

LIVING UNDER THE LAW

Romans 6:14

Good morning! We're continuing our series on the Book of Romans called "Power to Change" and we're now in this section on sanctification. The title of my message this morning is "Living Under the Law". Our verse today is Romans 6:14, *"For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace."* That's a very short verse but we could spend this session and probably next week on this verse. There is so much behind this concept. As a Christian you are not under the Law, but you are under grace.

What does that mean? Two weeks ago, we looked at the first part of chapter 6. We said that we were free from sin. The reason is because we are in Christ and Christ died on the cross and we died with Him. When He died to sin, we died to sin with Him. This is a difficult concept, and we'll keep coming back to it in the next few weeks.

Today, I want us to look at another freedom -- not just freedom from sin. We said that freedom from sin means that after I become a Christian, I don't have to sin anymore. I don't have to automatically give in to it. That doesn't mean I'm going to be perfect, but it means I now have a new power to stop those bad habits and those things in my life I didn't have control over before I became a believer.

So, today I want us to look at freedom from the Law. We are not under the Law but under grace as Paul says. First, we need to start off by saying,

I. WHAT IS THE LAW?

The Old Testament describes three different types of Law:

1) **Ceremonial Law** -- sacrifices, rituals, offerings, food restrictions. All of those things in the Old Testament that you read and think, "What does that mean? Why did they do that?"

2) **Civil Law** -- the part that has to do with the nation of Israel itself, the rules of government, regulations for the nation, the way the country is to be operated, governmental Laws, judgements, judicial Laws.

3) **Moral Law** -- this is the part we're most familiar with. It refers to The Ten Commandments primarily. God has some ethical standards of behavior that He wants us to follow.

So, when we talk about the Law in general, we're actually talking about three different parts: Civil Law, Ceremonial Law, and Moral Law.

II. WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW?

Why was the Law given? In the New Testament there are at least six different descriptions of the Law. Six analogies, six illustrations that show a different purpose of the Law. You need to understand the purposes of the Law, so you'll realize that as a Christian you're not under the Law but under grace. If you understand this, it's going to make a tremendous impact in your life.

We're going to look outside of Romans to explain what Romans 6:14 looks at. Fortunately, we have a lot of material written about this very verse. Paul wrote an entire other book simply to explain this verse. That book is called Galatians. The book of Galatians basically explains Romans 6:14.

Galatians 5:1 is the very first description of the Law. *"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."* If you'd read the previous two chapters, you'd find out that the yoke of slavery he's talking about is the Law. So, in this verse,

1. The Law is pictured as a Yoke.

A **yoke** is put on cattle. Its purpose is to control an animal. The purpose of the Law then is to control us. Not to change us but to control us. The Law was given to control us. This is easy to understand. What if we had a world that didn't have any Laws in it? Would there be any control? No. If there wasn't a Law that said

you have to drive on the right side of the road, would there be trouble? Of course. What if there were no stop lights? Would there be trouble? Definitely. What if there was a Law that said you could drive any speed limit you want? Obviously, you have to have Laws to bring order or some semblance of order or control to a situation.

The point I want to make is this: A yoke does not change a cow into a horse or into a chicken. It doesn't change a cow into anything else. It will always have the nature of a cow. Likewise, the yoke of the Law does not change you in any sense at all. All it does is control you. Many people think if they just obey the Law they can change. No. The Law was never meant to make you a different person. The Law was simply to bring control. The fact is people do act like animals, don't they?

Paul says don't let yourselves be enslaved again, burdened down by a yoke of slavery -- talking about the Law. Compare that to what Jesus said in **Matthew 11:28-30** *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."* When you became a Christian, the Bible says you gave up one yoke and took on another. You gave up the yoke of the Law, which is heavy, condemning, burdening, frustrating and took on the yoke of Jesus which is easy and light and gentle. When you became a Christian, you simply exchanged yokes. You gave up an external yoke of legalism for an internal yoke of love in Christ. **The lesson is that It's far better to be under the yoke of Christ.**

So the first purpose of the Law is to control us not to change us.

2. The Law is also pictured as a Guardian.

Galatians 4:1-3 says, *"What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. The heir is*

subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world."

Rich people have governesses (like Mary Poppins), or governors or guardians. Paul says the Law is like a guardian for immature people. Israel was like an immature nation. For a long time, the nation of Israel was like a nation of children. And God had promised them great things, but they were too immature to handle it. He says just like a kid that's born into a wealthy home and eventually going to own the whole thing, he's treated almost like a slave at the start because he's not mature enough to handle all the wealth and responsibility and inheritance. Small children need lots of rules and regulations. The Law was the guardian for the nation of Israel while they were immature. It watched over them. Everything was kind of black and white: Do this -- Don't do that. The Law, while Israel was immature, was acting like a guardian and took care of them. In Greek and Roman culture, they often had slaves to take care of their children. Parents did very little parenting. If you had any money at all you had a slave who basically did the parenting.

