

Someone Must Die

10.6.24

Message 19

Romans Series

Romans 6:20–7:6 (CSB)

²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free with regard to righteousness. ²¹ So what fruit was produced then from the things you are now ashamed of? The outcome of those things is death. ²² But now, since you have been set free from sin and have become enslaved to God, you have your fruit, which results in sanctification—and the outcome is eternal life! ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

¹ Since I am speaking to those who know the law, brothers and sisters, don't you know that the law rules over someone as long as he lives? ² For example, a married woman is legally bound to her husband while he lives. But if her husband dies, she is released from the law regarding the husband. ³ So then, if she is married to another man while her husband is living, she will be called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law. Then, if she is married to another man, she is not an adulteress. ⁴ Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you also were put to death in relation to the law through the body of Christ so that you may belong to another. You belong to him who was raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God. ⁵ For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions aroused through the law were working in us to bear fruit for death. ⁶ But now we have been released from the law, since we have died to what held us, so that we may serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the old letter of the law.

Introduction

- A. Romans 7 is one of the most complex chapters in Romans.
 - 1. So if you have ever read Chapter 7 or you are reading along and wondering, “what”? don’t worry you are not alone.
 - 2. The Apostle uses analogies, rhetorical questions, and many other forms of argument to drive a point.
- B. Christianity is both simple and complex.
 - 1. To live for Jesus and to stop sinning is simple.
 - 2. To live that out is hard and complex.
 - 3. Paul says we are dead to our old life, but dying isn’t easy.
- C. Chapter 7 finalizes Paul’s argument through the first chapters.
 - 1. All are sinners.
 - 2. Death, sin, and law have held us all captive.
 - 3. But Jesus brings a changed life and a new hope.

1. Paul uses one more analogy to drive home this point.

- A. Paul uses the analogy of marriage much like he used the analogy of slavery earlier.
 - 1. Analogies work well because they make the abstract concrete.
 - 2. It’s hard to follow Paul’s argument, so he uses analogies to give handles to the train of thought.
 - 3. First, Paul used slavery, and now he uses marriage under the Law.
 - a. There is some debate about whether Paul was thinking only of the Jewish Law or the general laws of his day.
 - b. Maybe he has the general law and cultural standards in mind.

c. Both options would apply, but I lean toward Paul talking to the Jewish audience.

B. This analogy seems directed to the Jews.

1. It's possible that the Roman and Greek audience would have related to the slavery analogy better than the Jews.

2. So now, Paul uses an illustration where the Jewish background believers would connect better.

3. The rules of marriage under the Jewish Law.

C. Under Jewish Law, a wife was bound to her husband as long as he was alive.

1. But when he dies, she is freed from that law or covenant and is free to remarry.

2. But anything outside of death made her an adulteress.

3. This isn't too far from our culture today where it is illegal to be married to two people at the same time.

4. What is unique is that only the wife is mentioned.

D. Why are only wives mentioned?

1. Because, especially in the Jewish culture, a woman could not seek a divorce or leave her spouse.

a. She was permanently bound to this man.

b. She could be in an arranged marriage or a negotiated marriage, where she had minimal say in the marriage.

2. But only the man could ask for a certificate of divorce and he could leave for almost any reason.

3. This put women in a terrible position.

a. Many women needed the protection and provision of a husband and family.

b. But if she remarried or started living with someone else, she was an adulterous.

c. And the Jewish Law especially called for adulterers to die.

E. That's not fair! Where's the justice?

1. But isn't that kind of the point.

2. The Law, whether it is limited to the Jewish Law or it is just the natural law of sin was used by sin to enslave and make captive.

a. Later in Romans 7, we will see that sin takes what is good and twists it for evil.

b. The law keeps us in sin.

3. And the only way for that relationship to change was for someone to die.

2. Who dies?

A. Paul's analogy is confusing and complex; let's illustrate this.

1. The Law is the standard that binds a person to a spouse.

a. In this analogy the husband is the Law.

b. We would expect the husband to die.

2. The believer is the wife.

a. The married woman is the main character.

b. She is the wife, waiting for her husband to die so she can remarry and have freedom.

1. As long as he is alive, she is not free to serve anyone else.

2. She is tied to him.

3. And the Law can be hard, sometimes harsh, and cannot give the life and righteousness that she wants and needs.

4. For her to find freedom, he must die.

3. If we were writing the story, the good but overachieving husband would die and now the nearing middle-aged wife sees a handsome man in flannel, shopping for his niece at a Christmas themed village.

a. As the snowflakes begin to fall, their hands touch reaching for some super complicated coffee drink and they know:

b. This is the love I was created for.

c. See, anyone can write a Hallmark movie.

