



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Romans 68 Why law? Romans 7:8-13

Romans 7:7-13, *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."⁸ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.⁹ I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.¹⁰ And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.¹² Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.¹³ Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.*

The greatest good news ever known to the humans is that
“Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.”

If we can't be saved by the law - in **chapters 3 and 4**

If we can't be sanctified by the law - in **chapters 5 and 6**

If we are saved by our union with Christ,

If we are made holy by our union with Christ,

then why did God go to such tremendous extreme to give such
a complex law?

When you say that we are supposed to get out from under the
law and be free from the law, aren't you avoiding the place of
the law?

Paul wants to explain all this in chapter 7.

Paul gives us in chapter 7 a very good explanation of the place
of the law. When we take chapter 3 through 8, we get a
comprehensive view of the law and its role.

What the law can't do for us?

It can't save us chapters 3, 4 and 5.

What the law can't do with us?

It can't make us holy Chapter 6.

What the law can't do to us?

It can't condemn us Romans 7:1-6.

What the law can do for us?

It can convict us of sin Romans 7:7-13.

What the law can't do in us?

It can't deliver us from sin Romans 7:14-25.

What the law can do by us?

It can be fulfilled by us Romans 8:1-4.

Romans chapters 3 to 8, an absolutely comprehensive picture of the law.

1. The law reveals sin.

The first element of its convicting power.

V 7, What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."

The issue of sin is not external.

You might control your behaviour because you want to be accepted by a group of religious people who don't lie, or whatever.

The only way you will ever clean up the evil desire of your heart is by a transformation by God.

That is what the law is intended to do.

There aren't just external commands, but there are internal ones.

All the unsaved who come to Christ come this way. They see the reality of the depth of their sin. Not only that they do wrong things, but that there is an inner corruption in their nature.

2. The law aggravates or rouses sin.

V 8, But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.

Apart from the law, sin is dead.

Until you are really convicted of your sin, sin is dead in the sense that it doesn't overwhelm you.

It doesn't rise up to pounce on you.

It's dormant.

It's sort of not fully active.

But when the law of God comes in, and you see what sin is, then sin rises to become a monster that you see in your life, and that's when a person really comes to Christ.

People they just go through life and say, "it's wrong to do that or this and terrible atrocities of murder etc." They can generally find the sin in other people's lives.

Even in their own life and they want to get better, but they really don't understand the profound depth of sin. They don't see sin as some monster to consume them eternally in hell. They don't see the wretchedness of sin until someone comes before them with the law of God.

V 8, "Apart from the law, sin is dead."

It's just dormant. It's just sort of there.

What happens?

V 8, "But sin is launched, takes occasion,"

A military word used as a base point to launch an attack.
Sin is launched by the commandment.

As soon as the commandment of God comes in, then sin just is launched. It just takes over. It just comes to life, and you are aware of the sin.

Then it has the effect of causing in you all manner of lusting. It just starts making it appear all over the place.

This is the reason why the Puritans preached the law before they preached the gospel because you have got to get people desperate before they are going to want a Saviour.

You can't just dance people into the Kingdom on positive thinking. You can't just sweep them in on.

Wouldn't you like to be happy?

Wouldn't you like to have peace?

Wouldn't you like to have joy?

Who wouldn't?

Where do I sign?

They don't even know what they are signing for.

The Bible from one to the other approaches this thing the same way. God is still saying the same thing.

You are wretched,

You are vile,

You are cursed.

If you try by yourself, you will just get yourself deeper into a curse.

You have got to get out from under the law, and the only way you can do that is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The only way you will want to do that is when you come to utter bankruptcy in terms of your own ability.

The law reveals sin in Verse 7 and then it rouses it in verse 8.

Suddenly you just see lusts coming out of you, you never knew were even there.

Now the law is not the culprit. Sin is.

The law does a good work because the law shows you sin.

Is that a good work?

Sure, it's a good work.

Aren't you glad you saw your sin?

Because when you saw your sin as it really was you saw your need for a Saviour.

