

# Not under law but under Grace

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Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

- [ 0 : 00 ]     Let's sing now to God's praise from Psalm 36. Psalm 36, verse 5, verses 5 through to 9.
- Thy mercy, Lord, is in the heavens. Thy truth doth reach the clouds. Thy justice is like mountains great. Thy judgments deep as floods.
- Lord, thou preservest man and beast. How precious is thy grace. Therefore in shadow of thy wings men's sons their trust shall place. They with the fatness of thy house shall be well satisfied.
- From rivers of thy pleasures thou wilt drink to them provide. Because of life the fountain pure remains alone with thee. And in that purest light of thine we clearly light shall see.
- And so on these verses. Thy mercy, Lord, is in the heavens. Thy truth doth reach the clouds. Thy mercy, Lord, is in the heavens.
- [ 1 : 13 ]     Thy truth doth reach the clouds. Thy justice is like mountains great.
- Thy c'mon to receive the flood. Thy christ they will sunny. Lord, is in the heavens.
- am to Cola Giles.
- Thy grace. Therefore in shadow of thy ways men stand their cross of place.
- They with the bloodless of thy heart shall be well satisfied.
- From rivers from thy blessings that were great to them provide.
- [ 2 : 39 ]     Because of thine's abundant pure in sorrow with thee, and in the purest light of thine will we ever be like the sea.
- Can we for a short time turn to the chapter that we read in the New Testament in the epistle of Paul to the Romans.
- Chapter 6, reading again at verse 14. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.
- Sin shall not have dominion over you. The chapter begins with a question, a question which arises out of what Paul has been bringing to their attention previously.
- The words of verse 20 state, Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound, but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.
- [ 4 : 19 ]     That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness and to eternal life by Jesus Christ.
- And there are those who would listen to Paul and who assert that that therefore means that they can sin at will.
- And there would be no repercussions for their sinfulness. But Paul considers that to be preposterous.
- I think the strength of what he says in verse 2, God forbid, we find it in Paul's epistle to the Galatians, God forbid.
- It is so strenuously denied by him because of its offensive nature. And it is something that he is very intolerant of.

[ 5 : 35 ] And there are indeed those who believe that the emphasis that Paul places upon the liberating power of the gospel that it does allow them to live their life as they please.

But that is in no way what Paul means us to understand. Those who believe it to be thus, they think of God as something other than the way the God of the scripture presents himself to us.

They know nothing of the grace of God and they know nothing of the God of grace. But having said that, the emphasis must be preserved that those who are delivered from sin through Christ Jesus know the fullness and the perfection of that salvation brought on their behalf.

So what does this mean? Just to look at this verse in particular, but bearing in mind the context in which it is found, to look at it asking three questions.

First of all, what are we meant to understand by the grace of God? What does Paul mean when he speaks of being under the law?

[ 7 : 16 ] And finally, what does he specifically mean for the believer not to be under the dominion of sin?

What does that mean for the believer? To understand and to live in the light of what it teaches, that sin is not any longer the dominant part of their human existence or experience.

What do we mean when we use the word grace? And we've often asked the question, I suppose, and it's a question that needs to be asked because it is a word that features very prominently in the Christian vocabulary, the word grace.

And the fact of the matter is, for all its frequency, it should alert us to the fact that it doesn't have one single meaning.

It has a breadth of meaning, a wealth of meaning, that should always be governed by the place where it is found and the use that is given to it.

[ 8 : 37 ] We heard quoted in prayer, two references to Ruth in the Old Testament, in the two prayers. And in the book of Ruth, Ruth is speaking to Naomi, and she tells Naomi that she is going to glean in the field of Boaz.

And she says to her mother-in-law, let me now go to the field and glean ears of corn after him, in whose sight I shall find grace.

So that's a word that she uses and that she uses with understanding. She is going to find grace in being granted permission to glean in the fields of Boaz.

Not just to glean, but to glean beneficially. And that is what is at the heart of the word in many respects.

It describes to us goodness or kindness shown on the part of the person who was demonstrating it.

[ 9 : 58 ] So Ruth was going to be a beneficiary of the kindness of Boaz in permitting her to glean with the gleaners there.

When you go to the New Testament you find the same Old Testament Hebrew word translated and the word charis is used.

A different word, but it's a word in Greek which means exactly the same thing. It is descriptive of goodness, of kindness, a mercy that is shown, that is undeserving.

And when the apostle uses it he reminds us that at the heart of his use of it, is that understanding, but also he means us to appreciate that when we encounter grace, we encounter something that is of a greater intensity and at the same time of a great breadth of application.

There are many ways in which we can experience it and there are many ways in which our experience is surprising to us because it is not what we deserve.

