

DEAD TO THE LAW BUT ALIVE IN CHRIST

By Abri Brancken, 25 Jun 2017

SCRIPTURE READING

ROMANS 7:4-6, ESV

4 Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. 5 For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

LOOKING BACK AT ROMANS 1-6

Romans 1-3:20

In Romans 1-3:20 Paul demonstrates the hopeless position of humanity. We exchanged God for other things and humanity lives an adulteress life. No one is righteous, not one (Rom 3:10). Everyone will be held accountable to God for their sin. God hates sin and as people we are trapped in it. Unless we are saved by God Himself, there is no hope for us because we cannot get free from sin in our own power.

In Romans chapter 3:21 – 5 Paul shares with us the Good News. There is a way of getting right with a Good, Righteous, Just God. The way is different from what people might think. It is not a moral improvement program or our human effort do things right and deal with sin. You can't get into a right relationship with God by being nice. Fixing issues does not make you holy. There is only one way to get right with God and it is through justification by faith.

Jesus Christ came into the world to endure infinite punishment in our place and to provide a perfect righteousness in our place. For us to get right with God our sin must be perfectly punished and God's Law must be perfectly obeyed. Jesus received the punishment and Jesus fulfilled the Law perfectly. Therefore, when we are in Him, our sins have been punished and we live within the fulfillment of the Law. Not because of ourselves, but because of Jesus.

Getting right with God happens totally outside ourselves. Christianity is not about a moral improvement program. We do not partake in any Law keeping to demonstrate that our right standing before God is in ourselves. We depend fully and wholly on Christ's work. We acknowledge that our punishment and act of making us righteous is in the act of Christ. Salvation is an external provision and you receive it by faith. When you commit to this great gift you commit with your whole life. Christ is not just an add on to your life or your culture. No, He becomes the centre point around which everything else rotates and revolves.

It does not depend on you to be in right standing with God, but it is up to Christ. Our goal as Christians should be the manifestation of Christ in our midst. It is all about Jesus.

The Law is there to help us identify sin, but in itself it does not have the power to set you free from sin. Sin that is indwelling humanity pulls us towards itself, but in Christ that power is broken.

CHAPTER 6

Rom 6:6

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?

People objected to Paul's teaching. They were saying, well, if salvation is an external thing demonstrating God's grace, let's continue to sin to demonstrate just how great God's grace is. If we are not under the law, why don't we just become lawless and do what we want, when we want in the way we want. The people objected because Paul said that our justification is Christ's work and not our good moral living. We are made righteous apart from the Law, like Abraham was. Those under the law often need to feel that they are in right standing with God based on their own achievements.

ROMANS 6,7,8

Rom 7:15

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!

ROMANS 6, 7, 8 is written to explain why we cannot live in sin as children of God. Those who are in a right standing with God cannot live in sin any longer. Why? Why does a person who has been justified by Christ (through faith) not continue to live a lifestyle of sin? The answer is simple:

1. Because we are dead to sin.
2. Because God Himself did a work in us to deliver us from sin. It's not our work, but Gods.

Rom 6:17

17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

God transforms you. He relocates you from being a slave to being a free person. He moves your heart to a state of righteousness. Never think that it is because of your personal good deeds and works that you are in right standing before God as a Christian. It is because of Christ's work. Christ took our sin and gave us His Righteousness. It's an exchange. It's all about Jesus' work!!!

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CHAPTER 7:1-6

Law is the issue in Romans 7:1-6 and the issues is this: Why does not being under the Law not produce lawless people? Why is the redeemed in Christ not sinful? What stops believers in Christ (apart from the law) to become more and more lawless? The answer: The power of sin is broken.

Rom 7:4

Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong (joined) to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.

We were married to the law and to the power of sin, until we died to it and became joined with Christ. We can now live in a “new marriage” free from adultery. You don’t become lawless when you are in Christ because when you died to the law you married Perfection, Jesus. You and Jesus are united. The law in itself had no power to change you. It merely showed you what is wrong, but Jesus changes us. We are married to someone that is alive and that gives us His life and ability to produce fruit for God’s glory.

If you are unchanged you are unmarried. We cannot love the world more than we love Him. The result of this marriage is fruit. The fruit leads to sanctification. The fruit is our holy living. One of the fruits produced in Christ is obedience!

Being set free from the Law does not mean freedom from justice, righteousness, that which is good and holy. No, to be free from the Law by being in Christ is the opposite. It is to be married to justice and righteousness and goodness and mercy and love. The two become one.

Rom 7:6

6 But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new (newness) way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

You don’t become sinners but servants when we die to the Law. Why did we die from the Law? Why did God ordain it that when we commit our lives to Christ and die to the Law and it is not binding anymore? Why? ***“So that we may serve in the newness of the Spirit.”*** God does something on the inside to change you. The inward transformation of Christ is at work in us.

CONCLUSION

Christianity is not about you adapting to a moral code. Christianity is to die to sin and live to Christ and the Spirit. It’s all about transformation. It’s all about exchange. Exchanging Christ’s Righteousness for your sin. If you are justified by faith in Christ your live is all about Him, not yourself. We do not continue in sin because we are dead to sin.

SALVATION INVITATION