

Romans 7: 1-13 – Married to Jesus – 16 Oct 2011

Well, this morning I like us to turn our Bibles to Romans, and chapter 7, one of the more challenging passages in the entire Bible, but, it is a tremendous, tremendous theme we will be looking at this morning. I will read to you Romans 7:1-13 this morning and made the reading of the Word of God bless your hearts today.

Romans 7:1,

1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

Let's come to God in a word of prayer once again. Father, we acknowledge again, the depths we have to plunge, as we look at the verses before us and we pray that Your Spirit would now, once again, minister to us, so that we might know, who we are in Jesus Christ and that we might then walk according to our calling. We pray for You to bless Your people as we look into the Scriptures right now, that we might find out all in Jesus Christ alone. Bless Your people, we pray in Jesus name amen.

Time stamp in audio 0:03:46.0.

Marriage, is a deep intimate and exclusive relationship between a man and a woman. It is isn't it. There is a story of a boy who had just been to a wedding ceremony and on the way home, his mother asked him "son, you have witnessed a wedding ceremony, how many wives can a man have?" The boy thought for a while and said "Mom, I think it is 16." The mom was puzzled, 16 ? "But son, didn't you see that there was one man and one woman who stood before the pastor, why 16?" The young boy then said "Mom, I had the pastors say four better, four worse, four richer, four poorer." (Laughter in the congregation). It is an interesting observation by the boy, but it is the wrong conclusion he has come up with. Marriage is an exclusive an intimate relationship between a man and a woman and do you know, that is the kind of relationship the church and Christians, today can have with Jesus Christ our Lord.

Time stamp in audio 0:05:09.2.

The Bible says in Romans 7:4

"that we should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead."

4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

It's a wonderful, intimate relationship that Christians can have with Jesus Christ, pictured like that of an intimate marriage, exclusive, intimate, deep relationship. And

that is the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is a radical message because it changes, His people, God's people totally, completely, radically.

Time stamp in audio 0:05:49.4.

Do you realize, in Romans 6 and 7, Paul has been telling us the profound change in the core of a man. In Romans 6, Paul tells us, because Jesus is now in your life, you now have a new life. You were dead to sin and alive now to Jesus Christ, you have a new life. He continues to tell us in Romans 6, not only do you have a new life, you now have a new Lord, you are no more needed to serve sin, you're no more enslaved to sin, you can have a new Lord. And now, in Romans 7, Paul is saying, you can now have a new love, a new life, a new Lord, a new love. And it is a thrilling, exciting relationship we have with Jesus Christ, a love relationship of great intimacy, like that of a marriage.

This week, I was reading, about how the King of Bhutan, married the commoner bride. It's a interesting story, if you have read it. The King of Bhutan was 17 years old, when he first met with his current wife. His wife then was (someone in the congregation says 7 years old), oh, you guys are very well read. (Laughter in the congregation). He was 17 when he met with the seven-year-old girl and said to her, if when we grow up, I am not married, and you are not married, we should be married. Wah, this is what he called childhood sweetheart. Now, a period of 14 years have elapsed and just this week, the King of Bhutan married this commoner bride and this captivated the imagination of the entire kingdom of Bhutan. It is the talk of the town, everybody knows about it, because it is found everywhere, commemorative badges, it is found in the billboards, it is found in tourist sites, it is carried by everyone everywhere. (Laughter in the congregation because of a picture showing someone carrying the portrait). It is here to then, on top of the poles and can I say, this is not only known in Bhutan, because, in the Straits Times on the 13 October, the Singapore Mint placed a whole page of advertisements, congratulating the King of Bhutan in his marriage. It has captured the attention and imagination of many, many people.

Time stamp in audio 0:08:25.6.

I tried to think of what it must have felt like, for this lady, who is a commoner to now be the queen of the kingdom of Bhutan. I think her life is radically changed.

