

ROMANS: TRANSFORMED BY GRACE

(Romans 7:7-14)

Spring cleaning, Fall wardrobe =time to throw out the old; unused; donate/Twice as Nice
 -Many Christians today struggle to enjoy/understand OT. And sp. Ex./Lev./Dt. =The LAW
 =feels irrelevant to our daily lives; difficult to understand; violent/**Braveheart** i.e. God's
 righteous war in punishing the rebellious clans, tribes, and people who reject God.

In this text, Paul is reminding his readers that the Law was intended for our good & has several useful functions.

MAIN POINT: As Believers living on the *grace* side of Redemptive History, the O.T. LAW still serves as a powerful reminder of God's power, awe, and holiness as categorically distinct from ours – and displays our GREAT need for Him in every aspect of our lives.

-1 Cor 10:11 "Now these things happened to them as an example, it was written for instruction"

-Rom 15:4 "Whatever was written in earlier times was given for our instruction so that through perseverance & encouragement of Scripture we might have hope."

-We are to read/be reminded of OT lives in peril in need of **RESCUE** & Who rescued them/*like us*

-We see a God of **COVENANT** faithfulness who created this universe for His glory & splendor and called out a nobody people (Jews) in order to have a cov. **Relationship** with them = Heart

-People were still saved by **FAITH** in the One True God in the OT and His promised Messiah to come – just like we are saved by faith through the revealed Messiah, Jesus Christ. (Heb. 11)

-We read and discover that God is still using the history/narrative of OT to change lives today because the OT is perfectly **Fulfilled** in Jesus Christ.

-We read & still learn about God's nature and our responsibility to pursue Holy lives which reflect His holiness. God is still the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8)

Even though the law of God represents God's holy standards of righteousness (In the NT, Paul is hard on the Law because the Jewish people became hyper-focused on Law keeping (in being "perfect" or demonstrating "holiness" through works-righteousness as a way to earn God's favor. In this sense, the Jews forgot their relationship with God and focused rather on the rules of God rather than the purpose for which they were sent = to lead His covenant people into greater faithfulness in His presence toward an **abiding relationship with Him**.

Recall:

-Jesus was sent to Jews for this very reason – to be the **MEDIATOR**, between sinful people and holy God. They rejected Jesus and kept focused on performing the Law/sacrifices =*missed pt*

-Jesus perfectly fulfilled God's LAW and then became the sinless substitute on our behalf (the spotless lamb) & was sacrificed (taking our just punishment) as the only means back into a relationship with Holy God. Jesus became the only blood sacrifice that God counted to forgive us

-**IN Jesus**, we can now approach God in relationship since we have been *declared* righteous through Jesus' own righteousness [**covered by Him/blanket/we put on Jesus**].

So, the LAW of God is good. It was intended for man's benefit. This is the Law of God which reflects God's moral, Holy character. ¹² So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. The Law was a gift to His covenant people to help them know how to please God and live in right fellowship with Him and their fellow neighbor.

-Yet, man tends to taint everything we touch: Man, in his own sinful heart, “made the LAW” sinful by making it an **idol** unto itself (=hyperfocusing on keeping the LAW, rather than allowing the LAW to be a guide and a road to the Lord in deepening relationship).

-Since the Jews made the LAW an idol in its own right, that was negative & Paul spends the first six chapters of Romans demonstrating how the LAW was no longer helpful for the Jew or Gentile **IF** they were hyperfocused on it, & believed that God would save them through their OWN righteousness (own works/deeds); Paul says often in NT that Jew is missing the very purpose of why God gave them the LAW – to show them truest need & lead them to Him.

*So, Paul flips the script and asks the question – Is God’s Law harmful, or bad, or sinful in and of itself?

7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? Far from it! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, “You shall not covet.” Paul is positively declaring that God’s purpose in sending the Law to Israel/world was to show God’s own holiness & the righteous standard for pleasing Him & how to come to Him in need of His presence.