B. Then the Apostle Paul kills off the favorite character.

Romans 7:4 (CSB)

⁴ Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you also were put to death in relation to the law through the body of Christ so that you may belong to another. You belong to him who was raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God.

1. **Vs. 4.** Therefore, YOU also were put to death...

2. WHAT!!!

3. Why does the wife die?

4. Isn't it the Law that dies?

C. Paul says we die so that we may belong to another.

1. Jesus died and was resurrected.

2. If I want to be with Jesus, I, too must die.

3. The Law didn't die; Jesus did.

A. Jesus did not come to abolish the Law.

1. Matthew 5:17–20 (CSB)

¹⁷ “Don’t think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or one stroke of a letter will pass away from the law until all things are accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.

2. Jesus’ sinless, perfect life, did not abolish the law or cancel it but fulfilled it.

3. Jesus lived under the Law, fulfilled the law, and then died to the law.

B. If we want to live in freedom and life, we must die to the Law.

1. But we don’t die to righteousness.

2. God’s standard of holiness and righteousness are critical themes in Romans.

3. As long as we are still trying to do it our way, trying to earn our salvation through works, and placing our faith elsewhere, then we are still alive under the Law.

2. But, when we die with Jesus through the waters of Baptism and the pain of crucifixion with Christ, the Law has no say over us.

3. We are dead to the Law, and alive to Christ.

4. Only death allows us to serve Jesus.

⁶ But now we have been released from the law, since we have died to what held us, so that we may serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the old letter of the law.

A. You cannot serve Jesus while binding yourself to the old way of life.

1. The old way of life can only lead to death.
2. The only wages sin can pay are the wages of death.
3. Sin can promise you everything, but it can only deliver death.

B. But now that we have died to sin and are raised from the dead, we may now bear fruit for God.

1. We are free from our old master and now we are enslaved to Jesus.
2. We are not free from righteousness; we are free to be righteous.
3. We are not free from standards, we become free to follow and obey those standards.
4. We must be tied or tethered to a master, dying to the Law allows us to follow Jesus.

C. One thing that every slave understands is work.

1. We receive release from the law, the old spouse, to serve our new spouse in the newness of the Spirit.
2. Spirit ministry still has standards and still has guidelines.

D. Jesus drilled down into this in Matthew 5.

1. Unless your righteousness surpasses the Pharisees...
2. Then Jesus began to give examples:
 - a. You've heard it said...thou shall not kill.
 - b. You've heard it said...do not commit adultery.
 - c. In other words, you know the Law and the limits that the Law placed.
3. Then Jesus takes it up to a whole new level:
 - a. But I say to you, if you hate you have murdered.

- b. If you lust, you have committed adultery.
- c. The righteousness of the Spirit cannot be achieved by merely following the rule of law, but most follow the Spirit of the Law.

4. The Law arouses our flesh.

5. The Spirit kills the flesh.

E. Through Jesus, we are released from the Law but not from Righteousness.

²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free with regard (or FROM) to righteousness. ²¹ So what fruit was produced then from the things you are now ashamed of? The outcome of those things is death. ²² But now, since you have been set free from sin and have become enslaved to God, you have your fruit, which results in sanctification—and the outcome is eternal life! ²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1. Because we have died with Jesus, we are now free to serve him.

2. And when we serve with Him, He gives us the greatest gift of all: eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Apply: I can't help but sense that the Spirit is calling us to go further and deeper than ever before.

A. I feel as though I have been saying this for a while.

1. That's God's people are at the precipice: will we go all in with Jesus.

2. Are we fully dead to sin and fully alive to Jesus?

3. Or, are we only mostly dead to sin...

B. I can't help but wonder: what would life be like for us to fully give our lives to Jesus, holding nothing back?

1. I know that I am designed to be selfish.

2. I want to look after myself, to tend toward my own comfort, to advance my own agenda.

3. Much of it is good and honors Jesus.

4. But don't we all hold a little back for ourselves?

C. Yet, Romans 7 calls us to die to our old ways so that we might serve another, and that another is Jesus.

1. My prayer today is simply this:

2. Lord, would you show me where I'm holding back?

3. Lord, would you show me where I'm falling short of your plans and your goals for my life.

4. Then, if your heart begins to stir, you start getting a thought about a specific thing, then pray for that area or arena of your life.