Have you ever considered them for yourself, what does it mean, when the Scripture says "I am released from sin, from the law, to now be married to Jesus Christ." Have you ever considered this question, what does it mean to be married to Jesus. I think

it is a thrilling theme you think about it and I think, in Scriptures it tells us, several, wonderful realities. By the way, the new life, the new Lord, the new love, is not what you do for yourself, it's what God does for you. That's the power of the Gospel, the transforming grace of the Gospel. And God has placed you right now in a marriage, in a sense with Jesus Christ. What does it mean for you and me?

### 1. A New Position

First of all, I think it means that we now enjoy a new position in life. We now enjoy a new position in life. How many of you here today are married, can I see by a show of hands? Married people, can you, can I see, alright, so, about half for you? How many of you are not married, can I see by a show of hands? Raise your hands please, high, not married. Now, if you raise your hands right now, keep your hands high, shame on you. (Laughter in the congregation). Hey, hey, why shame on you pastor? Shame on you, because you know, you did not realize that you are already married. (Laughter in the congregation). I know they are teenagers here but you are already married. The question is, but who are you married to, that's all.

According to the teachings here, in Romans 7:1-4, Paul is saying, you are either married to sin or you will be married to Jesus. But all of us are married. You see, he says in verse 4

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another,

in verses 1-3, he says, "Hey, a woman can only to one, if she is married to two, she is considered an adulteress." And Paul is saying right here, that all of us began in a marriage to sin. But, Jesus Christ is here to set us free from that previously unhappy marriage to now be happily married to Him. But all of us, are married. But you say, pastor, doesn't that go against what the Bible says, how can we be married to sin and then be married to Jesus. Wouldn't we be in a sense, be in adultery. Paul says, no, it's not adultery, if something happens. What happens? You can be married now to another because you have become dead, you have died. The previous marriage is binding, but now that you have died, you set free to be married to another.

How many of you here, remember your vows on your wedding day. Can I see by a show of hands? One, two, three (Laughter in the congregation). This is painful, you know! (Laughter in the congregation). You don't quite take your vows seriously huh ? (Laughter in the congregation). What is the last phrase in your vow? Wow, so many different types. The last phrase of your vow would be, " till death do us part".

You know something about the marriage, it is binding as long as you are alive, but when you die, your spouse is now actually free to marry another. So, Paul is saying, you cannot be married Jesus, because you died. When did you die? You die by the body of Christ, the co-crucifixion with Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross, not only did He die for me, but if I receive Him into my life, I died with Jesus. And now, as a result of that co-crucifixion, I can be married to Jesus Christ.

Time stamp in audio 0:13:36.1.

As I have said, the previous marriage was a horrible one. You were united with what? You were united with sin, you were joined with sin and you were under the law, God's law and as a result of joining with sin and being under God's law, you were a frustrated man or woman, because, you could never, ever fulfil the demands of the law of God. You could never match up to its standards and therefore the previous marriage was one of intense condemnation and guilt. It's one of misery and frustration, because you could never meet up to it.

But now, when you died with Jesus, you died through the law. In other words, the law now can never condemn you anymore. That old life, that old marriage that was under condemnation is over because you died and you are arising now as a new man in Jesus. You see, the law is binding as long as the man is alive. But, when he is dead, there is nothing the law can do against that man. Suppose today, you meet a crazy guy who is driving, furiously and recklessly on the road. This guy is crisscrossing the lanes, this guy is banging here and there and he is driving so fast and the police, the traffic police spotted this mad man, chases after him and this mad man goes even faster, even more recklessly and eventually, he ends up in a car crash and he dies. If you are a traffic policeman, what will you do, would you stop your car and parked behind, beside the wrecked car, take out your summons ticket, this so and so has driven recklessly and you need to pay the fine and go to jail because of that and you stick that piece of paper on the dead man's head. (Laughter in the congregation). Would you even do that? Your police Commissioner would say, why are you wasting paper, this man has already died and the law cannot condemn him any longer.

Time stamp in audio 0:15:57.3.

And that is the teaching, Paul is saying, you were previously joined to sin, you were previously under the law, under its guilt and condemnation but because of dying with Jesus, you are no more condemned and in the words of Paul, he says in Romans 7:6

But, now we are delivered from the law.

