

Series through Romans: TRUTH: UNASHAMED, PART II

Sermon Title: Week 7, The Law Kills

Principal Scripture: Romans 7:7-13

Date: September 16, 2018

- **My OT class that started the work of art... I didn't have a clue!**
- **There are times when we are confronted with things that are GOOD.. we know they are good, but they are so hard to understand. TRUE WITH SCRIPTURE, particularly with a guy named Paul....**

† **A word about this guy named Paul**

- **I've always been encouraged by what PETER said about Paul's writing...**

2 Peter 3:15-17 Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. ¹⁶ He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

- **Friends, today we are moving deeper into Romans 7, a section of scripture, that is hard to understand! And yet, it is GOOD. It is worth it. We jumped in with both feet last week, when Paul introduced us to the NEW WAY OF THE SPIRIT.**

† **Welcome to the New Way!**

Romans 7:4-6 So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. ⁵ For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. ⁶ But now, by dying to 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.

- **If you missed last week... go back!**

A few reminders:

• **Law is a...**

- **Moral requirements of God's goodness. Mosaic law (OT), broader moral teaching of scripture. GOOD.**
- **Measuring stick... that reveals how far we miss**

• **To live by the law is to...**

- **Do our best to achieve our identity, sense of rightness, meet our needs, be content.. - by how well we measure up to a standard. We tell ourselves (and people tell us) that we will be acceptable (to God, others, ourselves) based upon how well we perform.**
- **Paul proclaims- he virtually shouts- that we DIED to that system of living. NOW, IN CHRIST, how we live, WHY we live, what we believe to be true about who we are, the motivation for the choices we make... flows from LOVE OF GOD. The miracle of what is TRUE OF US because we are new creations In Christ.**
- **NOW, moving on, Paul takes it to the next level. He wants to make sure we understand that not only have we died to the law, but that LAW- if it is all that we have- leads to DEATH.**

† **The most important thing I barely understand...**

Romans 7:7-13 What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not! Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."⁸ But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced

in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the law, sin was dead. ⁹ Once I was alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. ¹⁰ I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. ¹¹ For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. ¹² So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

¹³ Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! Nevertheless, in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it used what is good to bring about my death, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

- **AAAA!! What does “alive apart from the law”... “death, I died”... Paul’s big point is WHAT DOES LAW DO.**

✠ Who (and when) is Paul talking about?

- **WHO. He is talking about himself, his own experience, but also common experience of man**
- **WHEN is the bigger question. Is Paul describing his life before he was a believer, or after? We really don’t know, but when it comes down to it, the overriding point He makes is something we experience BEFORE we come to Christ, and something we too often experience as believers...**

Romans 7:7-13 What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not!

- **We DIED to the law... but God’s moral law is not sinful! It is a picture of God’s perfection... Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.”**
- **Paul was brought up as a devout Jew. He KNEW the law. He knew there was a law that said “Don’t Covet”**
- **You know what coveting is- a desire –lust- for something we don’t have- we are telling ourselves “I HAVE TO HAVE THAT- I must BE LIKE THAT... to be happy, content, complete”.. it’s a poison in our soul**
- **PAUL KNEW the law said don’t covet. But he didn’t understand that to covet was to SIN AGAINST GOD. He had always seen ‘do not covet’ in the abstract, as a general principal for people... he didn’t see it as the issue of HIS HEART that was HIS SIN, that was separating him from GOD.**
- **In fact, his knowledge of the law didn’t KEEP him from coveting, it stirred up his desire to covet...**

⁸ But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the law, sin was dead.

- **We all can relate to this! It is a tragic result of the human condition that when we are told what NOT to do, it stirs up a desire to DO IT! “Don’t eat the cookies!”... Cookies? Why not? Are they good? Will they make me happy? I WANT COOKIES!**
- **APART FROM LAW sin is still sin, but it doesn’t have the power of temptation that the law brings. EVEN MORE, apart from the demands of the law, SIN DOESN’T BOTHER US. PERHAPS this is what Paul means when he goes on to say...**

⁹ Once I was alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. ¹⁰ I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. ¹¹ For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.

