

Is the Law of God Bad? **Rom 7:7-12**

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? 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." 8 But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. 9 I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. 10 And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. 12 Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. NKJV

Last week Paul gives us a more or less general statement and today he expounds on it. In last week's section, Paul has showed us that the Christian has died to the law. This of itself could cause some people a lot of problems. What is Paul saying here? Does he mean to tell us that the law is bad?

Not only that but he tells us that the law stirred up our lust and worked against us in our relationship with God. What Paul is telling us is that the laws purpose was never to make us righteous before God.

Back in Chapter 5 versus 20 and 21 Paul said moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where's sin abounded, Grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Christ Jesus our Lord.

We see then, that Paul is simply continuing his theme from the very beginning that apart from God man can never meet God's righteous requirements

In our section today Paul wants to make it very clear. The gospel does not entirely dismiss the law. Some people might construe what Paul was saying to conclude that the law was valueless and pointless. So Paul takes time in this chapter to make the relationship of the law to the Christian very clear.

He has shown that justification cannot come by the law. That on the basis of law we will only be condemned in God's sight. He said in 5:1 "Therefore being justified by faith."

But now he wants us to understand that after salvation, that sanctification cannot come by the law either. Sanctification is that progressive work whereby the Christian becomes more and more like Jesus every day.

We say that in the last verse last week. Rom 7:6 *so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.* NKJV

So at the end of this second section Paul will come to the conclusion "Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good."

Paul's purpose then is to vindicate the Law and to prove that the Law must never be held responsible for our failure to keep it. Not only does the law fail to deliver us but it aggravates our

problem.

The man who is justified is a man who is safe and secure, his position is certain.

Rom 5:1-2 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. NKJV

Grace will be victorious, because our salvation is entirely in and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rom 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. NKJV

Rom 5:20-21 Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, 21 so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. NKJV

I. What shall we say then? Is the law sin?

A. Some might look at what Paul has been saying and conclude then that we had all been better off if there never was law.

B. If the law takes advantage of my weakness and works together with my flesh to become more the rebel against God then would we not be better off without it.

II. Certainly not!

A. Paul has to show that the law of God was given for a very good reason.

B. The law of God is first of all the expression of the moral nature of God Himself.

III. On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law.

A. Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. NKJV

1. Did you ever try to use the wrong tool for the job.

2. My grandchildren are all the time picking up things they should not.

a. My response to them is that is not a toy.

3. Many people try to make the law something that it was never meant to be.

4. And it was never meant to make us right before God.

B. Paul was not saying that without the law he would never had a knowledge of sin.

1. That was given to our first parents in the garden when they ate of the forbidden tree.

2. There is a general knowledge of sin among people.

3. "His meaning is that he was not aware of the real nature of sin until the

Law made it clear to him. It is the Law, he says, that brought him to a right understanding of the essential character and nature of sin.” Lloyd-Jones

4. Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. NKJV
5. “It is God’s Law alone that really gives us a right conception of the true character and nature of sin.” Lloyd-Jones

C. The unregenerate do not know and understand the truth about sin.

1. For the moment he truly understands his sin, he becomes troubled about his soul and seeks a Savior.
2. The old Puritans used to do what they called the preliminary work.
3. They would preach the law of God and the judgement of God so strongly that in their meetings people would call out, “Is there not any mercy?”
4. Without the law there is no real knowledge of sin.

IV. For I would not have known covetousness (lust) unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."

A. The word here for lust, is desire.

1. In the NT it is used only once in a sense for a good desire.
2. Luke 22:15 Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer NKJV
3. All others it is translated by the idea of an evil desire, or lust.
4. That is an inappropriate desire for anything, not just sexual things.

B. Paul no doubt has in mind the tenth commandment. Thou shall not covet.

1. Ex 20:17 You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's." NKJV
2. Do you notice the difference between this command and the others?
 - a. The others deal with action but this one deals with thoughts and desires.

C. Paul as a Pharisee no doubt had not spent much time contemplating this commandment.

1. They were very much into actions and not thought.
2. As matter of fact they taught that there was no sin until the action took place.

3. Their idea was that it was alright to think it if you did not do it.
 4. Matt 5:21-23 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. NKJV
 5. Matt 5:27-30 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. NKJV
- D. Sin begins in the heart and the mind.
1. Murder and adultery are committed in the heart long before they acted out.
 2. To desire, to covet is sin, and how can we ever hope to control that.
 3. "I had never understood the power of lust and of desire within me until I was really enlightened by a true understanding of the law. Lloyd-Jones
- E. Knowing
1. For I would not have known covetousness (lust) unless the law had said, "You shall not covet. For I would not have known covetousness (lust) unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."
 2. Lloyd-Jones tells us that there are two different words used by Paul here.
 - a. The first has the general idea of knowledge but the second is much stronger.
 - b. It means to know absolutely
 3. We will never know the power of sin over us until we know, really know what sin is.
 4. Many religions de-emphasize sin because they think it is negative preaching.
 5. But with out the knowledge of our sin we will never seek a Savior.

