

# The Law of Moses - and the new husband

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to be looking into Romans chapter 7. You may or may not know that Romans chapter 7 is a contested chapter of Romans. Different people understand it in different ways.

And the more I looked into it the past week and looked at the different commentaries that I'd spent my money on, or some of your money as well actually, I got more and more confused because they don't all say the same thing and they reflect the fact that it's a difficult chapter. There we are.

So, let's see, as it was read earlier, the law of the Lord makes wise the simple. We don't have to be clever people to gain benefit from scripture if we read it prayerfully and in a listening attitude.

So, let's come to Romans 7 with that prayer that God would teach us and bless us and help us to live the Christian life through his scriptures. What I'd like to look at this morning is verses 1 to 6. So, only that little bit, but it's not so easy to understand a little bit without seeing the whole of where he's going and where he's coming from.

So, let's look first of all at where he's coming from. I think we could say that the one way of looking at it is to say he has been answering the question, how can we escape?

[ 1 : 35 ] What it is to belong to Adam. How can we escape this whole realm of sin and death and condemnation?

So, I won't draw all the pictures again that we did before, but you will remember that he had these two great divisions of humanity. In Adam, where all die and those in Christ, where there is a new principle of life.

And the question is, how can we make the escape from sin and condemnation and death and wrath and all of that?

How can we escape into a better position? And I'd like to suggest that one of the answers that he's looked at is the idea that becoming a Jew is the solution.

And I'm sure as Paul went around speaking that many Jews would have said this is the correct answer.

[ 2 : 42 ] So, the Jewish people, the men would be circumcised so they would bear a sign of being in a covenant with God.

And they would say, we have this. We know the right way to behave.

We have the privilege of this relationship with God. And that's the way to escape being in Adam.

So, if you think about it in chapter 2, verse 13, Paul has said, actually, I don't agree with that.

It's not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but you need to be righteous some other way. Just having this privilege of information, knowing the law of Moses, is not good enough. And he has said things like this. He said, no, the Jews and the Gentiles are alike under sin. That's what he says in chapter 3, verse 9.

[ 3 : 53 ] Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. So, having the law, knowing the law, having the privileges that Jewish people have, does not make anybody right with God.

That is not the correct answer to how to escape from sin and death and condemnation in Adam.

And then we could go on to say, if the Old Testament...

No, start that sentence again. If being Jewish, if those privileges, if that information, if those rituals, in fact, do not save people, then how much more true it is of any other religion which wasn't invented by God.

Jewish religion is invented by God. That can't save people how much more than any other religious actions or enlightenment or privilege.

So, if we're sitting thinking, well, I'm right with God because I've been to church the right number of times in the year, or something like that.

[ 5 : 14 ] I'm right with God because I've prayed X number of times during the day. Or, I'm right with God because I've recited X verses of the Holy Book.

And Paul would say, no. That does not escape you from sin and condemnation and death.

Can't do it. Can't do it. What about, is there an answer then? Well, Paul says very definitely, the answer does not lie in you doing stuff, or your privileges, or your enlightenment.

The answer lies in what Jesus Christ did when he died on the cross and rose again. And you need to relate to that by faith.

Not by becoming a Jew, but by becoming a believer. A believer in Jesus Christ. And Paul will point back into the Old Testament, and he'll say, actually, in the Old Testament we've got examples of this.

[ 6 : 20 ] So, Abraham, our forefather, was right with God. He escaped being in Adam, and he escaped it by faith.

Abraham, Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. And he says that's a great example for everybody. Looking back on him, it's there in the scriptures of the Old Testament, and it's about faith.

That's the way to escape, by believing. And Abraham believed, and we can see much more clearly what it is the way to believe.

We believe in Jesus Christ. We believe in God's promises. We believe in God's gift. And Paul would sum it up with this word, grace.

A whole lot of stuff that God offers to us, without charge, freely. It's all wrapped up in Jesus Christ.

[ 7 : 24 ] If you like, he did all the heavy lifting for this. And so he would sum it up. For example, in chapter 3, verse 24, he would say, this is what it is.

It is being justified. That means right with God. Justified. Justified. Justified.

I can't find the verse. Yes. Justified. Freely. By his grace. Through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ.

And Paul is painting this whole picture of, not that way, but this way, the way of grace. And we're called to receive Christ's redeeming work, by faith.

