

## When in Romans part 7: Understanding God's Law and Grace

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### Sermon Summary

This sermon provides a comprehensive exploration of the Mosaic Law and its relationship to Christian faith today. The pastor addresses the common question of which Old Testament laws Christians must still follow by introducing a threefold categorization of the law: moral, ceremonial, and civil/judicial. The message emphasizes that while ceremonial and civil laws were fulfilled in Christ, the moral law remains binding on believers. The sermon demonstrates that the law was never meant to save anyone but rather to reveal humanity's universal need for Jesus Christ. Both Jews who had the law and Gentiles who didn't equally need salvation through faith in Christ alone. The teaching culminates in the recognition that Jesus perfectly fulfilled the law and became the sacrifice that frees believers from the law's penalty, making His blood the only pathway to eternal life.

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### Key Points

- The Mosaic Law contains 613 commands that can be categorized into three types: moral, ceremonial, and civil/judicial law
- The moral law reflects God's character and is summarized by Jesus as loving God completely and loving your neighbor as yourself
- The ceremonial law governed Israel's worship practices and was fulfilled in Christ as our sacrifice, high priest, and temple
- The civil/judicial law governed Israel as a theocracy and is no longer applicable since Christ's kingdom is not of this world
- Jesus didn't abolish the law but fulfilled it, revealing that obedience goes beyond physical actions to include the heart's condition
- No one can perfectly keep the law; both Jews with the law and Gentiles without it need salvation through Jesus Christ
- The law's primary purpose was to reveal humanity's need for a Savior and prepare people for the coming Messiah
- Salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ, repentance of sin, and cleansing by His blood, not through keeping the law

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## Scripture Reference

- Romans 2:12 - "For all have sinned apart from the law will also perish apart from the law and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law"
- Deuteronomy 22:11 - Prohibition against wearing wool and linen blends (used as an example)
- Matthew 5:17 - Jesus came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it
- Hebrews 10:10 - Jesus as the one sacrifice for all
- Hebrews 4:14 - Jesus as our great high priest
- Various references from the Sermon on the Mount regarding murder, adultery, and oaths
- John 6:53-58 - Jesus' teaching about eating His flesh and drinking His blood

### Alluded to or Paraphrased References:

- Exodus 25-31 - Instructions for building the tabernacle
- 1 Kings 6-7 - Solomon building the temple
- Matthew 22:37-40 (also Mark 12:30-31, Luke 10:27) - Greatest commandment: Love God and love your neighbor
- Matthew 7:12 - The Golden Rule
- Matthew 5:21-22 - Jesus teaching on murder and anger
- Matthew 5:27-28 - Jesus teaching on adultery and lust
- Matthew 5:33-37 - Jesus teaching on oaths (let your yes be yes)
- Matthew 5:43-44 - Love your enemies
- John 18:36 - "My kingdom is not of this world"
- Romans 6:23 - "The wages of sin is death"
- James 2:10 - Breaking one law makes you guilty of all
- 1 Corinthians 3:16 (also 1 Corinthians 6:19) - You are the temple of the Holy Spirit
- Ephesians 2:10 - Good works prepared in advance for us to do
- Luke 22:19-20 (also 1 Corinthians 11:23-26) - Institution of communion

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## Discussion Questions

- How does understanding the threefold division of Old Testament law (moral, ceremonial, and civil) change the way you read and apply Scripture in your daily life?
- In what ways might we still be tempted to rely on rule-keeping rather than faith in Jesus for our salvation, even as modern Christians?
- Jesus revealed that the moral law addresses not just our actions but the attitudes of our hearts. What hidden sins of the heart might God be calling you to confess and surrender?
- Paul warns that both those with the law and those without it face judgment. How does this truth level the playing field between all people and emphasize our universal need for Christ?
- How does recognizing that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit transform your understanding of worship and your relationship with God?
- Jesus said His kingdom is not of this world. What implications does this have for how Christians should engage with government, politics, and civil authority today?
- The sermon emphasizes that the law was designed as a sign pointing to our need for Christ. In what ways do you see God's law still revealing your need for Jesus in your life right now?
- How does the truth that Jesus perfectly fulfilled the law on our behalf affect your motivation to obey God's commands?
- What does it mean practically to let your yes be yes and your no be no, as Jesus taught, in a culture that often values flexibility and self-interest?
- When we take communion, we remember Christ's broken body and shed blood. How can this act of remembrance strengthen your faith and worship throughout the week ahead?

