# Audio file

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# 1979 Camp Study 2

We now continue our study of God's way of salvation. And tonight, we wish to look more deeply into the subject of bondage to sin, which we introduced in our first study period the other day. And our main area of consideration will be the 7th chapter of the Book of Romans, which deals, of course, with the very real problem of sin as a slave master over a very unwilling prisoner. Let's turn to the 7th chapter of Romans. We'll omit for the moment the first few verses, which deal with the two husbands, and we'll come back to that later on in our series. We begin tonight with the ninth verse, which begins a series of arguments on Paul's part of illustrations demonstrating the problem, which is faced by a person who finds himself in bondage to the power of sin.

In verse nine, we read these words, “for I was alive without the law once. But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be under death. For a sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me and by it slay me, wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment, holy and just and good, was then that which is good made death unto me, God forbid. but sin, that it might appear sin working death in me by that which is good. That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.”

Paul here is very obviously contrasting two different eras in his life experience. First of all, he says in verse nine: for I was alive without the law once. Then, he says: But when the commandment came. So, very obviously, we can talk in terms of Paul's life before the commandment came, and Paul's life after the commandment came. And there is a very definite difference between those two experiences.

One great writer, EJ Waggoner by name, makes the observation that prior to the entrance of the law into Paul's experience, he was literally a willing sinner. A man without conviction. A man who day by day went about his sinful life without thinking very much about the kind of life he was living. And this doesn't mean, of course, he was a wild, abandoned sinner because Paul did lead a rather religious life, all his days, and we could speak much about that. But let's pass on for the moment. It's not difficult to look out on the outside world today. And recognize that the average person out there is very much a willing Sinner. They have no particular regard for church obligations, or I shouldn't better say obligations to God, their eternal Father. But live their life according to the interests of their selfish desires, day by day.

And so, it was with the apostle Paul. But there came a time when his eyes were opened to behold the sacred law of God, commonly called of course, the ten commandments. He came literally as ancient Israel did to the base of mount Sinai. And as he gained the knowledge of God's requirements, he found that his own life was in sharp and very unfavorable contrast to what those principles laid out before him. And very, very real conviction fastened upon his mind.

And before we pass away from the law for the moment, I'd like to have you notice a statement which Paul makes in verse 10. “And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be under death.”

Is very important at this stage that we understand in what sense, Paul says the law was ordained to life. Now if we ask the question or first of all, make a statement, the statement being that the broken law of God, which in other words is sin or transgression and unrighteousness, is a life taker. The breaking of the commandments kills those who break those commandments.

Now, if the breaking of the law is a life taker, then what is the keeping of the law? It is a life,? Now, at this point, of course, people always come back and say it's a life giver. So before I particularly examine the answer given, we ask a third question or another question, and the other question is: what is God? He is the life, Giver. Now we know God is the life giver, there's no question about that, that's a fundamental truth that everybody who has any respect for the Bible whatsoever should recognize that God is the life giver. The creator, the source of all life, and existence. In Him, as Paul said on Mars Hill, we live, and move and have our being.

Now, if God is the life giver, then the law cannot be the life giver. Even though Paul says it was ordained to life. And if the broken law is a life taker and God is the life giver, how then serve the law? It is a life preserver or a life sustainer. Life must be there first of all, and then the existence of law is provided by God to sustain or preserve that life from being destroyed. It is in that sense, that Paul says the law was ordained to life or to the preservation of life. Disregarded as holly requirements and standards, of course, becomes a life destroyer. and in this role Paul has some very, very wonderful words to say about the law, when he says in verse 12, “wherefore the law is holy and the commandment holy and just and good. Was then that which is good made death and to me, God forbid.”

Now the words, the law itself is not the life taker. It’s the breaking of that law or the removing of that law, which becomes the life taker. Now Paul, now in verse 14 and onward, begins to examine very carefully and closely the natural outworking of these great discoveries in his life experience. And he came to understand his problem or situation better than he had previously done. Verse 14, he says, “We know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal sold under sin.”

