

Sunday, June 21, 2026

Romans pt 18 - Dead to the Law, Alive in Christ: Understanding Our Freedom from Sin

Sermon Summary

This sermon explores Romans 7:1-12, examining the Christian's relationship to Old Testament law and how sin uses God's good law as a catalyst to produce death. Pastor Chris explains that through faith in Christ and identification with His death and resurrection, believers have died to the Mosaic law and are now bound to Christ in a new covenant relationship. The law's purpose was to reveal sin and humanity's sinfulness, but sin seized this opportunity to produce even greater sinful desires within us. However, through Christ's body, believers are released from the law's binding power and are now empowered by the Holy Spirit to bear fruit for God and serve in newness of life. The sermon warns against underestimating sin's power while emphasizing that the Holy Spirit within believers provides the strength to walk in righteousness rather than succumb to temptation.

Scripture

- Romans 7:1-12 - The primary text of the sermon, read in full
- Romans 6:3 - Baptized into Christ
- Romans 6:4 - Buried with Christ through baptism
- Romans 6:5 - United with Christ in His death
- Romans 6:6 - Our old self was crucified with Christ
- Ephesians 5 - Christ and the church as bride and groom (general reference to the chapter)
- Matthew 5-7 - The Sermon on the Mount (Jesus raising the bar on Old Testament law)
- Genesis 4:7 - Sin crouching at Cain's door (alluded to when discussing sin "crouching at your door")

Key Points

- The law only has authority over people while they are alive; through Christ, believers have died to the law
- Believers are released from the Old Testament law to be joined to Christ in a covenant relationship similar to marriage
- The purpose of this freedom is to bear fruit for God through service in the new life of the Spirit
- The law itself is holy, righteous, and good—its purpose is to reveal sin, not to be sin itself
- Sin uses the law as a catalyst to arouse and multiply sinful desires within humanity
- Sin is personified as an active, aggressive force that "seizes opportunities" and pursues people
- Christians must not underestimate sin's power but must actively choose righteousness through the Holy Spirit
- Believers are now bound to the "law of Christ" rather than the Mosaic law, though many Old Testament principles are reiterated in New Testament teaching
- The greatest commandments—love God and love neighbor—summarize both the law and the Christian calling
- Service is the evidence of freedom from the law and life in the Spirit

Discussion Questions

- How does understanding that we have died to the law through Christ change the way you approach obedience and righteousness in your daily life?
- In what ways have you experienced sin using good rules or boundaries as a catalyst to increase temptation, and how can awareness of this pattern help you fight sin more effectively?
- Paul describes being released from the law so that we can serve in the new life of the Spirit rather than under the old written code. What does serving in the new life of the Spirit look like practically in your context?

- Why do you think many people, including Christians, underestimate the power and persistence of sin in their lives, and what safeguards can we put in place to avoid this mistake?
- How does the marriage analogy in Romans 7 help you understand your covenant relationship with Christ, and what does it mean to be faithfully bound to Him?
- Paul suggests that the law, though good and holy, actually increased his awareness of sin and his desire to sin. How can we study God's law in a way that leads to life rather than legalism or increased temptation?
- What is the difference between being controlled by rules and regulations versus being empowered by the Holy Spirit to bear fruit for God?
- The sermon emphasizes that sin is an active force that seeks to capture us. How does this personification of sin change your approach to spiritual warfare and daily vigilance?
- How do we balance honoring the wisdom and character of God revealed in the Old Testament law while recognizing we are now under the law of Christ?
- In what areas of your life are you most tempted to think you are strong enough to resist sin on your own, and how can you instead rely on the Holy Spirit's power to choose the right path before temptation arrives?

5-Day Devotional: Freedom from the Law, Life in the Spirit

Day 1: Dead to the Law, Alive in Christ

Reading: Romans 7:1-6

Devotional: Just as a widow is released from marriage vows when her husband dies, we've been released from the law's binding power through Christ's death. This isn't freedom to do whatever we want—it's freedom to be joined to Someone better. We've traded the exhausting treadmill of rule-keeping for an intimate relationship with the risen Jesus. The law showed us our sin, but it couldn't give us power to overcome it. Now, united with Christ, we can "serve in the new life of the Spirit" rather than the "old written code." Today, ask yourself: Am I still trying to earn God's favor through perfect obedience, or am I resting in my union with Christ? Let His love, not legalistic fear, motivate your obedience.

Day 2: The Law Reveals What's Already There

Reading: Romans 7:7-8; Psalm 19:7-11

Devotional: Paul asks a shocking question: Is the law sin? Absolutely not! The law is like a spiritual MRI—it doesn't create the disease, it reveals what's already present. When God said "don't covet," Paul suddenly became aware of desires he hadn't noticed before. The law exposed the sin already lurking in his heart. This is actually good news. We can't treat a problem we don't know exists. God's commands illuminate our true condition, driving us to the only cure: Jesus Christ. The law is "holy, righteous, and good" precisely because it shows us our desperate need for grace. Don't resent God's standards—they're meant to lead you to the Savior who can actually transform you from the inside out.

Day 3: Sin's Deceptive Power

Reading: Romans 7:9-11; Genesis 4:6-7

Devotional: Paul personifies sin as an active, cunning enemy that "seizes opportunities" and "deceives" us. This isn't poetic exaggeration—sin truly is a force that wants to destroy you. When God warned Cain that "sin is crouching at your door," He revealed sin's predatory nature. We dangerously underestimate sin when we think, "I'm strong enough to handle this temptation." That's exactly when sin pounces. The pastor's warning rings true: don't go to places, engage in activities, or entertain thoughts where sin gains advantage. Sin used even God's good law as a catalyst to stir up rebellion in our hearts. Victory doesn't come from willpower but from walking closely with Jesus through the Spirit's power. Where are you underestimating sin's strength in your life today?

Day 4: Serving in the New Life of the Spirit

Reading: Romans 7:6; Galatians 5:16-25

Devotional: The contrast is stunning: serving "in the new life of the Spirit" versus living "under the old written code." The old way was external rules producing internal frustration. The new way is the Spirit's internal transformation producing external righteousness. This is why service flows naturally from Spirit-filled believers. When you're not consumed with rule-keeping, you're free to notice and meet others' needs. You're liberated to love God and love people—which Jesus said summarizes everything. The church thrives when believers stop obsessing over religious performance and start serving in Spirit-empowered freedom. What opportunity to serve is right in front of you? Don't let legalistic thinking paralyze you. The Spirit within you is greater than sin in the world.

Day 5: Walking in Victory Over Sin

Reading: Romans 6:11-14; 1 John 4:4

Devotional: Here's the glorious truth: sin no longer has mastery over you. You died with Christ, and you've been raised to new life. Sin still exists in your flesh and will tempt you until glory, but it's no longer your master. You have a choice. The Holy Spirit dwelling in you provides real power to say no to sin and yes to righteousness. This requires vigilance—recognizing sin's tactics, avoiding unnecessary temptation, and actively pursuing holiness. But it's not willpower; it's Spirit-power. "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." When temptation comes today, remember: you're not fighting alone, and you're not fighting from a position of weakness. You're fighting from victory already secured by Jesus. Walk confidently in the Spirit's power.