

THE LAW WAS GIVEN SO THAT SIN MIGHT ABOUND

Bertie Brits

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Greetings! It is a great blessing for me to come to you and, once again, bring you the Gospel of God's grace. It's all about the power of Jesus' resurrection and what He has come to give us. He has come to give us His life, peace and to remove all condemnation and guilt from us and to declare us righteous and clean and bring us in a place where we can share in His quality of life. It is great to see people established in the Good News of Jesus as we walk together in this life of God.

Father, I want to thank You so much for Your grace and Your kindness. I want to thank You for the love that You have towards us. Thank You that we can say our prayers to a God that hears us. Thank You that we can know that You have come to show us that the solution is You and what You have come to give us and it is not found in us and in what we do. Thank You for making Your life available to us for free. Amen and amen

In the last two weeks we have been talking about how everything comes from the new life or by the Resurrection power of God as well as our inability to modify our lives. We are in a series when I'm preaching through Romans. In the last two weeks I basically spoke more about the doctrine that is mentioned in Romans 6 and 7. Today I want to talk a little bit about the context and put a little bit more of a focus on the context and what Paul is trying to communicate with these two chapters or what his line of thought is and why he says what he says. We are going to learn some wonderful things today. We are going to look at how the law works and what the law has come to bring forth and what the message was through all of that.

But, as we start in Romans chapter 5, and we are just giving a little bit of a background there, what Paul says in Romans chapter 5 is that Abraham was justified by faith and not in his flesh. God blessed him before he was circumcised, before he had a law to obey, before anything was done in his flesh, so that he could have confidence in the flesh. Before any of that, God blessed him. Then Abraham believed and after he believed there was a sign given which was then the circumcision and in that circumcision we see that it is the removal of flesh. What it actually means is, the type and the shadow of this, the reality of this is that God, as we have believed and trusted in Him, He will remove the death in our flesh from us and He will bring life to us.

All the focus in Chapter 5 is that it is all by faith. In Chapter 6 it talks about, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" That is something that we need to understand was addressed to the Jews. Chapter 5 is all about writing to the Jewish people in the congregation and churches in Rome. He is writing to them and he knows that in his letter, that would be read publicly, there would be a great amount of Gentiles sitting there.

So, what he is doing is he is speaking to the Jews but he cleverly knows that the Gentiles are also hearing this message. What he has in mind is, "I'm going to tell these Jews how wrong it is to find their confidence in the flesh, how wrong it is to say, "I make my boast in the law and in the fact that I am a Jew." I'm going to explain to them the dynamics of how legalism and law bring death and the purpose of all of that. Then I will have these Gentiles on the side that will say, "Yeah, amen. We told you Jews it is now our Gentile gospel and it is now for us." Then Paul is actually lining up the Gentiles here teaching the Jews and correcting them in the presence of the Gentiles. Later on, in Romans, turn to the Gentiles and say, "Everything that I have now told these Jews also applies to you. So, don't take any confidence in your flesh or in the fact that you are not a Jew and Gentile. The confidence is not there. The confidence, as I have explained to all the Jews, is in the Lord and not in our flesh."

We are now going to look at chapter 6 where he is addressing the Jews again. He's telling them, "Listen guys, we should not continue under the law." If we read this today, it is basically, not even supposed to be applicable to us today. But what has happened in the church is that we have become so flooded with legalism and a mixture of law and grace, that it is basically applicable to us today. But the context here is that the law entered that the offense might abound. That is what Romans 7 is all about so I'm touching quickly on Romans 5 and we're going to quickly go through Romans 6. Then we are going to see in Romans 7 the explanation of the passage in Romans 5:20 where it says, "***The law entered, that the offence might abound...***"

Romans 5:

20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21 That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

What we need to understand in this passage is that the law entered that sin, the offense, might abound. It doesn't mean that God gave the law so that you can become more guilty before God. That's not what it means. It means that the law was given so that we could actually see how big our problem is. The Jews thought that the problem was the Gentiles. They thought that the problem was maybe here and there a person that doesn't really obey the law or people that in their flesh, or in their minds, are not willing to do what God says. That is what they thought the problem was. But the major problem to the Jews was these Gentiles that are oppressing us but then the law was given that the problem might become bigger. All of a sudden, the problem is not the Gentiles anymore. I find that the problem is me. The problem is death itself. The problem is mortality.

