

Romans 7:1-13 (ESV)

¹ Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? ² Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. ³ Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress. ⁴ Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. ⁵ For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. ⁶ But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

⁷ What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” ⁸ But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law, sin lies dead. ⁹ I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. ¹⁰ The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. ¹¹ For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. ¹² So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. ¹³ Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

I greet you with, grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Risen Lord and the Holy Spirit who lives within us as believers, and empowering us.

Every human being sooner or later seeks to answer identity and purpose questions. Who am I? Why am I here? What am I suppose to do? Does my life really matter? These identity and purpose question are answered by our creator and it is also given in verse 4 of our lesson today from Romans, as Paul proclaims, **“⁴ Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.”** (Romans 7:4 ESV) As a believer you belong to Jesus. That changes everything in life. It changes your relationships. It changes your future. It changes who you are. Because of that change, the fruit of character and the fruit of actions, your thoughts, words, and deeds are now different, impacted by the Lord Jesus. He is producing fruit in your life, the fruit of good works that involve your character and your actions. The call in our life is to, live for Him.

Understating that we belong to Jesus, Paul proclaims in the first six verses the change in regards to the law, Paul’s tells us we have died to the law. Another words the law no longer condemns us, we are free, Jesus took our punishment that the law demands, it has no claim on us. He makes a second point starting in verse seven, saying, **“⁷ What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means!”** (Romans 7:7 ESV) You

see, Paul explains, the law is not bad, it is holy. Because of the law I knew what is wrong and that drove me to Christ, for the law can not save. Sin brings death, not the law. The law is good. It shows sin, my need for Christ. Even as a Christian, the law guides me as I mature in Christ. May we understand that we belong to Jesus and how that changes everything in life, and how the law no long condemns us because we are in Christ, we are now free, our lives are filled with the fruit of character and of actions born out of our change in Christ.

You belong to Christ. How wonderful and exciting that is. Everything in life is now different. This new freedom, becoming a Christian and living in this new life is what Paul has been proclaiming in the book of Romans. Martin Luther said of this book of Romans, “This epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament....every Christian...should occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul. We can never read it or ponder over it too much...”(LW 35:365) This epistle is packed with the very spiritual food we need each and every day. It is a book on the gospel, the good news of God’s plan of salvation of mankind, both the Jew and the Gentile. We are saved by grace through faith. Jesus saves you from the condemnation of the law. Faith is the channel we receive what God has done. Call to Him for salvation, for forgiveness. We also live by that faith God has provided, trusting Him, as He through the Holy Spirit produces fruit in our lives. Without fruit no one truly belongs to Jesus. It is not the fruit that saves, but those that are saved have fruit, and fruit becomes a sign of believers, and is from God. Jesus uses a tree and fruit to picture what is happening spiritually in our lives as believers, true believers are like trees that bear fruit, He says, ¹⁷ **So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”** (Matthew 7:17-19 ESV) Also, fruit becomes a sign of a good tree, Jesus words in Matthew 12, ³³ **Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit.”** (Matthew 12:33 ESV) Also in John 15, it is God who produces the fruit, not you, Jesus says, ⁴ **Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”** (John 15:4-5 ESV) Your call is to abide in Jesus, to rest in Him. He brings fruit. Fruit involves character and actions.

CHARACTER FRUIT

In Galatians 5, we see character traits associated with fruit, it says, ²² **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”** (Galatians 5:22-23 ESV) These qualities, or character traits are being produced in the life of a believer, the Holy Spirit through the word develops and matures these qualities, the kinds of things like love,

joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. This affects every aspect of life. You belong to the Lord Jesus, He wants to give you all those qualities, receive through the word.

ACTION FRUIT

Fruit can involve the actions of a believer, how you care for others, sharing the good news of salvation. God is working fruit in your life, the good works that are being produced. In Ephesians 2 it says, “¹⁰ **For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**” (Ephesians 2:10 ESV). That fruit includes righteous living, the deeds, how you live, as it says in Philippians 1, “¹¹ **filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.**” (Philippians 1:11 ESV) In fact it includes every aspect of life, in Colossians 1 it says, “¹⁰ **so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.**” (Colossians 1:10 ESV) Fruit includes how you speak as it says in Hebrews 13, “¹⁵ **Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.**” (Hebrews 13:15 ESV) Your thoughts are part of living for Christ as well. Jesus explaining sin, lists “evil thoughts” first. (Mat 15:19, Mk 7:21) Peter wrote to encourage wholesome thinking, saying in 2nd Peter 3, “¹ **Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking.**” (2 Peter 3:1 (NIV) How you think is part of fruit in our Christian living. Watch what you think about. You can grieve and quench the work of the Holy Spirit through sin, through chasing the things of this world, receive and live the life He has called you to, as the word works in our lives.

The powerful message from our lesson is to live each day knowing, you belong to Jesus, live the life He has called you to live, as a new creation in Him. He effects your life both in character and action fruit, receive as the Holy Spirit works through the word, and know there is no condemnation from law, you are forgiven, for Christ’s sake, but hear the law as He guides you encouraging you in a walk with the Lord as He guides your steps enriching and providing for you and others, through you. May God grant this to us all

In His name we pray, AMEN May the peace of God that passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. AMEN.