So I could just ask you, as you're sitting there this morning, and how do you sense that your relationship with God is?

[ 8 : 27 ] Are you saying, I feel confident of God's acceptance of me because I've done lots of stuff? Or are you actually saying, it's much more simple and more fundamental than that.

I'm knowing that God accepts me because I am trusting in what Jesus Christ did on the cross. I could put it another way, the classic question.

If you got, as it were, to the gates of heaven, when you died, and you were at the gates there, they have passport check, or something like that, and they say, why should you be let in?

What would you say? So if you say, because I, that's almost certainly a wrong answer. If you say, I ask to be let in because Jesus, that's almost certainly the right answer.

I expect to be let into heaven because Jesus died on the cross, paid the penalty for my sins, rose again from the dead, and I'm putting my trust in him. That's grace.

[ 9 : 31 ] Fair enough? Fair enough? Yes. It is grace. And Paul puts it into a little saying, a little slogan that he's used.

He says, we're not under law, but under grace. We weren't trying to be right with God that way that I was describing, but in the other way I was describing.

Not under law, but under grace. Chapter 6, verse 14, he says, you are not under law, but you are under grace. Chapter 6, verse 15, shall we sin?

Because we are not under law, but under grace. And chapter 5, verse 20, what did it say there? It says, the law was added that the trespass might increase.

Where sin increased, grace increased all the more. Just as sin reigned in death, so grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[ 10 : 32 ] And he keeps on saying, it's grace. It's grace. That's where you're at. Grace. Grace is the power that rules in your life. Grace is the place that you're at. Not under law, but under grace.

Now, so, what about the law? He talks a lot about the law in the chapter that we're looking at.

So there's some things to be said about it. And if you, let's see what he says. Chapter 7, verse 1, he talks about the law having authority over somebody.

No, I haven't even started properly. Do you not know, brothers, I'm speaking to men who know the law. So he's speaking to the Roman church, Roman congregation. Presumably, many of them were converted Jews.

Presumably, another considerable number of them were Gentiles who had been God-fearers. In other words, they'd gone to the synagogue and they had come to read the Jewish scriptures for themselves.

[ 11 : 43 ] And so when he writes this, he says, most of you, I'm assuming all of you, know about the law of Moses.

you know about the Hebrew scriptures. So that's important to realise who he's speaking to. And he says to them, well, you know this, don't you? You know that the law has authority over someone as long as he lives.

So the, the, the, chapter 7, verse 1, the law as he's speaking of it is in its power, in its lordship.

Chapter 7, verse 6, he says, we die to what once bound us.

So, presumably, the law, as he's referring to it, has power to bind, to constrain, to command. And in verse, and also in that verse, he says, we're released.

So, presumably, the power that he was talking about is snapped and released. He also talks in 7, verse 6, about serving.

[ 12 : 56 ] It's that word for being a slave. We serve. We used to serve in one way, now we serve in another way. He's talking about serving as the law affects things.

He also links this up, chapter 7, verse 5, with being controlled by the sinful nature. Chapter 7, verse 5, when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so we bore!

We bore fruit for death. Literally, it says, in the flesh, but he's saying that, as he speaks about the law, he's saying that it relates, not only to the law's binding ability, but it also relates to being in the flesh, whatever that is.

And, as he goes on, in the bit that Adam read thereafter, he refers, chapter 7, verse 9, to the commandment. He gives this as an example of the very entangled way that the law works in the human conscience and in the human decision-making and so on.

So, 7, verse 9, he talks about the commandment coming. When the law, yeah, once I was alive apart from law, but when the commandment came, so he's talking about the commandment there, he says the same thing in verse 10, I found a very commandment that was intended to bring life brought death and in verse 11, sin seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment deceived me and through the commandment put me to death and so on.

[ 14 : 49 ] So, these are the things he's talking about. He's talking about the law in its role to command, in the way that it demands service and so on.

Okay, well, that's the sort of thing he's talking about. Let's narrow it down a little bit further. What sort of commandments is he thinking of? Well, he gives us some examples, or at least he gives us one example.

He particularly talks about the commandment of coveting, chapter 7, verse 7, the law said do not covet. Does anybody know which bit of the Bible that comes from, do not covet?

I can't hear. No, yeah, not coveting your neighbour's wife or donkey or anything like that. It's part of the Old Testament, isn't it?