So, what the law came to do is it came to show the magnitude of the problem, what the true problem is. And as we saw what the true problem is and as it became bigger in our eyes, you might say, "Well, I think my problem was that I've got a headache." Then you go to the doctor and he says, "There is a problem. We have a medicine that is for the kind of headache that you have and you will be healed. But we just want to say that the true problem is not a headache. The headache is there because you've got brain cancer. But we have this pill that can cure it."

So, when you went to the doctor, you knew there is medicine for a headache but you thought it was just to the magnitude of an aspirin that can help a headache. But, when you realize that the true problem is cancer, and you also now realize that this medicine can heal you, the power of the medicine was also increased in your mind. It is a bigger solution than what you thought. It was more powerful than you thought but the problem was also bigger than what you thought. So, what it says is that when sin abounded, grace did much more abound. We realized that the problem through the law is in our flesh. It's in our inability to keep the law. It's in our mortal bodies. But now we find and we realize that the problem here is actually in my flesh. Then we come to the conclusion that by ourselves we can do nothing good unto life and the law was given that we can come to that realization.

So, as verse 21 says, ***That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace*** (God's ability to keep His promise) ***reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*** He was saying two things there. First it says, "by yourself". Now you realize, "I cannot do it by myself" so that it can be through grace, by Jesus.

So why was the law given? The law was given so that you could have no confidence in the flesh and confidence in Christ. The law was given so that man could see how big his problem is. So, we can come to the bottom-line conclusion that if God has promised us life, that His grace is bigger than we ever thought, even bigger than our problem, so that it can be by Him and not by us.

Paul writes this in a very difficult way. So many times, I wished that it could just be in plain text. There are many people that say that if it doesn't come forth as just a simple reading of the Bible, that it is not true. But I want to say to you that the simplicity of what we talk about here explained in our context will make absolute sense to us. But if we read a document here that is almost 2,000 years old, that was written to another culture, we have to enter that culture. We have to look at the context where in it was said. Then when we understand the culture, when we understand what was going on there, we can see the truth of it, put it into our culture, into the here and now, and see the simplicity of it. As Christians, we are studying the ancient documents and the letters that were written, for in them is great truth and great inspiration that, should we understand it and apply to our culture, here and now in true context, we will find great power from it and great blessing from it.

So, I almost want to say that I apologize that it can sound a bit complicated, but it's actually not that complicated. We are going to look at it in our lives today and see the simplicity of it. But let me first summarize the first part here: What Paul says is this: We thought that the problem was the Gentiles. The problem was not the Gentiles. We come to realize that the law was given. And when the law was given, our sin issue became a very big sin issue. We first thought that our sin issue is that we don't keep the law here and there but it's all in our willpower. We must just get our act together and do what God says and things will be okay. But now we have found that when the law was given, we found that we, as Jews, are just as guilty, or as much as sinners, as the Gentiles. We were not a light to the Gentiles. We find weakness in ourselves. We find there is something very wrong. And the law is pointing to our flesh that there is something wrong in your flesh.

You boast in the flesh, "We are Jews". Then you have a law and then you ask, as Jews should obey the law and thereby be blessed and you find you cannot obey the law.

So, what is the conclusion? There is something wrong with my flesh that I was boasting in. So, what would the solution be? The solution would not be for God to come and kill Rome. The solution would be for God to heal my flesh and the way that God is going to heal the flesh is by taking away the power of sin in the flesh and provide sinless flesh as our destination by the Spirit that would bring that forth in us. So, all of a sudden, we have a much bigger problem but, glory to God, there's a bigger solution to a bigger problem. ... A bigger solution in what we ever thought.

Romans 6:1 *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*

In other words, what then should we then conclude as pertaining to the law? Should we continue to live under the power of sin and death so that we can see that we have a bigger problem than what we thought we had? No, not at all! God did not show us the solution for no reason. Let us walk in the solution and enjoy our new life in Him!

The reason why Paul says in Romans 6 is that he knows that there are some Jews there that are going to try to find loopholes to keep confidence in the flesh. "We are the people of God as the Jews." He is saying to them that now that you are a Christian, you might say that we are going to do the world a favor. We are going to stay under the law. As we stay under the law and our inability is shown, it will be a sign to all people that you cannot be saved by your own works. Should you now continue that grace may abound? In other words, that we can see there's a greater solution. So, shall we continue in the law system to be justified by the law, so that we can see that there is a greater solution? So, should we keep the law?"

