

## Romans 7:1-6 – “Released from the Law”

(Pew Bible Page: 943)

**Intro:** As we look into tonight’s passage, let’s remind ourselves of the progressive nature of Paul’s theme in chapters 5-8, Assurance of Salvation. In chapter 5 we learned that there are two representative men, Adam, and Christ, and that all who are in each man are counted as having the same history as their representative. All in Adam are counted guilty because they sinned “in Adam.” All in Christ are counted as forgiven and justified by being “in Christ” when He died and rose again. All who are “in Christ,” therefore, are forever secure because just as Christ died once to sin and rose to die no more, so we have risen once with Him and will never again come under condemnation (Romans 6:10-11). Our business is now to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Chapter 6 answered two likely objections to this doctrine by those outside the faith: 1) That such teaching would encourage people to abuse grace and plunge recklessly into sin and 2) That telling people that salvation no longer results from keeping the Law would result in those following the way of Grace slipping into lives of presumptuous sin. Sin is the key issue being dealt with in chapter 6. As we’ll see tonight, chapter 7 discusses another theme, the believer’s relationship to the Law. If chapters 5 & 6 teach that our salvation is completely a matter of the free gift of Grace (and they do!) what about the believer’s relationship to the Law? The Law was given to make God’s character known, to suppress sinfulness and to condemn Lawbreakers. Since we are now in Christ, does the Law still exercise this authority to condemn us? As we’ll learn tonight, it does not, because those “in Christ” are now under a higher law that comprehends the morality of the old Law and overwhelms it with a higher righteousness “in Christ.”

**Proposition:** All those “in Christ” are released from the Law’s authority to bring us under condemnation.

Billboard: (vv.1-3) The Principle Announced and Illustrated  
(vv.4-6) The Principle Applied and Contrasted

(vv.1-3) The Principle Announced and Illustrated – Paul again anticipated questions that would arise in the minds of those hearing this doctrine for the first time. He seems to have in mind Jewish believers who having grown up under a legalistic pressure unimaginable to most modern people, would surely struggle in their hearts with the teaching that they were now no longer under the Law. Perhaps some among us tonight will feel this same moral incongruence, having grown up or come to Christ under a legalistic form of Christianity. Paul responds to this possibility by stating and illustrating from life the principle that death releases one from bondage to the Law. **Romans 7:1–3** - *1 Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? 2 For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. 3 Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.* The Law has power for all who are “in Adam”: The Law binds us – prohibits us from living any way we feel, holding us accountable and under condemnation should we disobey its strictures. We all understand this, but we should

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understand something else as well: when death intervenes, it releases us from the Law’s obligating power. Paul announced this in verse 1, then illustrated it from life in verses 2-3.

The illustration makes the matter clear: As long as people are “in Adam,” they are bound to obey the commands of the Law. In the Garden of Eden, God instituted Law as a guide and curb for our first parents, Adam and Eve. Later after sin entered the world, God gave Moses the full statement of His moral Law in the Ten Commandments. God’s laws are not merely good ideas, or wise advice. The Law binds men under its power and makes them liable to condemnation for any act of disobedience. The Law of Marriage, described here, binds a man and a woman together for life, and insists that the two live in complete faithfulness to each other so long as they both shall live. But what happens when one of the two dies? As is illustrated here, everyone agrees that the Law’s obligations are ended when death intervenes. In the illustration, the wife is free to remarry without condemnation after the husband dies. In this same way, when we die with Christ, the “last Adam,” the Law’s power to condemn us is broken, and we are set free to be raised to new life “in Christ.” The point here is that...

[DOCTRINAL POINT] Death releases one from the Law’s authority.

(vv.4-6) The Principle Applied and Contrasted – Paul now brings in focus the effect of this truth on those who have passed out of Adam by death and have entered Christ through death and resurrection: All who are “in Christ” have been released once and for all from the Law’s power to obligate and condemn. **Romans 7:4–6** - *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* (cf. Colossians 2:11-15). Paul reminds us that when Christ died, we are counted by God as dying with Him, “*Likewise my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ.*” How did Christ’s death release you and I from the Law’s power? Remember that the first man, Adam, was placed under the Law’s authority when God said, “*You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*”<sup>1</sup> In Adam, the penalty for sin is death. Christ is “*the last Adam*” (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:45). He is also called “*the second man*” (1 Corinthians 15:47). As “*the last Adam*,” Christ paid sin’s penalty once and forever for all those in Him. As “*the second man*,” Christ has forever raised to new life and a new law all who are in Him. It is all because of our union with Him. His death has broken the Law’s authority; His resurrection has raised us to life under a new, higher law, “*the standard of teaching*,” we noted last week in Romans 6:17.

Paul was anxious to emphasize the radical difference this truth makes, so in verses 5 and 6 he contrasts the effect of all this between those “in Adam” and those “in Christ.” Notice how he

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Ge 2:16–17). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

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reminded his readers that at one time they were living under the Law in Adam, and the fruit this produced in them was death: **Romans 7:5 - 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.* Those who are “in Adam” are under sin’s power, aroused by the Law, and can ONLY bear fruit for death. Those who are “in Christ” however, are now released from the Law’s power, as verse 6 assures us: **Romans 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 way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.* All “in Christ” are now operating under a new power. No longer are we under the power of sin. We are now raised up in the power of the Holy Spirit. The result of this is that we now are motivated and controlled by the Spirit and bear fruit for Righteousness, rather than being motivated and controlled by our sinful nature, bearing fruit for death.

[DOCTRINAL POINT] All who are “in Christ” have been released forever from the Law’s power to condemn.

[ILLUSTRATION] The institution of slavery in the United States was legally abolished on January 1<sup>st</sup> of 1863, when President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Nevertheless, many enslaved citizens continued to live in bondage until June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1865, when U.S. Army General Gordon Granger announced General Order No. 3, freeing the last enslaved citizens from their bonds. Legally, they had been free since 1863, but they were kept in bondage by their ignorance of their freedom and the cruelty of their task masters. In just this same way, many Christians are kept in bondage to the Law because they have not learned that “in Christ” we have been set free from the Law’s power to condemn.

[APPLICATION] Anyone who grew up or came to faith under a legalistic form of Christianity needs to hear that “in Christ” we are released forever from the Law’s power to condemn. Until this truth takes root in our hearts, we will likely continue to struggle to feel secure about our salvation.

Some who struggle with assurance are troubled by the continuing presence of sin in their lives, but as chapter 6 showed us, God has released us from sin’s authority and has made provision for us to overcome its now illegitimate demands. Others struggle with feelings of condemnation caused by their failure to realize that “in Christ” they have been released from the Law’s power.

The way out of both these traps is to see that “in Christ” we have been given AS A FREE GIFT all that we need. All our inadequacies have been overwhelmed by His adequacy on our behalf. Remember, dear one, your security isn’t about who you are; it’s about who you are “in Christ.” In Christ, Grace has triumphed over Sin and the Law.

**Conclusion:** Have you experienced the great escape?

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