I don't think it is Leviticus actually. Exodus and Deuteronomy. It's in a section that's quite well known, which I've actually written up there anyway. Ten commandments.

[ 16 : 00 ] It's one of the Ten Commandments. They're not actually called commandments in Hebrew, they're called ten words. So when it says commandment here in chapter 7, don't automatically think he means the Ten Commandments, they're not called that in Hebrew, but this is one of the Ten Commandments, as we refer to them, that do not covet.

So he's definitely thinking of that. I would like to suggest that he's also thinking of the Jewishness of circumcision.

circumcision. Now, does he say law equals circumcision? I don't think he does, but I'm pretty sure that's in his mind, because when he was talking in chapter 2 about the people who had the law, he linked it up with having, being circumcised, this particular Jewish piece of surgery, as you know, on a baby boy, to mark them as somebody who was belonging to God's people in the Old Testament sense.

So chapter 2, verse 25, says, circumcision has value if you observe the law, and then he says, if you break the law, you become as though you had not been circumcised.

So I would like to link circumcision with the law, just in case you're not looking on the screen, where does that come from in the Old Testament?

[ 17 : 26 ] Where does circumcision come from? Where does it start? Genesis. It is Genesis, isn't it? And with which particular person?

Is it Moses or does it go back earlier than Moses? Abraham. Yeah, Abraham received the covenant of circumcision, didn't he? So he was obliged to circumcise his family, his children.

I'd also like to suggest that Paul has in mind, when he talks about the law, from chapter 13, verses 8 to 10, I'll read this, it says, let no debt remain outstanding except the debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law.

The commandments do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not covet, and whatever other commandment they may be, are summarised in this one rule, love your neighbour as yourself, love does no harm to its neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilment of the law. Anybody know where love your neighbour as yourself comes strong? It's certainly in the Sermon on the Mount, but it's actually Leviticus, it isn't one of the Ten Commandments as such, it is a summary, which Jesus says, this is a summary, love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength and love your neighbour as yourself.

[ 19 : 04 ] And Jesus is taking two bits from different parts of the Old Testament and the love your neighbour as yourself. I'm pretty sure, though I didn't look it up, is from Leviticus.

So what I'm saying is, when Paul talks about the law, he's got quite a wide range of things in mind. He's got quite a wide range of things in mind.

Do not covet is one of the Ten Commandments. Circumcision, which I'm pretty sure he has in mind, is from Abraham. Love your neighbour as yourself is from Leviticus.

So it's quite a wide range of places. And I dare say, no, let me stop again, those are to do with pretty much the package of things that came with Moses.

So you would have had to read your Bible to know that law. But even if you had never read your Bible, you would certainly have the idea of law.

[ 20 : 11 ] Paul says that the Gentiles, who are completely spiritually ignorant about the Bible, they still know what laws are. They sometimes have their own laws, which they carry around in their head.

So you might be familiar with a law that says something like this, thou shalt send Christmas cards to all thy friends on Facebook.

And you might at Christmas time suddenly think, oh, I'm under this immense commandment to send Christmas cards to lots of people that I've never met before. Maybe that isn't part of the law that you're aware of.

Here's a law that you might have in your family. You might have been taught this from a child. You always say please and thank you. So, could I have more chips?

Could I have more chips? What? Could I have more chips? Mummy? No. Could I have more chips? Please? Please. And when you've had the chips, what do you say? What do you say?

[ 21 : 17 ] What do you say? Please? No. Thank you. So, it's a law. It's not one of the Ten Commandments, but it's law. Some laws and rules that bear in on us are cultural.

So, turn up on time is a Western European law. It's not African. And many, many parts of the world are so enlightened that they don't give themselves heart attacks and high blood pressure thinking that they've got to turn up on time.

They just turn up when it's convenient, which has a lot to commend it. There is a law, almost an unwritten law, that pervades Western society, which says you need to be thin.

Have you ever come across that law? It's probably not written down in those two words, but the idea that this is incumbent, this is something that's demanded of people. And it's a pretty tough law, that one is, isn't it?

Now, so I've, I've, we're thinking about law and I've suggested that there is quite a wide range of possible meanings.

[ 22 : 29 ] We could be, just the Ten Commandments, we could be thinking of quite a wide range of things in the Old Testament. We could be extending that to things that aren't even in the Bible, but say things inside our heads.