I am carnal, sold under sin. Now in this verse, what is Paul confessing? What he has done. Or what he is? I am, he says. And those two words of course indicate what he is. I am Carnal. Therefore, he was Carnal. The word Carnal, of course, meaning fleshly and as we shall see in a moment applies to the presence in him of an indwelling power of sin.

I will develop this point quite strongly over the next few moments. That's basically the last three words of Roman 7, verse 14, when he says: “sold under sin.” It should not be difficult to recognize that Paul here was drawing on the imagery of slavery, which was back in his day was a very common practice.

Today, of course, there are still slaves in certain parts of the world, but so far as the Western world is concerned, the actual practice of buying and selling humanity to work on a basis of total control has been abolished, but not for long. Only 100 years or less ago in North America, for instance, slavery was very prevalent, and it remains there until the civil war broke its power in the country. there are still slaves, of course, in certain less civilized and less Christian countries.

But it's no longer the practice as it was back in Paul's day. Now as Paul stood in the marketplace and watched the slaves being sold as we sell cattle and sheep today, he saw there a perfect picture of the conditional situation of a person who is a slave to sin. He said I’m sold under sin and would under of course means to pass under sins’ dominion, under sins’ control.

Now, having made this statement, he now supports it with evidence, and the proof that he was a slave sold under sin is given in the kind of behavior which he now exhibits. In other words, he's saying the fact that I'm a slave is the reason why I do what I am doing. In other words, my bondage is the root of my problem. My actions are the fruit of that root.

Now Jesus expressed the same principle back in Luke, the 6th chapter Verses 43 to 45. Let's just go back to this reference for a moment. And then in turn, we'll come back to Roman. So, keep your finger in Romans, chapter 7, as we journey back to Luke the 6th chapter. As Christ was teaching the people he said in verses 43 to verse 45. “For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit, neither doth a corrupt tree brings forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. through thorns, men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

Now Jesus, here is making reference to a well-known law in the world of nature. Even children understand this principle. For this reason, you don't find anybody going out to a thornbush to gather figs, grapes, apples, Peaches, pears, plums, oranges. You don't go to the bramble bush for those same good fruits. You know perfectly well there's no possibility in the world of that kind of Bush or tree producing good fruit. Now imagine today, if such a strange phenomenon should occur, supposing that somewhere in the world that a Bramble Bush was to suddenly produce just one single fig, just one.

And this news would spread around the world, and would be on every newscast around the world and thousands upon thousands of botanists and scientists would flock to this place to behold this wonder, this amazing thing, that a thornbush had produced a single fig. Is this ever going to happen?

It certainly is not, because the inviolable law of nature says that every tree produces, after its own kind. Now that law, which is so fixed and reliable in nature, is equally fixed and reliable so far as the human family is concerned, as Jesus goes on to say in verse 45. “A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good. And an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.”

In other words, just as a good tree brings forth good fruit, and an evil tree brings forth evil fruit, so a good man brings forth good deeds and an evil man brings forth evil deeds. In other words, before we can do good, we must become good. It's a very simple but reliable principle in the search for salvation and victory over sin. Let’s come back now to Romans Chapter 7. This explains why, first of all, Paul makes a statement telling what kind of person he is, then proves his statement to be true by advancing the evidence of the life which he leads.

So now we'll read these words again in verse 14 when he says: “I am carnal, sold under sin for that which I do, I allow not. For what I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law, that it is good. Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. For the will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. for the good that I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then, a law that when I would do good evil is present with me.”

There is a striking difference between the man that Paul was before the law entered his life experience, and the man he was after the law entered his life experience. There is also a remaining similarity. There's a difference, and a similarity. first of all, let's determine the difference. The difference is that before the law entered, he was a willing sinner. But what is he now? An unwilling sinner. but the similarity is a sinner still.

In other words, in himself, there has been no change. in himself, is still just as much, or was just as much the thorn Bush, before he read the law of God as he was after he read the law of God. There's been no actual change in him because after he read the law of God, he still said I am carnal.

So, has the reading of the law made any change in him? No, it hadn't. Certainly, in his thinking, yes, and in his desires, yes. but not in his inner nature, because the law, as we said earlier, is not a life giver, and until there was a new life in him, put there by the miracle working power of God, then he certainly could not change his outward behavior under any circumstances.