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## **5-Day Devotional: Understanding God's Law and Grace**

### **Day 1: The Purpose of the Law**

**Reading: Romans 2:12-16; Matthew 5:17-20**

Devotional: The law was never meant to save us, but to reveal our desperate need for a Savior. Like a mirror shows us physical imperfections, God's law exposes our spiritual condition. The Jews had 613 commandments, yet no one could keep them perfectly. The Gentiles, though without the written law, still faced judgment for sin. This reality should humble us all. We cannot earn righteousness through rule-keeping or good behavior. The law's ultimate purpose was to prepare hearts for Jesus Christ, who alone fulfilled every requirement perfectly. Today, reflect on areas where you've tried to earn God's favor through performance. Surrender those efforts and rest in Christ's finished work. His grace is sufficient, and His sacrifice is complete.

### **Day 2: Jesus Fulfills What We Cannot**

**Reading: Hebrews 10:1-14; Hebrews 4:14-16**

Devotional: The Old Testament sacrificial system required constant repetition—daily offerings, yearly ceremonies, endless rituals. Yet these could never truly cleanse the conscience or remove sin permanently. They pointed forward to the one perfect sacrifice: Jesus Christ. He became our final sacrifice, our great High Priest, and our living temple. No more animal blood needed. No more priestly mediators required. We now have direct access to God through Christ. His broken body and shed blood accomplished what centuries of religious observance could not. As you go through today, remember that you don't approach God based on your performance but on Christ's perfection. You can come boldly to the throne of grace because Jesus has opened the way.

### **Day 3: The Heart Behind the Law**

**Reading: Matthew 5:21-30; 1 Samuel 16:7**

Devotional: Jesus shocked His listeners by revealing that God's law goes deeper than external behavior—it addresses the heart's condition. Murder begins with hatred. Adultery starts with lust. Dishonesty flows from a deceptive heart. God doesn't just want behavioral compliance; He desires heart transformation. The Pharisees mastered external obedience while harboring corrupt hearts. Jesus exposed this hypocrisy and called for authentic

righteousness. This is challenging because we can't change our own hearts. Only God's Spirit can transform us from the inside out. Today, ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart. Confess not just sinful actions but sinful attitudes—anger, jealousy, pride, lust. God desires truth in the innermost being. Let Him cleanse and renew your heart.

#### **Day 4: The Law of Love**

**Reading: Matthew 22:34-40; Romans 13:8-10; 1 John 4:7-12**

Devotional: When asked to summarize all 613 commandments, Jesus gave two simple directives: love God completely and love others genuinely. This isn't a reduction of the law but its fulfillment. Love encompasses all righteousness. When we truly love God, we won't worship idols, misuse His name, or neglect worship. When we genuinely love others, we won't murder, steal, lie, or covet. Love even extends to enemies, transforming relationships and reflecting God's character. Yet this love isn't manufactured through human effort—it flows from experiencing God's love for us. We love because He first loved us. Today, consider how you can demonstrate God's love practically. Who needs encouragement? Who requires forgiveness? Who deserves compassion? Let Christ's love flow through you.

#### **Day 5: Living by Grace, Walking in Obedience**

**Reading: Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 2:11-14; James 2:14-18**

Devotional: We are saved by grace through faith, not by works—this truth liberates us from performance-based religion. Yet grace doesn't eliminate obedience; it empowers it. God created us for good works, prepared in advance for us to do. We don't obey to earn salvation but because we've been saved. Our obedience flows from gratitude, love, and transformation, not obligation or fear. The moral law of Christ remains our guide—not as a burden but as wisdom for flourishing life. Faith without works is dead, not because works save us, but because genuine faith naturally produces fruit. Today, examine your motivations for obedience. Are you trying to earn God's approval or responding to His grace? Let gratitude fuel your obedience and grace empower your transformation.