So, that's just to help us think about it, that Paul is very definite, and this is where he's going to, that Christ, I'll read it, it's chapter 8 verse 4, that Christ died, God sent his own son as a sin offering in order that the righteousness or the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the spirit.

So, what he's going to say is that the whole idea of the gospel, the whole idea of Christ's offering himself, is that whatever it is that God requires should actually happen in people's actual lives. Christ died on the cross so that, not so that we can just live any old how, but so that righteousness, holiness, proper, what God properly expects of humanity should begin to happen in our lives. things. Okay, so we're trying to put the ingredients of this together. Now let's look at what the text actually says, and this is not too difficult to see what it actually says.

[ 24 : 23 ] He says, now brothers, we're not under law but under grace, and the aim of not being under law but under grace is that we should live fruitful lives as he says in chapter 6, 22.

And as he's going to say in this bit, that we bear fruit for God. And that should be chapter 7, verse 4, not chapter 7, verse 44. Now, what's the bit that he's actually saying that we're looking at?

He says, let me explain to you how this happens. Let me explain to you how it is that Christians bear fruit for God. let's explain how it is that they live, not under law but under grace.

And the best way to explain it is to think of a human example. And the human example is of a married woman, looking at verse 2, for example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive.

There we are, man and a woman. She is bound to her husband. So there's a bond there. She is bound to her husband.

[ 25 : 36 ] How long is she bound to her husband? As long as he is alive. It's a lifelong bond. If her husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.

So, poor chap dies, RIP, RIP man, and she is now free.

She is now free, as it says here. She can marry another man. Presumably she'd leave a respectful period in between.

But anyway, Paul's example is quite clear. If her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage.

So then, if she marries another man, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she's called an adulteress. And it says called, it means officially, that's really what she is.

[ 26 : 42 ] She's officially an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law, and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.

Okay, I think that's clear, isn't it? He's just painting this picture. Husband and wife, bound to each other, lifelong. But, if the poor husband dies, the woman is released from that law, she's able to marry someone else.

And she would be released from the old arrangement, and she would belong to another in the new arrangement. And Paul then tells us why he's painted this picture.

Because it's to do with the people that he's writing to. So, he is now saying, let's transfer that to the law, and you that I'm writing to, you Roman Christians.

So, my brothers, he says, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another.

[ 27 : 52 ] Now, please notice that he doesn't follow the exact pattern, because you have a relationship bound together. And, who is it who dies in the, not in the example, but in the real life thing that he's referring to?

Us, yeah, or the Romans. Not the man, but the woman. Do you like? You, my brothers, died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

So, just to complete that, it's the woman. No. Let's just see it properly.

You died to the law. So, you died. The woman, part of it, died, so that you might belong to another. Same wording.

You belong to Christ who was raised from the dead, and presumably, if you died, then you must sort of come to life again yourself.

[ 29 : 13 ] So, you died to the law through the body of Christ. Christ. So, because Christ died on the cross, you died to this relationship, so that you can now form another relationship.

That's what he's saying. And he says that the effect of that is that you bear fruit for God. Let's see how he continues to describe this.

Verse 5. He says, what was it like? Well, in the old relationship, he says this was in the flesh. For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, or literally, when we were in the flesh, what happened then?

The sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies. So, in the old arrangement, the law apparently provoked and caused sin, sinful passions, sinful thoughts, sinful plans, or whatever. And the result of that is fruit for death. That was the old relationship with the law. But because of Christ, we're in a new relationship.

[ 30 : 36 ] If you like, we are no longer married to the law, but we're married to Christ. That's putting it very simply, and I think not incorrectly. He then goes on to say, verse 6, But now, dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law, or if you like, annulled from the law.

We die to what bound us, and we're released from the law, and we serve, as it says here, in the newness of the spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

That's what he's saying in the verses. We were married to the law, or at least his readers were married to the law. They've been freed from this, and are now married to Christ.

The old situation led to all sorts of unpleasant side effects, and the new situation produces fruit for God in the power of the spirit.

Okay? Now, that's the illustration that he's giving, and it raises all sorts of questions. It raises all sorts of questions.

[ 32 : 02 ] Actually, he will answer some of those questions as he goes on through. So he doesn't answer them all at once. For example, he's going to ask the question, chapter 7, verse 7, so does that mean that law is bad?