In other words, we are no more, going to stand as a guilty sinner, in the light of the law we could not meet up to, we're delivered from the law. He says, in another way, in Romans 6:15, we are now no more under the law but under grace. You don't stand condemned, you are not accepted because of your performance or because of your ability to keep the law, you accepted freely, under grace. The free, unmerited favor of God.

A side note here. As you listen to this, some of us might think, hey, this makes it sound as if the law is a terrible thing. Huh, going to be under the law, it makes it sound as if the law is a bad thing. But is it so, no, absolutely not, God forbid, the law is a good thing, why? The Lord must be a good thing, because, the law is an expression of who God is. That's what Paul says in verse 12

12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

There is nothing wrong with the law. It's pure, it's righteous and it confers benefits to us. But the law is frustrating to live under not because it is bad but because we are bad. It is miserable to be under the law not because the law is no good but because we cannot do good. We are so depraved we are so wrapped up in sin that when we meet the high standard of the law, we failed, we get frustrated. That's what Paul says, it's a liberation, for us to realize that we are no more under the law but under grace.

The law has a beautiful function but it also has its limitations. What is the function of the law? The law cannot save us but the law can show us something. In verse 7, the law is given, so that our sins will be revealed. It reveals our sins, but the law cannot remove our sins. You see that? And it is terribly frustrating to the natural man when he sees what is not right and he has no ability to get right. The law reveals our sins, but it doesn't remove our sins.

Imagine today, if your face is full of pimples, what you need to see your pimples? You need a mirror. But can your mirror remove your pimples, squeeze it piak, piak and all the juices come out. (Laughter in the congregation) no, you can't, you don't use a mirror to deal with acne. The mirror is useful to reveal it but it doesn't remove it. You better go to a specialist; you better go to someone who can really do it. The law is like that mirror; the law is also like an x-ray machine. The x-ray shines in your tummy and shows you a whopping big tumour within. It shows you your cancer, but you know something, it cannot remove your cancer.

The law reveals your sins but it doesn't remove your sins and that's why is frustrating. You know, it is very frustrating, every morning you wake up, you see acne

and you can't do anything about it. Some of you are comforting each other (Laughter in the congregation). Actually, I don't see much of a problem here with you guys but, it is frustrating.

But you know how sinful man is. When men see something good, which is the law, not only are we frustrated, actually, the sinfulness within us, takes advantage of the law and gets worse. In other words, the law when he confronts a sinful man, actually, stimulates, stirs up more sins. How do you know that pastor? Look at verse 8

But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence, a big word, but it is in the Greek word, EPITHUMIA which means, lust that has gone overboard, lust that has been excessive, Epi, on top of normal lust and desires. It has gone overboard.

And what it means is this, the sinfulness of man, when he sees the laws of God, actually gets more sinful as a result. You say, how does it work. The word occasion, is the word that you get a launching base from. A launch base, it is a military term. If you want to launch an attack on someone, you start from a base and what he is saying here is that the law is a starting base for sin to start its attacks, to launch its attacks. Sin is stirred up when sinful man meets the law.

Time stamp in audio 0:21:37.7.

Just this week, I was with my son in the park and he has now a new fascination. He used to be fascinated with trees, still is, but less because now he likes to play with sand and so, he was at a sand pit, he got a spade and started to scoop the sand, and its fine scooping the sand and playing with it and throwing it all around in the sand pit. But he got bored with that, and so he scooped the sand and decided to pour it on the bench that is nearby. I saw him scooped the sand onto the bench and I said "Shaun, you shouldn't do this because you dirty the bench and other people cannot sit on it, it's too dirty, so don't do it, Shaun." And with the sweetest smile, he looked at me and says "Yes daddy, I am wrong, I shouldn't do that, other people can't sit." Now, of course he didn't say that. (Loud laughter in the congregation).