You can't preach half the message.

Sin is the culprit, not the law.

The villain of the piece is sin, that is indwelling sin, the flesh which is aroused by the law.

These antinomians says that our whole problem is the law are wrong. Our real problem is sin, not the law.

It is thus indwelling sin, our flesh, our fallen nature which explains the weakness of the law to save us. The law cannot save us for the simple reason that we can't keep it because of indwelling sin.

Galatians 3:21, Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.

There was nothing wrong with the law. If there could have been a law to give righteousness then the law would have done it, but it couldn't.

Nothing wrong with the law.
Something wrong with the people.

The law is not the problem.
People are the problem.

But what the law did was create a launching point, a base of operations, a launch point.
Sin just took off.

When you see the law of God for what it is, you become much more aware of the sin that's there.

But have you noticed also that when you know that something is wrong, and you see it by the law of God, there's a strange desire in you to do it? Maybe you never desired to do it before you knew it was wrong?

If you don't tell me I shouldn't do something, I am not nearly so bothered about not doing it.

But as soon as you tell me I can't do it, then I just want to do it. It's sort of reverse psychology.

People get on and tell us about how terrible certain things are. The more they talk about it the more we just want to see what it is.

The more the light of the law shines upon and in our depraved hearts, the more the enmity of our minds is roused to opposition. The more it is made manifest that the mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God.

When a person sees the law of God and he knows what's right and what's wrong, then all of a sudden, the forbidden thing becomes all the more desirable.

That shows you how rotten man is because when confronted with the holy law of God. Man doesn't find himself eager to obey it. He finds himself aggravated to even greater extent to disobey it.

Romans 7;22, *For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.*

Paul is not talking as an unbeliever. Because an unbeliever, when he sees the law of God is not drawn to do right but he is aggravated to do wrong by that law.

So, the law reveals and rouses sin, and it is a good work that the law does that.

3. Law ruins the sinner.

Sin devastates and destroys.

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

Paul means I was doing fine. I was really living.

Paul was going along in his complacent and self-righteous life.

Everything was fine.

Suddenly this convicting upheaval when he was exposed to the law showed what sin really was.

What does it mean you died?

I died in the sense of all my hopes and all my dreams and everything I counted on. Everything I hoped in were shattered and destroyed and ruined and devastated.

- This is again the loss of all security,
- the loss of all self-esteem,
- the loss of all self-satisfaction,
- the loss of all sense of self-preservation,
- the loss of all ability to think you could save yourself.

Paul was devastated when he saw the real extent of God's law and knew his own sinfulness.

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

So, sin ruins, it devastates.

What Paul is saying when he says, "I died."

- I was broken in spirit.
- I was contrite.
- I was repentant.
- I was poor in spirit.
- I was mourning over my sin.
- I was meek before God.

Romans 5:6, *For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

Paul has come to the point in his own life here that he is really looking for a way out of this horrendous guilt since being exposed to the law.

The way to evaluate the genuineness of your salvation is not by your reaction to God's love but it's by your reaction to God's law.

It's not by feeling good about yourself, but by feeling bad about yourself.

To cater to the feeble sense of sin in the world is not to love people, but to hate them. That is why we must reaffirm the law of God.

It just devastates him, and that is exactly what God wants to do. Put him flat on his back in a hopeless, helpless, without strength condition.

The law just really aggravates sin.

Somebody was writing off a scientific experiment about a balloon. They filled a balloon with water, inflate it, fill it with water then, and they bring it near a coiled rattlesnake. The rattlesnake would feel the heat coming out of the warm water and the warm air in the balloon and strike its fangs and burst

the balloon, and out would come the poisonous venom to be collected and gathered.

The experiment was interesting because it indicates that until the balloon comes near, the venom lies dormant in the glands of the snake.

But when the balloon comes, it provides the occasion for the release of the poison. We see the law in a very similar way.

