

# The purpose of the law – Romans 7

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Good morning. Welcome to the worship service this morning. The sun is shining again after a beautiful rain.
- Blessings indeed. We had a wedding yesterday for Eric Koenig and Sierra, and it was planned to be outside at Dunvegan, and two hours before the wedding started, they made a shift in plans and moved it inside at Fairview in a hall.
- But the Lord blessed, and we did have a blessed time together as doing the wedding there. Romans 7, continuing.
- Paul is putting a lot of emphasis on teaching on the law and our relationship to the law. And I trust we're not getting tired of hearing, of learning.
- Obviously, God thinks this is important, that we get this, that we understand our relationship, the purpose of the law, and so on.
- [ 1 : 3 4 ]     And when we think of rules or law, why is it that so many people enjoy living by rules? Is that a proper statement? It brings security and purpose.
- Okay? Okay, anything to add to that? Why do people enjoy living by rules? Makes them feel good?
- Yeah. Yeah. So when we're talking about law here, I'm going to narrow it down to the moral law.
- But when we have the civil law, as Pastor Henry mentioned last Sunday, it's full of rules. You build a house, you've got to have certain setbacks, you've got to have a foundation, you've got to have this.
- [ 2 : 4 4 ]     Rules we are to follow for our own good. But when it comes to moral rules, why do we sometimes enjoy being told what to do?
- You can do this and this, you can't do that and that and that. And Bill said it makes you feel good.
- I think we can take it one step further. Then we feel it removes us from being responsible of having to think for ourselves.
- And it's easier if someone else does the thinking and I try to obey.
- Now that's maybe a hard thing to absorb. But when we come to Christ, we're born again.
- [ 4 : 0 4 ]     And God imparts His Holy Spirit in us. He desires now that we live by the Spirit, that we walk by the Spirit.
- And that has replaced the law in our lives. And that puts the emphasis on me and on each one of us individually before a holy God to walk before Him.
- Because if our church comes up with two sheets of rules and your pastors are telling you you must do this, you must dress so and so and so, then we take on responsibility for you as if we have to give account for you.
- But that is not right. That is not true. As pastors, we are responsible to present the truth.

And then each one of us, including us, are responsible to walk by that truth. And we will stand before a holy God and give account.

[ 5 : 43 ] And so this morning, talking about the law, why the law? Why did God give law? And so we're going to look at various aspects of that.

God had a purpose for it and mankind has often wrongly applied it. Last Sunday, we heard that that we have died to the law that we may be married to Christ.

that we be married to Christ. We have a new master. And so here today, in the verses that were read for us, Paul continues now of the law.

So why was the law given the very same law that we died to as believers? So why was it there? And how do we relate to it today?

We'll look at some of that. And verses 7 through 14. And then the rest of the chapter, 15 through 25, Paul goes on to deal, to teach on the ongoing struggle in the life of a Christian between the new nature and the sinful nature that still exists.

[ 7 : 16 ] that still wants to rear its head. And the struggle in the Christian that wasn't there before. And he, so Lord willing, next Sunday, we'll deal with that aspect of it.

But today, we're going to deal with the purpose of the law. So Paul begins, verse 7, what shall we say then? Law, sin. Is the law wrong?

Because he, he said we've died to it. That we could be married to Christ. So is it then wrong? And he says, 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, you shall not covet.

And so he is bringing in a personal example. We'll get to that in a bit. But, the law is not sinful.

[ 8 : 18 ] He says, certainly not. If we skip down a few verses to verse 12, he says, the law is holy and the commandment is holy and just and good.

So the moral law of God is holy, just, and good. And why then are we to die to it?

Or why did we die to it? So we could be married to Christ. A little background on law.

God's moral law. Often referred to it as the commandments. Broken down into two sections. We have love the Lord your God with all your heart.

Love your neighbor as yourself. the two halves of the Ten Commandments. Jesus brings them together into two. And so that is the moral law that we're talking about here.

[ 9 : 31 ] And when was this law first given? I want to walk through that a little bit. So when when we are conceived when human mankind is conceived God puts on our hearts the moral law.

Is that true? Do people have a sense of right and wrong? They do. They have an uncanny sense of justice.

A two-year-old when injustice is done or injustice is done they have a problem with that. And they know at a very young age when they do wrong.

So the moral law is implanted on us I believe it's part of us being created in the image of God.

that we understand morally what is right and what is wrong. But there's a problem with that.

[ 10 : 55 ] So why did Jesus even need to come if we have that in here? we have to understand first of all that because of the fall of man into sin we lack the strength the ability to follow that law.

We're unable to keep it. if we could keep it if one person could have kept it Jesus would not have had to come.

We're unable to keep it and Satan is always working on us to bring it to life that we don't that we keep on sinning that we don't keep the law given in us.

As we grow up from childhood life trials they warp that moral law in us and we become far from it as we go through life and we become hardened to it.

