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Sermon Notes

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Dead to the Law, Fruitful for God

Romans 7:1-6

I. An Eternally Fruitful Marriage

A. Marriage Intended for Fruit

Genesis 1:27-28 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.

B. God Intends to Bear Fruit in Your Life Too... fruit that will last

John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Picture: total union with Christ... like a branch to a vine... like a marriage: they bear fruit!!

II. Context: Last Week

A. Context in the Bible: The Problem of the Law

1. The "Man" of Romans 7
2. Deeper question: what relationship should the Christian have with the Law?
3. What is the nature of the Law itself?

B. Paul Answers Certain Charges

1. Paul's doctrine: Paul seems to undermine the Law of God

Romans 5:20 The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more

YET... Paul says he upholds the Law:

Romans 3:31 Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

How, Paul? How can you possibly state that you uphold the Law?

What exactly IS the proper relationship of the believer to the Law?

THAT is the question Paul addresses in Romans 7!!

C. Overview of Romans 7

1. Romans 7:1-6 Doctrine laid out in principle and illustrated by marriage

Married to the Law bears fruit for death

Married to Christ bears fruit for God

2. Romans 7:7-12 Vindication of the Law Itself

Romans 7:7 “Is the Law sin?”

3. Romans 7:13-25 Doctrine worked out in practice: The contradiction of a believer living in the flesh as if under the Law

Culmination of entire chapter:

Romans 7:24-25 “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ!”

D. Last week:

1. Principle declared:

vs. 1 Do you not know, brothers--for I am speaking to men who know the law--that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives?

The Principle: Dead Men Are Released from Law

2. Principle illustrated by marriage

vs. 2-3 For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. ³ So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.

- a. legally binding relationship under law
- b. bound together “Till death do us part!!”
- c. deeper meaning: marriages bear fruit!!!

3. The Principle Applied Spiritually: Death to Law, Marriage to Christ (vs. 4)

vs. 4 So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.

- a. “through the body of Christ”: INCARNATION
- b. died through the body: CRUCIFIXION
- c. to Him who was raised from the dead: RESURRECTION

4. So What Does “Dead to the Law” Mean?

- a. does NOT mean completely free from the Law’s requirements

Ten Commandments and Two Commandments

Law written in our hearts, lived out in our lives: Hebrews 8

- b. dead to law as condemner
- c. dead to law as manner and mode of serving/relating to God

III. A New Life: Married to Christ (vs. 4)

vs. 4 So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.

A. Prophecy of this marriage

The Old Covenant—Yahweh and Israel

Jeremiah 2:2-3 “ I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown. ³ Israel was holy to the LORD, the firstfruits of his harvest”

Isaiah 54:5 For your Maker is your husband--the LORD Almighty is his name--the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.

- Israel's breaking of the covenant through sin & idolatry likened to adultery against her husband God

Jeremiah 3:14 "Return, faithless people," declares the LORD, "for I am your husband."

- The prophet Hosea commanded to marry a prostitute to symbolize Israel's unfaithfulness to God
- Israel's restitution in the latter days likened to re-establishment of marriage with God

Isaiah 62:5 "...as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you."

B. Proclamation of this marriage

1. Proclaimed by John the Baptist

John 3:29 The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete.

2. Proclaimed by Christ Himself

a. open statement

Matthew 9:14-15 Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"¹⁵ Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.

b. parables

Matthew 22:1-2 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying:² "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son.

Matthew 25:1 "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

3. Proclaimed by Paul

2 Corinthians 11:2 I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

Ephesians 5:31-32 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." ³² This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church.

C. Privileges of this marriage

1. Sharing His name

- a. traditionally a wife takes the name of her husband
- b. here the bride of Christ takes the name of the Son of God

[John's disciples in Ephesus] Acts 19:5 On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Revelation 22:4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

- c. in the name of Jesus Christ there is complete salvation... He owns us, cares for us

2. Sharing His standing/position

- a. perfect righteousness
- b. status as a family member (like an adopted son/daughter)

John 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God

Adopted into the family of God... yes, but as the Bride of His Son

Matthew 22:1-2 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: ² "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son.