And then of course, all the way through these verses he reiterates the point. That's so far as his will is concerned, he is determined to do the right thing. But when it comes to performing that which is good, he finds himself a slave to a power greater than his own power. And this point, is very clearly confirmed in the closing verses of Romans Chapter 7.

Let's look now at verse 22. Where Paul says: “for I delight in the law of God after the inward man” Now we have two inward men, through two different departments, inwardly in a person. One is the spiritual nature and the other is the intellectual nature or the mental nature. and we have to decide, of course, which of those two inward men is being referred to in verse 22, where Paul says: “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.”

There’s a third person involved in our makeup, and that's the physical nature, we have a body which is the physical nature, with an intellectual mind, which is the intellectual nature, and we have in ourselves either the seed of Satan, which is the evil spiritual nature, or if we have been born again, the seed of Christ, which is the good spiritual nature.

Now if we come back a moment to the earlier verses to get this point quite clear and plain, in verse 15, Paul says: “for that which I do” now what does the doing? Naturally, of course, the instrument of the flesh and blood body, the members. back in Roman 6 and verse 13, Paul makes reference to these unruly members in the following words: Neither yield, you, your members as instruments of unrighteousness, under sin. yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”

So, what is your body? It is an instrument. We're not overlooking the fact, of course, that in the body, there are desires, passions, appetites, affections, which can have a very powerful effect upon the mind, but basically what is our body? It is an instrument to carry out the desires of the mind, if the mind is free, and if it is not, of course, it carries out the dictates of the carnal mind, which, of course, is the offspring of Satan.

Now when Paul says in verse 18: “for I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing.” What part of him knows this? The intellectual nature, the mental powers. “For the will is present with me or to choose is present with me.” Again, what part of him is being referred to here? The mental nature or the intellectual nature. Let's come down now to verse 22 again, when he says: I delight in the law of God after the inward man.” now which inward man, the spiritual or the mental? and your answer, very obviously, of course, is the mental. Or in other words the intellectual nature.

Now verse 23 brings to view the relationship between these different warring elements. “But” he says, “I see another law in my members” “another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.”

I want you to think of the word law in terms of power. Because after all is said and done, a law is never a law unless the power is there to enforce it. For instance, supposing tonight that we were to sit down and after some debate and discussion, we were to formulate a law, which required every man, woman, and child upon the face of this earth to worship God on Wednesday. And we very solemnly wrote this law down. We very solemnly passed it and declared it. Now, would that law be a law? No, it wouldn't. why? Because we have no power to enforce it, no power whatsoever.

So therefore, when Paul says, I see another law in my members, and this law is so powerful, that it wars against the law of his mind and actually brings him into captivity to this law of sin in his members, then very obviously, of course, the law referred to is a very, very definite power which is able to overcome the will of the man involved in this little drama.

So then, let's now look and see what this power is. But I see another law or power in my members. Now is it then his members or something in the members? The answer again is very obvious, or something in his actual members. Now this law, of course, is one of the inward powers within the person. It cannot be the intellectual power, because it wars against the law of his mind or against his intellect, or against his will. And it brings them into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.

So, in very clear terms, Paul then speaks of these three different departments or elements of our natures, the physical, the mental and the spiritual. physical, the mental and the spiritual. And because the spiritual is in fact the inward presence of the power of sin, that the mental and the physical are in bondage to that power of evil, so it cannot do the thing which he knows he ought to do, and the thing which he very much desires to do.

This then is the problem which confronts this particular person. So, in verse 24, he then cries out, oh wretched man, that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I've had the experience of talking to quite a number of religious people around the world from time to time. Church people professed Christians, and we have discussed the 7th chapter of the Book of Romans. And it is the commonly held view on the part of the majority of God's professed children, that Roman 7 describes a Christians’ normal experience. And folk have confessed and said, Romans seven is the perfect description of my own personal experience. That's exactly what I'm going through from day-to-day. I don't want to do these things. I am resolved not to do them, but I find that there's a power in me which I cannot override, and at its dictation, I do what I don't want to do.

I confess the problem, I plead with God for forgiveness. I believe He forgives me, and I rise to try again.