No way, no way. I know his heart is formed in iniquity, I know his life is formed in sin. And instead of saying what I hope he said, his eyes grew bigger and he had that rebellious look that emerged from within his countenance, he paused, a very pregnant pause, then he started to scoop more and pour it onto the bench. (Laughter in the congregation). Just to show me who is boss. It attests to the fact, Shaun demonstrated to me that that is the nature of man. Romans 8:7, The carnal man, is

enmity against God. Not only are we unable to fulfil the law, we actually hate the law. So, when the law comes into a man's life, the man hates it and instead of obeying it, he purposely goes against it. It becomes a launching pad for more sins.

Time stamp in audio 0:23:46.1.

John Bunyan, that brilliant writer, who gave an allegory of Christian life, wrote in Pilgrim's Progress, about the journey of a Christian man call Christian. And Christian come into a room, that is full of dust, a picture of the sinful dirty heart of man. And Christian sees a man walking with the broom. A broom is the picture of the law and when the law started to sweep in that dirty room, the dust just flew all over the place and suffocated and choked Christian. In a sinful man's heart, the law stirs up, rouses more sins.

You see, the problem is not the law, the problem is our hearts, the problem is in the carnality and the sinfulness of man.

Warren Wiersbe

"Instead of being a dynamo that gives us power to overcome, the Law is a magnet that draws out of us all kinds of sin and corruption."

And therefore, it is so frustrating to live under the law. You have no ability to get right with God.

You are in the position of condemnation, you are guilty as charged.

Time stamp in audio 0:25:21.2.

But, when we are united with Jesus, as we believe and obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Bible tells you, something radical happens. Romans 6 tells you, you have a new life, you have a new Lord, you have a new love. You died to the law; in other words, the law cannot condemn you anymore, you are dead, it cannot be like that policemen that sticks a ticket on to your dead head, it can't. You stand no more under the condemnation of the law. But now, you are under grace. Grace, because when Jesus died for you, you died with Him and you are so united with Him right now, that when God sees you, He sees Christ, and you are accepted because Christ is accepted, you are blessed because Christ is blessed, you are favoured because your Saviour is favoured. God sees you in Him and even if you slip up, you are still accepted in the beloved.

That's how radical, and in some words of writers, said, "It's how scandalous and amazing grace is". God sees you in His Son, you stand no more condemned. Christians, you don't have to be in that performance trap, trying to match up, to be worthy of God. You are already worthy in Christ. What a brilliant, what a blessed position we are in as we understand what it means to be married to Jesus.

A new position that we need to revel in, these are positional truths, you need to know, reckon for yourself. We stand forgiven at the cross, beautiful. But, can I say to you, when you are married to Jesus, not only do you have a new position, the Bible says you would now have a new passion.

## 2 A New Passion

A new passion.

He says, Romans 7:6

That we would now serve God in newness of spirit.

6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

The word newness here, is from the Greek word, KAINOS. And it is a word that means to be new totally, new of a different kind, it's not just an updated version of the past, it's not just an upgrade of the past. It's a totally new thing.

I think, there are many Apple fans here and many Apple fans are disappointed, that iPhone 4, is only, upgraded to iPhone 4S. Now, that is not kainos, that's not new in a different kind. That's just an upgrade, an update. Even if iPhone 4, goes to iPhone 5, it is still not kainos. I think, when an iPhone becomes a Siemens, becomes a Nokia, becomes a Samsung, or becomes a satellite phone, then, maybe we can think of it as kainos because it is on a totally different operating system.

Time stamp in audio 0:28:51.3.

Paul is saying, because of Jesus, you now have a totally different economy. You serve God now, in the newness, a brand-new, it's a totally new thing; newness in Spirit. You say, how new? Any biblical scholar, would tell you that if you look at Scripture, when you refer here to the newness of Spirit, it has reference to the Old Testament prophecy. Three passages, that you might want to look at.

First, Jeremiah 31:33,34. I think, this is given to us in the book of Hebrews chapter 8 as well and it refers to the new work that God does in a man, who received His Son as his Saviour and when you believe in Jesus Christ, you can worship him in the newness of Spirit because this is a tremendous transformation that the Spirit of God effects in your life. What does he do? God says:

I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Time stamp in audio 0:30:20.0.

