

THE UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS MESSENGER

September 13, 2009

Romans 7--1

Over the following few bulletins we will be discussing Romans 7. Many believe that Paul is speaking of his life as a Christian from verse 14 to the end of the chapter. I do not believe that such is the case for that would have Paul essentially claiming that Christians have no choice but to sin. Let's see if we can understand this important chapter together. While verse 14 through the end of the chapter will be our main focus, it is imperative that we understand the entire context. Thus, we will begin in verse 1.

Take a moment to read **Romans 7:1-6**. As Paul begins chapter 7 he revisits a thought that he began back in verses 14 and 15 of the previous chapter, namely that his readers were no longer under law but under grace. Law does not free from sin, it condemns the sinner. Fortunately, a person can be freed from sin because of the grace of God.

Paul sets forth a principal clearly understood to illustrate his point: the marriage relationship. Jackie is bound to me in marriage as long as I am alive and vice versa. If she or I were to go live with another we would be committing adultery because we are still bound to one another in marriage. However, were one of us to pass away the other would be freed from that law. We could marry again and not be engaged in the sin of adultery.

In verse 4 Paul makes the application from the marriage illustration. **“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.”** Standing alone, it is not easy from this verse to see how the body of Christ caused them to die to the law. Fortunately, this verse does not have to stand alone and other passages shed a great deal of light on the subject. Please take a moment to read **Ephesians 2:14-16 and Colossians 2:13-14**. Two important points: **1) They were not married to Christ before His death for the Law was not taken out of the way until it was nailed to the cross. 2) When Paul wrote this letter the Roman brethren were joined with Christ, just as we are today.**

In verse 5 Paul speaks of the time when they were “living in the flesh.” As he continues into verse 6 he shows us that this time of living in the flesh was the time when they were still bound to the Law of Moses. Verse 6 is as clear a statement that people are released from the Law of Moses as there is anywhere in Scripture. Truly, if they had insisted on clinging to the Law of Moses they would not have been serving God in the process. Our Sabbatarian friends tell us that the word “law” in this place does not include the Ten Commandments. Verse 7 will show otherwise.

“What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, ‘You shall not covet.’” The commandment “You shall not covet” is part of the Ten Commandments. Thus, Paul understood the Ten Commandments as being part of the Law of

Moses, the very Law he has just told them they were delivered from. Was the Law of Moses sinful? No. The Law of Moses *defined* sin. Paul would never have known the true nature of coveting, its sinfulness and its consequences, had not the Law of Moses explained it to him. One can learn the very same thing today from the Gospel of Christ.

Take a moment now to read **verses 8-13**. God’s Law never creates evil desires in a person. For that reason God’s Law and commandments can, with complete confidence and honesty, be referred to as “**holy, righteous, and good**.” Yet sin uses God’s commands to create opportunities for violation. For instance, when God’s Law told Paul that coveting was a transgression of the law, sin used that command to place the temptation to covet constantly before Paul’s eyes. Had God’s Law never named coveting as a transgression, sin could not have existed regarding it. Because God did call it a transgression, sin seized opportunity through that commandment to make it an occasion for stumbling to Paul.

From this point on we will be examining this chapter verse by verse. Verse 14 says, “**For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.**” How we interpret this verse will determine how we interpret the remainder of this chapter. It will also determine how we view sin and our ability to overcome it. The pertinent question for the remainder of the chapter is this: Does Paul speak of his current life as a Christian, or is this a reference to his previous life as a non Christian? I believe only the latter explanation is tenable. Over the next few weeks we will examine it together.

In Need of Prayers	In Need of Prayers
<p>Sharon Tirey continues her cancer treatments.</p> <p>Kristen Osterling’s baby boy is struggling mightily. His lone kidney is not functioning properly and his lungs have been filling with fluid.</p> <p>Remember David Blakeman.</p> <p>Rachel Knollman is entirely cancer free!</p> <p>Wayne Galloway has gone home from the hospital.</p> <p>Lilly Fitzwater (Bill Morelan’s mother) is recovering in a care facility in Ohio. The contact information is posted on the bulletin board in the hall.</p>	<p>Chuck McDavitt is suffering with diabetes and an infection in his foot.</p> <p>Ron Catchen had open heart surgery earlier in the year but recently had to have stints put in.</p> <p>Remember this afternoon men’s meeting .</p> <p>University Height Church of Christ 445 Columbia Avenue Lexington, Ky 40508 859-255-6257 www.uheightschurch.com</p>