

## Robust Principles in the Redeemed (Romans 7:21-8:4)

### Definitions:

- **Natural law:** the moral law (Law of God) that exists in every image bearer, regardless of exposure to the Holy Scriptures. It is a principled law to love God and to love others.
- **Positive law:** laws, commands, and prohibitions that must be revealed, which cannot be known otherwise (circumcision, dietary, cultic, clothing, festivals, Baptism, etc.).
- **Mosaic law:** 613 laws given as a covenant to the nation of Israel. It was established in the context of redemption from the slavery of sin with anticipation of inheriting the land (Deut. 5:1-6). It was temporary as a Guardian (Gal 3).

### Summary of Romans 7:1-20:

- Paul uses the illustration of marriage to describe the believer's relation to the law (Mosaic for the Jew and natural law for the Jew/Gentile). In faith, they have died to the law through the death of Christ (v.4).
- The purpose of 7:7-20 is to demonstrate that sanctification and justification cannot come from the law in the realm of the flesh and sin, as the law does not produce holiness in that "envelope." Instead, it reveals the true character and nature of sin.

### 1. The Complex Interaction of Principled Laws in the Redeemed (v.21-23)

Paul will unpack *five* principled laws that operate in a complex (not complicated) manner within the justified and sanctified saint. All five principles operate differently in v.21-23.

#### Law (Principle) #1 (v.21a): "I see this law (principle/pattern/rule/power/design) in me."

- Paul observes a "pattern" - in the Greek it is "law." He realizes something about himself in his redeemed, regenerated, justified, and sanctifying state. What law does he see?
  - He sees a "rule of action" that when he wants to do good, evil is "right there."
  - His intentions, motives, and execution of what he believes to be righteous, true, holy, and honorable are often accompanied by evil.

#### Law (Principle) #2 (v.22a): "I delight in the law of God in my inner being."

- The Law of God is a metonym for the principled law, not merely the stipulations of the Mosaic law or the Law in general, but the substance behind it: Paul rejoices that the law is holy, righteous, and good (v.7, 12, 14, 16).
- The inner man is what is hidden from the gaze of the public, which refers to the "soul" or "spirit" of the person.

#### Law (Principle) #3 (v.23a): "I see in my members another law (principle) waging war..."

- This "another law" differs from the "law" in v.21. While both are principled, they are different principles.
  - In v.21, Paul acknowledges that he "discovers" or "realizes" a new principle.
  - In v.23a, Paul describes the character and location of the struggle; one (v.21) is a matter of fact, while the other is more detailed (v.23a).
- The "members" refers to the seat of desires of passions (Rom. 6:13, 19; 7:5).

#### Law (Principle) #4 (v.23b): "...against the law of my mind..."

- The "law of my mind" is a metonym for the redeemed man inside of him, which he believes to be true concerning holiness, righteousness, and faith.
- This would share many of the same principles and "rules" with the "law of the Spirit" (8:2) and "the law of faith" (Rom. 3:27).

#### Law (Principle) #5 (v.23c): "...making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members..."

- The "law of sin" is the "sphere" of the old man with tremendous power and influence.
- Paul is in defeat, as the law (principle) of sin not only defeats him but also brings him into captivity. He is helpless in this scenario and setting the scene to demonstrate that the believer needs more than regeneration, adoption, and justification.

**Summary of V.21-23:** "There is a law (principle) that I recognize going on inside of me when I want to do good, evil is right there! I delight in the law (principled law) of God, which is spiritual in my new nature, yet within me, there is a law (principle) that wages war against the law of my mind (principled from my justification), making me captive to the law (principle) of sin that dwells in my members (who I am, i.e., the fleshly part of me). The war that is going on inside of me is between my mind (regenerated man) vs. flesh (old man in Adam) OR between the law of God (spiritual) vs. the law of sin (death). HELP!"

### 2. The Cry of a Redeemed Saint for Present Power and Future Deliverance (v.24-25)

- Regeneration, justification, and adoption are not sufficient to be victorious in this life.
- As a justified man, Paul cannot live the life he wants. He subsequently cries out for help and deliverance in faith alone with the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit (8:2).
- Not only does Paul plead for present deliverance, but future, eschatological deliverance, when the "body of death" will finally be put off, which will come at the revelation of Jesus Christ (Second Coming), when he receives his new body, with the inability to sin.
  - The body of death is the "old man in Adam," which all believers "carry around."
- Paul does not depend on the law to deliver him, for he is not "under law." He needs power from above to work and will in him (Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 1:29).

### 3. The Conditions of the Law Fulfilled by the Spirit in the Saint (8:1-4)

- Paul's "therefore" (v.1) is not connected to 7:25 but to Rom. 5:1. Romans 5 addresses justification, and Romans 6-7 tackles sanctification. The law cannot justify (chapter 5) nor sanctify (chapters 6-7). Chapters 6-7 are a "parenthesis" to Romans 5:1.
- Contextually, it would read, "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1) ... "Therefore...there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus" (8:1).
- Paul does not want believers to confuse justification (legal reckoning of "not guilty" before God) and sanctification (conformity to the character of God-incarnate, Jesus Christ). Justification is complete and related to status (standing). Sanctification is never completed and is related to conduct; sanctification flows from justification; sanctification does not produce justification.
  - Regarding justification, no means no! "No" requires no qualifiers, exceptions, or exemptions. Jesus has paid the debt through faith alone. No double-jeopardy.
- The law of sin and death (v.2) is the principled attitude and consequent behavior in the realm of the flesh and sin (old man) that condemns us. The "law of the Spirit" is the nature and character of the Spirit who dwells inside all believers (Jas. 1:17-18).
- The Holy Spirit is indispensable for our sanctification. Only through the cooperation of the redeemed saint and the power He supplies can the redeemed saint subdue the power of the flesh, giving us liberty to be a slave to God (7:25).
- Rom. 8:1 speaks to the freedom from the guilt of sin, where Rom. 8:2 speaks to the freedom from the power of sin.
- Paul does not say, "We fulfill the righteous requirement of the law," but that "the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us." Jesus not only fulfilled the law (passive and active obedience) in our stead but now the law is fulfilled in us through the Holy Spirit, not by us.