But inevitably, after an hour or two, a day or two, the old temptations reappear, And I do that sin again, so I find myself sinning and repenting, sinning and repenting, sinning and repenting, and then they say I'm so glad Paul had the same experience, because after all, he was a child of God, He'll be in heaven.

So, he with that experience will be in heaven. So will I too. I want now to examine the validity of this argument to see whether, in fact, Paul was speaking about his ultimate Christian experience or an intermediate experience between when he was a willing sinner and when he finally became a true child of God, keeping God's commandments in the spirit and in the truth.

Let's then examine some of the facts in regard to Romans Chapter 7 to see whether this is in reality a true Christian experience. And in verse 24, we find that the apostle cries out in great anguish of spirit, and great desperation, as a matter of fact, sheer desperation and says: “Oh, wretched man, that I am. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

In other words, he's asking to be delivered from the experience of Romans Chapter 7. Very obviously. He wants deliverance from this captivity. Now I ask you a very simple question. Is a true Christian experiencing a body of death so terrible that he has to cry out to be saved from it. A true Christian?

In other words, does a true Christian pray to be saved from a Christian experience? Obviously not. And yet the facts are that if Romans seven is a true Christian experience, then Paul by praying to be saved from the Romans 7 experience was praying to be saved from a true Christian experience.

Now, if he is praying to be saved from a true Christian experience, then what was he praying to go into? Well, what alternative is left? There is none, is there? because if you're saved out of a true Christian experience and out of the worldly experience, there's no other place to go under any circumstances.

Now turn to 1st John. That's the Epistle down near the Book of Revelation. Where this beloved apostle has some words to say in the 5th chapter and verse 4. About what it means to be an overcomer.

First John 5 and verse 4: “For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

John said: “whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world. Let's turn this around the other way. Because its saying, in other words, that whoever is being overcome by the world is not born again. Right? It’s one way or the other. Either we're overcomers and born again, or we're not overcomers, and we're not born again. Now is the man of Romans, Chapter 7 overcoming or is he being overcome? The answer is obvious, all the way through he talks about defeat, defeat, defeat, there is not one note of victory anywhere in the 7th chapter of Romans, nowhere whatsoever. It is a story of captivity, of bondage and being forced against his will, to do that which he knew he ought not to do.

Therefore, he is not overcoming the world. The world is overcoming him, and if he is not overcoming the world, then he was not born again. Now, what did Jesus say in the 3rd chapter of John? (The Gospel of John) Except a man be born again, he shall not see the Kingdom of God.

Therefore, as surely as the man of Romans 7 is not a born again Christian, he is not in a saved condition, and should he die at any time during this experience, he most certainly would not come up in the resurrection. Now of course, many people are rather shocked by this kind of argument.

Because they have rested in a false secure position for many, many years. By saying to themselves, true, I sin and confess and sin and confess. I don't have living personal victory over sin. but then who does have this kind of experience around about me? I am trying my very best. I am very sincere in my determination to serve the God of heaven. I believe that every time I confess my sin, God Forgives me and should I die, in the great resurrection morning, he will say I did my best and give me a place in the Kingdom.

Now this is a very, very fatal delusion, which will cost that person his eternal life, and therefore it's quite essential they will be shocked out of our false ideas, our false sense of security, so far as the Romans 7 experience is concerned. So, we will realize our desperate need and thus be led to reach out and lay hold upon the glorious promises of God, who will give to us a living deliverance from sins over ruling power, who will break the wicked pattern of sin, confessing, sin, confessing, sin, confess, and give to us a new experience altogether.

Now, note for instance, when Paul in Roman 7 cried out, oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? What did he then find? He found deliverance. He said, I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. He thanked God for deliverance, for freedom and for victory over sin.

We have time just to read the first verse of Chapter 8 which says: “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ, Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

Let's look up then with hope and courage and confidence, knowing that there is a way out of this vicious circle of sin and confess, sin and confess, sin and confess. God through Jesus Christ will give us the complete and total victory over the sin problem. We'll leave our presentation here for the night and when we come together again, we'll continue this study until we learn exactly how that victory can be gained, and a new life lived altogether.