

96-06-14a

As we prepare to study the Word of God this evening, let's take a moment to clear our minds and prepare our hearts and seek the ministry of God the Holy Spirit so that our study will accomplish the purpose that God has for us. Shall we pray? Father, we thank you as always for the privilege that we have of fellowshiping together in your Word. We thank you for the many ways that you have sustained us and provided for us and blessed us.

We thank you at this moment for the preservation of your Word and for the ministry of your Spirit. We pray that the purpose for which you have provided these things will take place as we study the letter to the Romans. We pray that you will give us insight and understanding and that as a result we will think and act in a way that pleases you and glorifies our Savior Jesus Christ.

We ask it in his name. Amen. We start a new chapter tonight in Romans, Romans chapter 7. We are well into the message that Paul is delivering to this church in Rome, to these believers in Rome.

The environment in which they live is an environment where they have been conditioned by their peers, by their fellow Jewish neighbors and fellow Jewish Christians to think of their relationship with God in terms of obedience to the law of Moses and conforming themselves by means of what they do to a standard. And this is a visible standard. It's a physical standard and involves circumcision.

It involves rituals. It involves obedience to a code of behavior, refraining from certain actions and performing certain actions. And this has been what they grew up with, what they have always been told, what they have always believed.

And with the coming of the gospel of Jesus Christ, this carried forward into their lives as believers. They understood that Jesus Christ had come in the furtherance of God's plan, but the implications of his coming, the implications of his death, burial and resurrection in terms of their daily life was just now beginning to be presented and to sink in, in large part through the ministry of Paul. So he has presented this, and he is in the middle of seeking to provide the evidence and the biblical truth that will transform their thinking in this area.

And he has presented several arguments and illustrations already. He has just completed some in Chapter 6 as to what the role of the law and the role of God sending a standard of behavior or a standard of actions, what the purpose of that was. Why did God ever send the law in the first place? Why did God ever communicate a system of behavior and a system of ritual? What was its purpose? And that had become clouded in the minds of a lot of believers over the centuries so that by the time of Christ, it was thought to be a means of establishing one's righteousness.

And Jesus said, you people who are all trying to attain this outward standard, when the new righteousness by faith has come, you're like whitewashed tombstones. You are being obedient on

the outside, and yet inside you're full of dead men's bones. So Paul has been presenting this, and as we were concluding Chapter 6, he talked about the fact that we should reckon ourselves to be dead with Christ.

Christ died to the law. Christ died to sin. And the life that he now lives, he lives to God.

And this is a hard thing to get across in our own minds as believers because we grow up in a similar way. We're never under the law of Moses, but we tend to grow up judging ourselves by the standard of our peers. Children riding the school bus, children in school classrooms, as you get into high school and then into college or into whatever environment of peers we find ourselves, there is an accepted standard of behavior.

There's an accepted set of actions. You dress in a way that conforms. You act and talk in a way that conforms.

And you blend in, and you're accepted, and this gives us a feeling of well-being and in some ways a feeling of security. And so we tend to carry that over into our lives as believers, and there is sort of a Christian culture that prescribes that you act a certain way and many times have a certain vocabulary. And if we blend in with that, we figure we're Christians and we blend into the Christian culture and so forth.

The point that Paul is making here is that our status as believers and as members of God's family and particularly as members of the body of Christ is not a culture and it's not a society that's based on mutual acceptance or mutual admiration. It isn't a life that's directed toward other people. It's a life that's directed toward God.

And that's why he brings up the point of Jesus Christ. The life that he lives, he doesn't live toward us. Jesus Christ is not now engaged in impressing us with his life.

For 2,000 years, Jesus Christ has been seated at the right hand of the Father, and he is living his life, his resurrected status, to please God and in God's presence and achieving God's objectives and God's designs. He isn't trying to make any sort of an impression on us in terms of his daily activities, if you will. He is living his life to God.

