

# Romans 7 – IBS Workshop

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## Key Verse 7:4

“So, my brothers and sisters, you also **died to the law** through the body of Christ, that you might **belong** to another, to him who was **raised from the dead**, in order that we might bear **fruit for God.**”

# Ch. 7 in the Context of the Book of Romans

6:1-23

Our *new life* and the *temptation of sin*: Not the *continuation of our old life*, but a *new life as instruments of righteousness*

7:1-25

Our *new life* and *the law*: *freedom* from the *law of sin* to live the *victorious life through Jesus Christ*

8:1-39

The *victorious life*: With the *power of the Holy Spirit*, Christians are *spiritual conquerors* and *victorious overcomers*

# Difference between Ch. 6 and Ch. 7

## Chapter 6:

- **Addressee:** All Christians
  - **Topic:** The relationship between new life & still-existent temptation of sin
  - **Answer:** Dead to sin, but alive in Christ Jesus
- = FREEDOM FROM SIN**
- = to serve God as instruments of righteousness**

## Chapter 7:

- **Addressee:** Those who already believe and know the word of God
  - **Topic:** The relationship between new life & the law
  - **Answer:** Dead to the law, bound in our new life to Jesus Christ
- = FREEDOM FROM THE LAW OF SIN** that accuses and condemns us
- = No life under self-condemnation anymore, but now serve Jesus as our new Lord & live the victorious life
- **Not lawless, but fulfilling the law**

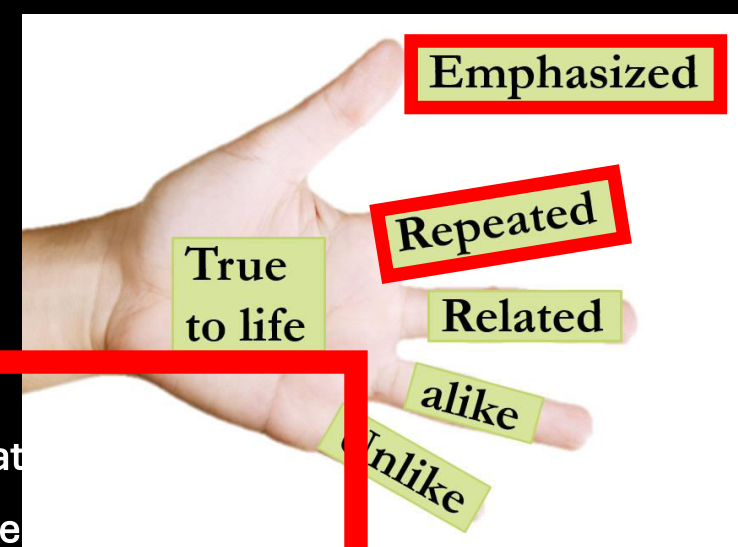
# Chapter 7: Sections

## 7:1-6 Freedom from the law

- 7:1 The law is only binding as long as the person lives To “die”, “death” – 8 times “law” – 8 times
- 7:2.3 Example: A husband’s death frees a married woman from her duty / law
- 7:4 Analogy: Through Christ’s death freedom from the law and bound to Jesus
- 7:5.6 The new, fruitful life through Christ

## 7:7-13 The meaning of the law

- 7:7 The law reveals the sin as a sin “sin”, “sinful” – 8 times
- 7:8 Sin abuses the law to arouse the sinful desire in us “law” – 6 times
- 7:9-11 The root problem: Through the law, sin brings death
- 7:12-13 The law is good and holy: It shows how sinful our sin is.



