

† **It's all been heading to this!**

- **Good morning! TODAY we enter Romans chapter 7! Crucial step, as everything we have covered so far has been leading to the ground we will be breaking in the coming few weeks.**
- **TODAY IS teaching! There are concepts here that are so often missed, ignored, that are essential to our experience of the NEW LIFE God has given us IN CHRIST. SO, we will cover a lot of ground, and in next two weeks, we will get more in-depth.**
- **THAT SAID, Start with in illustration. From the opening paragraph of Paul's letter, we have been climbing a mountain, heading to the ridge in the distance, entering new country each day.**
- **AND NOW, we've reached the distant ridge we saw when we first started. NOW, in front of us is a chasm. On the other side is ROMANS 8:1, what we all desire, the land of the freedom and the victorious Christian life.**
- **Not a land free from difficult circumstances, but a land where Christ has finally become the leading force in our lives, we are experiencing our union with him, and experiencing- as our principal reality- the fruit of his spirit in us and through us. LAND OF JOY. PEACE. HOPE. WHOLENESS. PATIENCE. LOVE. COURAGE. EMOTIONAL/SPIRITUAL MATURITY. CONTENTMENT.**
- **THE CHASM between us and where our soul longs to be, is the reality almost all of us face every day. Reality that we still struggle with sin. Doubt. Selfishness. Anger, jealousy, passivity, addiction... we don't want these things, and we get frustrated when we hear scripture proclaim that we are free from these things, because we still experience these things! HOW DO WE GET TO ROMANS 8?**
- **IN THIS ANALOGY... we have to take a bridge. Two options. The first, and the option chosen by most Christians since Jesus ascended... is the option of building our own bridge. Here, on the ridge, is a big pile of construction supplies... big sign: DIY CHRISTIAN LIFE.... LAW AND PERFORMANCE.**
  - **Religious activity. Moral principles, rules. All sorts of motivations such as guilt, shame, pride, consequences and blessings if we live right. (If I tithe, I'll be financially blessed). Right jobs/schools/people. Lots that IF WE DO THEM, we will make it to our destination. Fliers and building instructions for positive circumstances and ideal scenarios. SO WE pick up our tools, recommit our lives to Jesus, and get to work.**
  - **Some of us are great builders, that Christian bridge looks really good for a while. Others of us hit trouble, and often want to throw down our tools and give up. BUT no matter how hard and how long we toil, in our heart of hearts, when we look up, the horizon of the full Christian life is still a glimmer in the distance.**
- **AND THEN, one day when the whole bridge has collapsed and we are sitting exhausted back where we started, we glance to the side, and lo and behold, no far away, there is another bridge. It's narrow. Simple. Plain. And it's heading to the land...**
- **Excited, we pack up all of our 'DIY Christian life' equipment, and head to the start... but there's a sign next to the entry that says "NO LAW ALLOWED".**
- **Huh... look closer, we read... **Romans 6:14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.** NO LAW ALLOWED**
- **Then... "This bridge is by faith from first to last, for the righteous, the free, will live by faith" NO LAW!**
- **And so, finally, we drop our pack, shed all our work clothes, and take our first step into the bridge of the NEW COVENANT.**

- **THIS IS WHERE WE ARE MY FRIENDS! At the beginning of Romans 7, standing at the entry to the...**

The Radical Truth of the New Covenant (that drives legalists crazy)... **IN CHRIST, we have been set FREE from LAW.**

- **The importance of this idea cannot be understated, and it's also easily mis-understood. SO, definitions!**

† **Definition: The essential concept of the FLESH. (More to come in week 8)**

- **Core human attitude that we know what is best. Therefore, we look to ourselves (or other people) to justify, validate, and give purpose to ourselves. We may believe in God, we may confess that God is good, but our source of living life is ourselves. May look good, may look bad, may lead to great pride, may lead to despair, but flesh is flesh, and when we are faced with turning to God our turning to self, flesh always turns to self. That is its defining characteristic. AND WHEREVER the flesh is at work, it always is using it's every present companion: LAW**

† **Definition: The essential concept of LAW**

- Law as a principle
- **A truth. A reality. A way things work. We will see this in Romans 8... "through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.**
- Law as a moral/religious requirement (Mosaic law)
- **Mosaic law, but generally, any system of moral rules.**
- **Any system of right vs wrong, acceptable vs unacceptable, Christian vs secular.... As a moral person, as a 'good Christian', THE WAY YOU MUST LIVE. Expectations. Measuring stick that reveals the extent of your success or failure.**
- **BUT CRITICALLY, and INSEPARABLE from this...**
- Law as a way (strategy) of living where our rightness/ acceptance with God (and others) is based on how well we keep the law, also known as performance based acceptance.
- **IF/WHEN I meet enough of these expectations, then we will be righteous, accepted, good.**
- **Idea, that if I DO live in a certain way, perform morally, socially, or in any other way to a certain level, then I will be acceptable, my circumstances will be acceptable, and life will be what I am looking for.**
- **Called PERFORMANCE BASED ACCEPTANCE. And you can ask any marriage counselor, and they will tell you that performance based acceptance is POISON to a relationship, and at the root of most marriage failures.**
- **Speaking of marriages, this is exactly where Paul goes to begin his point...**

