

Romans 7:4-6

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[0 : 00] So we've been working our way through the book of Romans, which has been truly a pleasure. And we have really seen this developing case for justification by faith alone.

! Paul is hammering this point, because if you miss this point, you miss Christianity really in its entirety. Justification by faith alone, we can't be seen as right before God, as righteous before Him, apart from faith.

It's not from the law. It's not from morality. It's not from showing up on Sunday morning to church. All those things we think are good, it's from faith that we are justified.

And he begins to make this argument for us here in chapter 7 that we've actually been released from the law. And he uses a fairly simple analogy, simply just to say, as far as this analogy goes, we shouldn't try to pull out of it, divorce doctrine.

And he's simply saying, if a woman is married to a man and he dies, she's not married to him anymore. That's the simplicity of the analogy that he gives us. And he goes on in verse 4 to say, likewise, my brothers.

[1 : 09] We're going to talk about verse 4, 5, and 6 today. And I want to point out that he says, likewise, my brothers. Those who have placed their faith in Christ is who he's referring to.

Those who have placed their faith in Christ. We see in verse 5 who we once were if we have not. Excuse me, let me correct myself.

Who we once were if we have. Who you may be if you have not. Verse 5, for while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.

Our sinful passions, that very nature that we inherited from Adam, was at work within us. And when the law came into place, we knew those things that were wrong. It aroused in us all kinds of fruit for death.

It's who we were if we placed our faith in Christ. It's who you may be if you have not. And then verse 4 and verse 6 are fairly reflexive.

[2 : 13] And I want you to see that. In verse 4, you have died to the law. Verse 6, we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive.

So in Christ, in his death, we have also died to the law. To what end? Notice the similarities again. Verse 4, to belong to another. That is Jesus Christ. To bear fruit for God. This is the end of verse 4. To belong to another in order to bear fruit for God.

And in verse 6, to serve in the new way of the Spirit. So we have died to the law in order that we might live in the Spirit.

I want you to turn with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 3. We're going to give the binding of your Bible a workout today. 2 Corinthians chapter 3.

[3 : 15] We're going to read together verses 4 through 6. Paul writes to the Corinthians, You're seeing our connection there.

Back to Romans 7, 6. The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. And because of the work of Jesus Christ, we have been made competent or sufficient to be ministers of what?

A new covenant. He says a new covenant. There must have been an old covenant. Right? If there is a new one, there must have been an old.

And the old covenant that he's referring to is the covenant of the law. The Mosaic covenant. We're not talking about the Abrahamic covenant. We're talking about the Mosaic covenant.

That covenant that came by the law and God said to his people, If you live by these rules, we're okay. Everything's going to be okay between us. That's the old covenant.

[4 : 41] But we've been now set free from that. Right? We've died to that old covenant to live to a new covenant. A new covenant that's not of the law.

It's of the Spirit. This is so important that we wrap our minds around what this means for our living. I am a sinful person.

And in my flesh, I so want a new law. I so want just another set of rules. Just give it to me plainly. Tell me exactly what a Christian should look like. And let me just march along following those little rules. I will not be justified before God. Because of anything that I do.

But simply because of my faith. And we must understand this together. Turn with me to Jeremiah chapter 31. We're going to work out that binding all over the place.

[5 : 51] Jeremiah the prophet brings to us the words of God speaking of this new covenant. So we see already here in Jeremiah speaking to what would be accomplished in Christ.

Jeremiah 31, 31. Chapter 31, verse 31. Jeremiah wrote the words of God.

Now behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. And let's pause there for a second. I don't have time to explain it to you today.

But those who are found in Christ is who he's talking about. The house of Israel and the house of Judah is the church. But the house of Israel and the house of Judah, verse 32.

Not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. My covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord.

[6 : 57] I will put my law within them and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me.

From the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more. So here we see God speaking through Jeremiah, talking already of the covenant, the new covenant that is to come, the covenant of the spirit that comes by faith.

I will put my law within them and I will write it. On their hearts. How is it that we live the Christian life?

By the spirit, by our hearts that have been changed from hearts of stone to hearts of flesh that can worship our God. This is a treasure.

This is something that ought to be immensely awesome to us. But it isn't always, is it? I'm not even sure we totally comprehend what it means.

[8 : 11] I think that for us to live that Christian life, we must have further unfolding revelations of Christ. We must see him fresh and new every day.

I must remember that in my greatest effort, I fall so short. But because of what Christ has accomplished, I have been set free to live and to worship him.

As such, I hope to give you a fresh revelation of Christ this morning from the book of Hebrews. You ready?

