

PHANTOM FAITH

In part 4 of 5 in our *Phantom Faith* series Pastor J.D. will be teaching from Mark 8. We will be pairing this with Romans 7 in the small group guide as we continue our study of Romans 4-8 [*Newsflash, we will be in Romans 8 next week!*]. Last week we asked the question, “Does the gospel leave us free to live in any way we want?” Paul resoundingly said, “No!” In fact, Romans 7:1-6 reaffirms this using the analogy of marriage: A married woman is only bound to her husband as long as he lives. Once he is dead, she is released from the law of marriage. The same applied to believers who have died to sin in Christ and now are free to serve God.

Since Jesus set believers free from the law, how do they relate to it now? Christians and non-Christians struggle to understand the role of the Law (God’s commandments to the people of Israel) in their lives. Paul addresses this head on in Romans 7:7-25.

The Main Point:

The law is good and exposes sin. Sin uses the law to produce death. Despite our weakness toward sin, we have hope in Christ’s rescue.

Before we jump into our study, I want to note that sometimes it’s difficult to understand how the word “law” is being used. Even throughout the Bible in different places it takes on different meanings in different context. To help us in our study this week, think about law, sin, and gospel like this:

- Law = anything the Bible says to do.
- Sin = anything we do in contradiction to what the Bible says.
- Gospel = what God has done for our salvation.

Sermon Response Questions:

1. In the sermon, Pastor J.D. brings up three specific ways that we will tend to subvert the gospel and live contrary to Jesus command that, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” (Mark 8:34) What were those three components of false faith? Which one are you most prone to and why?

Bible Study Questions: Read Romans 7:7-25

2. According to verses 7-12, what can and can’t the law do?

3. Verse 9 is a very difficult verse to read and understand – not just for us, but for Bible scholars too. However, by thinking about it well we can see the deceitfulness of sin and the hope we have in Christ better.

- a. What does it mean that Paul was “once alive apart from the law?”
- b. What does it mean that Paul was “alive” in this time?

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4. Verse 8 (“sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness.”) sets up verses 13-20. How is sin described in these verses?

5. Even in the face of our weakness toward sin, how do we hope in Christ? (vs 21-25)

Small Group Discussion Questions:

6. How should Christians relate to God’s laws?

7. Why is it liberating to be able to be honest about your wretchedness, and certain about your forgiveness? What happens if we forget one or the other truth?

8. Contrast this week’s study in Romans 7 on the power of sin and last week’s study in Romans 6 on the freedom we have in Christ through his death.

Prayer Guide:

This week’s study exposed the power and scope of sin. Pray these things over your group:

- Pray that through growing knowledge of God’s word, your group would recognize and repent of sin in all of our lives. (v. 7)
- Pray that no one would despair in our ongoing battle with sin in this life. (v 18)
- Thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord who has delivered us from this body of death. (v. 24-25)

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Works Cited:

Keller, Timothy. *Romans 1-7 For You*. The Good Book Company, USA: 2014

Keller, Timothy. *Romans 1-7: The Gift of God*. The Good Book Company, USA: 2014

Sailhamer, John H. *NIV Compact Bible Commentary*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids: 1994.