

cannot save ourselves. But there is a subtle tendency in all of us, particularly as we learn more and more of God's Word to go back and to try and be justified with God by our obedience to the law.

*Why do you think we tend to drift back into living a life that is measured by the law rather than living in the freedom that God purchased in Christ?*

**4. Walking in the power of the Spirit is the key to an overcoming Christian life. Read Romans 8:1-4** So, here is where Paul gives us the answer, he teaches clearly in Scripture that when someone places their faith in Christ, their spirit comes alive and they are born again. It is the on-going dependency of a believer on the resource of the Holy Spirit that enables the believer to live free. The Spirit, who was mentioned only once in chapters 1-7, is referred to nearly twenty times in chapter 8. The Spirit:

- Frees us from sin and death.
  - Enables us to fulfill God's moral law
  - Changes our nature and grants us strength for victory over our flesh.
- Paul once again confirms in Romans 8:3 that the law cannot bring salvation or freedom from sin – it is only a life controlled by the Holy Spirit that will overcome. One of Satan's greatest strategies is to convince believers of their total unworthiness and sinfulness. But the message of a life controlled by the Holy Spirit is that we are no longer condemned. Additionally, the life that is Spirit-led will be released from fleshly pursuits.

*How do we, as believers, walk in the power of the Holy Spirit?*

## Personal Application

What impact has this lesson had on your understanding of the role of the law and the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer in Jesus?

## Prayer

Share prayer requests and pray for them together as a group. Take some time to share a testimony of answered prayer.

# WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

## Week 5 – Freedom from the Law

### Announcements

**Servolution** - March 26 – April 4

**Celebrate Easter: The Door** – April 2 – 4

**A Life Made Beautiful** - May 7-8, 2010

**March Madness Block Party** – March 27

**Legacy Update & Offering** – March 27-28

**Good Friday Communion & Prayer for the Sick** – April 2

**Water Baptism** - March 28

**VBS** – June 7-11

**Club456** – March 26

### Warm-Up

What do you think of when you hear the word "law"? What do you think of when you hear the word "freedom"?

### Word

In this series, **What is the Gospel?**, we are spending six weeks studying the first eight chapters of the book of Romans. Now last week, we spent some time looking at how our nature is transformed when we put our faith in Christ. We learned that when we were physically born, we were born, as the Bible says, into Adam. When we are spiritually born, we are reborn into Christ. We also learned that in Christ we are dead to sin, but alive to God.

In our lesson this week entitled **Freedom from the Law**, we will study Romans chapter 7 and the beginning of chapter 8. We will discover how we

can live a life overflowing with the Spirit of God.

In this portion of the book, Paul, continues to unpack – *What is the Gospel?* Knowing that the original readers of the book of Romans – especially the Jewish ones – would have many questions about how the law relates to their faith in Christ, he sets out to explain that relationship. In this passage alone, Paul refers to the law **twenty-seven** times and provides a detailed explanation of what it means not to be under the law but under grace.

*When you hear the word “law” in a biblical context, what images come to mind? Does the law have any bearing on our life today?*

There are three elements to the law. They are:

**The Ceremonial Law** (aka the Levitical law) is primarily a priestly code, with rules for ritual cleanliness, sin offerings, and holy days. The ceremonial law would explain how and what type of lamb should be sacrificed for the forgiveness of sins.

**The Civil Law** was set in place for the governing of the nation of Israel. This is also known as the political or jurisdictional law. This governed how people were to get along with one another in society.

**The Moral Law** was revealed through the Ten Commandments. This is also known as the Mosaic Law.

It's very important that we understand that, at the cross, certain aspects of the law were fulfilled and were, therefore, now longer needed; while other aspects still apply and affect us as believers today.

At the cross, **Jesus fulfilled the ceremonial law**. It was at Calvary that He became the ultimate sacrifice. At the cross, **the exactness of the civil law was fulfilled**, but there are some elements of the civil law that still serve as guides even for our judicial system today. **The moral law, or the Ten Commandments was not abolished at the cross**. After the cross, Jesus now gives us as believers the power to fulfill the dictates of the moral law. We are not made right with God or justified, by obeying the Ten Commandments, but now, through the gospel, Jesus gives us, as believers, the ability to obey the Ten Commandments.

*How has this explanation of the law changed your understanding of what the biblical law really is? How does this law apply to your life today?*

In this passage, Paul is very transparent about his own struggle with the law and begins to provide some instruction about the law in the lives of

those who have placed their trust in Jesus. Here are four truths from Romans 7-8:

**1. The law can no longer condemn us a believer. Read Romans 7:1-2** Paul has demonstrated earlier in Romans that we cannot be saved by any works or by being a part of a certain ethnic group. This includes any efforts to achieve salvation through following God's law. Now that we have identified with the death of Christ and become new creations **in Christ the law has no hold over us**. In other words, we who have died to sin and have become new in Christ, and have been set free from attempting to be justified by works of the law.

*How does Paul use the illustration of marriage to describe our relationship to the law as believers?*

**2. The law convicts both believers and unbelievers of sin. Read 7:7** Paul goes on to teach us more about the moral law, or Ten Commandments, and what it does. Paul wanted to make certain that we did not conclude that the law itself was evil – he is actually saying that the law is good. The Law reveals the divine standard, and as we compare ourselves against that standard, we can accurately identify sin – the failure to meet the standard. The law points unbelievers to Christ and it shows believers their continual need to remain dependent upon Christ.

*Read Galatians 3:24 – What does Paul say that the role of the law was in God's plan?*

God instituted the law in the Old Testament - to drive us to Christ. Now that Christ has come and He has fulfilled the ceremonial aspects of the law our faith in Him is our only requirement.

**3. The law is powerless to deliver us from sin. Read Romans 7:14-17** Paul says, “Sin has deceived us, and it kicked into a whole other gear when you became a Christian, because sin now is obvious to us. It's as if sin was lying dormant. But, once you became a Christian, once you began to be aware of and adopt God's standards for your life,” Paul says, “it's like sin sprang to life in you.” And consequently the struggle began. Paul explains this struggle so that we can better understand what happens inside of us. He teaches us that it is not just our will against God's law, there is something else involved - the power of sin. Until we're willing to acknowledge the reality of sin in the world and in our lives, we will never be able to set free. In fact, if there's a battle at all, if there's a struggle at all that means that we at least recognize God's existence and that He has a good standard. When we evaluate this struggle in our own lives we need to take note of the fact that the power of sin that still resides in our fleshly bodies as believers. When we are a born again believers our nature is changed, but we still have your flesh to deal with. When we come to Christ, we are aware that we