And he's going to say, absolutely not. And we might ask, how does this law, how does law arouse these sinful passions? What's going on there? And Paul asked the question, does something good kill me?

Might ask what he means by the question. And we might ask the question, and just how, how much of a pickle does this whole, when you start to think of it, how much of a pickle does this generate inside us when we think of law and sin and how this goes on inside us?

How much of a pickle is it? And he says, it actually is a terrible pickle. chapter 7, verse 24, he says, absolutely insufferable. What a wretched man I am.

Who will rescue me from this body of death? So what he's going to go on to say is, actually when you begin to think about it, there's a whole world of tangles and conflicts and feeling awful about things and all of that which goes on when we delve into this subject.

[ 33 : 29 ] I'm not going to delve into it just at the moment. I'm just going to say, there are lots of questions. What can we say? Let's see, I've got four things.

What can we say from the passage? Number one, God justifies people by faith in Christ apart from the law.

this is simply what he said in the first chapters and this is what I said earlier on. Here's the group of people who are the unrighteous, here's the group of people who are the righteous, here's somebody who is making a transition from one to the other.

How do they do that? Answer, not by the law but by faith in Christ. That's his first huge point in Romans. How do you get counted righteous by trusting?

By trusting in Jesus Christ by the gospel. That's how you get there. The law is not part of that equation. I think I made the point earlier but I'm just making it again.

[ 34 : 38 ] Secondly, let's think a little bit about the effects of the law. The law can make people proud. So, Ray read to us earlier the rich young ruler and he came up to Jesus and said, good master, how do I inherit eternal life?

And Jesus said, why do you call me good? Tell me about the commandments. Do not murder, do not commit adultery, honour your father or mother. And the rich young ruler could say, did you notice it?

He said, I've done all that. Did you notice that? He said, done all that. So, if you imagine the law as being a series of boxes, he said, yeah, I could tick all the boxes.

Tick them all. And I would say, I mean, he says, I have kept all these. Mark chapter 10 verse 20. I would say there's a certain self-righteousness there.

One of the things the law can do, if you understand it in a certain way, is to make us self-righteous. On the other hand, another thing that the law can do is make us totally miserable.

[ 35 : 51 ] And that's, I think Paul was referring to that later on in the chapter. There's another way of looking at the law and it can get inside you, get under your skin, get into your heart and the more you think about it, the more you think, I'm just a total failure.

It says, well, Paul's example, it says, do not covet. And I do find that I do covet.

It says, Jesus himself said, do not commit adultery, but don't look in an adulterous way. And you can say, actually, the law, when I begin to think about the strenuous nature of its real demands, I'm just decimated by it.

I feel totally awful about myself because of what the law says. And if you think about it, it doesn't have to be just the Bible law.

You can feel bad in your conscience about all sorts of things. You can feel terrible about not having sent enough Christmas cards, can't you? The law can make people proud or it can make people miserable.

[ 37 : 12 ] But what I'm going to say is that we are not married to the law. We are no longer married to the law, but we are married to Christ.

Big change. And therefore, we don't have to listen to what the law says about us in that sense.

Okay, so married women. Do you care to hoots what somebody else's husband thinks about you, I don't know, your dress sense or whatever?

It's none of his business, is it? It's none of his business. And so too, the Christian is no longer married to the law. That's what it says.

We are released from the law. We are not bound to the law. and in that, we are not dependent on the law's good opinion of us.

[ 38 : 18 ] We're not married to the law. We're married to Jesus Christ. We do care a great deal about what he thinks and what he says, but we're not married to the law.

So if the law says you could feel very proud of yourself, we say, I'm not bothered with that. I only want to know what Jesus thinks of me. And if the law says to us, you miserable, inconsistent failure, we're not going to be bowed down by that.

We're going to say, I want to know what Jesus says about me. Actually, Jesus says very different things, doesn't he? Jesus says, I died on the cross for you. I paid the penalty for your sins.

I forgive you freely. It's a very different thing, the opinion of our new husband. Do you get that point? I think that's a very important point. We're not bound to the law.

We're married to our new husband, to Jesus Christ. Third thing, law or laws might command us this or that, but our first service or our service is first to Jesus Christ.