And that is the example for us. We have to make, in many cases, a conscious effort to shake free from the natural tendency to judge our actions and judge our status by where we stand in the opinions of other people. And in some cases, we have to shake free from the opinion that we have of ourself.

Our own opinion tends to be shaped by our culture, by our experience, by our life, our standards in the past that maybe haven't yet been transformed by God. And we can judge ourselves falsely. We can believe that we stand in a certain position of righteousness or in a certain position of effectiveness or usefulness in God's plan, and we can be completely wrong.

So we can't rely on that. We have to turn to God and inform ourselves of what God's standard is in this area. This is what Paul is trying to get across.

We've reviewed the argument of the letter, and I would just like to point out, as we remember what we finished up in chapter 6 last time, that Paul said in verse 19, just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness and of lawlessness, leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. And we saw that there were three actions, three things that take place in the process of our transformation out of the old life and into the new. The first was in verse 11, Reckon yourselves to be dead, the first imperative in the book of Romans.

The first commands that we have, we have five chapters of information, five chapters of truth to be the object of our faith. And when we incorporate that into our thinking, then it is time to decide and to act. And so Paul says, decide something about yourself.

In the light of this information, reckon yourself dead to sin. And we often hear this first quoted, and the idea is, well, you've got to stop sinning. Quit, think of all the sins you're committing and stop them.

But in the context of what Paul is saying, he's been talking about the purpose in God's plan. In the old age, what was the purpose of the law? Well, let's review this. I'll just give you five points.

The title of this could be, Why We Are Not Under the Law, or Why We Are Righteous by Faith and Not by Works. Why We Are Not Under the Law. This is another summary of the flow of the argument of Romans, specifically as it applies to the law, because that's what Paul is going to address in chapter 7. First of all, Paul gave us this piece of truth.

The law applies in the realm of the physical. The law applies in the realm of the physical, the visible, the concrete, the material. That's where the law has its provenance.

It is applied by observation. You look and see if someone is stealing. You see if someone is murdering.

You see if someone is committing adultery. This is in the realm of the physical and the visible. True righteousness is in the realm of the spirit.

Paul communicated this in chapter 2, verses 28 and 29. So that's our first principle. The law is in the realm of the physical.

We are called to live in the realm of the spirit. Secondly, the law, or the system of works, establishes the presence of sin, not the presence of righteousness. The purpose of the law is to demonstrate and establish the presence of sin.

That's its function. That's its role in God's plan, to show how unrighteous and sinful we are. Not to

establish righteousness.

That was never its purpose. Paul pointed this out in Romans 3, verse 20 and also in chapter 5, verse 20. Romans 3, verse 20 says, Think about this.

Let's think about David. We're studying David on Sundays in our study of 2 Samuel. You think about the life of David.

Let's think about his failures. What were his great sins? We've just studied them. He murdered.

He committed adultery. How do we know that these were his great sins? They were prohibited by the law of Moses. Now, another fact that we know about David is that he was a man after God's own heart and that he was one of the great faith believers of the Old Testament.

What part of the law of Moses tells us that about David? What application of the law of Moses tells us how much David was a man after God's own heart and what a man of faith he was? We don't establish that by the law, do we? David's righteousness isn't established and communicated by the law of Moses. It's David's sin and David's failure that we can demonstrate through the law of Moses. And that's the case with everyone, with all of us.

The purpose of the law is to establish sin, not righteousness. So the flip side of that coin is our third point. Righteousness comes through faith, not through deeds, not through works.

And it's always important for us to remember that when we talk about the law, we're talking about any measure that's based on works. Maybe the law of Moses is not the uppermost standard today, but we have many standards of behavior that are floating around. Some people think you need to behave with glossolalia, with speaking in tongues.

Some people think you need to demonstrate that you have the second blessing or you get the ghost. Some people think you should demonstrate your righteousness by the number of times you communicate the gospel to unbelievers. When is the last time you shared Christ? When is the last time you impacted someone else's life? When is the last time you disciplined someone? These are systems of works.