# Chapter 7: Sections

“sin”, “sinful” – 7 times

“law” – 9 times

## **7:14-25** The victorious life through Jesus Christ

7:14 The fatal diagnosis: The law is spiritual, we are unspiritual

7:15-20 The inner spiritual conflict: The power of sin leads him to do the evil works although his mind wants to do good

7,21-24 Without God, we hopelessly lose the war / fight against the law of sin

7,25 The turning point: Through Christ, we can be delivered from sin to the victorious life

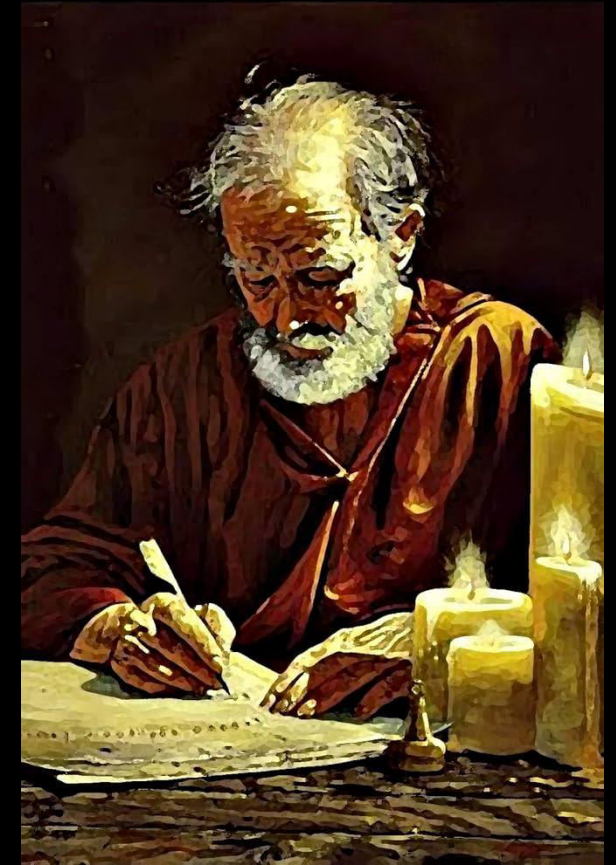
# Observation – V. 1a

## Freedom from the Law (7:1-6)

*1a “Do you not know, brothers and sisters — for I am speaking to those who know the law”*

### For whom did Paul write this chapter?

- “You” = The Jewish Christians – those who already know the law given by God



33 AD: Jews from Rome hear Petrus' Pentecost sermon (2:10.37-41)

A church with Jewish Background

49 AD: Emp. Claudius expels all Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2)

54 AD: Claudius' death – Jews return  
→ Find a church of Gentile Christians



# *Observation – V. 1a*

Freedom from the Law (7:1-6)

*1a “Do you not know, brothers and sisters — for I am speaking to those who know the law”*

- **Conflicts and questions:** Has the law become completely irrelevant? Do the Gentile Christians need to follow the law also?  
→ **Give clear answer to this question**
- Prepare the church in Rome (Jewish and Gentile Christians) to be good coworkers of Paul’s mission to Spain (Rom 15:24-26)  
→ **By being grounded on the truth of the gospel**

## *Magna Carta of King John, AD 1215*

# Verse 1: „those who know the **law**“

- The **law** is God’s best gift to mankind (before the gift of Christ Jesus)
- The **law** is the greatest achievement of civilized societies (e.g., Jewish Law, Roman Law, Magna Carta 1215, Constitution of the United States 1789, French Constitution 1793)
- The **law** is the standard and guideline to righteousness
- The **law** allows to discern good and evil
- Without the law: the **rule of power / Darwinism**

# Verse 1: „those who know **the law**“

- The greatest law is **God's Law**
- The **Ten Commandments**
- Written by God's finger
- Simple, but deep
- **Love God** and **Love your Neighbor**
- Transformed a slave people into a great nation
- The basis of the laws of Christian influenced civilizations
- **Superior law** to Greek philosophy, Roman law, Confucius, Humanism, etc.
- We can be **proud** of God's Law

# Verse 1: „those who **know** the law“

- **Study** => Jewish supremacy in Nobel Prizes (Albert Einstein)
- Interpretation!
- Application!
- In Jewish culture: Only the best (**Moses**, Priests, **Ezra**, Pharisees, **Jesus**)
- Kings & Chronicles: The **priests** are the **consciences** of the kings (Nathan and David)
- Psalm: “<sup>2</sup> but whose **delight** is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law **day and night**. <sup>3</sup> That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its **fruit** in season”
- We/You are so **blessed** to study and know the Law of the Lord!

