

ROMANS  
7:1-6



# The Lordship of the Law!

The Marriage Analogy:  
*“Till Death Us Do Part !”*

An Illustration  
And  
Overview

# ROMANS

7:1



## THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW

*<sup>1</sup>Or do you not know, brothers, for I am speaking to ones knowing the Law, that the Law is lord over the person as long as he lives?*

**Paul addressed the Christian's in Roman as "brothers" as he returns to a discussion the Law. He has already discussed the "lordship" of sin and death; so now he adds: "...the Law is lord over the person as long as he lives?"**

# ROMANS

7:1



## THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW

*<sup>1</sup>Or do you not know, brothers, for I am speaking to ones knowing the Law, that the Law is lord over the person as long as he lives?*

**Albeit briefly, Paul has already established a connection between the Law and sin (cf. 3:20; 5:20; 6:14).**

**So then, he returns to spell out the relationship which exist between them via an illustration – “Marriage!”**

# ROMANS

7:2



THE  
LORDSHIP  
OF THE  
LAW

*<sup>2</sup>For the married woman has been and remains bound to her living husband by the Law. But if the husband should die, she has been released and stands free from the Law of the husband.*

**Paul is using “law of marriage” as an example to point to our marriage to Christ.**

**And it’s clear that Paul is using the Mosaic Torah as his authoritative source, not Roman law. Let briefly review Dt. 24:1-4.**

# ROMANS

7:2



## THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW

*<sup>2</sup>For the married woman has been and remains bound to her living husband by the Law. But if the husband should die, she has been released and stands free from the Law of the husband.*

**To Western ears this may sound rather harsh; yet, we should understand Paul's illustration as a *tertium comparationis* (a point of comparison). Then Paul's point is understood:** the occurrence of a death effects a decisive change in respect to relationship to the Law!

# ROMANS

7:2



THE  
LORDSHIP  
OF THE  
LAW

*<sup>2</sup>For the married woman has been and remains bound to her living husband by the Law. But if the husband should die, she has been released and stands free from the Law of the husband.*

**Therefore, in Paul's comparision, the Law is like a husband in exercising lordship (v.1), but in no way implies that the Law has died! The analogy is that the Roman Christians, equivalent to the wife, have died!**

# ROMANS

## 7:3-4



### THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW

<sup>3</sup>Consequently then, while the husband is living, she will be called an adulteress if she belongs to another man. But if the husband should die, she is free from the Law, with the result that she is not an adulteress while belonging to another man.

<sup>4</sup>For this reason, my brothers, you, you also were put to death to the Law through the body of Christ in order that you might belong to another, to the One who was raised from [the] dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.

**Just think of the imagery here: We die, and enter into Christ's presence. We are not *OF* that world nor are we judged by that other spiritual spouse (Law) anymore.**

# ROMANS

## 7:3-4



## THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW

<sup>3</sup>Consequently then, while the husband is living, she will be called an adulteress if she belongs to another man. But if the husband should die, she is free from the Law, with the result that she is not an adulteress while belonging to another man.

<sup>4</sup>For this reason, my brothers, you, you also were put to death to the Law through the body of Christ in order that you might belong to another, to the One who was raised from [the] dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.

**So in dying, we will no longer produce sinful fruit, as we did under the Law; fruit that we bore “[leading] to death” (cf. v.5). No matter how good the fruit looked, it was “poisoning” us to death.**

# ROMANS

## 7:3-4



## THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW

<sup>3</sup>Consequently then, while the husband is living, she will be called an adulteress if she belongs to another man. But if the husband should die, she is free from the Law, with the result that she is not an adulteress while belonging to another man.

<sup>4</sup>For this reason, my brothers, you, you also were put to death to the Law through the body of Christ in order that you might belong to another, to the One who was raised from [the] dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.

**But now, being no longer bound to our old spouse—Law—we are “married” to Christ, who frees us to serve “...in the renewal of the Spirit” (v.6).**

# ROMANS

7:3-4



## THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW

Paul is setting the stage for the war within. He recognizes not that the Law is gone, but rather that WE have died to the Law! And now we are not judged by how well we serve our old spouse, the Law. But how well our Groom, Jesus, serves us! Men should glean from this a subtle picture of their role in marriage. It's that of Christ's, to give their wives value and beauty by how they serve them. This is what our Heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus, has done for us (cf. Eph. 5:25-27).

# ROMANS

7:3-4



## THE LORDSHIP OF THE LAW

One might conclude that the Law was an abusive, even an evil spouse, so I am glad I died! No, it was not the Law that was evil; rather, it was you who was evil. However, in your death, *“death did your part!”*

Paul deals with this next as we now turn to verses 5 and 6.

