

I. Introduction and review: Is the Law sin? v. 7a

- A. Paul has made some strong negative statements about the Law.
 - 1. The law cannot justify. 3:20 4:15
 - 2. Nor can the law sanctify. 6:14 7:1-6 5:20
- B. It is easy to see how Paul could be misunderstood. v. 7a
 - 1. Is Paul saying that the Law is evil? May it never be!
 - 2. Paul defends the Law by explaining how the Law has worked in his own life.

II. The Law exposes sin. v. 7b-8

- A. The Law reveals the extent of your sinful nature v. 7b 3:10f Ga. 6:5
 - 1. Without the Law you are unaware of how sinful you are.
 - a. Paul is not saying that there is no sin without the Law. 1:18-20 2:12,14-15
 - b. Those who have the written Law don't fully grasp their sin because they don't really understand the Law. Phil. 3:4-6 Lu. 18:11-12 16:15 Mt. 19:16-20
 - 2. The Law uncovers the depth of your depravity. Jo. 3:19-20 Ge. 6:5 8:21
 - a. The Law reveals sin as an offense against God.
 - b. The Law goes beyond external behavior. Mt. 5:20-22,27-28
 - c. The law goes beyond prohibitions. Mt. 22:36-40 Deut. 6:5 Lev. 19:18
 - 3. The example of coveting. Ex. 20:17 Deut. 5:21 Mt. 19:21-22
Why does Paul choose the tenth commandment to represent the whole Law?
 - a. The tenth commandment deals explicitly with the desires of your heart.
 - b. Once you understand that your desires are wrong, you are faced with the reality that you have broken the whole Law. Col. 3:5
- B. The Law stirs up your sinful nature to action. v. 8 8:7
 - 1. Sin uses the Law as a staging ground to produce more sin.
 - 2. How does the Law produce sin?
 - a. Before the Law comes, the sinful nature may lie dormant. v. 8c
 - b. The Law challenges your autonomy.
 - 3. The provocative power of the Law is a matter of everyday experience.
- C. Why is it good that the Law exposes your sin?

III. The Law condemns you. v. 9-11

- A. Paul's experience with the Law is typical. v. 9
 - 1. First, he thought he was alive.
 - a. This does not mean that he was spiritually alive. Actually quite the opposite!
 - b. He was in a state of spiritual complacency, imagining that he was pleasing to God. Phil. 3:6b Ga. 1:13-14 Lu. 18:11-12 Mt. 19:16-20
 - c. Such is the condition of every unbeliever.
 - 2. Then God's commandment came to him with power. Mt. 19:21-22
 - a. Not that Paul didn't know the Law in an external sense.
 - b. But the Law hadn't yet done its work in his soul.
 - 3. Then sin sprang to life.
He had a shocking sense of how far short of God's standard he fell.
 - 4. Then he died to all hope in his Law works.
He realized that all his spiritual accomplishments were rubbish. Phil. 3:7-8

- B. The Law which he expected to give him life instead revealed that he was dead. v. 10
 - 1. In what sense does the Law give life? 10:5 Lev. 18:5 Ezek. 20:11 Luke 10:25-28
 - 2. The Law brings condemnation and death to the disobedient. Dt. 28:15f Ga. 3:10
- C. Sin uses the Law to deceive and condemn you. v. 11
 - 1. By making you think that you are capable of earning God's favor by external Law-keeping. 3:20 IJo. 1:8
 - 2. By making you believe the Law on its own can constrain sin. 7:5
 - 3. By making God's Law appear to be unreasonable and oppressive. Gen. 3:5
 - 4. By causing you to discount the consequence of disobedience. Gen. 3:4 II Pe. 3:4f
- D. What good then is the Law? The Law brings you to the end of yourself.

IV. The verdict: The fault is not with the Law, but with your sin. v. 12-13

- A. The Law is not sin. Rather, God's Law is holy, righteous, and good! v. 12 Ps. 19:7-11
 - 1. The Law displays God's Holy Character which should also be reflected in us. I Pe. 1:15-16 Lev. 11:45 19:2
 - 2. The Law is righteous, declaring God's perfect justice. Deut. 4:8
 - 3. The Law is good, expressing God's benevolence. Mk. 10:18 IJo. 5:3 Ps. 1:2 119:97
- B. Nor is the Law responsible for your death. v. 13
 - 1. Your sinful nature, not the law, is the murderous villain.
 - 2. The Law shows you how sinful you are.
 - 3. The sinfulness of sin is demonstrated in that it uses God's good Law as an instrument of death.

V. Concluding Applications.

- A. The Law makes you realize your sin so that you might seek forgiveness from God. IJo. 1:8-2:2 Ga. 3:19-22,10-11 Lu. 18:9-14
- B. Application in preaching and evangelism.
 - 1. Preach Law alone and none will be cured.
 - 2. Fail to uphold the spiritual nature of God's Law and none will seek a cure.
- C. The fulfillment of the Law has come through the work of Christ. 8:4 10:4 Isa. 1:18

Questions for family worship

1. Why might some think Paul was against God's Law? v. 7a
2. How does the Law reveal your sinful nature? v. 7b
 - Why do many who know the Law not experience deep conviction of sin?
3. How does sin use the Law to produce more sin? v. 8
4. Explain the four stages of Paul's experience as described in verse 9.
5. How does sin deceive you using the Law? v. 11
6. What about God's Law is holy, righteous and good? v. 12
7. Why isn't the law responsible for death? v. 13
8. What place does the law have in saving us?
9. What good is the law?