# Verse 1: „those who **know** the law“

- Those who know the law realize that they are (hopeless) sinners.
- This is actually good!
- To realize that oneself is a sinner is the first step to salvation!
- After salvation we bear fruits of faith!
- What happens to the law after our justification?
- Fact: We are still imperfect. We are struggling.
- Question: How can we be righteous/fruitful, if we break the law continuously?
- Question: Can we ever reach/fulfill the standard of the law?
- Question: If not, can we ignore the law?

# Verse 1: „those who **know** the **law**“

- Question: Can we ever reach/fulfill the standard of the law?
- False answer “Gnosis”: “So then, I myself **in my mind am a slave to God’s law**, but **in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.**” (Romanes 7,25)
- Sounds spiritual, but Gnosis and all its derivations (humanism) is the way of the losers and the way to death: “<sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh, you will die” (Romans 8,13a)

# Verse 1: „those who **know** the **law**“

<sup>11</sup> And if **the Spirit** of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also **give life to your mortal bodies** because of his Spirit who lives in you.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it.

<sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if **by the Spirit** you **put to death the misdeeds of the body**, you will **live**. (Romans 8:11-13)

- Can we do it? Yes, by the Spirit!
- The spirit will our make **our mortal bodies** **alive**. Our sinful body is transformed in a **new body**.
- A new body with **fruits of faith** and live as an **overcomer**!

Verse 1: „those who **know** the **law**“

A new body with fruits of faith and live as an overcomer!

How do we get it?

The secret of the **freedom from the law**  
**in our relationship with Christ.**

=> Let' study Romans chapter 7!

# *Observation – V. 1b*

Freedom from the Law (7:1-6)

1b “that the law has authority over someone only as long as that person lives?”

To answer this question, Paul begins with a simple foundational principle:

- **The law (a law) only counts for the living, but not for the dead anymore.**



# Observation – V. 2-3

## Freedom from the Law (7:1-6)

<sup>2</sup> *For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law that binds her to him.*

<sup>3</sup> *So then, if she has **sexual relations** with another man while her husband is still **alive**, she is **called an adulteress**. But if her husband **dies**, she is **released from that law** and is **not an adulteress** if she marries another man.*