Paul says at the right time God sent the Messiah and said, "Now I'm going to treat you like my own sons -- like you're part of the family." *"But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship."*

(Galatians 4:4-5) You see, the Law is for immature people. But **the lesson is this: The greater the relationship you have with Christ, the less you're going to see the need for the Law.** The more mature a relationship is, the less guidelines you need for it.

That's true in a marriage. When Bel and I first got married there were a number of things we had to compromise on: If you do this, I'll do that... There

were some rules, guidelines, we did to keep peace in the family. But now that our relationship has matured, we threw away many of those rules and acted on the basis of understand and loving each other.

3. The Law is also pictured as a Slave Girl.

Now, let's look at Galatians 4:21-23, *"Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise."*

Here we have the example of Abraham, Hagar and Sarah which we talked about back in Romans 4. Paul went to Galatia and while he was there, he started some churches in Galatia and later he wrote this letter to them. He had taught them they were to live under grace. He told them that they didn't have to be circumcised or observe Jewish laws and ceremonies. After Paul left there were some people who came in called Judaizers. They said, "Yes, to be a Christian you must believe in Jesus, but you must also keep all the Jewish Laws."

There are people today, even Christians, who think you must keep all the Jewish Laws too -- Seventh Day Adventists are a good example. They worship on the Sabbath because it says Saturday in the Old Testament. They keep all the dietary Laws, a lot of the ceremonial Laws. They believe those are still valid. So Paul is writing this letter telling them that after he had left, these people came in and told them they had to add all of these things -- he says you're missing the point. Just believe!

Paul continues in verse 24, *"These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in*

slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.

Here Paul is saying the Law is like a slave girl. Hagar was Sarah's slave girl. This story illustrates the point that Hagar represents the Law and Sarah represents grace. The point he's making is that Abraham was never supposed to have a relationship with Hagar. Likewise, you were never supposed to have a relationship to the Law. Abraham was supposed to have a relationship to Sarah only who represents grace. God says I want you to have a relationship with grace. v. 30 *"But what does Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son."* The Lesson is that only if we live by grace are we part of the legitimate family of God.

Colossians 2 gives us a fourth application. We've seen the Law as a guardian, as a yoke, as a slave girl.

4. The Law is pictured as a Debt.

Colossians 2:13-14 *"When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross."* We were in deep debt because of our sins. We were literally bankrupt. Is there any way you can keep all the Laws of the Old Testament? No. We have broken so many Laws in our lifetime there is no way we could repay them all! But there was a person who paid it. Jesus Christ. Jesus paid all our debt and canceled all the written codes and regulations. All the ceremonies have been fulfilled. The moment Jesus died, the veil in the Temple was split from the top to the bottom -- God split it from the top to the bottom. The veil represents a barrier between God and man. God is holy and man is sinful and never can the two come together. There is

always a separation. When Jesus Christ died on the cross, God split the veil and that meant the separation has been removed.

There was only one person who could go behind that veil and only once a year. That was the High Priest. He could go behind the veil of the temple on the day of atonement and make a sacrifice. Now he says there is no need for any priest anymore. Everybody has free access to God. It used to be that the way you got to God was go through the priest. Now you don't need a priest. We have direct access to God. The veil has been split and you can talk to God anytime. You don't have to go through somebody else. You come in Jesus' name and have direct access to God.

God paid the debt. **The lesson is that you are no longer in debt to the Law.**

5. The Law is also pictured as a Shadow.

v. 16-17, "Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ." The Law is not only a yoke, a guardian, a slave girl, a debt that has been paid but the Old Testament Laws were a shadow of everything that was really going to come to pass. The reality is Jesus Christ.

When you talk about a shadow, what causes a shadow? Light. Wherever there is a shadow you've got to have a light. He's saying that the shadow is just a temporary thing. What's really going to come is the Light. Who is the Light of the world? Jesus. **Hebrews 10:1 "The Law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming, not the realities themselves. For it's this reason that it can never by the same sacrifice repeat endlessly year after year or make perfect those who draw near to worship."** We don't need the sacrificial system anymore. All of those requirements of the Old Testament about how they were to sacrifice -- that was just a symbol of the ultimate sacrifice who was coming to earth, Jesus. Once Jesus

came and sacrificed himself for our sins, we don't need these other sacrifices anymore. People talk about how the Temple has to be rebuilt in Israel so that the sacrificial system can be reinstated. Hebrews says it will never be reinstated. It doesn't need to be. It's worthless. It was just a shadow of what was to come. Reality was that Jesus Christ was the sacrifice. The lesson is that **the Sacrifice of Jesus is once and for all.**

The sixth illustration of the Law we see in the New Testament is in James 1.

6. The Law is pictured as Mirror.

v. 22 "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says [Don't just come and take notes. Put it into practice.] Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in the mirror and after looking at himself he goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law [The Law is perfect. That's why it's a standard. Perfect.] ... that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

The Law is simply a mirror. Remember when you were a kid playing in the mud and your mom said, "You ought to see yourself!" When you looked you suddenly saw how much mud you had all over your face. You were totally unaware of it until you looked in the mirror. James is saying the Law is simply a mirror. You don't look into the mirror to change yourself. You look into the mirror to see what you look like and then maybe you try to change yourself. But the mirror can't change you. All it does is show that you're dirty or that your hair's messed up. The mirror doesn't do you any good; it just shows you your condition. The Law can show you where you've blown it. That's the purpose of the Law. The Law shows us where we've made mistakes but the Law can't clean you up.