These are actions by which Christians tend to judge one another and to judge themselves in comparison with others and to perhaps falsely believe that we are righteous. So righteousness comes through faith and not works, and of course that's Romans 3.28. We conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law, apart from any actions we may or may not commit. It isn't to say that evangelism and ministry and these other things are not wonderful things.

They don't establish righteousness. They are a result and a fruit of righteousness that comes through faith. So faith produces or is the means by which we are declared righteous.

Our fourth point here, with Christ we died to sin. These points are all under the heading why we are not under the law. One of the reasons we're not under the law is that we died to sin with Christ.

With Christ we died to sin. This is Romans 6.2 and 3. Do you not know that as many of you as were baptized into Christ were baptized into His death? The death He died, He died to sin. And there is a connection between sin and the law, the standard of righteousness, because that was the law's purpose.

If we've died to sin, then we've died to the purpose that God gave the law. That's not our role in God's plan any longer to be a demonstration of the inadequacy of corrupt human natures and corrupt people. God has already made that point.

And when Christ died, that purpose in God's plan died also. God's purpose in this age is not condemnation. The law was the means of condemnation.

What did Jesus say? The Son of Man came not into the world to condemn the world. That had already been done by the law. We saw that back in Romans 3 when He talks about the fact that the Jews, in fact, I think it may have even been back in 3.19, we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God.

So when Christ came and died, His purpose wasn't to bring about more condemnation. That had been done by the law. His purpose was to produce deliverance.

So with Christ we died to sin. We have been freed from serving sin. This is Romans 6.18 and Romans 6.22. We have been set free from sin and we became slaves of righteousness.

It says in 6.18. 6.22 says, Now having been set free from sin and having become slaves to God, you have your fruit to holiness and its end, everlasting life. So our purpose here isn't related to sin. We still commit sin.

We still have to have a mechanism for dealing with sin. But our life does not revolve around sin the way it did in Old Testament days. The great demonstration in that age was that given a standard of behavior, even when we managed to adhere to the standard in large part, it showed the corruption in our souls.

The Pharisees were a prime example. They managed to keep a lot of the law, but the hypocrisy that came through that demonstrated that our righteousness is really like filthy rags. So our fourth point, With Christ we died to sin.

We have been freed from serving it so that it is no longer our ruler. This is 6.14. We're not under the lordship of sin. We're not fulfilling its purpose.

And finally, our fifth point, Righteousness by faith. We've had many illustrations of these points. Paul has used illustrations mixed in with these points.

The fact that righteousness comes by faith, he gave us the illustration of Abraham in chapter 4. If we work our way backward through the book, we can remember that righteousness can come through another person. We can be assigned the righteousness of someone else. And Paul used an illustration.

He said your condemnation came through Adam. So in the same way, if you can receive condemnation through another, you can also receive righteousness through another. And that, of course, was in Romans chapter 3. And also in chapter 5. And in the same way, we had an illustration that God's wrath is revealed against anyone who suppresses the truth.

He illustrated this in chapter 1 with unbelievers, and he went on to apply it to believers in chapter 2. So in each of our chapters, Paul has interleaved this truth with illustrations to bring it home and make it real. He's going to do the same thing here in chapter 7. So as we continue now, we saw starting in chapter 6, verse 20, when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you then have in the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death.

But now, having been set free from sin and having become slaves to God, you have your fruit to holiness and its end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord. And we recognize that this principle applies in the sense of salvation.

We use this verse, Romans 6, 23, as a part of the Roman road to communicate the gospel. But in the context, we can see that Paul is applying this as a universal principle. Whether you are a believer or an unbeliever, if you are serving sin, the fruit and the end, the production of your life is death.

It's corruption. It is non-useful in God's plan. And especially in this age, because sin at least served a purpose in God's plan.