3. Sharing His protection

John 17:12 While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost...

- a. Christ protects His bride out of His intense love for her
- b. He protects her from outside threats

Acts 9:4 "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

- c. He also protects her from her own sinful tendencies

James 4:4-6 *You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? ⁶ But he gives us more grace.*

4. Sharing His possessions

[Jesus to the Father] **John 17:10** *All I have is yours, and all you have is mine.*

Hebrews 1:2 *“...in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.*

Romans 4:13 *It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.*

Matthew 5:5 *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

1 Corinthians 3:21-23 *All things are yours, ²² whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future--all are yours, ²³ and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.*

5. Sharing His glory & throne

a. seeing His glory

John 17:24 *"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.*

b. receiving His glory

John 17:22 *I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one*

c. reigning on His throne

Revelation 3:21 *To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.*

6. Sharing His intimate love

Jeremiah 31:3 "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.

D. Preparation for this marriage

Christ must have a holy, perfect, beautiful Bride... not a wicked, filthy, adulterous one

Sin must be dealt with completely before the marriage can be consummated

Ephesians 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

1. Justification

By His blood, the Son of God pays for the sins of His wife, and buys her out of bondage to sin

2. Sanctification

By His Spirit, the Son of God transforms the very nature of His wife, making her just like Him morally... loving righteousness and hating wickedness

2 Corinthians 11:2 I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

3. Glorification

By His presence and power, the Son of God glorifies His bride and covers her with radiant garments fit for her wedding day and fit to be His bride forever

Ephesians 5:27 to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless

Jude 24 To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy

E. Purpose of this marriage

vs. 4 "...in order that we might bear fruit to God."

Every marriage is meant by God to be fruitful... children are the clearest visible symbol of this principle, although sadly not every couple is permitted this blessing

Malachi 2:15 Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.

Genesis 1:27-28 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.

1. The Glory and Joy of God

Hebrews 12:2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

2. The Glory and Joy of God's People

3. Eternal fruitfulness

- a. people led to Christ
- b. deeds done in righteousness
- c. worship and praise for His grace

F. Perfection of this marriage

Illus. On March 23, 1989, the most expensive wedding dress of all time was unveiled in Paris, France: designed by Helene Gainville and Alexander Reza, it was embroidered with diamonds mounted on platinum and was worth \$7.3 million

BUT nothing compared with the beauty and cost of the wedding dress Christ's bride, the church will wear on the Great Day of the Wedding banquet of the Lamb

After all the missions are finished, after all of Christ's bride has come to faith, after all the Bible teaching and sanctification are done, the Bride will be ready at last for the great wedding day

Like all brides, the bride of Christ will be wearing her most beautifully radiant clothing... righteous acts of the saints, made perfect through the cleansing blood of Christ and the powerful work of the Holy Spirit

Revelation 19:7-8 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. ⁸ Fine linen, bright and

clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

Revelation 21:1-4 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

IV. Application

1. **HAPPINESS:** Rejoice at the security of your love relationship with Christ... he has loved you completely and that love will never change...
2. **HOLINESS:** Realize Christ will never tolerate His bride to be impure for even a moment; He is as jealous over you as any husband for His wife; when you go after worldly and sinful pleasures, Christ's Spirit within you is as jealous as a husband would be seeing His with embrace another man at an office party
3. **HARVEST:** Christ expects His bride to bear fruit daily; following in the power of the Spirit, we will bear MUCH FRUIT for God... an abundant harvest of people led to Christ, prayers offered in faith, good deeds done, money given sacrificially, tears wept with those who grieve, etc.
4. **HOPE:** Be filled with joy at what awaits you as a part of the Bride of Christ... a wedding banquet unlike anything that has been experienced since the beginning of the world