The lesson is that the Law reveals my condition but it doesn't cure it. All of those Old Testament laws don't help you obey them, they just tell you what to do.

The Law simply makes you feel guilty. It brings guilt. The Law cannot change you. It shows you the disease you've got but it doesn't cure it. It doesn't deliver you. It's like a mirror.

What can change you? There is another mirror. 2 Cor. 3:18 is the answer to James 1:22-25. There's the mirror of the Law and then there's another mirror. This mirror, when you look at it, changes you. *v. 18 "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."*

We look at the Lord. We contemplate on him. As we look at the mirror of God we're changed to be like Him. As you spend time with the Lord -- looking at Him -- you're going to be changed from one degree of maturity to another -- little by little.

There are a few other illustrations of the Ten Commandments but for the sake of time, I'm giving only 6. Suffice it to say that the Law was given to the Jews as a list of do's and don't's because they were immature and they have to be guided until they were set free. We, Christians, we too can be immature by looking at the Law as the be-all and the end-all. But God has set us free from the strict requirements of the Law.

III. HOW DOES A CHRISTIAN RELATE TO THE LAW?

If we are free from the Law -- and it's taught all through the New Testament -- then do we just throw out the Old Testament? Why should we teach the Ten Commandments? How is a Christian to relate to the Law? Three ways:

1) The Ceremonial Law. What does God say is our relationship to the Ceremonial Law? Hebrew 8:13 tells us what Christians are to do with all of the ceremonial laws. *"By calling this covenant 'new,' he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear."* **You have no obligation at all to keep the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament.** That is the old

covenant and we're in the new covenant now. In a little while we're going to do the Lord's Supper and I'm going to quote Jesus words, "This cup is the new covenant." The entire book of Hebrews teaches one basic truth: the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament are now unnecessary and abolished.

2) **The Civil Law** -- the laws involving the nation of Israel. In Ephesians 2:11-16, Paul points out that before Christ came there was a division in humanity -- Jews and Gentiles. He says God has not only broken down the wall between us and God but He's broken down the wall between Jews and Gentiles. God sees us all as the same in His sight now. *"Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)— remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world."* (Eph. 3:11-12)

Paul is talking to people in Ephesus, a city in Greece, whose people are all Gentiles. He's saying that before Christ came there wasn't a whole lot of hope for them because the Jews were supposed to be taking the message out and they hadn't been doing it. *"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one..."* (Eph. 2:13-14a) The two different divisions -- Jews and Gentiles -- He put them all in one class. *"... thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility."*

God's plan for the world is one new race of Christians. No longer should there be Jew and no longer should there be Gentile. He has broken down the barrier even there and put them into one and saying "Let's just have Christians." This verse has a very dramatic impact on what you believe about Bible prophecy. Israel is not

God's plan anymore; God's plan is now the church. He didn't create a whole separate body (the church) and also plan to keep on keeping the old covenant (the Jews). He's bringing them together. A Jew has no more special privilege than a Gentile today. **What counts now is your relationship to Christ not the fact of where you were born or what your background is or what your heredity is or where your nationality is.** What counts now is the fact that you know Christ. Christ is God's only plan. We are brought together in one. There is no Plan A for the church and Plan B for Israel. God is saying the Civil Law is also abolished. We don't have to keep the Civil Law. All Jews and Gentiles are brought together in one. What counts is not whether you're American or Korean or Filipino or Ilocano or Cebuano or what your nationality is, but your relationship to Christ is what counts. God doesn't have two bodies; He has one body -- the church. His plan through the world is through the church.

3) Moral Law. What about the Moral Law? *"For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace."* We're not bound by the civil law or the ceremonial law. Does this mean we're not bound by the moral law? Paul's answer is an emphatic no in the next verse, *"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means!"* He's saying we still have a responsibility to the moral law. It has meaning for us today not as a means for salvation, as a means to get us into heaven, but as guidelines for moral living. Not to put you in a better standing with God -- if you ever keep the sabbath or not is not going to change whether God loves you or not. It is simply for your own benefit here on earth.

In Romans 3:31, it says, *"Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law."* Paul here is talking about the moral law, the ethical behavior. Just because we live by grace by faith doesn't give us a license to do

anything we want to do. It doesn't mean we have the freedom to do anything we want to do. We still have a moral responsibility.

So, what value is it to the Christian? I Timothy 1:8, *"We know that the law is good if one uses it properly."* -- not to get to heaven, not to earn brownie points with God, not to say, "Hey, God, look what a neat guy I am.", not to compensate for all my sins. We use it properly. How do you use the Law properly?

In Romans 13:9, Paul lists four of the Ten Commandments, *"The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not covet,' and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"* How do you use it properly? You keep the moral law, not to prove yourself to God, but to show love to others.