- [ 11 : 27 ] And when Paul wants to get to the heart of the gospel and the message that he proclaims, a message of God's grace, he wants us to understand that man is a great sinner sinner, and Christ is a great saviour, and there is no greater sinner than Paul himself in his eyes, and he knows that he is the beneficiary of God's grace in that respect, entirely undeserving of the least of God's mercy.

And he understands and he means the people who are listening to his word, the preaching of the word, he means them to understand that the favour, the divine favour that is bestowed upon them is entirely undeserved, and the end result of that bestowal of God's grace is that they will no longer be subject to the condemnation of God.

And when Paul wants to explore this, he looks at it from many different angles, but at the heart of what he says, this, there is, I'll go to chapter 8, the beginning, there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit, those who are no longer controlled by the flesh, no longer subject to the power of this world, the power of the devil, the world and the flesh.

they are liberated, and that liberation ensures that they will be able to believe that they are no longer under condemnation.

salvation. Now, what we can understand and what we need to understand that when we read this verse, for example, that the believer is no longer under the law but under grace, that they can speak of that grace with the generosity of spirit that is included within it, that enables us to believe that what Christ has secured for the believer is something of such a precious and awe-inspiring nature that there is nothing like it.

- [ 14 : 21 ] Whatever you try and compare to it, the comparisons fall by the wayside. Jesus, who is the mediator of the new covenant, is identified for us in the following way.

Remember how the apostle John opens out the gospel to us. He, in the first chapter there, he speaks of the witness of John the Baptist concerning Jesus.

And he says, John, bear witness of him and cried, saying, this was he of whom I spoke. He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me, and of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. John, in his introduction to the gospel, more or less declares, this is what the gospel is all about.

It's important. for us to grasp the significance of this as being at the heart of the gospel content, that salvation is all of grace.

- [ 15 : 36 ] Salvation in and through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ is God's gracious dealings with sin that could not and would not be dealt with in any other way.

glory. And the outcome of according to the design of what Jesus does and what God declares in his word concerning him is that as far as theologians are concerned, as far as their understanding of the gospel is concerned, we cannot overreach ourselves in emphasizing the nature of what God is doing.

Because I think at the heart of every individual thought, this is the best I can do in understanding why we are always striving to take to ourselves some plaudit or other concerning the salvation that Christ has to offer.

We want to in some way have some credit on our own part and we manufacture it in some way.

It's because we listened more carefully or because we worked more diligently or because we did this or we did that and it's always we.

[ 17 : 15 ] What we did, how we did it, why we did it, where we were, we'll find some way of bringing it round to ourselves. But God always insists that we have to move away from that and understand whatever it is that God expects from us, it is a bounden duty to do that.

There is nothing that we do except what we have expected to do. And anything less than that we are condemned for it.

And as far as the gospel is concerned, the gospel speaks of God's charity, God's love, God's willingness to go to where we are when we could not go to where he hears.

It is all of grace. And Paul says, sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace.

And God's grace is at the beginning, the middle, and end of the gospel. And it begins with perfection, it ends with perfection.

[ 18 : 35 ] There is nothing that God does that he leaves to chance. There is nothing that God does that he himself is not responsible for, and that he himself brings to fruition.

He doesn't leave it to us, he doesn't tilt us to the end of a steep brain, give us a wee nudge, shall free wheel to the bottom, not a bit of it.

What he begins in the salvation of sinners in the person of Jesus Christ, he proclaims that Christ in the gospel, he gives the sinner the wherewithal by which to respond to that Christ, he creates in us a new heart, he gives to us a new will, and by reason of what he does, he can say without any shadow of doubt, salvation is all of grace, and because it is all of grace, and because it is all his doing, there is nothing that he does that is not perfectly done, there is nothing that will leave you or me doubting that where grace abounds, it abounds to the chief of sinners, it doesn't matter who that person is, whether it is a Paul, whether it is a John Bunyan, whether it is a John Newton, it doesn't matter who it is, the word teaches us of the nature of this grace, and it's this contrast that we have in this verse, those who are under the dominion of sin, because under the dominion of sin, as we discover, that cannot but be the case because we are under the law and the law is broken and we are accountable to God for that broken law and there is no recovery from us in our own strength and by our own devices.

In the passage before us, Paul describes both the power to destroy sin as well as the power to enliven the sinner and both are keeping pace as it were and that is an act of God's grace, it is God's doing and we cannot and we should not overlook that.

The second thing that we have along with this emphasis on grace and we've just said very few words about grace. If you explore this word for yourself and find every demonstration of it, every facet of it, every discovery that you've made of it for yourself in your own life, how have you encountered God's grace?

[ 21 : 31 ] Well, you could say I've seen it not just in my personal encounter with Christ, but in my encounter with all who are Christ's.