Jer 31:33,34

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Something amazing. The old covenant is about the law inscribed on tables of stones. It's an external code of conduct that fallen man could never match up to. But in the new covenant, when you received Jesus, this is what God does, He doesn't write the law on the outside, He writes His law on your inside, on fleshly hearts of flesh. He causes you today to love His Word, He causes you today, to delight and to have a passion to fulfil His Word.

And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart that is unable to obey out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them.

Eze 11:19,20

And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart (Added by Pastor : That is unable to obey ) out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

And, if it is not clear enough for you, He repeats again for you in

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit ... I will give you an heart of flesh .And I will put my spirit within you, you know something, when you believe in Jesus, instead of trying to match up to God in your own strength or rather what I say weakness, He gives you the ability to obey, by giving you His Spirit and He gives you a fresh passion to do what He wants, because He gives you a new heart. That's how radical it is.

Eze 36:26,27

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Time stamp in audio 0:32:05.0.

And if you today, say that you are a Christian, but you have no desire or delight in the Word of God or in fulfilling the Word of God, there is a big question mark over whether you are even saved in the first place because genuine salvation is accompanied by the wonderful transformation God does in the heart of a man. A new nature, with new desires.

That's what Paul could say, in Romans 7:22

I delight, he says, I just don't do it you know, it's not drudgery, it's not a burden, he says it is a delight, I delight in the law of God after that inward man. He loves, he desires, he has a passion for God's will.

Rom 7:22

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

That's what a new creation in Christ will have, that's what being married to Jesus means, a new position, a new passion.

A story, a familiar one no doubt, is spoken of a lady who is married to a terrible man and she has a very unhappy marriage. She feels that in this marriage, she could never do anything right. The husband is always criticizing her, the husband is always condemning her and she feels unloved. She feels that she's never going to match up

to his standards, she's frustrated and miserable. She has to do a lot of things, she wrote down a list of things she has to do on a daily basis and she is overwhelmed by it all. But, one day, it all changed, when her husband died. And she very quickly, got to know another man and this other man, loves her deeply. This other man lavishes his love upon her unconditionally and even when she does wrong, he says it is all right. It seems like now she can do no wrong. She is so loved, she is so accepted, she is so lavished and eventually, they got married and it is the most blissful marriage she's ever heard or known of, and she is in it. She rejoices, she revels in this love relationship with the new husband. And one day, and she's cleaning up the house, she discovered that list, that she used to write, that she used to be overwhelmed with, she reads the list, item by item, line by line and she thinks to herself, and she realizes something about herself. What she used to do in the past, is exactly what she's doing right now. But what she's doing right now is such a delight and joy, because she is touched by the love of her husband.

In a very little way, this illustrates how we respond to God. Of course, this illustration doesn't speak of the transformation God does. But in reality, in our spiritual journey, when we came to Jesus, Jesus not only reaches out to us in His grace and we are grateful for it, but His grace also transforms our heart. He gives us a new heart, a new delight, a new passion.

So, my dear friends, this is the blessing of being united with Jesus, you have a new position, number two, you have a new passion and finally, can I end for you, a new production.

### 3. A New Production

A new outflow of your life. The previous life is one of sin and death, absolutely sin and death. It is one of condemnation and guilt. But now, because of Jesus, you have life, you can have righteousness and the Bible says in verse 4, we can now bring forth fruit unto God.

Time stamp in audio 0:36:21.4.

Now, in the Bible, I think fruit is defined as anything that glorifies God through a believer's life. How do I know that? John 15:8

Herein, is my Father, glorify, that ye bear forth much fruit.

Food is what glorifies God in a believer's life and for the very first time in your life, because of Jesus, you can now bring forth fruit unto God. Previously, you could only bring forth sin unto condemnation. But now, you are set free, you can now finally, have the ability in His Spirit to do what is right. And finally, you have what is in the Spirit, the desire to do right. God works in you, both to will and to do His good pleasure and for the first time, henceforth in your life, you can bring forth fruit unto God.

Time stamp in audio 0:37:21.2.

Because previously whatever you did is for yourself; to gain acceptance, to be justified by your work, but now, you are free from it all, to bring forth fruit unto Him.