*(5. Mose 24, 1-4; 3. Mose 20, 10)*



The law: A married woman is bound to her husband

Affair = She breaks this law by having an affair

Since under the scope of the law:  
= broken the law  
Punishment

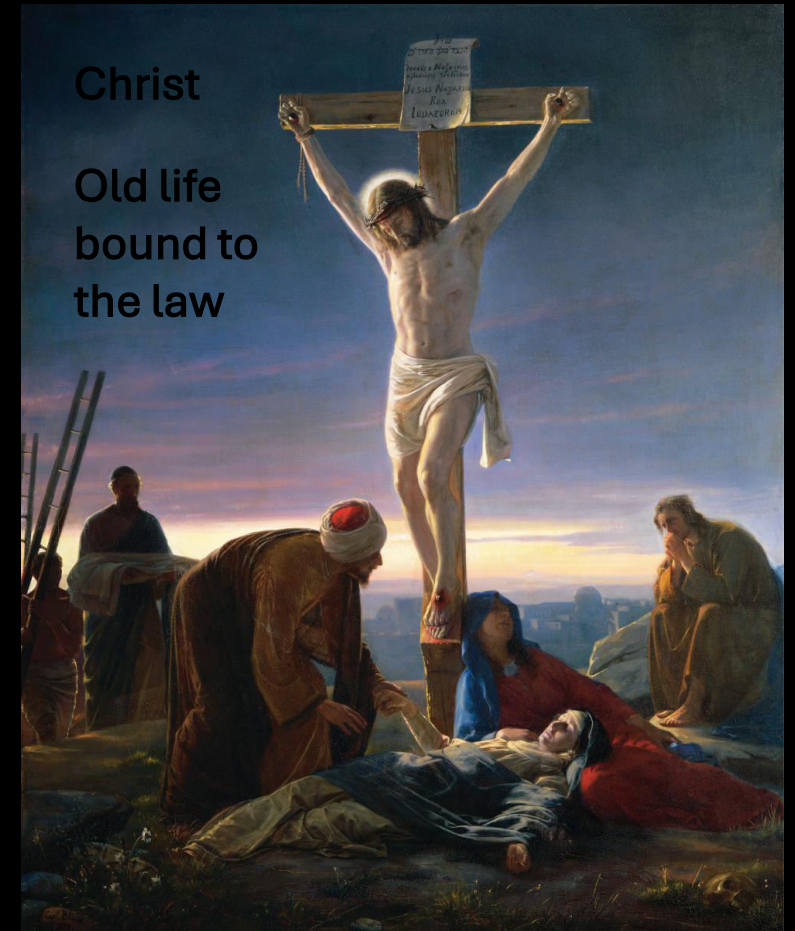
Husband dies  
• Not under the scope of the law anymore  
= Free to choose another man

# Observation – V. 4a

## Freedom from the Law (7:1-6)

<sup>4</sup> *So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law **through the body of Christ**, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.*

- The law cannot die. It is God’s holy “gold-standard” (Rom 3:20)
- Then we have to die. When we die, then we are free from the law.
- But when we die, then there is **no life for us.**
- Solution: **Through the body of Christ**, our old self has died with him spiritually → To spare our life for a new life! (Rom 6:3.4.8-11)



# *Observation – V. 4*

Freedom from the Law (7:1-6)

*<sup>4</sup> So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might **belong to another, to him** who was raised from the dead in order that we might **bear fruit for God.***

- Not bound to the law, but free from it
- = That does not mean living “lawless” and “free-pass”
- We belong to our new husband: Jesus Christ to obey him and bear the fruitful life

# Observation – V. 5

Freedom from the Law (7:1-6)

<sup>5</sup> *For when we were in the **realm of the flesh**, the **sinful passions aroused by the law** were **at work in us**, so that we bore **fruit for death**.*

How is life with the law different from life with Jesus Christ?

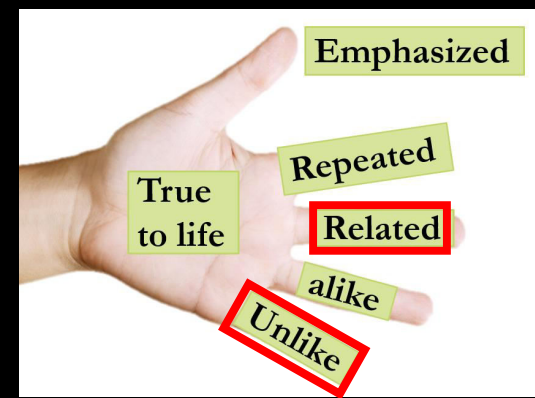
In our old life in the “flesh” = the sinful human nature:

- Human’s sinful heart reacts with rebellion against the good law (Eph 2:1-3)
- Strangely, bound to the law, we bring **only fruit to death**



# Observation – V. 6

Freedom from the Law (7:1-6)



