

## **'TIL DEATH DO US PART—A LESSON FROM MARRIAGE**

### **Romans 7:1-6**

**McGee:** Before Civil War, married plantation owner be-came ill & died. Great heartbreak, wife had him embalmed, placed in glass case in entry way. When you opened the door, there he was, looking at you.

Friends suggested she travel. She went N. for 2 yr. Dur-ing that time she met a man, fell in love, & they married. On honeymoon, they visited plantation. He picked her up; carried her over threshold, suddenly coming face to face with man in the glass case. “Who’s *that*?” She explains it’s 1<sup>st</sup> husband; they decide it’s time to bury him. She’s married to new man; time to bury old man. He’s dead.

People put *law* in glass case in l.r.—trying to live by it.  
In Romans, Paul teaches the church about the Gospel.

**Salvation by faith => leads to holy life 6-8**

6-7: 3 obj. to salvation by faith [=> security]

**# 2 objection concerning liberty 6:15-7:6**

**Obj.: We aren't saved by law; saved by grace.**

**Doesn't that leave us free to break the law? 6:15a**

*“What then? Shall we sin because we’re not under law but under grace?”*

Christian living isn’t about following a list of rules!

If law doesn’t matter, we might as well *live it up!*

People fear we’ll forget law; live as we please!

**Response: 6:15b-7:6 No way!**

**Trust Christ—doesn't give us freedom to sin,**

**—gives us freedom from sin,**

**We’re now free to serve God.**

## 2 ILLUSTRATIONS:

### III. #1: illustration from slavery 6:15b-23

Deals with grace

**When slave changes owners,  
old owner no longer has authority over him.**

**By God's grace,**

**we're now free from bondage to sin.  
we're free to serve God.**

We were **SLAVES** of sin, now we're **FREE** from sin.

Sin no longer has authority over us.

We're free to serve God; to serve righteousness

### III. #2: Illustration from Marriage 7:1-6

Deals with law

Premise: **Law has no authority over dead people! 1-3**

**Principle stated: Law applies to people who are  
alive!**

**7:1** *"Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives?"*

**Principle illustrated: 7:2-3** *"For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. <sup>3</sup>So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress even though she marries another man."*

Marriage law has authority over people while we're alive. This authority ends when we die

**Wife bound while husband lives.** 2a

**Wife released when husband dies.** 2b

***She isn't an adulteress if he's dead!*** [Similarly ]

**WE've DIED to law -4-6 4** *"So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God."*

=> ...so we could be united with Christ

=>...so we could bear fruit for God—glorify Him

We died with Christ > to law & are free from its authority.

**DEATH BREAKS THE BOND; as with husband & wife, so death—our death with Christ—breaks bond which yoked us to law**

Now we're free to be **united with Christ**.

Now, **we can bear God's fruit in our lives!**

It's time to bury "the man in the glass case!"

We're married to new man;

it's time to bury old man. He's dead.

We're wed to Jesus—no longer live by old law

We're united with Him—live by new nature.

**Contrasts *past vs. present*:**

**Past: 5** *"When we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death."*

**Law used to arouse sinful desires in us...**

**...So we'd bear fruit that leads to death**

–not pretty sight! Results were self-centered garbage  
Law's restrictions were provoking us to rebel.

*"No one's going to tell ME what to do!"*

*"Not even God! I'm going to do what I feel like!"*

Imagine what it would be like for wife confronted daily by husband  
with long list of demands she has to do.

Nothing short of perfection accepted; no excuses allowed!

Every failure results in accusations & guilt for ineptitude

She lashes out in anger.

Wife might celebrate death of husband like that!

His death brings sighs of relief! *At last she's free!*

**Present: 6** *"By dying to what once bound us, we've  
been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the  
Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code*

**We've died & been released from the law.**

Death has freed us from law's dominion.

**We can serve in new way, obeying Spirit**

**We no longer serve in old way,**

**trying to obey legalistic rules.**

We serve under authority of *the Spirit* rather than *letter*

New freedom—expectancy to do what God asks!

By power of Spirit we can fulfill God's demands.

Our life is useful in His sight

Parents: **Joy when children outgrow rule-setting stage**

–we don't have to force them: wash hair or brush teeth.  
 New motivation comes into their life—a girl (or a guy)!  
 –we make rules about how long they tie up bathroom!  
 That's difference between letter of law & newness of Spirit.  
 Now we have internal, motivation!  
 Since our marriage to law has been dissolved,  
 we're free to serve the Spirit in *new* way.  
 Instead of despair, there's joy!  
 Instead of bondage, freedom! Instead of death, life!  
 We're no longer yoked to law, but to Christ.

**Now Christ lives His life through us.**

Ralph Erskine, 18<sup>th</sup> C. Puritan preacher wrote:

*A rigid master was the Law,  
 Demanding brick, denying straw;  
 But when with gospel-tongue it sings,  
 It bids me fly, and gives me wings."*

We're **free** to **enjoy new** life, that pleases & glorifies God.

We could never do that in *our* strength.

Now that we're in Him, our life is changed!

–Transformed into the image of His Son

It's time to bury "the man in the glass case!"

We're now wed to *Christ*. We no longer live by old law.

We're united with Christ—live in strength of new nature.

So what about the main question?

**Shall we sin since we're not under law but under grace?**

**NO WAY!**

*Why?* Because **now we're FREE to follow Christ .**

***<sup>6</sup>By dying to what once bound us, we've been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, not in old way of the written code.***

**We're FREE to follow Christ.**

That freedom is only enjoyed by people who stop trying to satisfy God by our efforts.

Heb. 3 describes people who try to do it ourselves:

We used to be among those who *“through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”*

Fear of death kept us in bondage.

Now, trusting Christ alone, we're FREE!

**Are YOU trusting Him this morning?**

**We're FREE to follow Christ.**

***We're free from law***

***so we can follow a new master, new life!***

***Why would we EVER go back to RULES of past?!!***

***Why would we EVER try to revive “man in glass case?”***