You say, what is that fruit, pastor, can you be a bit more specific. I know you said that it is anything that glorifies God through a believer's life, but is there greater specificity in the Scriptures? I think so, especially in the context that we see here. I think, the specific fruits, the Scripture teaches us is encapsulated in that one word, love.

When a man, is set free from the bondage of the law and is now led in newness of the Spirit, led by the Spirit, the Bible says, he will manifest love. Galatians 5

But if ye be led of the Spirit, the kainos of the Spirit, you are not under the law and if you are walking so in the Spirit, then, the fruit of the Spirit is love.

Gal 5:18,22

But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. But the fruit of the Spirit is love.....

Love, let me tell you something about love. What is love, there are plenty of songs that go out there, what is love, tell me what love is all about, what is love? Let me tell you what love is all about in the Scriptures, very objectively.

Time stamp in audio 0:38:54.6.

When the Holy Spirit manifests, His fruit in your life as love, you will do this. What would you do? Bible says in Galatians 5:14

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, in one statement, in one saying even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

You know what is love? Love is the fulfilling of the law.

Gal 5:14

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

I say that again, in Romans 13:8

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

Love is the fulfilment of the law.

Verse 10, if you still don't get it, he says

"love is the fulfilling of the law."

Rom 13:8,10

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Think with me and this is the paradox of life. You know, the Bible is full of paradoxes. The Sermon on the Mount is so paradoxical, blessed are they who mourn for they shall be comforted. It is scriptural, spiritual teachings, a lot of times it's paradoxical to all worldly human thinking you see. But this is the real paradox of life, they who die to the law of those who will fulfil the law. Would you even understand that statement? They who die to the law are those who will fulfil the law, why? Because they died to the law in Jesus Christ and now they are under grace, there is that *kainos*, of the Holy Spirit in their lives, the Spirit bears forth the fruit of love and love fulfils the law.

But those who try to keep the law in their own strength, never fulfil the law. It's they who die to the law who are best able to fulfil the law.

Time stamp in audio 0:40:58.1.

You see, what I'm trying to say throughout this, is Jesus is the centre of everything isn't it? The Gospel is about Jesus Christ and the Gospel of Jesus Christ is given not

only for your salvation from the penalty of sin but also for your sanctification from the power of sin. The Gospel is for both salvation and sanctification and just as Gospel for salvation is not achieved but received, sanctification is primarily received and not achieved. It's walking in the Spirit, and not legalism that grows you, that changes you. It's all about what God has already done in your life. Knowing it, reckoning it and yielding to it, is the key to sanctification. It's always about Jesus.

Time stamp in audio 0:42:00.7.

And I want you to understand that you can unreservedly, totally and completely give yourself to Jesus that He may change your life. I end with an illustration, I heard recently from a preacher and it's about a movie, an essay written about a movie called three seasons, and in one of the mini stories within this story, it speaks of a rickshaw rider named Hai. This is set in the 70s, in Vietnam and the rickshaw rider named Hai loved a beautiful prostitute named Lan and both of them, have unfulfilled desires. You see, Hai wanted to be with Lan but he could never afford her, he is a poor impoverished man. And Lan has been working herself in prostitution, so that she could get herself out of this life, she hates the life she is in, she is in sin, she is in filth, in prostitution but she thought that sleeping her way through, she might get out of that life into the dream life she hopes, and the dream life she wanted was to be able to stay in those elegant, beautiful hotels, like the guests, like the customers she has to service, except the fact, she could never stay there, because, after what she does, she's always asked to leave. And Lan has been dreaming of that kind of a life and she wanted to sleep her way out of this mess. And so, Hai and Lan have unfulfilled desires.

Time stamp in audio 0:43:46.6.