# ROMANS

7:5



**You and  
the Law  
“before...”**

*<sup>5</sup>For when we were in [the realm of] the flesh, the passions of the sins, which [passions] were through the Law, were at work in our bodily members with the result that we produced fruit [leading] to death.*

**As Paul has done prior to these verses (cf. 6:17-22), he proceeds with the “before” and “after” contrast of the believer.**

**First, is the “before!”**

# ROMANS

7:5



**You and  
the Law  
“before...”**

*<sup>5</sup>For when we were in [the realm of] the flesh, the passions of the sins, which [passions] were through the Law, were at work in our bodily members with the result that we produced fruit [leading] to death.*

**Before “we” were put to death to the Law (v.4), Paul describes “we” as “in [the realm of] the flesh” (Gr: σάρξ – this noun is generally negative, referring to making decisions (actions) according to self – i.e. done apart from faith. Thus, what is “of the flesh (carnal)” is by definition displeasing to the Lord.**

# ROMANS

7:5



**You and  
the Law  
“before...”**

*<sup>5</sup>For when we were in [the realm of] the flesh, the passions of the sins, which [passions] were through the Law, were at work in our bodily members with the result that we produced fruit [leading] to death.*

**In short, flesh generally relates to unaided human effort, i.e., actions (decisions) that originate from self or are empowered by self. This is carnal (“*of the flesh*”) and proceeds out of the untouched (unchanged) part of us – i.e., not transformed by God. In Lutheranism, we know the *flesh* in this sense as Old Adam.**

# ROMANS

7:5



**You and  
the Law  
“before...”**

*<sup>5</sup>For when we were in [the realm of] the flesh, the passions of the sins, which [passions] were through the Law, were at work in our bodily members with the result that we produced fruit [leading] to death.*

**At that time, our bodily members were fully controlled by the flesh (the passions of the sins) for evil works. These passions “were through the Law”, which has an integral connection with the passions of sins and a life lived in the flesh! This would have been shocking to those who revered the Law!**

# ROMANS

7:5



You and  
the Law  
“before...”

*<sup>5</sup>For when we were in [the realm of] the flesh, the passions of the sins, which [passions] were through the Law, were at work in our bodily members with the result that we produced fruit [leading] to death.*

**Even so, as Paul has written, “boasting in the Law” (2:23) and relying on “circumcision... in flesh” (2:28) are to be characterized as existing “in [the realm of] the flesh.” So Paul, as you would expect, comes to the same conclusion as he did in 6:21; regarding the outcome of such a life: “we produced fruit [leading] to death.”**

# ROMANS

7:5



You and  
the Law

“before...”

*<sup>5</sup>For when we were in [the realm of] the flesh, the passions of the sins, which [passions] were through the Law, were at work in our bodily members with the result that we produced fruit [leading] to death.*

**Furthermore, death itself is the resulting fruit or outcome! As in 5:20-21, Paul has now assembled three entities together which he contends interact with one another: Passions of sins energized by the Law results in death!**

# ROMANS

7:6



**You and  
the Law  
“after...”**

*<sup>6</sup>But now we were released from the Law, after dying [to that] by which we were being confined, so that we might serve as slaves in [the] renewal of the Spirit and not in [the] oldness of [the] letter.*

**Paul now provides a description of the tremendous liberation from the Law which comes through the Holy Spirit’s work in Holy Baptism.**

**As he has written in 6:22, “*But now...*” moves us from the prior existence “before” to the baptized believer’s “after” (cf. 3:21).**

# ROMANS

7:6



**You and  
the Law  
“after...”**

*‘But now we were released from the Law, after dying [to that] by which we were being confined, so that we might serve as slaves in [the] renewal of the Spirit and not in [the] oldness of [the] letter.*

**Paul reaffirms that** “we were released from the Law” **by a** “dying to the Law.”

**This is the point of comparison with the marriage illustration (vv.2-3). The Law is lord of us and, like sin and death, confines us in bondage until our death with Jesus that takes place in Holy Baptism!** (Let’s review Gal. 3:23-29; Col. 2:11-13).

# ROMANS

7:6



**You and  
the Law  
“after...”**

*<sup>6</sup>But now we were released from the Law, after dying [to that] by which we were being confined, so that we might serve as slaves in [the] renewal of the Spirit and not in [the] oldness of [the] letter.*

**Our release from the confinement of the Law is not a “self-chosen” freedom, but into a different kind of slavery: service – to God – which is liberation!**

**Serving “in [the] renewal of the Spirit” is the exact opposite of slavery “in [the realm of] the flesh!” This renewal is explicitly linked to the Holy Spirit, who originates and penetrates the Christian’s life (cf. Rom 5:5; Gal 3:1-14).**

# ROMANS

7:6



**You and  
the Law  
“after...”**

*‘But now we were released from the Law, after dying [to that] by which we were being confined, so that we might serve as slaves in [the] renewal of the Spirit and not in [the] oldness of [the] letter.*

**This finally brings us to the opposite of “in [the] renewal of the Spirit” as expressed in the “before”: “in [the] oldness of [the] letter” and this phrase points to the Law.**

**The Greek noun Paul uses for “oldness” is παλαιότης; this is the only occurrence of this noun in the NT. Paul uses this noun in order to link it to the adjective in 6:6: παλαιὸς (“old self”) that denotes our old sinful flesh (nature) who was crucified with Jesus in Holy Baptism.**

# ROMANS

7:6



**You and  
the Law  
“after...”**

*<sup>6</sup>But now we were released from the Law, after dying [to that] by which we were being confined, so that we might serve as slaves in [the] renewal of the Spirit and not in [the] oldness of [the] letter.*

**Thus, “the oldness of [the] letter” denotes the letter of the Law and the authority it exerts over those who strive to live outwardly by the letter of the Law and apart from the Spirit.**

# ROMANS

## 7:8-13



**Next  
Week**

# The Lordship of the Law!



**The Law and  
“I” (Past)**