Now I put up a timeline I'm going to refer to it a few times I know you can't read it but this is a timeline of the Old Testament and we've had it in Sunday school a few times it's 4,000 before Christ all the way to the coming of Jesus and so 4,000 years represented Adam and Eve at the beginning and the fall of man happened right in the beginning and as we go down the timeline from the year 4,000 over to the flood roughly 2350 that would be 1650 years later and I want to read a verse in Genesis chapter 6 Genesis chapter 6 so we're in the time of

[ 13 : 21 ] Noah we're six chapters into scripture and yet we've covered that much of the timeline one third of it and this verse tells us then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth every intent of the thoughts of the heart was only evil continually did they have the moral law in them yes they did but they were powerless to keep it and God looked down and aggrieved his heart when he saw the activities of mankind and he purposed to bring about a flood to destroy and to start fresh and so we have the moral law right through in mankind as we're made in

God's image but here God brought it to a climax and he started fresh so then that's the first stage perhaps of law we would say the second stage is in the year 2000 approximately right there we're halfway through God called Abraham and he separated Abraham and he says I want to make out of you a nation through whom I will bless the world I'm going to call you apart and I'm going to reveal myself through you and your people and down the road from Abraham over to here the year 1446 I think the law was given on Mount Sinai by Moses and so we have the same moral law that was written on our hearts is now given on two tablets of stone given to the people of

Israel Abraham's descendants why the first one didn't work external law written rules on stone how is this going to help the people live how did the children of Israel do by the way whom God revealed the law to you know from from Abraham right to the end they failed they failed in fact they became worse than their pagan neighbors and they sought after other gods and roughly right there

God sent them into captivity and sent the Babylonians to carry them away they utterly failed to live for God through the physical law so why why the law if it's so powerless to help us so just to put it in perspective we have moral law running throughout and we have the moral law on stone roughly two-thirds down the Old Testament timeline so roughly two-thirds out of 4,000 years only the last 1,440 were they given the external law and now today Jesus says as believers you have died to the law so he's bringing out purpose and why the law was given and so that's what we need to come to grips with in

Romans chapter 2 let's turn back a few pages from chapter 7 in Romans chapter 2 I want to read a few verses Romans 2 starting in verse 12 for as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law and it's talking about the outward law the Ten Commandments sinned in the law will be judged by the law for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God but the doers of the law will be justified for when Gentiles who do not have the law by nature do the things in the law these although not having the law are a law to themselves who show the work of the law written in their hearts their conscience also bearing witness and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them in the day when

[ 19 : 18 ] God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel so the Gentiles who don't have the Ten Commandments outwardly because the law was given to the law written on their hearts from within the moral law and so they weren't able to keep it to the T so to speak but when Gentiles recognize God as their creator and trust him by faith and to the best of their ability serve God this is the Old Testament model of salvation written in their hearts and the Jews who have it outwardly aren't able to follow it so now we live in a time of transition where

God has taken the law one step further and in Christ he has implanted the law in our hearts and then he has empowered us by giving us the Holy Spirit so the law is holy just and good but it could never save you it never had the power to clean up your life and now as believers dying to the law and being married to Christ we have the law inside brought to life we could say by the Holy Spirit who now gives us the ability to live it and so if our timeline would continue we're maybe over there now the

Christians the church should be demonstrating keeping the law within from within our hearts and so Paul is working diligently here trying to explain that so going back to verse seven what shall we say then is the law sin certainly not on the contrary I would not have known the law except or known sin except through the law for I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said you shall not covet so Paul is now beginning to explain that the law now he's talking about the ten commandments was given to highlight sin to bring it to the forefront and and uses an example out of his own life the commandment that we should not covet it's the tenth commandment we should not long for things that aren't ours we should not have a desire for the things that are not ours thou shalt not covet and and

Paul bringing out that example from his life he says that that was brought alive in my life that I should not covet and yet he says in verse eight but sin taking opportunity by the commandment produced in me all manner of evil desires for apart from the law sin was dead I was alive once without the law but when the commandment came sin and I died so just to pause there from his own life the moral law on his heart had been dulled it wasn't sharp and deep down Paul would have known it was wrong to be covetous to covet but he says it didn't affect me but then when the law came and the ten commandments said thou shalt not covet and if you covet the penalty is death

Paul is saying it did not help him to not covet but what it did is it brought in desires to covet even more and it revived sin it brought it to the forefront and all of a sudden it wasn't a big problem before now that I'm aware of it it's in my mind all the time and I can't stop doing it and Paul says coveting is his life we're not given details on what exactly he coveted but he mentions that as a struggle in his life so he says I used to be alive or so I thought but when the commandment came and revealed my problem with coveting then he says what

