

Christ as the End of the Law.

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Romans

8:37 "In all these things we are triumphantly
victorious due to the one who loved us."
[International Standard Version]

Philippians

4:13 "I can do all things through him who
strengthens me."

Today, I entitled this sermon "The Lord Jesus who is the End of the Law." The entire chapter 7 of the Epistle to the Romans can be regarded as the detailed explanation of chapter 6, verse 14:

Romans

6:14 "For sin will not have mastery over you,
because you are not under Law but under grace."

This verse is about liberation from the Law. Liberation means to be combined with something at the higher level while bondage is to be bonded to something at the lower level. Jesus once said:

John

8:36 "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed!"

It is the Lord Jesus alone who can set us free indeed and no one else. When we are tied firmly to Jesus, we obtain true freedom. The grace of God is revealed in the fact that the Lord God, by giving up His Son Jesus to us granted us true freedom.

How about the Law on the other hand? From the perspective of the Law in the Scriptures, the attitude expected from us is that we do something for the Lord, that we do everything we can in order to obey the Law and try to please the Lord by that. What is the consequence of all this?

We sincerely wish to understand the intention of the Lord and put it into practice, but it always fails. Romans chapter 6 is about liberation from sin. It uses the relationship between a master and his slave as an example. The Bible states that the relationship between sin and sinners is compared to the relationship between a master and his slave.

In chapter 7 of Romans, liberation from the Law is discussed and the relationship between a wife and her husband is used as an analogy to explain it. Let us look at how the Law is related to this analogy. There is a story of a woman and two men in chapter 7 of Romans. Now, the woman is married to someone she does not respect very much. She actually loves another man. However, a woman can have only one husband at a time, unfortunately.

The husband she is married to now is not a bad man at all. They just lack a heartfelt relationship with each other. This husband does not tolerate an ambiguous attitude while this wife likes to keep things vague and unclear. Because of this difference in their personalities, they cannot live happily together.

This husband is very serious about everything. He never stops being demanding to his wife about everything in their lives. Actually, his attitude toward her is natural as her husband and he is not asking anything wrong of his wife. The problem is in this wife, who cannot obey what her husband says. As their lives go on this way, discrepancy arises between the two. The wife is well aware of her shortcomings. She tries very hard to obey her husband, but something gets in her way. It is because there is always something wrong with what this wife says and does. The wife is driven to despair and begins to seek a better husband.

The other man she has in her mind is very much like her current husband in that he hates ambiguity and has a very strict personality. However, he has one big difference, which is that when he demands something from his wife, he is willing to lend her a helping hand and to work with her. She is now desperate to get married to this new man; however, she is not allowed to do so as long as her current husband is alive.

In chapter 7 of Romans, Paul uses this as an analogy to explain the relationship between the Law and humans. The first husband symbolizes the commandment of the Lord, the Law of the Lord; the wife represents us, who try very hard to satisfy the will of the Lord, but always end up sighing in realization that we are totally incapable of it; and the second husband represents Jesus, who dwells inside us and enforces the Law.

The Law demands many things of us, but it does not help us to obey it. Contrarily, Jesus demands of us so much more than the Law. But, He dwells within us and helps us accomplish what He demands.

Therefore, this wife wishes to be separated from her present husband and get together with the second

man. The wife hopes that her current husband dies as soon as possible. As long as her husband is alive, a new marriage would never be possible. The wife is unhappy because her husband is in very good shape, does not have any illnesses and it seems as though he will live for many more years. Jesus once said:

Matthew

5:18 "I tell all of you with certainty that until heaven and earth disappear, not one letter or one stroke of a letter will disappear from the Law until everything has been accomplished."

This verse implies that the first husband, who represents the Law never dies but would live forever, which means that we absolutely need to obey the Law. Now the question is how can we get together with the second husband, Jesus?

According to the Romans, chapter 7, verses 1 to 3, women are allowed to have a second husband if the first husband dies. However, the next verse of chapter 7, mentions, not the death of the husband, but the death of the wife, which is our death. The Law remains forever. However, if we die as far as the Law is concerned, we will be liberated from the Law and become free men. No law has its effect on a person once that person is dead.

After the Second World War, former Minister of Aviation of Germany, Hermann Goering was sentenced to death, but he killed himself by taking poison before the day of his execution. At the moment he died, his death sentence lost its effect simultaneously.

Likewise, in order for us to be liberated from the Law of the Lord, we need to die. If we die, no matter what the first husband demands us to do, it has no effect on us and we no longer have an obligation to obey him.

Now, the problem here is how can we die to ourselves. It is explained in Romans, chapter 6, verse 4:

Romans

6:4 "Therefore, through baptism we were buried with him into his death so that, just as the Messiah was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too may live an entirely new life."

1 Corinthians

1:30 "It is because of God that you are in union with the Messiah Jesus."

God placed us in union with Christ. Therefore, when Jesus died, we died along with Him. Furthermore, when Jesus resurrected, we too, having been in union

with Him, resurrected with Him.

Romans

7:4 "In the same way, my brothers, through the Messiah's body you also died as far as the Law is concerned, so that you may belong to another person, the one who was raised from the dead, and may bear fruit for God."

When the first husband dies, the wife is liberated from him and now, she can get married to her second husband. Just as it is written in Romans, chapter 7, verse 4, "so that you may belong to another person." This "another person," who is Jesus, is capable of accomplishing what He has commanded.

What is the outcome of the woman getting married to the second husband? This wife, who until then, has been sighing all her life and has been in distress will begin to bear abundant fruit for the Lord God as is written in chapter 7, verse 4. The power of the resurrection, the life of the resurrection of Jesus, who now dwells in her has given her the strength to bear the fruit of the Lord God.