The poison of man's sin lies dormant until suddenly, he is exposed to the law of God. Somehow some way, it just draws him out. When he sees that thing, there is a certain attraction about the forbidden thing and spews out the venom.

John Bunyan in his Pilgrim's Progress.

Where he has Interpreter's house, and Christian is taken in there. There the large room represents the heart. The room is full of dust and the dust represents sin.

Into this room comes a man and the man is the law. The man's got a broom and he come into this big room with all this dust, and he just starts going like mad with this broom.

What happens?

Just dust every place, just choking dust all over the place so that Christian is almost suffocated in there.

What the law does?

It just comes into your life and just stirs up sin all over the place. That's its good intention. That's its good purpose so that you might see what a sinner you are, that you might seek a remedy in Jesus Christ.

V 8, *For apart from the law sin was dead.*

4. Law was given to provide blessedness in life.

Do you see the good purpose of the law?

V 10, *And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death.*

The commandment, which was ordained for the purpose of bringing life, I found to be rather unto death.

Instead of making me live, it killed me.

Following along that same idea that sin ruins a person.

The law was given to bless, to make life full, rich, meaningful, purposeful, joyous, and happy.

That's why God gave the law.

If we read the Old Testament over and over again, we will find out that the text of the Old Testament says, “If you do these things, you shall prosper in life.”

Proverbs talks that if you are obedient, and you accept the wisdom of God and you apply then your days will be long upon the earth.

- ✓ God will give you quality of life, and quantity of life.
- ✓ God will enrich your life.
- ✓ God will bless your life.
- ✓ God will pour out abundant mercies upon your life.

The law of God was ordained to produce life blessed. It doesn't mean just make you live physically, but to give you the fullness and the richness of what it means to be alive.

The law was to put men in the path of life, live to its extreme fullness.

That The law cannot accomplish that purpose in an unsaved person because an unsaved person can't obey the law. Therefore, cannot receive its benefits of blessing.

This is what Paul is saying here.

The law which God ordained to give me full, rich, and meaningful life just killed me, devastated, and slew me.

Can the law ever give life?

Paul says of course.

If you are a Christian and you love the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit dwells within you, the Holy Spirit in you can bring to pass the law, can He not?

***Romans 8:4**, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

The law can bring life to you if you obey God in the power of the Spirit which you can only do if you are a Christian.

If you obey God in the power of the Spirit, will God bless your life?

Of course, He will.

Will God prosper your life?

Of course, He will.

Will God pour out grace upon your life?

Of course, He will.

Will God allow you to live life to its fullest?

Of course, He will.

The law was given to bring blessedness to life, but the only way it can ever do what it was given to do is when man is redeemed. An unredeemed man is so overpowered by sin that he can't keep the law at all. Therefore, the law can't bring to him any of the meaning of life.

So, the law which was designed to secure life and its fullness for men only brings about death, devastation, destruction, disappointment, and disillusionment.

- Life here has to do with happiness and holiness,
- Death here has to do with misery and sin.

- ✓ When God's law comes along to an unregenerate person, all it does is show him how evil he is and make him miserable.
- ✓ When God's law starts to be operating in the heart of a Christian by the power of the Holy Spirit, it brings about his happiness, holiness, and blessedness.

Unsaved people cannot expect salvation or sanctification from the law. They can't, and that's what Paul was experiencing in his life.

The commandment, which was ordained to life, found to be unto death.

The law of God which I thought would make my life meaningful and fill up my life with purpose and so forth, I found to be nothing but devastation to me.

Philippians 3:8, *Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ*

So, Paul looked at all the things that he had done, and said it is all dung. The law couldn't produce anything in him but manure because it is incapacitated by the sinfulness of man.

V 11, *For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.*

Again, Paul comes back to say that sin killed him again when the law came along.

He was literally devastated.

Paul thought he was alive.

- He was going along doing what he thought was righteousness.
- He thought he was blameless.
- He was zealous for God.
- He was persecuting Christians.
- He was a member of the leadership of Israel.