[ 25 : 11 ] I thought was to bring life I found brought death so the very law which is holy and just and good instead of bringing life it brought death it revealed in me my human nature and instead of Paul being able to overcome coveting it got worse and worse till he met Jesus Christ in fact what were Paul's activities before he met Jesus what was he doing he was persecuting the church of God the church of Jesus and he thought he was doing God a favor he saw this new movement followers of Christ and maybe a problem with that as they were in competition with the

Jews we're not told exactly what it was but Paul he got worse and worse in persecuting till he met Jesus Christ and could bring an end to that how many of us have had a CT scan or an MRI at the hospital quite a few lots of hands going up did they inject a dye dye I know I've had a few and they put in a dye and what does the dye do it highlights what the doctors are looking for so they can identify it better and so they inject a dye a color to run through your veins so when they do the test it is more visible likewise the law when applied to us makes sin and makes us more conscious that

I'm a sinner and it revives the sin in us so that's what Paul is saying is the chief purpose of the law is to make sin exceedingly sinful to bring it to the forefront to make us realize how bad we are if I put the question to each one of you personally have you had an area of sin that you've struggled with and when you receive teaching that it's wrong does the struggle go away or does it intensify does it get bigger and it's when we're before we're with

Christ it gets bigger and God has probably used that in your life to draw you to him that before you were Christian and you read the word it highlighted your sin and your struggle got bigger and bigger surrendered and gave your heart to God that is the purpose of the law is to bring sin to the forefront to bring you to a point where boom you meet Jesus and you realize I need help this is the purpose of the law as human beings we have turned the law into a way of pleasing God before we meet

Christ and we often look at the commandments they're holy they're just they're good so therefore I ought to keep them and I strive to keep them thinking that God is going to be happy with me now I'm talking about a person before they meet Jesus Christ and we can sometimes appear to be a good person we're coming to church we're doing what we think all the outward things that are right as we as we try to apply God's holy law to us and you know maybe inwardly thinking without being aware of it that the good that I do outweighs my sinfulness this is a tactic a tool of the devil to keep us trapped in sin because that's a life of frustration a life of failure and it does not replace and cannot replace a real relationship with

[ 31 : 10 ] Jesus Christ to be empowered by him and so thus nothing short of our brokenness before a will do often we hear the terminology I'm trying to clean up my life I want to change but we cannot change we're powerless to change and so God has given us the law to make sin exceedingly sinful to create in us a brokenness where our heart breaks before almighty

God and it drives us to our knees to say God here I am I come into my life anything short of that is failure and we'll continue to struggle in our sin I know many of our backgrounds if not all we have wrestled with this we've wrestled with this and coming to church and basically trying to become a better person and pretending to be a Christian does not cut it it won't do because we don't have that inward power let's finish our passage verse 12 therefore the law is holy and the commandment holy and just and good has then what is good become death to me 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 for we know that the law is spiritual and I am carnal sold under sin so can we blame the law for our sinfulness is the law at fault he says certainly not but it's an instrument of God to reveal sin for what it is to make it the law is holy and just and good but it makes us real verse 14 we'll close with that for we know that the law is spiritual but I am carnal sold under sin the spiritual realm is of

God the moral law is of God and for us to be in right relationship with God we have to meet him in the spiritual but you know what being in the spiritual is hard work it demands that we go out of the natural it's by faith it demands of us that we train our hearts our minds to walk with God with the leading of the Holy

Spirit the natural is easy the kempfens else it comes on its own but the spiritual we have to apply what God has given us and so thus we realize that the life of a believer is not easy as it's warfare between the natural and the spiritual we're going to continue with that Lord willing next Sunday so as we as we sum up the law is holy just and good the law was given for the purpose of revealing sin and once once

I become broken before God I have died to that external law and I'm married to Christ and have the Holy Spirit within to live out that moral law written on my heart and the spiritual law is written on our hearts and so the Christian has died to the physical law and is married to the spiritual and now God commands us to walk with him and he empowers us to do that so is the law the relationship of the law to the Christian totally removed when it comes to the external law yes it's it's gone but the internal law the moral law written on our hearts is very much alive as we walk with God and so it's it's day and night different before it was from the outside and we couldn't keep it and now

[ 38 : 03 ] God himself empowers us to keep it and as we strive to follow so may may the Lord bless you with that and as we attempt to understand our walk with him and in our position with him if you are tempted to do and to keep certain rules to please God remember this remember this we cannot please God on the outside let's pray father we know that you are holy that you are just and that you are good and we praise you father that we are made in your image and

Lord thank you for revealing sin to us through your holy law to make us realize that we are sinful that we need a savior the circumcision of the heart a broken heart thank you father for using this to drive us to our knees to turn to you and Lord as believers now as we learn to walk with you to trust you to follow the holy spirit leading us from within may you grant us with strength and wisdom to do so I pray for your blessing on each one here this morning in Jesus name amen can do so traipse to SO