One more time. Hebrews chapter 7. And I promise we'll get back to Romans. I did not anticipate how much time it would take to flip.

I bookmarked mine. It's not very fair. I'm sorry. Hebrews chapter 7. We're going to go to verse 18. Hebrews chapter 7. Hebrews chapter 7.

[9 : 15] Hebrews chapter 7. Hebrews chapter 7. Hebrews chapter 7. Hebrews chapter 7. Hebrews 7.

Hebrews 7. For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness. For the law made nothing perfect.

But on the other hand, a better hope is introduced through which we draw near to God. We've died to the law. It's the same language the writer of Hebrews is using. We have died to the law that we might belong to another.

Verse 20. And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath. But this one, being Christ, was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him, The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind.

You are a priest forever. And the rest of that, which you can see up in verse 17, after the order of Melchizedek. Verse 22. This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

[10 : 22] Now, this is key. It's not just that we have a new promise that has come to us that was like the old, that depended on this Levitical line of priests that failed in their offering as they were

charged to make atonement and to make intercession for the people of God.

And they failed in this. It wasn't the same. It came with an oath. An oath from who? From God. This is a quote from Psalm 110. Psalm 110.

It's a psalm of David. And it's an exploration, if you will, of some oracles of God. There are two oracles given to us in Psalm 110.

You're welcome to look there if you want, but I'll just explain it to you. Okay? Psalm 110, verse 1. He's speaking to Christ.

The Lord says to my Lord, God says to Jesus, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. Speaks to the kingly attributes of Jesus Christ.

[11:34] And then in verse 4, he says this, The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. And that's all we get in 110 about verse 4.

There's an explanation. Following verse 1, there's two verses of explanation. Some expansion on what David is being inspired to write there. And then there's verse 4.

And he goes right into verse 5 to speak more about Christ's kingly attributes. He doesn't speak about him as priest in that case. David and all the kings of Jerusalem were commanded upon becoming king to write down a fresh copy of the word of God.

You know that? No printing presses. They were commanded to write down a fresh copy, a copy that was theirs to study through and meditate on. And they were told to do so every day. So it can be assumed, and I will say that, certainly I'm making an assumption, but it can be assumed that David was studying the Old Testament.

And as he was studying through it, he came to this character Melchizedek. And he was moved by the Spirit to pen this oracle from God that Jesus would be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

[12:58] So who is this guy? He's not mentioned often in the Bible. Twice in the Old Testament. Once in Psalm 110.

The other place in Genesis chapter 14 for three verses. In Genesis chapter 14, Abram is now sojourning in the land that God was to give to him.

And he has gone to war. Five kings, which were essentially kings of towns, kind of mayors, five kings, had risen up against the city of Sodom and had taken captive his nephew Lot.

So Abram gets with three other kings. Four of them go after. They pursue this army, which was led by a guy named, if I can remember his name properly.

I always call him Cheddar. His name's Keterlororum or something like that. I might have written it down. Let me see. I'll flip my notes over here. Oh, I did. Good for me. Keterleomer.

[13:57] Keterleomer is his name. But I call him Cheddar. But they pursue him and they're victorious. They're victorious. And Abram goes back then to the king of Sodom.

And as was the custom in those days, to return all the captives. He was bringing back the people of Sodom to give them back to the king of Sodom. And he would have been able then to keep the spoils of war.

So we see in Genesis chapter 14 this story going on. But then there's this insertion. There's three verses that are inserted in the middle of the story and don't seem to have much bearing on the rest of it.

And that's the story of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was the king of Salem. The king of the city of peace. And it's proposed and probably true that he was actually the king of Jerusalem.

Here in this area, there are many cities called Salem in the region. But because of where they were, he probably was the king of Jerusalem. And his name means king of righteousness.

[15:07] So here we see this man who's both a king and a priest. And he comes to Abram in the valley. He brings all of his men bread and wine to nourish them.

And he blesses Abram for what he's done. And Abram gives to him a tithe. Ten percent of the spoils of his war. And here it is kind of inserted in there.

Now, in this case, the silence about Melchizedek is deafening. And the reason for that is if we're careful readers as we read through the book of Genesis, we will see that everyone in the book of Genesis with significance has a lineage given to us.

We understand who they were, where they came from, who they begot, so to speak. There are characters in there that that doesn't happen with, but they're pretty insignificant.

Here we see Melchizedek doesn't seem to have a lineage. Not saying that he didn't. It's not reported for us. It's incredibly significant to our understanding of who he was and who Jesus is in the book of Hebrews.