One day, Hai entered into a rickshaw race and to his surprise, he came in first. He's the grand prize winner and now, he has a bunch of money and this bunch of money, could totally change his life, but he decided not to change his life the way we had expected. But, he decided to splurge it all and to buy and purchase a night with Lan and a room in the most elegant hotel he could find. And so, both Hai and Lan are in the same room and the writer goes on to say, everybody expected a steamy love scene. Lan unexpected certainly that from Hai but to everyone's surprise and to Lan's surprise, Hai said, I do not want to have sex with you. I just want to give an opportunity to you to have your unfulfilled desires, fulfilled. I want you to have a taste of life you dream of, that's all. And if there is anything I want to ask, I just want to ask permission to watch you be able to sleep peacefully tonight. Slowly, peacefully,

comfortably, Lan sleeps, falls into a deep sleep and in the morning, Hai is gone, asking nothing, but only a chance, an opportunity to fulfil Lan's dream.

Time stamp in audio 0:45:17.3.

But something snapped in Lan. She finds that she cannot go back to prostitution anymore. She finds that she cannot return to the old life she hated because for the very first time in her life, she had experienced someone who used his power, not to use her but to serve her. She discovers within herself a new sense of dignity and she is a changed woman. You see, she has tasted for herself, the transforming grace of selfless love and she would not go back to the old life.

Now, Jesus is all powerful, immensely rich. But he saw us entrapped in our sins and His mercy, He emptied Himself and went to the cross to give Himself for us. Instead of using us, God gave Himself to serve us. If Lan could be touched by the transforming grace of redeeming love, how much more should we, utterly and completely, give ourselves over to Jesus Christ, to yield ourselves to Him. My friends, God will effect that fruitfulness in your life because that's His desire. Because of our unity with Jesus, you have a new position, a new passion and a new production for His glory. Let's bow for a word of prayer.

Every head bow, every eye closed, I just want to give all of us a time of reflection and contemplation as to the Gospel reality that Scripture presents to you. It's an amazing transformation you see, a transformation from the inside out, not achieved by human effort but achieved by the sovereign power and grace of the Mighty God, found in Jesus Christ.

Time stamp in audio 0:48:04.4.

Maybe today, you feel like life is merely a bunch of rules and regulations. There is no joy, no delight, no desire for the things of God. Yet you have been thinking, I have been coming to church, I must be saved. My friends, would you search your hearts today, examining yourself, whether ye be in the faith, because if you are truly united with Jesus, in a true spiritual way, there will be a change, in your heart from the inside out, you'll be like Paul saying, "I delight in the law of God in my inward man". If there isn't and your life has not changed, the best thing I could do for you this morning is the cause you to consider your plight and stop depending on self-righteousness and flee to Jesus alone for salvation and life.

But if you today my dear friends are saved as a Christian, you do know in your hearts that God has changed you, but you do feel dry, frustrated, you see fruitlessness in your life, you see a lot of critical spirit within you, then maybe today you have been living under legalism, thinking that is your performance that allows you to match up to what God wants you to be. Maybe, you have been looking around at others and you have been critical about them, my friends, the grace of God doesn't lead us to legalism. It's not about what you achieve; it's about the grace that you are in.

Time stamp in audio 0:49:54.8.

Or maybe today in your life, there is no fruitfulness. Instead of yielding yourself to Jesus, your new life, your new Lord, your new love, you have still been yielding yourself to sin. Let the Gospel of Jesus inflame your hearts, let the love of Jesus so touch your life and yield yourself completely to Him. And so Father, we thank You this morning, we thank You, because it is all of grace, not of works, lest any man should boast.

I thank You today that You are who You are, nothing more, nothing less and we rejoice in You. Would You today bless the hearts of my friends who are here and who may not have known Jesus as their Saviour as yet, would You, by Your Spirit, awaken them from their sins and from their state that they may fly and turn to Jesus Christ. Lord, save them, by the sovereign working of Your Spirit and Father, would You today, draw Your people away from the life of lawlessness, draw Your people away from the life of legalism, to find our all in love, the love of our Saviour and the love from our Saviour. May the Gospel, may the love of God so melt the hearts of Your people today, that we will wholeheartedly yield ourselves to You and we will be careful today to give You praise and thanks for all that You have done. Thank You, dear God, that You have given us all things that pertain to life and Godliness, we praise You, we thank You, we ask all this in the Mighty Name of Jesus, amen. God bless.