[ 39 : 27 ] I think that's what this passage is telling us. It does use the idea of binding and authority.

Law or laws might command us this or that, but we are not bound to those laws. Our service is first to Christ.

that's a very important principle as to how we understand the obligations that the Bible puts on us.

So, we read the Bible but we ask ourselves, how does this relate to Jesus Christ?

How does our new husband tell us to understand this? So, I could give you a simple example. Let's suppose a woman does remarry.

Her first husband sadly passes away. Her old husband liked jazz and her old husband liked curry and her old husband liked cricket.

[ 40 : 44 ] Now, she is remarried and her new husband likes country and western chips but he does like cricket.

So, the woman has to think, what should we make for tea today? Nice curry. No, hold on a minute. That was my old husband, my dear departed husband liked curry but what I must make for my new husband is chips.

That's what he likes. So, she had to rethink that. And then she said, we'll put on some nice music while we're eating. Let's put on something, jazz.

And then she thinks, oh no, no, no, no, no, no, no, that was my old husband liked jazz. My new husband would get out the Dolly Parton and so she has to rethink.

That's what it used to be. This is how it is now. But there's some things that her new husband and her old husband agreed on. So, she says, what would you like to do for your birthday?

[ 41 : 58 ] I'll buy you a ticket to something. What I used to do with my past husband, he always used to like to go to home and watch the cricket. What would you like?

And he says, I like exactly the same thing. I'll go and watch the cricket. Now, so it is, I'm suggesting, with the Bible.

There are some things that used to be the case, like circumcision, like food laws, and our new husband says, you don't have to do that.

I'm not interested in you being circumcised. I'm not interested in you keeping the food laws. You can eat anything you like. Do you understand that part? So the food laws are different. But under the old law, it said you should love your neighbour as yourself.

You should love God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength. And we go to our new husband and said, what should I do about my neighbour? What should I do about the Lord? And he says, well, let me tell you, it's exactly the same as what it used to be.

[ 43 : 02 ] Love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength as your neighbour as yourself. So I'm just giving that as an example that we are bound first to Christ and what he says.

And we could apply that to all sorts of other things. So let's suppose the law, there is a law around which says, oh, you have to be thin and you have to look a certain way. And we say, well, I don't know whose husband that is, but what does my new husband say?

And the Lord Jesus might say something very different in terms of voices and commands that come. What does Christ say? That's the point. Number four.

If we are able to live this way, living under the lordship of Jesus Christ himself, Paul makes this claim that this way of living, is fruitful in a way that the old way never was and never could be.

It's interesting that, isn't it? He's saying that that old way of when you live, when you're married to a set of laws, it does not produce the inner change, it does not produce the dynamic for holiness and righteousness, it tends to produce guilt, anxiety, slavishness, things like that.

[ 44 : 33 ] It can't produce holiness but the new way can. Do you notice what he says there? Verse six, by dying to what bound us, what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

so I put here for our encouragement that Paul says this is the way to live, if we can get our heads round it, we can learn this. The way of Christ, of realising that we're married to Christ, is grace. We're not under law but under grace and there's all this whole dynamic of forgiveness, of kindness, of the fact that when we fall over we can pick ourselves up and come back and still be forgiven again and again and again.

There's a whole way of grace. And he says there's newness, there's a new way of the spirit and I'd like to contrast that with the old way.

The old way is the way that people naturally try to improve themselves. It's the sort of default position that human nature goes back to.

[ 45 : 53 ] And Paul says what we Christians have is a new way. We're not stuck in the old default human capacities, human abilities.

We've gone into a new way of serving. So I put there newness and I put it's not natural, there's something supernatural which leads us to the fact that the new way is the way of the spirit and there is a power at work here which is not at work in the old way.

There is a power of the spirit which enables miracles to take place, which enables human nature to change, which beyond what human nature is capable of on its own.

and this new way of the spirit is fruitful as he says, we bear fruit to God, verse 4.

It's fruitful. The passage isn't telling us to do anything, it doesn't contain any imperatives, it just describes for us how the Christian life is and he says we're not serving in the old, sterile, barren, death, condemnation way of being married to the law.

[ 47 : 18 ] We are serving in a new way which is focused upon Jesus Christ and his grace and the power of his spirit and there is this beautiful, wonderful, fruitfulness in the way of Jesus Christ.

Let's stop there.