He says, "No, why shall we keep the law? God did not reveal this so that we can keep on in death. He revealed this so that we can move on to Christ as the answer. Why would you continually go to the doctor to be diagnosed with a sickness? If you know you have the sickness and you know this is the problem and you know what the medicine is, my goodness! Let's say that you feel weak. You just feel that you are weak in your muscles and the solution is to go to the gym. Now you go to the gym and you start to exercise. But you find that the more you exercise, the weaker you become. So, what is the conclusion? "There's something wrong with my body. The problem is bigger than I thought. I thought I could solve it by going to the gym."

But then you realize that you cannot solve it by going to the gym. You've got a bigger problem. You go to the doctor. The doctor diagnoses you and he finds that the problem is some muscular thing that you have. Then you find, "I have tried the wrong thing. I cannot solve this. I need something from outside of me to fix me." Then you find that they have this wonderful medicine that can now heal you. What will you do? Will you continue to go to the gym to see that the problem is with your body so that you can know that you need medicine? Will you continue to go to the gym every day? No! You are going to stop going to the gym. The revelation, that the weakness is in your flesh and that you cannot solve it by yourself, causes you to now die to the solution of "gyiming" your problem away.

You need some other medicine that comes from a person that is highly intellectual, who has studied and through science, they have come to some conclusion on how to solve this and you need to drink certain medicine and whatever, then you will be okay. You will stop eating certain foods maybe but mostly out of this medicine that you are taking, you're going to find healing for your flesh.

In the very same way, Paul comes and says, talking about the Jews, "Shall we, as Jews, be a continual example to ourselves and to all the world, that we cannot do it by our own work so that everybody can see that it is by grace?" No, not at all!

Let me read again, my paraphrase of **Romans 6**:

What shall we conclude as pertaining to the law? Shall we continue to live under the power of sin and death, so that we can see we have a bigger problem than what we thought we had? No, not at all. God did not show us the solution for no reason. Let us walk in the solution and enjoy the new life in Him. Jesus died and was raised so that we can have life by Him. We should not continue in that which reveals sin in the flesh. We are now dead to the law life, life by the law, which turned out to be no life at all. Your source of life is now the resurrected Jesus. We are not living from the death of our mortal bodies anymore. We get our strength from His immortal, resurrected life. The law was given so that we could see that it was not by our flesh but by Him. Since it's by Him, don't you know that it's not by ourselves anymore? Don't you understand that everything changed the day you believed on Jesus? When you placed your faith in Him, you have entered His death to self-effort. (Remember Jesus was dead to self-effort.) Jesus was raised from the dead because of God's life in whom He trusted and we expect the same as we are now placed under the power of God's life in Jesus.

What is Paul saying here? He says, "You, Jews, will not continue in the law." Why? Because, as you continue in the law, you are going to continue in death and God has now revealed through the law that we should move on to Jesus and trust Him.

Now we are going to go to **Romans 7** and just explain this kind of a phenomena here.

:1 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. No, I had not known sin, but by the law:

Now Paul goes in chapter 7 and he is continuing his thought. He hasn't given the Jews a break. He says, "Listen, I've explained to you that you are now dead to the law, meaning the law has done its job. It has shown you that it is by grace and not by your flesh. So don't try to find a loophole. I know that you guys like the fact that you were God's blue-eyed boys and you are not going to do the world, neither yourself, a favor to continue to show how weak you are and have the manifestation of sin in the flesh which is unto death. You are dead to that now. If you want life, remember it is not by your flesh through the law. Believe on Jesus." Then he goes through the whole of Romans chapter 6 explaining how we've died with Christ and was raised with Him. Then he just takes a breath and says, "Well, let me explain it again. Then he goes in Romans chapter 7 and he is addressing the Jews again. This is still not actually for the Gentile eyes. It's for the Jews. The Gentiles are standing on the side hearing how the Jews are being corrected.