3 Uses/functions of the LAW (Three aspects of the LAW: Moral, Levitical/Ceremonial, Civil)

1. Shows us God’s holiness and our fallen nature -**Mirror/hair -BUT helpless to change us**
2. Restrain Evil: Shows how to treat others **bumpers in bowling** (limits/inhibits more lawlessness)
3. Show how we can press in to live our lives in pleasing way to God; shows us holy living; to guide the regenerate into the good works that God has planned for them (Eph. 2:10) =GOOD

***God’s LAW points us to *the* LAWGIVER -A God of grace who has provided for us in [Cov. relatio](#)**

8 But sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting [lust] of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. =Sin is less clear & less recognizable in our life when we are dead in our own sin. **Sin blinds us from our own sin.** =Only God’s grace to show us our sin/fall from His righteous glory; It is a mercy that God gave Law/then Jesus to fulfill it

9 I was once alive apart from the Law; Paul=blissfully unaware of the depth & types of my sin; just how lost & desperate we are; Paul “convinced” he was acting on behalf of God to kill church but when the commandment/law came, sin came to life, and I died; =when God brought clarity to what it means to be truly holy (God Himself is very standard) and *just how far* I fall short of God’s glory, and how clear my sin & variety of the sins of my heart really are -which God used the LAW to show me/point out to me...then I knew I had to die to that sin and die to that old life of sin by surrendering my life to Jesus- allowing Jesus to give me true life in Him.

10 and this commandment/law, which was to result in life, -God gave the LAW to point us to relationship w/ Him through holiness since God is holy and that we need to be holy just to enter into His all-consuming Presence; we are not =we need help/grace even to achieve the Law/rel.

-Paul says that, The LAW then **proved to result in death for me;** =It was through God’s LAW that He shows us our great spiritual shortcomings and incapacity to even keep the Law or be perfect in our own righteousness (Rom 3:10-12)= **“filthy rags.”**

-The law became a stumbling block and a reminder that I am truly sinful and need of a true Savior (which the Law itself could not provide).

¹¹ for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment/Law, deceived me, and through it, killed *me*. Our own hearts are deceitful, thinking that we can keep the Law, be perfect, measure up, and do good (be holy) within our own efforts. This is a lie; this is deception, fatal flaw in humanity. Satan pounces on every opp. To make us think we have to DO s-thing to earn God's favor - to earn His love/grace. **Every religion/earth = works based. Rom. Cath.=works**
 -Jer. 17:9 "The Heart is more deceitful than all else, desp. Wicked/sick, who can understand it?"
-The whole of the OT proclaims that God alone is holy & that we need His Presence fr life
-The whole of the NT proclaims Jesus alone is enough. To be accepted by holy God is to now accept Jesus as Savior & allow His perfect acceptance by the Father to become ours!

¹² So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. The OT shows us the beauty and power of God, the holiness of God, God's desire to redeem the world, and our desperate need for God. Even though as a merciful gift to us meant for our own good, the Law became the focus of our hearts and actions, as an Idol, a false hope -rather than Lord.

¹³ Therefore did that which is good (LAW) become *a cause of death for me*? Far from it! (=No, never, no ever may it be). Rather *it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by bringing about my death through that which is good (LAW), so that through the commandment/Law sin would become utterly sinful.*¹⁴ For we know that the Law is spiritual [=Law reflects God's perfect heart & holiness for us], but I am fleshly, sold into bondage to sin.

1. Compared to **God**, I am unworthy, wicked, unrighteous, unholy, deceived, and in need of salv.
2. Compared to God's **Law**, I am also reminded what *I need to be* (holy) and just how far I fall short of His holiness, His standards of life for me; Law shows me the true nature of my heart
3. The Law is ultimately **good** as it *benefits me (for MY good)* =to show me just *how* much I need a Savior and just how God has graciously provided that Savior for us all! **Do you know Him?**
 -The Law clarifies the **BAD news & anticipates through the coming Messiah the GOOD News**
4. The LAW reflects the heart of the **Law-Giver** and the Law foreshadows God's provision of the perfect Law-Keeper **Who is Jesus**.
5. Our calling is now to run to Jesus, thank Him for perfectly fulfilling the Law, and through His sacrifice to have made a way for us *to be close* to Holy God, to approach Him, to worship Him

APPLICATION

- When is the last time you spent intentional time reading and trying to understand the OT (and not the just the Psalms)?
- When is the last time you tried to understand how every OT passage points to and is fulfilled in Jesus Christ? (John 5:39 Mt. 24:27) -Even Leviticus & Deuteronomy? ☺
- As we read God's Word (*all of it*, not just the fun parts), We should be asking- What does this passage teach me about God/His nature/His work in creation
 & What does this teach me about myself? My own heart? About man's condition and need?
- When is the last time you thought deeply about what does the very holiness of God mean?
- How can we now approach such a holy, wonderful, all-powerful, all-consuming God and not be consumed ourself with His Shekinah glory? B/C Jesus invited us into Himself.