[16:19] So we have then, quite some time later, David writes, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Why is that substantial to us? Jesus Christ is our prophet, priest, and king. You know what the Levitical law? Forbid a king from also being a priest.

Did you know that? It's pretty significant. Forbid a king from also being a priest. How then can Christ come and be that type of priest? Because he can't be our king if he's that type of priest.

If he serves under that covenant, it's not possible for that to happen. He's not after the Levitical line. I've got a great example of God's seriousness about such a law.

Remember when Saul was ousted as king and David took his place? Do you remember why that was? He was a king who tried to do the duties of the priest.

[17:24] That was the sin that God turned him out for. We're trying to be a king priest. So it's very significant that Jesus is after the order of Melchizedek.

Not after the Levitical line. Not after Aaron. And that helps us understand that we serve in a new covenant. Alright?

Back to Hebrews. Chapter... Or, excuse me. We're in chapter 7. Verse 22. This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

Verse 23. The former priests were many in number because they were prevented by death from continuing in office. They were finite, right? They died. At some point, they no longer could carry out their duties.

But he holds his priesthood permanently because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

[18:30] You're catching the significance now? Why he's a priest at the order of Melchizedek and not of the Levitical line? He always lives to make intercession for us.

For us. For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a son who has been made perfect forever.

I hope that your mind is lifting toward the person of Jesus Christ. He was unlike the Levitical priests in varying ways.

He was a priest forever. He's a priest king, which none of them could be. But he's like them in some ways as well. There are many of typologies throughout the Old Testament that are meant to help us understand who Jesus was coming to be on our behalf.

[19:50] The Levitical priests were given very careful instruction about everything that they did. There was nothing left to guessing. Even what they wore, the high priest wore, was very carefully explained to him.

And when we see that in Exodus chapter 28, the high priest wore two garments that were of significance to our conversation this morning. One was called an ephod, and it was fabric that hung on the front and the back of his body, and it was connected at the shoulders by stones.

The second that I'm discussing this morning was a breastplate that he wore. And on it were twelve stones. And these stones are really significant because the stones on his shoulders had six of the tribes of Israel on one shoulder and six of the tribes of Israel written on the other, on these stones on his shoulders.

And the breastplate had twelve stones, all of different type, each with the name of a tribe of Israel written on his chest.

He was meant to go into the presence of God with his strength, bearing those names on his shoulders, and with the names of Israel close to his heart, and make atonement for them and intercede for them.

[21:10] That was the job of the priest, the high priest, was to make atonement and to intercede for the people of God. It's a particular group of people, wasn't it?

He had a group of people that he was charged to do this for. The Israelites. Their names were written here and here. A particular group written for him.

In the same way, Jesus Christ intercedes on our behalf and makes atonement for our sin. Who is us, the church.

Those who place their faith in him. Look back at the end of Hebrews chapter 7. I want you to see the two things there. The very end of verse 25.

He always lives to make intercession for them. If that word is new to you, Jesus Christ stands between us and God.

[22 : 12] He allows us interaction with God. He is praying on our behalf, even now as we sit here, sitting at the right hand of the Father, interceding, that's what that word means, for us.

And in verse 27, he's made atonement. Doesn't have to do it continually, does he? Very end of the verse. Since he did this once for all, when he offered up himself.

Jesus Christ, the perfect, spotless sacrifice, has made atonement for the sins of the church forever. The things that you have done, the things maybe even that you're doing now, and anything that you will do has been atoned for, blows my mind.

That is incredible. So why did I tell you all this? Why did I tell you all this? How does that connect back into Romans chapter 7? I'm not Mark now, so I've got to turn it back with you.

Here we go. What's the point of all of this? What is Paul trying to communicate to us in these three verses?

[23 : 39] Four, five, and six. You do not have to sin. If you have placed your faith in Christ, you have been delivered from it and the consequences of it.

You do not have to continue in sin. You've been liberated from it. You've been set free from it. We still do, though, don't we?

Paul goes on to say in the rest of chapter 7 that it's not an easy task. There's a war waging within him. But you don't have to sin anymore.

How do we do that? We make God big in our lives. We see Jesus Christ as immense.

And if we do that, sin seems really small and really trivial. I'll give you a, I hope it's a good example.

[24 : 42] I started a new diet last Sunday. And, not really like a fad diet. I'm not doing anything crazy. I'm not like drinking cucumber juice and that's it or anything like that.

I have had some health issues for a decade and I've felt fairly convicted that I need to eat a plant-based whole foods diet.

