**Sermon Title: The Righteous purpose of the Law in Light of Sin**

**Sermon Text: Romans 7:7-13**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to understand that the law convicts unbelievers and believers of sin, and that the law cannot deliver from sin!**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 4 elements of the convicting work of God’s law.**

**I. The law reveals sin. V.7b**

**II. The law arouses sin. V.8**

**III. The law ruins the sinner. V.9-11**

**IV. The law reflects the absolute sinfulness of sin. V.12-13**

**Introduction: Psalm 119:97** MEM. Oh, how I love Your law! It *is* my meditation all the day.

**Deuteronomy 27:26** `Cursed *is* the one who does not confirm *all* the words of this law by observing them.' And all the people shall say,`Amen!'

**Galatians 3:10** For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." **11** But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God *is* evident, for "the just shall live by faith." **12** Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them."

The law finds its source in and from God! Why does God give His chosen people a law that was impossible for them to keep? His purpose was not only to reveal the standard of righteousness by which the saved are to live, but also the show them the impossibility of living it without His power and to show them the depth of their sinfulness when honestly measured against the law. The law was not given to show men how good they can be, but how good they could not be.

**I. The law reveals sin. V.7b**

Is the law sin?

Was the law given by God through Moses actually evil?

Can Christians now disregard the standards of the law and live as they please?

Certainly not! Greek negative “genoito” on the contrary.

The law not only is not sinful but continues to have great value for the Christian by convicting him of sin. The law being perfect itself, the law does reveal man’s imperfection. (In the present passage the apostle is speaking about knowledge of the full extent and depravity of man’s sin.) (**Rom 2:15**)

The law reveals or disclosed God’s divine standards of righteousness, men are able more accurately to identify sin, which is failure to meet those standards. (**Rom 3:20; 4:15; 5:13**)

Throughout the rest of the chapter, Paul uses the first person singular pronouns I and me, indicating that he is giving his personal testimony as well as teaching universal truth. He is sharing the conviction of sin the Holy Spirit washed in his own heart through the law before and during his Damascus road encounter with Christ and the 3 days of blindness that followed.

(**Acts 9:1-18; Acts 26:14**)

During his pre-salvation experience of conviction, Paul came to realize that the most important demands of God’s revealed law were not external but internal and that he had failed to meet them.

**II. The law arouses sin. V.8**

“The real battle with sin is internal, in the heart and mind.” (**Phil 3:3**) Only the transforming power of the Holy Spirit can take a sinful heart and make it pure and acceptable to God. The law’s purpose is to make a person aware of his sin and need of divine forgiveness, redemption, and divine standard of morality. (**Gal 3:19-25**)

v. 8 states the principle

v. 9 tells a story to illustrate the principle (the good law gets kidnapped and used for bad purposes.)

v. 10 gives Paul’s conclusion of the principle

v. 11 restates the principle

Aphorme originally was used of the starting point or base of operation for an expedition. Sin uses the commandments that is, God’s law, as a beachhead from which to launch its evil works. The verb “taking or siege” sin uses the law as a base of military operation.

In his book Principles of Conduct, John Murray, “observes that the more the light of God’s law shines into our depraved hearts, the more the enmity of our minds is aroused to opposition, proving that the mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God.” ([Grand Rapids: Eerdmens, 1957], p. 185)

When a person is confronted by God’s law, the forbidden thing becomes all the more attractive.

“Just as a broom cannot clean a room of dust but only stir it up, so the law cannot cleanse the heart of sin but only make the sin more evident and unpleasant.”

The axiom of Paul’s argument is that apart from the Law sin is dead. It is not that sin has no existence apart from the law. Paul’s point in Romans 7:8 is that sin is dead in the sense that it is somewhat dormant and not fully active. It does not overwhelm the sinner as it does when the Law becomes known. The idea is that sin lies dormant, the law then exposes the true nature of men. Sin lies dormant, until stirred up by the law.

**III. The law ruins the sinner. V.9-11**

Paul is still recounting his own experience before salvation. (**Phil 3:6**) Paul confesses that he has long been alive apart from the law.

Throughout all his years of proud self-effort, Paul served only the “oldness of the letter” of the law (**Rom 7:6**).

When true understanding came, he began to see himself as he really was and began to understand how far short he came of the law’s righteous standards.

His sin then became alive, that is, he came to realize his true condition in its full evil and destructiveness.

He died in the sense of his realizing that all his religious accomplishments were spiritual rubbish (**Phil 3:7-8**)

His self-esteem, self-satisfaction, and pride were devastated and in ruins. Paul died. That is, for the first time, he realized he was spiritually dead. When he saw the majesty and holiness of God’s

(**Rom 5:6; Luke 18:13**) perfect law, he was broken and contrite.

V. 10

What he had considered to be a means of gaining eternal life had turned out to be the way of spiritual death.

The law cannot produce blessing and peace in the unbeliever, because he cannot fulfill the law’s requirement.

God gave the law to provide blessing for those who love and serve Him. Throughout the Old Testament, the Lord gave His people such promises as, “How blessed are these”

**Psalm 119:1** ALEPH. Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, Who walk in the law of the LORD! **2** Blessed *are* those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart!

V. 11

Paul says that sin also deceived him. Deceit is one of sin’s most subtle and disastrous evils. A person who is deceived into thinking he is acceptable to God because of his own merit and good works will see no need for salvation and no reason for trusting in Christ.

Self-righteousness is not righteousness, human effort will not make it at all but is the worst of sins. Both by the standard of the law and by the standard of grace, the very term self-righteousness is a self-contradiction.

Sometimes before this encounter with Christ on the Damascus road, Paul came to recognize sin’s deceit and the law’s impossible demands and was convicted by the Holy Spirit of his own unrighteousness and spiritual helplessness.

**IV. The law reflects the absolute sinfulness of sin. V.12-13**

The apostle again answers the question, “Is the law sin?” (7:7)

The law is in fact holy, righteous and good. It is spiritual (v. 14), good (v.16), and joyfully concurring in his “inner man” with its divine truth and standards. (v. 22)

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

The fact that the law reveals, arouses, and condemns sin and brings death to the sinner does not make the law itself evil. When a person is justly convicted and sentenced for murder, there is no fault in the law or with those upholding it. The fault is in the one who broke the law.

V. 13

It is not the law against murder but the committing of murder that merits punishment. The law itself is good; it is the breaking of it that is evil. How much more is God’s law good, how much more evil is the breaking of it.

It is not the law that has caused spiritual death but it is sin that is the death master. Sin’s deadly character is exposed under the pure light of God’s law. The preaching of the law is necessary to the preaching of the gospel. Until men see their sin for what it is, they will not see their need of salvation from it.

Sin is so utterly sinful that it can even prevent and undermine the purpose of God’s holy law. It can twist and distort the law so that instead of bringing life, as God intended, it brings death. It can manipulate the pure law of God to deceive and damn people. (3:19-22)