

ROMANS CH.7

MAJOR THEME: THE GOSPEL: THE RIGHTEOUSNES OF GOD REVEALED IN SANCTIFICATION

Hymn: #491 When We Walk With the Lord

(Modified Outline of John A. Witmer- Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology, Dallas Theological Seminary; The Bible Knowledge Commentary; SP Publications; 1983; p.438)

- 1) INTRODUCTION AND THEME (1:1-17)
 - A) Apostolic Greeting (1:1-7)
 - B) Apostolic Travel Plans (1:8-15)
 - C) Apostolic Attitude (1:16-17)
- 2) RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED IN CONDEMNATION (1:18-3:20)
 - A) Against Pagan Humanity (1:18-32)
 - i) Reasons (1:18-23)
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 - (2) For Ignoring God's Revelation v. 19-20
 - (3) For Perverting God's Glory v.21-23
 - ii) Results (1:24-32)
 - (1) Abandoned to Fornication v.24-25
 - (2) Abandoned to Sexual Perversion v. 26-27
 - (3) Abandoned to a Depraved Lifestyle v.28-32
 - B) According to Divine Standards (2:1-16)
 - i) Truthfulness (2:1-4)
 - ii) Impartiality (2:5-11)
 - iii) Jesus Christ (2:12-16)
 - C) Against Unfaithful Jews (2:17-3:8)
 - i) Condemnation because of their hypocrisy (2: 17-24)
 - ii) Condemnation because of their trust in "rites" rather than God (2:25-29)
 - iii) Condemnation because of their unbelief (3:1-8)
 - D) Against All Humanity (3:9-20)
 - i) All Under Sin (3:9-18)
 - ii) All Conscious of Sin (3:19-20)
- 3) RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED IN JUSTIFICATION (3:21-5:21)
 - A) Provided Righteousness Explained (3:21-31)
 - B) Provided Righteousness Illustrated (Ch. 4)
 - i) By Faith Not Works (4:1-8)
 - ii) By Faith Not Rites (4:9-12)
 - iii) By Faith Not Law (4:13-17)
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 - C) Provided Righteousness Enjoyed (5:1-11)
 - i) Rejoice in The Hope of Glory (5:1-2)
 - ii) Rejoice in Our Sufferings (5:3-8)
 - iii) Rejoice in God (5:9-11)
 - D) Provided Righteousness Contrasted (5:12-21)
- 4) RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED IN SANCTIFICATION (Ch. 6-8).
 - A) Ground of Sanctification (6:1-4)
 - B) Attitudes for Sanctification (6:5-23)
 - i) Know (6:5-10)
 - ii) Reckon (6:11-12)
 - iii) Offer (6:13-17)
 - iv) Serve (6:18-23)
 - C) **Conflict in Sanctification (Ch.7)** This chapter is going to feel like a dramatic cliff hanging episode out of "A Place to Call Home" or "Downton Abbey". The relational entanglements; the forced and bad marriages; characters trying to do the right thing but doing it in the wrong way in these shows, all seem to show up in this chapter of Romans.

"It is one thing for a believer to understand that his identification with Jesus Christ means that he has died to sin (6:2) and to count or reckon that to be true (6:11). But it is something else for him to deal with the sin nature that remains within and its efforts to express itself in his thoughts and actions. This is the internal conflict in the area of sanctification that every believer faces." *(John Witmer; Dallas Theological Seminary- Bible Knowledge Commentary; p. 465)*

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i) The Believer and the Law (7:1-6)

- (1) Having known, reckoned, offered and begun to serve in Ch. 6 now Paul discusses his own personal experience of defeat when he began to desire to serve. Though identification was objectively true, and he had known, reckoned and offered, he experienced what he calls "laws", in fact three of them, which kept him from actually serving as he wanted.
 - (a) Law of God
 - (b) Law of his regenerate, though natural, mind
 - (c) Law of sin in his members
- (2) The first thing you need to know is that through the vicarious and all-inclusive death of Jesus Christ "You died to the law through the body of Christ" V.4 in the same way you died to sin back in Ch. 6:2. Equally, and as a result, the same way we were "set free from sin (6:18; 22) we have been set free from the Law's authority over us.
- (3) An Example of Marriage v. 2-6
 - (a) The "husband" we were married to is our "old man" and so long as he is alive we are bound to him BY LAW and we bear fruit for death.
 - (i) This is the first of the three laws in Ch.7, it is God's Law.
 - (ii) This "old man" is like a modern day drunk and domestically violent husband. He's drunk not on alcohol but on the sin nature, who constantly invokes and reminds us of the Law of our marriage to him and forces us to bear his children...fruit for death. (v. 5)
 - (iii) Until this bloke dies, we are bound to live a horrible and depressing life.
 - (b) But thank God, this bloke has finally died, in fact was put to death by Jesus when He died. We are now free to be married to Jesus in fruit bearing service to God and separated forever from the Law. The law only has power over one so long as he lives, but we, that is our "old man", have died.
 - (i) The Law did not die; WE died.
 - (ii) "To be dead to the law doesn't mean that we lead lawless lives. It simply means that the *dynamic* and *motivation* of our lives does not come from the Law; it comes from God's grace through our union with Christ." (*Wiersbe; Romans- Be Right; p. 83*)
 - (c) We now serve (lit. "serve as slaves") not in a written code keeping way of law, but we serve as slaves in the new way of spirit.
 - (i) Not "the Spirit". There is no article in the Grk here. This is our new and regenerated human spirit. We gained newness of life in 6:4; here we gain newness of spirit.
 - (d) Why is it so important for us to know that we have died to the Law? Because of the dreadful relationship between Law and Sin.

ii) The Law and Sin (7:7-13)

- (1) First Paul wants us know that this dreadful relationship is not the Law's fault, but rather sin's. (V.7-8)
 - (a) The Law arouses sin (v.5), but that does not make it evil in itself. The Law is given to make sin known to us (3:20 "through the law we become conscious of sin")
 - (b) Paul choses the sin of covetousness to show us that sin is more than just outward acts. Sin is also inward attitudes and lusts.