So, he is saying: **7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. No, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, you shalt not covet.**

8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

Paul now comes and explains from experiential knowledge. He says,

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

I put in the comments: the commandment that was supposed to reveal life was actually revealing death. The holy commandment that was what we thought bringing us life, we found that that was actually showing us that we have death in our flesh. We thought that, as Jews, the law was given to us. We got special people. Therefore, God gives the way of life only to us as a nation. We are going to walk on this way of life which is the law and this way of life we will then teach to Gentiles who want to learn and so life is going to come all over the world. But we now realized as we walk on what we thought was the way of life was, was actually the way whereby God showed us that even in us, as Jews, even in our flesh, is death.

11 For sin (A desire or condition where we have no life but desire it), **taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.**

12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good.

13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear as sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Paul is saying, "Let me explain to you how this works. This is how I have the revelation. I lived by the grace of God and then one day I became legalistic again and I tried to find my confidence in the fact that I am a Jew. This I did after I received Jesus. So, you Jews now received Jesus and now you think (This is now chapter 6) you think you can continue with the law. No! God has stopped that way of living. Let me explain to you. I'm going to explain to you from my own life. I was alive without the law once, but then I thought it wise to go back under the law. As I found my confidence in the flesh, all of a sudden, I found all the things that stopped to happen in my life after I believed in Jesus, is starting to find its manifestation again. Now that was amazing. I had no confidence in the fact that I am a Jew but then when I started to find confidence in my flesh again and I started to use my flesh in the law, I found that my flesh is desiring life.

I don't have life in my flesh and I found sin revived. I found the real me, if you want to call it like that, or the one that wants what's holy and righteous, is dying. Things were going backwards." Then Paul came to this conclusion: (Now we are talking that the law entered that the offence might abound. So, it says the law entered and then the offence abound.) "I thought that maybe I was not just doing the law but now I realized that I have a bigger problem."

What is the bigger problem? If we read on in Romans, he says in verse 24, this is his conclusion: the abounding of sin:

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

He is saying, "Oh, my goodness! Nothing good dwells in my flesh. I thought my flesh was good to try to serve God by human ability, but I realized that I have a dying body and sin has become bigger. My problem has become bigger. I thought that I was just transgressing a commandment but now I've come to the revelation that is not the transgressing of a commandment. It is that I have a death problem! My problem is bigger than I thought. I thought that I was just not doing a certain commandment but I have now realized that my problem is that I am mortal and that the mortal body does not possess the ability to keep the law. The law cannot actually give me life because my flesh doesn't have the ability to keep it. I really have a problem! I need deliverance from a dying body. That is what I need. So, the transgression, the sin, became exceedingly sinful. My problem became really big. I thought it was just disobedience."

It's like, let's say there's a child that is disobedient and you find that he is not concentrating, or he is a little bit away from his friends. Then later on you find that this child has some serious, psychological problems. And as you put him through certain tests, you realize that he has serious, serious problems. Then, I am just talking naturally here, you say, "Who is the psychologist who can deliver this child from the bondage that he is in? He needs help." The tests revealed the bigger problem and that is what the law has come to do.

Paul has come and he said that he realized, "Listen man, I have a bigger problem than what I thought. My problem is that I have a mortal body and who will deliver me from this body of death?" In saying that, he was correcting the Jews. He was saying to the Jews, again, "Listen. When I was under the law, the good that I wanted to do, I couldn't do. When I was in the flesh, having my boast in the fact that I am a Jew and trying to do the law, do the right thing to see the kingdom of God established in the world... when I was doing that I found that in my flesh, in this human ability to keep the law, is nothing good. For the good that I want to do, I cannot do and the bad that I don't want to do, that I do. Therefore, I conclude that whenever I stand and make my boast in the flesh or in the fact that I am a Jew and that I can keep the law, I find that evil is with me. Therefore, I conclude, that in my flesh, dwells nothing good that can lead to eternal life. I need someone who can raise my body from mortality to immortality. And glory be to God through Jesus Christ! Now, it is by grace through Jesus, by God's ability to keep His promise through the man Jesus." That is what Paul is saying in Romans 7.

Romans 5, Paul is saying that it is only by faith and not by your flesh.

Romans 6, he shuts the back door that the Jews could have but should he now continue in this old system that we can be a light unto the world, saying to everybody, "Listen, don't find your boldness in the flesh. No way! God didn't reveal this so that you cannot be free. He revealed the truth so that you can be free. Believe the truth now!"