† **An example from marriage** <sup>7:1</sup> *Do you not know, brothers and sisters—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law has authority over someone only as long as that person lives?* <sup>2</sup> *For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law that binds her to him.* <sup>3</sup> *So then, if she has sexual relations with another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress if she marries another man.*

- **Okay... What are you talking about Paul? IN jewish moral laws, the permanence of marriage was near the top of the list, especially for a woman. In fact, apart from adultery and divorce, there was only one moral way out of the binding law of marriage. DEATH!**

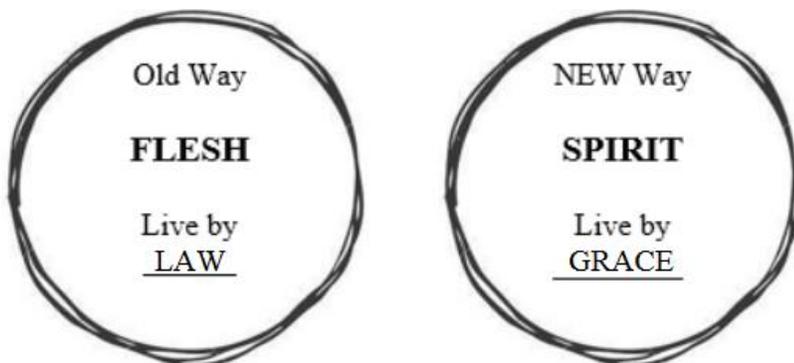
- What has Paul spent the last two chapters telling us? **In Christ, WE DIED!!** What did we die to?
  - o **Sin. Old self. Dead to being spiritually dead!** AND friends, at the summit of this argument Paul has been making, is the **BIG SECRET** of living the Christian life. The reality that **IN CHRIST** we have died to the **LAW**.

† The Big Secret <sup>7:4</sup> 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.

- **NASB, 'made to die'... put to death in regards to the law. We no longer have any relationship with it. IN REGARDS TO the motivation and source of how we live, LAW-PERFORMANCE BASED ACCEPTANCE to God or other people- has no place. We died to it. WHY??**
- **SO we can be joined to another- to Christ. HEAR!!** When we were joined with Christ through his death on the cross- died to the old person- **CHRIST DID THIS** so that having died to that old way, we can be **JOINED TO HIM**. **ACTUALLY EXPERIENCE** Him as our life, our hope, our peace, our motivation.
- **RESULT? BEAR FRUIT FOR GOD.** Our lives begin to reflect, manifest, the presence, nature, goodness of **CHRIST IN US**, living his life **THROUGH US**.
- **AND HERE'S HOW IMPORTANT this is to Paul... Back to illustration of marriage**
  - Reality! In Christ, having been set free from law, to try and live by law is to commit spiritual **ADULTRY**.
- **This leads to where we go next- in our lives, there are two ways we can go. Two bridges...**

† The two ways...

<sup>5</sup> For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law (more soon!) were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. <sup>6</sup> 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.



- Knowledge of right/wrong      - Knowledge of right/wrong
- **What is true about right/wrong hasn't changed.**
- Motivation is PBA                      - Motivation is LOVE
- Emotional result is                      - Emotional result is
- Guilt Pride Stress Dishonesty      Fullness Humility Peace Honesty
- Fear Exhaustion                              Courage to not lose heart
- **MOST IMPORTANTLY**
- Focus is on SELF                              - Focus is on CHRIST
- **From NLT...**

<sup>6</sup> But now we have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit.

† Cutting the cord- the crucial story of the Jerusalem Council (from Acts 15)

- **Paul and Barnabas in Antioch- God doing amazing things. THEN “You have to get circumcised”**
- **They go to Jerusalem to hash it out.**

<sup>5</sup> Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.”

<sup>6</sup> The apostles and elders met to consider this question. <sup>7</sup> After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: “Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. <sup>8</sup> God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. <sup>9</sup> He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. <sup>10</sup> Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? <sup>11</sup> No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

19... (James) “It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. <sup>20</sup> Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. <sup>21</sup> For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.