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- (2) Though the Law is “holy, righteous and good” (v. 12) when it comes into relationship with our sin nature, bad things happen.
- (3) Sin seizes the opportunity afforded by the Law and then produces in us the very thing the Law prohibits. (v. 8a)
 - (a) Have you ever noticed what happens whenever a “Wet Paint- Do Not Touch” sign goes up? We touch it to see if it really is wet! Or “Wet Concrete”, people scribble their names on it. Or a sign over a hole in the fence that says “Do not look through this hole”...what does it make you want to do? Yep, me too. This is the weird and sinful problem we have with Law.
- (4) But thanks be to God, “...apart from law, sin is dead.” (V.8b)
 - (a) This doesn’t mean that sin ceases to exist as a power and principle in us, but rather the “plug is pulled” on the power it has to energize and arouse sinful passions in our members, that is, in our body’s parts.
 - (i) 1 Cor. 15:56 says “The power of sin is the law”, thus when you live under Law you are only making your old sin nature stronger. There is grave danger in trying to live by the law for it will put you to death. (V.11)
- (5) V. 9-13 Paul was once “alive apart from the Law”
 - (a) This is referring to his childhood experience, before the age of accountability and before he understood God’s commandment. But once he understood the commandment, sin sprang to life, deceived him and spiritually put him to death.
 - (b) This whole dynamic is designed by God to show us how exceedingly sinful the sin nature is within us. When that which is holy, righteous and good is mixed with this sin nature, sin always corrupts it. How bad is that?!

iii) The Believer and Sin (7:14-25)

- (1) The previous verses 7-13 were all written in the past tense. Here Paul shifts to the use of present tense verbs which suggests that he is describing his own present conflict, as a Christian, with the indwelling sin nature.
- (2) V.14-20 This describes the experience we all have had. Paul himself had it.
 - (a) Some translations say in v. 14 “I do not understand what I do.” A better translation is “I do not approve of what I do”. Paul clearly “understood” this dynamic for that is what he is teaching here Ch. 7. The point is he and we are not going to settle for this state of living. We want victory and liberty.
- (3) V. 17 “As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.”
 - (a) This is not shirking responsibility for his actions, rather the “myself” means Paul’s will and desire.
- (4) The Second and Third Laws that Paul discovered is now discussed V. 21-23
 - (a) “The Law of my mind” is the regenerated, born again mind that is operating naturally out of the Soul where it resides along with the emotions and will.
 - (i) Man is a Tripartite Being
 1. Body- members
 2. Soul- mind, emotion and will
 3. Spirit- conscience, intuition, seat of worship
 - (ii) Paul discovered that when he delighted in first Law (God’s law) and wanted to good (The Second Law), evil was right there with him. He was dogged by sin.
 - (b) “The Law of Sin in my members”, is the third law. It is the indwelling law of sin in his body’s parts that is constantly mounting a military campaign against the

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good Paul wanted to do naturally. When he says “it made him a prisoner”, the implication is that he was defeated.

- (i) I remember as a boy watching the Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoons early on Saturday mornings. Every now and then there would be a character in the show who was face with a dilemma of choice. Suddenly, a little white haloed angel would appear at his right ear telling him to do the good thing. Then another little red horned and pitchfork carrying devil would appear at his left ear telling to do the wrong. More times than not he listened to the devil.
 - (ii) I also remember the 70's comedian Flip Wilson who was known for his one liner: “The devil made me do it”.
 - (iii) The world is fully aware off the dynamic Paul is taking about. Desiring- Trying –Failing, over and over again. Do you know anything about this? As long as we are in our mortal bodies we will have the inner conflict of sin defeating our soulish best intentions.
- (5) This made Paul exclaim “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?. (V. 24)
- (a) Wretched- Lit. ταλαίπωρος- means to be completely exhausted after a battle.
 - (i) Desiring to serve God; wanting to do good and yet continually being dogged, defeated and taken captive by a sin nature is an exhausting and wretched way to live.
 - (ii) Paul's summary in V. 25 is “So then, **I myself in my mind** am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.”
 - 1. I or me is used 47 times in this chapter and Law is used 23 times in this chapter.
 - a. In V.14 Paul described himself as σάρκινός- fleshly not yet πνευματικός-spiritual
 - b. The summary of the problem is suggested by these words and is the problem of the independent, natural mind, operating out of the soul, rather than the spirit, trying to obey God's law. It is trying to good the WRONG WAY. **Ch. 6 Paul told us how to stop doing bad things. In Ch. 7 he is telling us how NOT to do good thing.**
 - (b) WHO, not what, will rescue us from Lit. “the body of this death”. This way of living is not living, it is death!
 - (i) Thanks be to God, there is a WHO and His name is Jesus Christ.
 - (ii) But HOW is he going to it? How is He going to rescue us? Is there any hope? Must I live this wretched life of death forever?
 - 1. Like happens in every episode in Downton Abbey, we are going to be left on a cliff hanging episode wondering until we get to Ch. 8. So stay tuned....but here's a short trailer for next week's episode:
 - 2. “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.” (Rom. 8:1-4)

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3. “So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. 17For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.” (Gal. 5:16-18)