Although God did not condone sin, it did serve a purpose in the Old Testament age because it demonstrated the need for Jesus Christ. It demonstrated that we are insufficient. Who is going to accept a solution when they don't recognize the problem? So God took a couple of thousand years to demonstrate the magnitude of our problems so that we would recognize the magnitude of the solution in Jesus Christ.

But now that's done. So why go back and serve a dead purpose? Why serve something that only results in death? Why go back to the futility of that age? And the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

So now in chapter 7, he says, Or are you ignorant, brethren? And this is agnoeo. A, the prefix

meaning is a negative particle, and noeo is to be aware or to know something. So this is the root from which we get agnostic, someone who says, I just don't know.

So he says, Are you ignorant, brethren? By the way, this is the first time he's used the word brethren, I think, since the first chapter. And he uses it specifically here to refer to those who know the law. This doesn't mean that they are Jewish believers exclusively, but those who have been brethren or who have been believers for some time certainly include the Jews who were the first to come to Christ.

And the God-fearing Gentiles, many of whom may have been converts or proselytes to Judaism and then made a step further into Christianity, they would have been the first in the first generation of Christians. And so he says, I'm going to remind you who are familiar with the law now, not you recent converts, but those of you that have been around and you know the law. Do you not know, brethren? Are you ignorant, brethren? I speak to those who know the law, that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives.

Now this is the introduction to yet another demonstration of the fact that you can't make a case for living under the law. And from our point of view, we can't make a case as believers for living according to a code of behavior, that that's going to be the standard by which we measure. And it's a hard thing to shake.

We think, well, but if I'm not doing and being and acting, and if I'm not accepted by my peers in a certain way, how can I possibly be doing the right thing? And that's the way that it applies to us. He says, here's another reason. We've already reviewed these other reasons why we're not under the law.

Here's another one. Think about the provenance of the law. What is it that establishes and breaks the authority of the law? The law applies to those who are in Israel.

The law never applied to the Ninevites. The law didn't apply to the Hivites or the Hittites or the Amorites or many of the other ites that were in the land of Canaan or any of the other pagan peoples. There were Chinese over in China.

The law did not apply to them. The law applied to the Jews. And the law stopped applying when they died.

Once you died, you didn't have to keep the law anymore. You didn't have to show up for feasts. They didn't take your dead carcass and prop you up at the Passover table.

They didn't require any further ritual participation from the dead. Not only that, but death, even the death of someone else, could change your status under the law. For example, a brother was prohibited from uncovering the nakedness of his brother's wife, i.e., from having any sort of intimate physical relations with his sister-in-law.

But what if his brother died? That death changed your status under the law. Now suddenly, the Leveret Law came into play and you might be required to marry your dead brother's wife, to preserve the family title, to land and to raise up progeny and to train his children and so forth. So death made a difference under the law.

And he's going to give a specific example here. The woman who has a husband, in verse 2, is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.

And a woman was obviously prohibited from marrying someone else, having children with someone else, having relations with someone else. But if her husband died, the death of someone else changed her status and changed her standing. And the law that said you can't do these things no longer applied because someone died.

The principle is that one of the things that altered your standing under the law is death, and not necessarily your own death, but often the death of someone else. If you produced the death of someone else, you might suddenly come under the condemnation of the law. So death is one of the things that changes the way you stand under the law.

If the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then, if while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress even though she marries another man.

And this makes sense. Anyone who knew the law could say, well, yes, that's true. A death under the law would make a difference.

And what had been prohibited, now the law has no power to condemn because this death has taken place. And in verse 4, he says, Therefore, my brethren, and once again, he's appealing to people who know the law and people who are being influenced and who see an argument and a case for living by this standard of behavior. My brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ.