- **One view. Paul hasn’t met Jesus yet. He is going about his merry way, happily persecuting Christians, hurting people, filled with anger, and thinking he was doing a good thing. In a**

sense, he was 'alive' in that he was content in living apart from the conviction of the law in his life.

- THEN!!! One day, somehow, he was confronted with what the law really said. He came to see what he was doing, how sinful he really was. He came to see HIS OWN LUST, JEALOUSY, in comparison to the perfection of God. This brought shame, guilt, brokenness. IT BROUGHT THE EXPERIENCE OF DEATH. WHERE SIN ALWAYS LEADS.
- And so, instead of the law bringing about LIFE, the measuring stick of the law showed him just how broken he was, and it brought about shame. Guilt. Experience of Death.

¹² So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

- Paul emphasizes that the problem isn't the law. The law is PERFECT. It is GOOD NOT TO COVET- COVETING BRINGS DEATH...

¹³ Did that which is good, then, (The law) become death to me? By no means! Nevertheless, in order that sin might be recognized as sin, (that I might really understand what sin is) it used what is good to bring about my death (place of shame, guilt, brokenness), so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful. (So that through the perfection of God's moral law, I might come to see MY SIN for what it truly is.. hurting me, hurting others, and separating me from the Goodness of God)

- FRIENDS, this entire process can play itself out in our lives as believers... when we listen to the voice in our heart (of voice of others) that tells us our worth, value, acceptability to God is based on how well we are performing- law shows us how far off the mark we are, and it brings shame, guilt, brokenness. Experience of death. BUT, it isn't the law that brings about that experience of death, it is my sin which the law reveals.
- THIS GETS TO THE BIG TAKEAWAYS...

✠ The law (God's moral law) is GOOD.

- It is GOOD because even though it stirs up temptation, shows us how much we have failed, and will eventually bring us to a place of brokenness... THIS IS A PLACE WE MUST COME TO IF WE ARE TO RECEIVE GOD'S GRACE. WE MUST COME TO THE END OF OURSELVES.
- HERE'S THE CRUX!!! THAT IS AS FAR AS LAW CAN TAKE US. TO THE PLACE OF CONVICTION, GUILT, AND BROKENNESS.

✠ What sin does with the law

- As we've seen, sin uses the law to stir up our desire for sin. TITLE... "Law kills"... IT IS SIN THAT KILLS, and sin uses the law to bring us under condemnation

✠ When it comes to how we actually live (in our mind, our will, and our emotions):

- God's desire is not that we are obedient to the law. Rather, His desire is that we are FREE from SIN. And the law will NEVER set us free from sin.
- Living a life focused on measuring up to an impossible standard will always leave us in bondage.
- We will only be free from sin (fruit for death, Romans 7:5) when we give up on ACHIEVING good behavior, allow God to bring us to the end of ourselves, and begin to RECEIVE His provision as the daily source of all that we need.
- We will be talking more about what that looks like. But for now...

- *I wake up.. thinking of the day. Challenges, temptations I know I'll face, decisions I have to make, worries I have*
- *I could look to law- it says "Good luck! Today will be another experience of you not being good enough. Here... let's go through the list of ways you aren't going to measure up... so you can get good and stressed out before breakfast..*
- *OR, I look to Christ, who is right there. HE SAYS "You know Ethan, you AREN'T GOING TO MEASURE UP! THAT'S OKAY!*
- *I don't love you because of how well you are going to perform today, I LOVE YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE MINE! I'm not interested in you being perfect, I'm interested in you KNOWING ME, FOLLOWING ME.*
- *SO, here.. today, choose to believe what I say is true about you. You are precious. Loved. Nothing can change that.*
- *SET YOUR HEART UPON ME, and together let's get into this day. WE do have work to do! We do have that math test tomorrow. We do have to make that decision we've been pondering.*
- *BUT HOW ABOUT THIS... rather than stressing out about how well we are going to do on these, lets just do our best and know that I THE LORD AM YOUR GOD, YOU ARE MINE, and YOU ARE ACCEPTED.*