- He must have looked at himself and thought, “how God must be pleased with me. I am spiritually alive. I got my act together.”

Then Paul was confronted with the reality of God’s holy law.

- He looked inside of himself and saw the evil of his own nature in his own heart.
- He realized that all the stuff that he had been doing didn’t at all bring blessing.
- He counted it all manure.
- He threw himself on the mercy of Jesus Christ because he knew the law had not made him alive, it had just killed him.

That is a deception that sin plays on you.

V 11, *For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.*

It deceived me.

How did sin deceive him?

Because it led him to expect one thing while he was experiencing another.

Paul thought if he was just self-righteous, he would have real life.

He would get blessing.
He would get purpose.
He would get meaning.

What Paul got?

Death, misery, sin, unhappiness, disillusionment, and disappointment.

The world is filled with people just like him.

They are madly running after a religion of self-righteousness, a religion of keeping rules, a religion of saying their beads, or lighting their candles, or going to their temples, or going to their seminars and their Bible classes, or going to hear their cultic leaders.

Religions tells that if you do so many things like this and if you live a certain good life, and you don't do this and you do that, and if you just keep all your works going and obey all these laws which supposedly God has written, if you just keep doing that you are really going to be alive.

These people go along with that stuff, and they know if they think at all and investigate their hearts that they are not alive at all.

All the promises that were made to them by that system are unfulfilled. If they really stop and look in their hearts, they don't find life at all they find misery and unhappiness and death.

That is the deceitfulness of sin.

Paul felt that all desirable spiritual goals were available through the law. But when he learned the truth, he knew he had been deceived.

There are millions of people in our world who are so deceived. The exceeding deceitfulness of sin is this, it makes people think they can please God and gain His blessing by their works.

The ultimate deceit of sin.

It makes people believe they can gain the favour of God and His blessing by their own works.

That is a deception!

It is not true. Sin deceives.

Ephesians 4:22, *that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,*

Hebrews 3:13, *but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

Sin is so deceiving.

People think they are doing well but they are not.

They think they are pleasing God.

Do you know how many people there are who really through their religious activity think they are pleasing God by going to church and giving money and keeping certain rules?

They really think that they are pleasing God. That is the lie of all lies and the deceitfulness of sin.

If Satan wants anything, he wants people to think they are doing fine without the truth.

So, the law reveals sin, the law rouses sin and the law ruin the sinner with its deceit. Then you might be tempted to say that the law must be bad.

it must be awful.

It must be a bad thing if it does all these bad things to people.

No, not at all.

The law reflects the sinfulness of sin.

It reveals sin, rouses sin, ruins the sinner, and reflects the sinfulness of sin.

V 12, *Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.*

What are you saying, Paul?

You just said the law reveals sin and the law rouses sin and the law ruins people by sin using it to deceive them.

How can it be holy, just, and good?

Romans 7:14, *For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

Romans 7:22, *For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.*

Romans 7:16, *If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.*

Paul says the law is good.

- The law is holy.
- The law is just.
- The law is spiritual.
- I delight in the law.
- Nothing wrong with the law.

If the law reveals sin, it's not anything that is the fault of the law.

If you take a person to court and the person is convicted and sent to prison for murder and given the death penalty, do you blame the law?

Is it the law's fault?

No.

It isn't even the lawyers.

It isn't even the judge.

It isn't even the jury.

It isn't even the court that sentences him.

It is the law.

The whole purpose of a court is to merely to uphold the law. A man slams himself against the law, and it is the man who is at fault, not the law.

So it is that the law is holy it is as pure as God is pure. If God reveals His standard, it will be as pure as He is.

- ✓ It is just.
- ✓ It is fair.
- ✓ It is right.
- ✓ It is pure, and
- ✓ It is right.

There is no wrong in the law. There is nothing unjust in the law.

What does it mean good?

It promotes man's blessedness.

So, we could say it is holy in the sense that it reveals God's perfection. It is just in the sense that it is totally fair.

It is good in the sense that it promotes man's highest blessedness.