Here is the death of another. Jesus Christ has died and it changes our relationship to the law. So that you may be married to another, to him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

And this last phrase is sort of a distant reference. You can remember back in the garden, Adam and Eve, for this reason shall a man cleave unto his wife, the two shall be one flesh, and so forth. What did God tell Adam and Eve, the first married couple? Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

One of the reasons that God established marriage was to produce physical fruit, to populate the earth, to bring forth progeny. And so in sort of a distant way, Paul is saying, if you want to press

this analogy a little bit, you are in a sense freed from your old obligation to serve sin under the law of Moses and you are now free to be wedded to Jesus Christ. The church is the bride of Christ in one of our many illustrations of the relationship we have with Jesus Christ.

And that union is supposed to produce fruit. It's fruit that pleases God. It's productive.

It speaks of life. Reproduction always reminds us of life, the renewal of life, the wonderful creative act of God in bringing into being something that wasn't there before. And this is what's supposed to take place in our life.

We've been freed from the law of sin and death. We're not living a life that demonstrates the insufficiency of the human nature. We have the opportunity to live a life that demonstrates the creative power of God.

We have died to the old and have become wedded to the new so that we can have this new kind of production. But it's toward God. It says we bear fruit to God.

In the last chapter it said the death that he died, he died to sin. The life that he lives, he lives to God. This is fruit in God's eyes.

It's fruit that God sees, that God measures, that pleases God. We go back and read Colossians chapter 1 to understand what it means to walk the worthy walk and to live in a manner that is well-pleasing to God. It may or may not please people.

And it's so important for us to not decide where we stand based on our old standards or on the standards of people around us. People may not understand why we live the way we do, why we do or do not attend a particular church, why we do or do not participate in a certain opportunity for ministry or for evangelism or for giving or for some other seemingly worthy operation. This is fruit to God first and foremost.

And he goes on to say in verse 5, that when we were in the flesh... Now, what is he talking about here? We have to sort of figure out, is he saying before we were saved? Is this a we that means the specific people to whom he's talking when we were in the flesh? Or is this talking about the human race in general? Is he backing up and talking about this was the way things were in the past? And as a general principle, Paul tends to step back and talk in larger terms than saying, well, this is how it was before you were saved. He's saying this is how it was when we were without Christ. And that can be before we were saved.

That can be in the Old Testament age. But he uses the personal pronoun here and he says when we were in the flesh. This could be we meaning you and I. It can be we meaning Paul and the Church of Rome.

It can mean we as human beings historically and in the present. When we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to

death. Now notice it says the sinful passions which were aroused by the law.

Now, Paul has been going to great pains as we just reviewed to say we're not under the law. So what sort of time frame is he addressing here when he says when we were in the flesh? Sinful passions aroused by the law. Today, before we're saved, are we under the law? We're not.

Nobody's under the law. Unbeliever, believer. It doesn't mean that we're under the law until we get saved and then we're free from it.

This was in the time before Christ and yet he says we. Some of these people may not have been old enough to know the difference when Christ was on the earth or may not have ever lived any significant time in the Old Testament age. Paul is probably writing this roughly 50 years after the birth of Christ, 55 years perhaps.

And he may have some 20 and 30 year olds who never lived any significant time under the law. Maybe Gentiles who the law never applied to to begin with. But he uses the pronoun we and that's important both now and in what we're going to see later on in this chapter.

When we were in the flesh, we humans, we people, we believers, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law. Now this is a very interesting phrase right here. The sinful passions which were aroused by the law.

The normal word for passion or desire is not used here. This is the word pathema. Actually pathemata here.

P-A-T-H-E-M-A is the root form. We get pathos from this. Pathetic meaning pathos means sadness or heavy heartedness.

Pathema in Greek meant suffering. This word is so translated all through the New Testament. Everywhere except in two passages it's translated suffering.

And I'm not real sure why we changed the translation. Nowhere in pre-New Testament Greek or in New Testament Greek is pathema translated passions except here and in Galatians 5.24. And I would offer the thought that it probably should not be translated passions in these two places either. You might turn over to Galatians 5.24. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its pathema and desires. What I would offer you as a suggestion here is that pathema with its root meaning of suffering is talking about the misery, the uncomfortableness of the desires that we have under sin.