I won't get to all the particulars, but it means I'm limiting animal protein in my diet. I'm not drinking anything or eating anything with high fructose corn syrup or stuff. I'll kill you. I'm eating very, very little sugar.

Like, I had some peanut butter that's got some sugar in it, but that type of thing. So, I'm trying to eat much healthier. And I've been doing that for the past week. So far, I'm still fighting that good fight. But, it is so hard.

It is so hard to do. Because, I'm not the kind of guy that eats that way. And I know I'm twiggy. That's genetics. I love sugar.

[25 : 42] I absolutely love sweets. I'm a type 1 diabetic and at some point I had a doctor say, don't worry about the sugar, just take insulin for it. And I said, okay. And, I love it.

I will down a couple of sodas a day, bring on the candy. My wife makes fun of me. I mean, she can't open up something at the house that's sweet without it being gone that day. I'm bad.

I'm bad about that. So, I now have this conviction, this understanding in my mind, really, that I need to change that and I need to live a different way with what I ingest.

And I have a very big picture goal in my mind, which is to be healthier than I am and to live to the end of my days in a healthier state and to be there for my family and those types of things.

Are you catching the similarity here? I'm trying to live not for today, but I'm trying to live for what will come. Right? We have a little, Wes and I share an office at Troop McConnell College and we host people.

[26 : 43] So, we have a little fridge in our office and it's glass front and we stock it with Cokes and things like that. So, when people come tour to the campus, they say, hey, can we get you anything to drink? Okay. So, every time I walk to my desk, I walk right by this fridge.

It's been tough. It's been really, really tough. The campus store is downstairs so I can walk downstairs and buy any kind of candy bar I want anytime right there. It's been very challenging.

So, how do I not do those things? How do I not eat the things that I'm trying not to eat? I remember what I'm trying to accomplish. The other day, I was having a particular crummy afternoon and Wes was out and so I got up and later realized that this was great for this analogy but I got up and I walked down the hall to a co-worker and I began to tell her all about my diet.

So, literally, I walked in her office and said, hey, Hannah, how's it going? She said, good. I said, I'm having a really hard time not eating sugar right now. She said, okay. I said, you see, I'm doing this diet and I told her all about it and before I knew it, I was telling her all the reasons I was doing it, why I cared so much to do what I'm doing and you know what?

I didn't want sugar anymore. The coat could stay in the fridge. No big deal anymore because I remembered why I'm doing what I'm doing. And the same is true for us here.

[28 : 11] This is what Paul is trying to show us. That because of Jesus Christ, because of what He has done, because of His death, His perfect sacrifice on our behalf, we've been set free.

We can now live in Him. And our minds are just so, I'm just, I can't believe how idiotic I am.

I forget it all the time. All the time. I need to hear the Gospel constantly. I need to see grander, more expanding views of Jesus Christ.

I hope this morning, the connection to Melchizedek did that for you. It did it for me this week. I hope it did it for you. Jesus Christ has made a grand sacrifice on our behalf.

And if we treasure that, if we actually understand what He's done on our behalf, not like the typical Southeastern Christian who grew up moral, but we actually get the weight of our sin, we understand that we've offended a holy God, that He could actually have nothing to do with us apart from the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

[29 : 31] If we could just understand that every day and let that be big in our lives, sin, it's trivial. Why would I do this little silly thing that brings to me death when I can live to Christ?

I wonder where that leaves you this morning. If you're not a Christian, if you've never placed your faith in Jesus Christ, if you have thought that you can maintain and get to God by works, you're wrong.

Your soul's in a desperate state. Great time to deal with that. No time like now to repent and believe that Jesus Christ is the way to God.

You might be feeling this morning the burden of your sin as a Christian. God doesn't see you the way you feel right now.

God sees you as a son because Christ sits eternally with His right hand making intercession and He has made atonement for you.

[30 : 42] One of my favorite parts of my day is when I get home from work, Cade is always very excited to see me. It's usually short-lived but for some moments he's really excited that I'm home and I put down my bag and I squat down and he runs full force.

It's kind of scary even into me and gives me a hug. So, I squat down, Cade, and he, boom, bolts at me and I kind of have to cradle him so he doesn't knock himself out. He runs into me so hard. There is nothing Cade could do.

Nothing. Sam could report that he did the most terrible things that day and nothing is going to stop me from embracing him when he runs from me that way. Right? Come here, son, because he's my son.

Your sons and daughters are the Most High God. Run to His arms. Enlarge in your vision of who He is and you'll begin to see the sin work out of your life. of your soul.