How in the world could the law by causing all this sin to flourish promote the good of man?

Because where sin flourishes, where sin abounds Grace does much more abound.

As the law stirs up the sinfulness of sin, a man sees what he is, and then he knows he needs a Saviour. When he runs to the Saviour, grace is available for him.

Psalm 19:7-11, *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; ⁸The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; ⁹The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. ¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. ¹¹Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward.*

The law of God has a wonderful purpose.

- It converts the soul.
- It makes wise the simple.
- It reveals the truth.
- The law is holy, and the law is just, and the law is good.
- The law is spiritual, and the law is delightful.

If man can't keep it, there's nothing wrong with the law, something wrong with man.

V 13, *Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.*

Does the law get the blame for my sin?

It takes you right back to our analysis of a crime, a murder, a robbery, or something, is the law to blame?

No!

The law is not to blame.

The law simply reveals the sinner.

Paul asks **Was the law which is good made death?**

God forbid!"

The law wasn't made into something deadly. Sin is deadly.

The law was still given to produce blessing, the fullness of life.

Just because man can't live up to the law doesn't mean the law is bad. It means man is bad.

V 13, But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

Paul is simply saying that the law reveals sin.

The reason we preach against sin and the law of God so strongly in our message so that sin might appear to be sin, so that men can see how short they come.

You are exposing sin.

Paul says that when sin that it might appear sin is unmasked by the law, it works death in me by that which is good. That which is good is the law, but it brings about death.

Sin working off the law.

I see the law. I see myself fall short. I say, "O wretched man that I am, O merciful God, help me. I am a sinner."

Do you remember the publican beating on his breast and praying in Luke 18?

“God be merciful to me a sinner.”

Why did he say that?

Because he saw he was a sinner, because he understood the law of God. It came into his consciousness.

Paul’s argument then is tremendously powerful.

The law is holy, just, and good.

The law reveals and aggravates sin and uses sin to literally devastate and ruin the sinner.

All of this demonstrates that sin.

V 13, *might become exceedingly sinful.*

Sin can use the law of God, which is holy, just, and good to produce such terrible effects.

Sin can even twist, pervert the purest thing there is. That’s how sinful sin is. The law which was made to bring life, sin twists and perverts to bring death.

Paul is saying that sin is so sinful, that it will manipulate and use the holy law of God to damn people and deceive them all the way to their damnation.

The law is not at fault, sin is.

Men are so evil that instead of realizing the holy purpose of God's law, they slam themselves against it, are deceived. That's the wretchedness of sin.

So, the good work of the law, its power can be seen as it drives us to despair and out of despair comes salvation. But we can also see the utter sinfulness of sin that it takes the holy, just, and good law of God and uses it to work death.

Conclusion:

Galatians 3:19, *What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.*

Who is the seed?

The Saviour, the Messiah.

The law came to show men their need of a Saviour, to show them how utterly sinful they were until the one who could come and save them appeared.

Galatians 3:21-25, *Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. ²² But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³ But*

before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

To bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.

The law cannot save us.

The law cannot sanctify us.

But the law can convict us to lead us in desperation to Jesus Christ.

If you are a Christian, then the law still has that function in your life.

We need constant exposure to the divine holy standard of God so that we can see the sin in our life too and confess it so that we may experience the full blessing that belongs to His children.

So, when you came to Christ, you came because you saw your sin and you cried out to Him.

As you live with Christ every day, you need to see your sin also so that you can confess and seek His forgiveness.

As you study the Word of God, let the Word of God be always lifting up the standard. As you see the standard of God's holiness lifted up and as you see the beauty of God's law lifted up, may you find yourself falling short and crying out in repentant contrition to God, even as one of His own.

David said,

Psalms 119:11, *Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.*

He may have been indicating this that I keep exposing myself to your law so that I will see the sin in my own life and repent and turn from it.

If you have come to Christ, it is because the law convicted you, and you knew you needed a Saviour, and Jesus was that, Saviour.