We have cravings that are never satisfied. It creates unhappiness. It creates a kind of suffering when we're under sin.

We want and we do not have and it's frustrating. We don't have a happy outlook on life. We're frustrated.

We're disappointed. We're looking at others and thinking they've got and I don't have. We think that things ought to be a certain way and they're not.

We deserve a certain thing and we don't have it. And that furrows our brow. That produces a kind of soul suffering.

I wish I had, but I don't. I want this and I don't have it. Pathema means suffering.

Let me just point out a few passages where pathema is also used to give us a sense of this. Back in Romans, just turn a page over to Romans 8.18. This is a passage we've reviewed many times. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.

Now, we wouldn't say the passions of this present age. Paul says in Romans 8.18, I consider that the sufferings of this present time, this present age, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. And that's the word pathema, that word suffering.

We find this in 2 Corinthians 1. There's three verses in a row. Verses 5, 6, and 7 of 1 Corinthians 1. This is a fairly famous introduction. He talks about suffering and comfort in 2 Corinthians 1. Let's see if I can turn over there right quick.

Galatians and Colossians and Romans are all well worn in my Bible and the pages in between all stick together. I need to spend more time over here. I just can't get my high quality thin paper to part where I want it to.

Here we go. 2 Corinthians 1.5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation or our comfort also abounds through Christ. What is the contrast here? Suffering and comfort.

Affliction and comfort. In verse 6, if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. This is all pathema here.

Every place you see suffering is pathema. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and deliverance. And our hope for you is steadfast because we know that just as you are partakers of the sufferings of the pathemata, so also you will partake of the comfort, the consolation.

Another great passage where this is used is over in Philippians 3.10. Philippians 3.10. Paul says, I count all things in verse 8, I count all things loss, I count all things refuse, dung, for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God, by faith. What a great summary of everything we have been

studying. That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection.

Remember we talked about the fact that we are identified with Christ not only in His death, but in His resurrection. And Paul says, that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection. What is the power of Christ's resurrection? It is to live life to God.

It is to bear fruit unto righteousness. That is the power of resurrection. To live the resurrected life, the way Christ lives it.

And the fellowship of His sufferings, His pathemata, the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. What does it mean to be conformed to His death? The death that He died. He died to sin.

To put aside the demonstration of the fact that the human nature is weak and fallen, and can only produce sin. If by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead, Going through Romans here, I think it's the first time I've really gotten a glimmer of what Paul is saying when he says, if by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. It's been such a puzzle.

Does he mean that I may not be resurrected when Christ returns? But he's talking about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When Christ, the power of His resurrection is to live a life that is to God, that is before God, and that is dedicated to pleasing God exclusively. And for Paul, who is by all means saved, to say that he is striving to attain to the resurrection from the dead, what does that mean? He's striving to conform his life to the life of Jesus Christ, the life that he now lives, that he lives to God.

And he goes on to say in verse 12, not that I have already attained. Paul is saved. Paul is going to be resurrected when Christ returns, but he's talking about this life.

He's talking about attaining to the resurrection of Christ today, tomorrow, and the next day. Not that I have already attained or am already complete, but I press on that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. And isn't that interesting? Jesus Christ didn't lay hold of us just to save us from the lake of fire.

Paul says, I'm saved, but I'm still striving to lay hold of the thing that Christ saved me for, that He laid hold of me for. And it isn't just deliverance. It's production.

It's righteousness. It's a life that reflects the glory of God. That's what Paul is striving for.

He says in verse 13, brethren, I do not count myself, I do not reckon myself to have apprehended, to have attained that goal. But one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. This is the call that we have to forget those things which are behind.

And when you back up and look at it, it's forgetting the law. It's forgetting the standard that says you're measured by what you do. It's forgetting the life that only demonstrates the insufficiency of the human nature and the human flesh.

