Sermon Highlights

Dead to the Law, Alive in Christ:
Understanding Grace, Law, and the New Life

Summary:

Drawing from Romans 7:1-12, this sermon examines the relationship between the law, sin, and grace, and how believers are freed from the law's condemnation through death and resurrection with Christ. Pastor Bruce Gordon explains that just as death severs a marriage covenant, the believer's death with Christ severs the bond to the old nature, making possible a new union with the risen Lord. The law was never designed to produce life but to expose sin and reveal mankind's desperate need for a Savior. True Christian living flows not from self-effort or legal obligation but from the newness of the Spirit, producing genuine joy and fruitfulness in service to God. The sermon calls believers to examine whether their walk with God is marked by the liberty and delight of grace or the burden of mere religious duty.

Key Points:

- Romans 7 must be understood in its proper context, continuing the argument from Romans 6:14 about sin, law, and grace, with verses 6:15-23 serving as a parenthetical section

- Paul wrote Romans to a diverse congregation of Jewish and Gentile believers, each needing to understand how the law applied to them, whether through the royal law given to Moses or the moral law written on every human heart

- The law was never abolished but fulfilled by Christ, and its moral character remains in force, properly understood and applied through the power of the Spirit

- Just as death dissolves a marriage covenant and frees a spouse to remarry, the believer's death with Christ dissolves the bond to the old sinful nature and makes possible a new life united to the risen Christ

- The natural result of this new union with Christ is spiritual fruitfulness, service to God that flows from love rather than obligation

- The law's purpose was never to produce life but to function as a mirror, exposing the depth of sin in every human heart and revealing the need for a Savior

- Genuine Christian service, whether preaching, teaching, or any form of ministry, should be marked by joy rather than burden; a sense of burden in service is a signal to reassess one's spiritual condition or calling

- The commandments, though they arouse sinful passions by nature of the prohibition, are themselves holy, just, and good; the fault lies in human sinfulness, not in the law itself

Scripture Reference:

- Romans 7:1-12, which addresses the believer's death to the law through Christ and the law's role in exposing sin

Stories:

- Pastor Bruce Gordon uses the illustration of a marriage covenant to explain how death alone severs the legal bond between spouses, drawing directly from Paul's analogy in Romans 7:2-3 to show how the believer must die with Christ before being legitimately joined to him in new life

- Pastor Bruce Gordon references the account of the woman caught in adultery, in which the Pharisees demanded strict legal punishment while Christ responded with compassion and a call to repentance, illustrating the difference between the deadening letter of the law and the life-giving newness of the Spirit

- Pastor Bruce Gordon shares a personal anecdote about being brought to church throughout childhood, humorously describing it as a "drug problem," to illustrate the contrast between attending church out of obligation versus attending out of genuine love for God and his people following true salvation