What do you see? How do you see it? How do you experience it? You can delve into it yourself and discover perhaps more than I've said this evening.

But what does Paul mean when he speaks of being under the law? And I'm sure you'll say to yourself, well, surely that's an obvious question and an answer that would be obvious as well.

well, unfortunately some, because of the emphasis that Paul is placing upon God's grace and the conclusion of God's grace, the outcome of God's grace, it says more than they are prepared to admit.

good. so they're happy enough for them to think that when the law is spoken of here, you are not under the law.

[ 22 : 41 ] all it means is that there's been a transition from the Old Testament dispensation that requires the believer to keep the law and by the law is meant the law of the sacrifices, the law, the legal system that was once in place can now be abandoned because the sacrificial system is no longer in operation by the one sacrifice for sin, Jesus has curtailed the need for it, brought it to an end, it no longer applies.

And there are plenty who would say that is where we must find the answer to this. You are no longer under the law in that sense because they are not comfortable with the emphasis that Paul places upon it.

where he insists that the law has been dealt with in the fulfilling of the law by the Lord Jesus Christ.

And by the law there means the whole of the law of God, the moral law as it is fulfilled by the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In his commentary on Romans, the American Charles Hodge summarizes it into a sentence and he says, when he speaks of the law, it is the rule of duty that which binds the conscience as an expression of the will of God.

[ 24 : 36 ] It's a very succinct statement. The rule of duty that which binds the conscience as an expression of the will of God.

God is contained within that. And when the law applies to your heart and mind and my heart and mind and your conscience, God is there speaking to your conscience through the law which you are required to keep and which you can't.

But I came across these words that I think it's John Murray.

I'm not sure. I think it's in his commentary on Romans because he's got a very good commentary on Romans.

But if not it's in his collected works. But he says the following. The law commands and demands obedience.

[ 25 : 45 ] And you know that. The law requires of us obedience and it demands our obedience. The law pronounces blessing and approval when conformity to its demands.

It pronounces condemnation upon its breach. It exposes and convicts of sin. it excites and incites sin to a more aggrieved transgression.

That's what the law does. And the law is spread in breach. Every one of us without exception are lawbreakers.

and when we break the law it functions in this respect and it tells us the reality of our relationship to God that it's a broken relationship.

After Murray puts the crown as it were on it he says the law can neither be repealed nor modified.

[ 27 : 01 ] What it says once it says it always. It says it always. It's not going to be altered.

It's not going to be changed. Expounding God to the creature and defining man to himself.

That's a purpose that God intends for his word which is you could say the whole of the scripture is God's law. God's law the psalmist says is perfect but whether we want to have it as expansive as the word in its entirety or limited to the moral law as it is in the Ten Commandments but everything that must be extrapolated from that taken out from that.

Now it is impossible for us that's the thing we need to understand impossible for us to keep the law. The Bible tells you the Bible tells me that we all sin and come short of the glory of God and while we understand that we must also understand that the law makes no allowance for the fact that we can't keep the law.

The fact that you and I can't keep the law doesn't mean that the law is in some way flawed nor does it mean that there is an allowance made for us as law breakers because of the inevitability of our position as law breakers.

[ 28 : 54 ] If you listen to politicians you listen to words that often feature in their speechifying. One word that you listen out for is a word there are mitigations in place.

There are mitigations in place. In other words when things don't work out as they should there are allowances made that we can adjust what should have happened but did not.

Now God has not put any mitigations in place with regard to the law. We are guilty because we are breakers of the law.

Because we are breakers of the law we are condemned. And many would say that's not fair, that's not right, it's not just.

But what the law requires us to be is to be holy. Because the God whose law it is is holy and he wants us to be like he is. He wants to make us holy.

[ 30 : 05 ] But he through the law is not going to make us holy. Nor can you make yourself holy by your law keeping. There again is a problem that we have.

We think well if we apply ourselves and we do this thing or that thing and the next thing we'll in some way accrue credit with God.

But we cannot. Even in the best of our endeavours we're going to come short at some point. And if we don't keep the whole law then we fail and break the whole law.

And Paul goes to great lengths to emphasise that. We have the situation as it is with regard to the sinner.

That they are sinners under God's condemnation. God's grace deals with that circumstance and God's grace comes into operation and only God's grace can deal with a broken law.

[ 31 : 14 ] So that is the third thing that we come to hear. What does it mean for the believer not to be under sin's dominion? How is the believer not under sin's dominion?

Well there are plenty of ways in which you could explore that thought. What does it mean to be under sin's dominion? Well he explains it in this passage.

He says let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body that you should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin but yield yourselves unto God and Paul he tells us here that he is using language because of our weakness.