And instead to look forward, to look ahead to the judgment seat of Christ, to look ahead to the opportunity to reflect the glory of God both now and in the eternal future. And Paul says, I'm not worried about where I came from. I'm not worried about my past failures.

I'm not worried about the failures of other people or the rights or wrongs that have happened in the past. I forget those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. So this is what he's talking about here.

He says, how many different ways is he going to present it? How many different illustrations will he need to give for us to realize that we're not here to act as our first and foremost goal. We are here to think, to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, not by the alteration of our deeds. So he uses this marriage analogy and then he goes on to say in verse 6 of chapter 7 of Romans, Now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

The letter prescribes the physical, the visible. The spirit deals with what's on the inside. Only God sees what's on the inside, especially to begin with.

And the thing that we often don't realize about this is that if there is genuine inner transformation, if there is genuine renewal and rehabilitation on the inside through faith and through the generation of God's righteousness, it is going to produce the genuine results in the physical and in the visible realm that please God and that may or may not be visible to other people. Sometimes it is and sometimes it is not, but it is always going to be that which pleases God. And this is a good place for us to pause and take our break.

When we resume, we are going to get into one of the most interesting sections of the entire New Testament and that is Romans chapter 7, verse 7 through the end of the chapter all the way up through verse 25. And this is going to, I think, answer a lot of questions and provide us a way to fit this passage which has been much talked about into the framework that we have seen Paul develop in this book and it is going to lead us right into chapter 8 which is one of the great pinnacles of New Testament truth. So we will pause here and refresh ourselves and then we will be ready to resume.

Okay, we are ready to resume. And I want to go back to something before we continue in chapter 7 that Paul says, we saw a part of this in chapter 7, verse 5, When we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. Now this is a concept.

The law which is holy, righteous, and good arouses in us these sinful pathemata, these sinful sufferings, these sinful perceptions of lack, perceptions of need, things that make us unhappy, that make us miserable. It is a form of suffering. This is something that is aroused by the law and it is at work in our members to bear fruit to death.

And I looked around to see, well, does the Bible elsewhere talk about the fact that God delivering a righteous standard makes us tend to be disobedient or tend to be unhappy or whatever does the, what does this mean that the law arouses? Of course, it helps, I think, understanding what the pathema is here, that it's, I think it's the difference between what the ideal is and where we stand. I think we recognize that we are inadequate and sinful and unable to keep the standard. I think that another concept that's wrapped up in this is sort of like I saw a long time ago something where, well, you have this with candid camera.

Let's say you've got a sidewalk, you've got a city street, you've got a big blank wall there and someone drills a hole in the wall. Well, people would walk by all day long and not pay any attention. There's a little half-inch hole in the wall there, no big deal.

But Alan Font or someone comes along and puts a sign over it and says, do not look into this hole. Forbidden. Do not.

And people see the sign and say, well, what's so special about this hole? And by prohibiting, suddenly everyone is wanting to look through, what is this? Is this, what's going on in here that I'm not supposed to look at? And so the prohibition creates curiosity. I think one of the things that happens today in the media because we have so much overexposure to information is things that you would not have thought of. For example, I saw sometime in the last year or two that there was this new practice by junior high and high school kids called huffing where you spray something with these aromatic carrier agents into a paper bag and then sniff the fumes, kind of like the old sniffing glue thing but this is done with aerosol paints or hairspray or something like that and you spray this stuff into a bag and then stick your face in the bag and it's called huffing.

Well, they put this on the news and maybe somebody in Southern California that thought this up and thought it was a great idea and by saying, oh, this is a terrible thing, this will give you hallucinations and so forth, well, kids all over the country see this and oh, well, they're saying this is something you're not supposed to do because it looks like fun and so suddenly you've got people huffing all over the country. By communicating that something is bad, you become aware of the fact that it exists and then it creates curiosity or you wind up. And I think this is an element of what Paul is talking about here when he says that the desire is aroused by the law, by the prohibition or by the commandment.

The feeling of lack is generated in the presence of this.