Romans 7: Let me explain it to you this way: If you are going to live by the flesh, you are going to find that you bear forth fruit unto death. But Christ has died and was raised. For this reason, that you should now be married to another. That you should let go of this old way of thinking about yourselves.

He's correcting the Jews here. It's not about your flesh. It's not about being a Jew. It is about Christ and you putting your confidence in God keeping His promise. That is what this whole thing is all about. Paul is saying that knowing that there are some Gentiles there who have started to put their confidence in the flesh. They started to think, "Well, you know that God basically hates Jews and we are Gentiles and because the Jews didn't obey, God has now looked at other flesh. He's looked at the Gentiles and He's blessing non-Jews and we are non-Jews. Glory to God! So, the blessing is ours. What was theirs is now ours!" Paul is lining them up to sharply rebuke them as we get into chapter 11. He is going to sharply rebuke them. Paul is just setting this thing up and he is saying to people: "You cannot find life by your own works.

Let us just summarize this whole thing.

Romans 7:11 *For sin, (a desire or condition where you have no life but you desire it) taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.*

Remember, sin according to Romans 5 is the weakness in the flesh. Paul says that the weakness in the flesh has deceived me. He thought that by his flesh, he can do it, but he was deceived. He didn't see that weakness. He just thought, "Well, I am Jew. I can do it." But he was deceived because the moment he started to do it and started to live by the law, trying to see the kingdom of God manifest, seeing righteousness manifest, seeing holiness manifest, he realized that in his flesh dwelt nothing good. It's almost like Adam and Eve. You know, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was there. The devil came and told Eve, "Here is the knowledge of good and evil." She said, "Well, this is desirable to make me wise!" That was a Jewish way of saying, "Wise unto life by doing these things in my flesh, I am going to attain life!" And then when she started to do it, she found herself naked. 2 Corinthians 5 defines naked as mortal, not clothed with eternal life. And then she saw her mortality and she was ashamed of her mortality. Church, this is what Paul is talking about here. He says, "The law came and that our weakness might appear as a true weakness so that we can know that we can never have life by our own works.

Paul goes on...

15 *That which I allow not that I do and that which I want to do I do not.*

16 *If then I do that which I do not, I consent to the law that it good.*

17 *Now it is no more I that do it but sin that dwells in me. (sin, the weakness that is in my flesh to do it that causes all of this.)*

That is his conclusion. This is what caused it and what is the solution? He shouts out and he says:

22: For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

23 But I see another law in my members (in my body), **warring against the law of my mind** (that says do the right thing) **and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.** I am captive to my inability to do the right thing. I am captive. I'm dying!" Then his conclusion is **24 Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?**

Oh, my goodness! We thought that the grace of God was delivering us from the Gentiles. But grace has become something much bigger now. It is now God's ability delivering us from our mortality and giving us eternal life... Him cleaning up our flesh. Him saving us. Him making us holy and righteous. Him bringing eternal life to us. All of a sudden, I know the way that I thought would bring me life is no way at all! How will I have life? Jesus died and He was raised. He trusted the Father. So, what will we do? The Bible says, "If you believe in Him that raised Jesus from the dead and you can confess that this Jesus whom He raised from the dead, now rules over sin and death, you shall also be saved. Saved from what? Saved from the sin in the flesh and His Spirit will then bring forth His fruit in our lives. Isn't that absolutely beautiful!

Romans 5-8 is so beautiful! Next week we are going to jump into Romans chapter 8. I am going to explain, in the context of what I said here, what it means to say, **There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.**

So how do you make this practical for yourself in every day life? I just say it this way: I cannot sort out my own life by my own works. I trust the Father and I simply say, practically in prayer, "God, I am under Your power. You raised Christ from the dead and Jesus, the resurrected Jesus, is the Lord over my life and the things that there is in this mortal body that can bring destruction to me, I found no confidence in my own ability to do things. I only find confidence in God's ability to bring life to this body." That's how God brings life to my thoughts, life to my actions and I find His life manifesting in me now.

Paul says it this way: The life I live now I don't live according to the flesh but by the power of Jesus! So, yes, in this flesh is life but not by our doing but by Him. Glory to God! I trust this has blessed you. Listen to this message a few times. Let your mind go along the lines of these thoughts and you'll find just how it enriches you every day. Amen