***6** But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.*

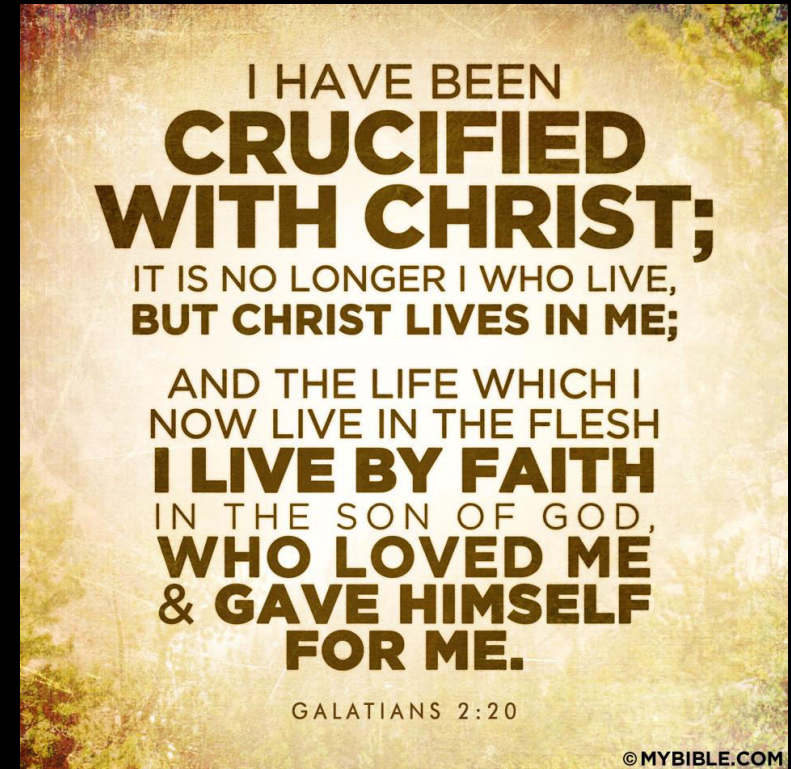
- “But Now” – the radical turning point!  
→ Freedom from the law + Being bound / married to Jesus Christ transforms our life
  - “We serve” – do the good works of God (Eph 2:10)
  - “in the new way of the Spirit” – Serve not driven – but with heart and mind, wholeheartedly (Deut 6:4.5) – because God’s holy spirit fills our heart and mind (Rom 8:1-4; Apg 1:8 und Mt 28:18-20; Apg 4:31-32; Gal 5:16-18)
- = the truly fruitful life

# Interpretation / Core Message

*“So, my brothers and sisters, you also **died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.**” (7:4)*

# Interpretation / Core Message

- Through Christ's death on cross for us, our old sinful body has already died!
    - Free from sin, now **obeying Christ!**
    - Free from the law, now **belonging to Christ!**
  - A transformed life where we serve God with heart and mind, wholeheartedly
  - Filled with the holy spirit, to live the truly fruitful life
- „But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” (Gal 5:22.23)



# Application: John Wesley

John Wesley: Very religious → Leader of the “Holy Club” – strict spiritual discipline, feasting, bible study, tracking every minute of his life to honor God

- But: He lived **bound to the law** through which sin accused him of his pride, self-righteousness, legalistic life
- **No fruits:** Fearful, self-disappointed return from his Mission Journey in America (1735-1738)



The Moravian Brothers & John Wesley

# Application: John Wesley

- When he accepted that through Jesus Christ he was not bound to the law anymore, but **freed from the law, and now bound to Jesus Christ:**
    - No driven, guilt-laden life anymore, but a truly fruitful life, **serving the mission work of God with the holy spirit every day**
    - = **Out of the grace of Christ**
    - **Methodist** renewal movement (pietistic tradition)
- Spiritual revival in Great Britain, Europe and the whole world