He said in verse 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh for as you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity and to iniquity.

Even so now yield your members servants to righteousness and to holiness. And part of that involves having to use language that helps us understand that we are servants to sin in a state of nature.

[ 32 : 43 ] We do what sin wants us to do. Sin is our master. Now strictly speaking what he is doing is he is personifying it.

He is giving through the language that he is using an illustration that helps us understand that when we are under the mastery of sin when we are under sin's dominion we are doing what sin expects us to do.

We do the wrong things. We don't do the right things but he says because of God's grace because you are no longer dominated by sin or under the dominion of sin you have a new master and as a new master is in operation in your life you are no longer doing the will of that master.

You read on what Paul says in chapter 8. he says what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.

he's not telling you I am now equipping you so that you can fulfill the law yourself you can go out and do what you couldn't do before no he's saying the change has been wrought in you by Christ Jesus who has fulfilled the law in your place who has done what you could not do and as you are in Christ just to cut it short as you are in Christ so Christ is allowing you to live no longer under the guilt that sin has brought into your experience but giving you the freedom from guilt that the gospel of his grace entitles you many years ago I was trying to find the book but I couldn't find it

[ 35 : 07 ] I know I had taken a quotation from it was a book by a southern American southern Presbyterian minister and it was given to me I think on the occasion of my first communion in Graver one of the ministers that we had there was the late old and to remember the occasion he passed on to me a book and he had transcribed his name and the occasion in the flyleaf of the book but this man Palmer wrote the following and I took a note of it if infinite pity and love shall unite with infinite wisdom and power to devise a way by which a sinner be rescued from his terrible doom it must be through an act of sovereign grace alone and of grace that cuts the channel of deliverance through the granite rock of the law itself

I think that's a marvellous statement it cuts the channel of deliverance through the granite rock of the law itself it undertakes to satisfy the law in all its demands against the sinner yet the method is perfectly safe for the sinner because it never presents God as in contradiction of himself it's God's provision and thus the God who provides it is a perfect God so what he provides is perfect for the sinner all of grace and all to ensure that you know sin will not have dominion over you you don't believe when you are under the power of sin that you were under the power of sin there was no one freer than you and yet it was exactly the opposite you were a slave to sin you were enslaved you were in chains and there was no power open to you by which you could break these chains whatever the chains were and whatever way they manifested themselves in the life of a sinner many people discovered that they were incapable of doing that the grace of

God alone can do this faith in Jesus Christ ensures that what Christ has secured becomes our possession and he alone is able to work that faith in us I was listening to somebody recently and they were talking about sin in their life and they were Christians they were Christians and one of their griefs was the appearance of sin in their lives especially when you read a passage like this sin shall have no more dominion over you and they feel and you feel perhaps that sin is something that is almost governing your life and this person was saying I feel today even coming to the end of my Christian life and I believe my life is a Christian life and yet

I have more problems today with sin than I had when I was a lot younger I have more problems with certain sins today than they were ever problematic to me in my youth and I suppose what you discover is that you'll encounter the same sins in new clothes or you'll encounter sins that you thought were not a problem to you but somebody else and they'll become your problem but this is the thing whatever these sins are for the Christian it's not that they're not problematic or that they're not sinful or that they're not damaging that's not what Paul is saying they will never have the mastery of you they will never be a dominant force in your life they will never the devil the flesh or the world engaged in a battle with these enemies but the foe has been defeated victory has been secured

Christ has ensured it so his grace demands that we understand that John Calvin makes a simple statement which requires an understanding of it he says this no one can be a servant of righteousness except he is first liberated by the power and kindness of God from the tyranny of sin no one can be a servant of righteousness if they are not in the first instance liberated and that word liberated as used by Calvin is all important Christ has liberated you and that liberty is certain however much the devil will persuade you otherwise the believer is free from sin but not free to sin you understand the difference and Jesus

[ 41 : 20 ] Christ is someone that is we are indebted to and that's what Mark Jane said I will always be a debtor to Christ we will never be the same you know we will never be equals because I will always be in his debt as my saviour and as my redeemer well may God help us to reflect on these verses and to think of the way in which God's grace is much in evidence in our life that ensures that sin is not in control however much we experience it let us pray O Lord we give thanks for the grace of God in Christ Jesus we give thanks for the power of that grace it is inexhaustible the source of it is undeniable through the spirit he ministers to us and we give thanks that however it manifests itself that we ought to acknowledge it and seek a growth of it as your servant the apostle said that he might grow in grace and in the knowledge of the

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ bless us together pardon sin in Jesus name Amen the closing psalm is psalm 85 psalm 85 going to sing verses in garlic from verse 10 and 11 and before the given morning me posible we could not be a chance.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 44 : 53 ] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.