: Fact is, we are blind to our sin without the Law! We can easily explain sin away as: lack of education, "I'm Irish," our culture, "everyone does it." - If our conscience becomes calloused we are in grave danger

- **Here is where the Law of God does its "saving work" by exposing our sin to us, and leading us to a Savior.**

2- (vs8-9) Sin uses the Law –to produce all kinds of bad desires & even death. This is the deceptiveness of sin – in us.

- "Sin" by definition is opposite of righteousness, God's will & Law.
- So, when we hear one of God's laws or commands – what do we want to do? -Rebel! **Sin makes us think God's Laws are unfair.** (EVE)
- **PAUL'S TESTIMONY:** "I was doing fine until the law came. I thought I was serving God OK, (Unaware of sin in me.) I was far better than most others I compared myself to. BUT THEN the command came that said I couldn't even have **ONE foreign desire** aside of glorifying God...& all the sudden I was full of them! I died!"
- Law just seems to make sin break out all over us!
- **Something inside us misinterprets law as being confining, unfair – and we rebel.** Sin. And die!

3- (vs.10) Law is intended by God for our good but it ends up judging us

Rom.7:12-13 The Law did not make us sin, sin did.

Paul exonerates the Law, totally. Law is from God and reflects right and wrong. It can never be accused of evil. It is holy and good.

- God sent His Law to warn & protect us against sin!

Vs.13) Through the command, sin is seen as utterly (*υπερβολη*) sinful! So sin might be seen as **exceedingly** sinful and dangerous.

ILLUS: *Law is like a Plumb line.*

A Plumb line can expose a crooked wall, but it doesn't make the wall crooked, nor can it straighten it. *The wall is crooked by itself.*

- **Law doesn't create sin, it shows up what is there all the time.**
- We are very resourceful at hiding our sin, and that is dangerous.
- When Adam & Eve sinned – they hid. *It was God's presence that brought about confession, and salvation.*
- We might be deceived into thinking that we can somehow measure up and be accepted by God – on the basis of our works, except the commands of God reveal who we really are.

JOKE

Like the lady who had a friend over for coffee. As they were looking out the kitchen window at her *neighbor's laundry*, she commented on how they were dirty and streaked. The other lady pointed out, "The streaks are not on her laundry, but on your windows."

Schaeffer: "The Ten Commandments have a purpose for us. The commandments of the N.T. have a purpose for us...Being under grace is not a license to carelessness & indifference.

We forget that salvation is a flowing stream that includes an ongoing process of sanctification – a process that is not automatic, but that involves clear choices on our part. As I study...the Sermon on the Mt., as I look at the commandments or Paul and look at the example of Christ's life, the sinfulness of sin will become apparent if I am sensitive and letting the Holy Spirit speak to me. I will flee to the shed blood to claim God's cleansing in this moment, to commit myself anew to Christ. Then and only then comes the wonderful promise of verse 4, that through my marriage to Christ, He will bring forth fruit unto God through me," 182.