The wife no longer needs to try very hard to obey the Law, serve God and please Him in fear. Jesus Himself, who dwells in her helps her to accomplish everything. What the Lord does always pleases the Father God.

2 Corinthians

11:2 "I am jealous of you with God's own jealousy, because I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to the Messiah."

When a woman gets married, what generally happens? Usually, she wears the name of her husband. Furthermore, she now shares all the things her husband has. Actually, when we belong to Christ, exactly the same things happen. We will come to use the name of Christ and all things that Jesus has will be ours too. By standing firm on the conviction that we share all things that the Lord has, it will be a simple task to keep the commandments of the Lord.

1 John

5:3 "For this demonstrates our love for God: We keep his commandments, and his commandments are not difficult."

Now, I would like to discuss briefly the blessing of giving up ourselves. It is a blessing that brings about spiritual bankruptcy. This brother in the Lord has been strongly desiring to enter the life of victory; he was so distressed and came to ask another brother, why he was so weak and could not reach the life of victory no

matter how hard he tried.

Then, this brother answered him, "I certainly appreciate that you pursue a life that pleases the Lord. It is by itself a blessing. And it is even better that you now understand that it can never be accomplished by your own efforts. However, you have not been weakened enough as long as you are in grief over your weakness. If you have been weakened thoroughly, you would not even think of accomplishing anything at all by yourself. When you are completely weakened, your work will be covered by the Lord from beginning to end.

We too are all totally weak beings by nature and we are quite helpless to do anything. We need to reach the point that we can do nothing but beg the Lord to do all things on our behalf. When we retrieve the drowning person, we can not save them while they still have the power to resist.

If you come to rescue a drowning person while he still has enough strength, he will hold on to you tight and you both will drown together. However, if you wait until he is weakened and loses all strength, it will be much easier to rescue him. Likewise, the Lord is waiting for us to stop making all efforts and become spiritually insolvent, just like the wife who was exhausted in attempting to love and obey her husband.

Very often, we misunderstand that we have the strength to serve the Lord. However, when we do, it reveals that we do not understand the true meaning of the Cross. The Cross is the judgment God pronounced on us. The Cross is the sentence that we most deserve. All our efforts we make in an attempt to please the Lord are meaningless. You cannot please the Lord on your own.

Romans

7:18 "For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but I cannot carry it out."

This was a sincere confession of Paul.

Romans

8:8 "Indeed, those who are under the control of human nature cannot please God."

He also clearly declared it this way. The "wife" in verses 1 to 3, chapter 7 of Romans, and Paul in verses 15 to 19, tried to please the Lord by themselves, but what they actually did was the opposite. We have already gone through the same experience, haven't we?

Although we always want to please the Lord, we do not realize that we are actually trying to please ourselves or other people. Or, we feel dizzy as soon as we begin to pray or we feel so exhausted from the very moment we open the Bible.

In the era that Paul wrote the Epistle to Romans, convicted murderers were given a severe punishment; it was a punishment to carry a corpse tied to their back for their whole lives. In this epistle, Paul likened himself to someone who was sentenced to this dreadful punishment.

Just like the corpse could not be taken away from the back of criminals, Paul felt that he would never be liberated no matter how hard he tried. Paul is lamenting over his miserable state. He continued his lament and cried out again in chapter 7, verse 24:

Romans

7:24 "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is infected by death?"

These words that he cried out to the Lord pleased God. These are the most spiritual words any human has ever said. This is the scream that comes out from the bottom of the souls of humans, who have totally given up on themselves and have finally gone into spiritual bankruptcy.

Have we already given up on ourselves? Or, are we still struggling to become better Christians through prayers and by learning from the Scriptures? Nowhere in what Paul has written has he said that we can be saved by many different things; he only said Jesus alone is the one who can save us.

Paul used to struggle to resolve his problems by himself, but he finally understood that he was totally powerless; at the moment he stopped his struggle to save himself, the blessings of the Lord began to pour onto him. When it occurred, Paul exclaimed in joy, in verse 25:

Romans

7:25 "Thank God through Jesus the Messiah, our Lord."

How did we receive the forgiveness of our sins? Was that through our prayers? Was that by learning the words from the Scriptures? Or, was it by offering some sacrifices? No, it was not. We received it because we looked up to the Cross and realized what the Lord Jesus has done there for us.

Then, how will we be liberated from the bondage of the Law and begin a life that pleases the Lord? It will never

be made possible by doing this, doing that, not doing this, or not doing that. It is by faithfully believing in the in-dwelling Lord Jesus, thanking Him, entrusting all things to Him that we can experience total liberation and begin to step into the life that pleases the Lord.

Forgiveness of sins is given by simply believing in what Jesus has done and appreciating it. Contrarily, liberation from the Law is possible by simply believing in what Jesus does within us now and appreciating it. I would like to conclude this sermon with this poem from Germany:

Once, I believed I could never live a sacred life.
Because I tried to sanctify myself.

But now, I am sanctified by the Lord Himself
Who dwells in me and does all things well

Once I tried very hard to be a person,
Who was full of kindness, love and meekness.

But now, I know that the Lord Jesus lives inside me,
Transforming me to His image.

Once, I could not even imagine
That I could live in victory each and every second.

But now, I realize that the Lord Himself dwells
inside me,
Leading my footsteps to victory.

I used to strive so hard to remain in the Lord,
To please Him and keep His Word.

But now, I let the Lord remain in me,
And let him complete His work fully.

This way, I am in the Lord,
And I am sure that the Lord is in me.

End