# Chapter 7: Sections

## 7:1-6 Freedom from the law

To “die”, “death” – 6 times

“law” – 8 times

7:1 The law is only binding as long as the person lives

7:2.3 Example: A husband’s death frees a married woman from her duty / law

7:4 Analogy: Through Christ’s death freedom from the law and bound to Jesus

7:5.6 The new, fruitful life through Christ

## 7:7-13 The meaning of the law

7:7 The law reveals the sin as a sin

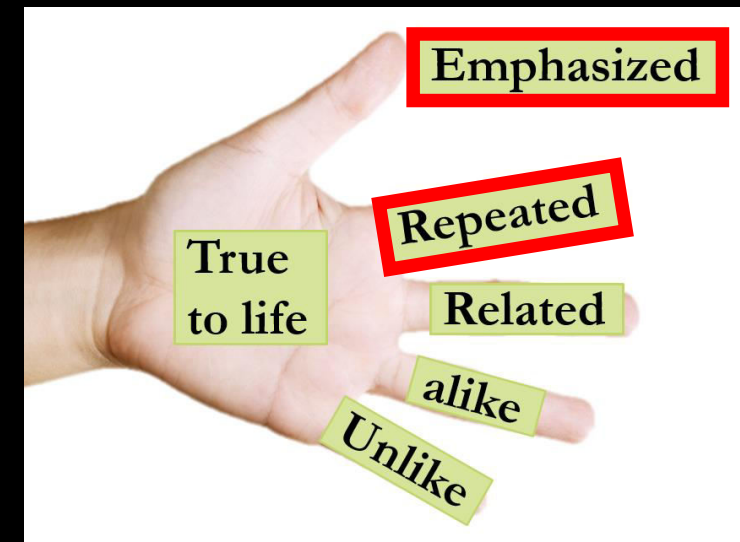
“sin”, “sinful” – 8 times

7:8 Sin abuses the law to arouse the sinful desire in us

“law” – 6 times

7:9-11 The root problem: Through the law, sin brings death

7:12-13 The law is good and holy: It shows how sinful our sin is.



# *Observation – V. 7a*

## The Meaning of the Law (7:1-6)

*7a What shall we say, then? **Is the law sinful?***

**When the law brings fruit for death, is the law sinful? Is the law something bad? What or who is the problem here?**

- **Would it have been better when God had not given us the law at all?**



# *Observation – V. 7b*

## The Meaning of the Law (7:7-13)

<sup>7b</sup> **Certainly not!** Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law.

- Certainly not - In greek: “*μὴ γένοιτο*”, *me genoito*”

→ The strongest expression of saying “No” - “Unthinkable!” / “That may never happen!”

- **Paul defends the law**, just as he defends the gospel in Romans 6 (6:1.17)

→ Paul makes it clear right away: The law is NOT the problem

- **The law is good! The law is not sin, but the law reveals sin as sin.**

Rom 3:20b “[...] rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.”

# Observation – V. 7c

## The Meaning of the Law (7:7-13)

*7c For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “**You shall not covet.**”*

- But why the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment as an example?
  - 1-9 commandments: Outward external behavior.
  - 10<sup>th</sup> commandment: Inner desires, longings, thoughts → looks into one’s heart
    - One can say: “I have never lied, never stolen, always honored my parents”
    - But no one can say “I have never coveted what belongs to others”
- The 10<sup>th</sup> commandment is thus a mirror of our heart



Vs.



# Observation – V. 7c

## The Meaning of the Law (7:7-13)

*7c For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “**You shall not covet.**”*

→ The 10<sup>th</sup> commandment is thus a mirror of our heart

- Other religions are concerned about our actions
- May be our attitudes
- But the law of God is higher than other religions – it is also concerned about our desires and longings.
- We shall be holy, as God is holy. Holiness is not only about our actions, but the ways of our hearts.



Vs.



# *Observation – V. 8-9*

## The Meaning of the Law (7:7-13)

<sup>8</sup> But **sin, seizing the opportunity** afforded by the commandment, **produced in me every kind of coveting.** For apart from the law, sin was dead.

<sup>9</sup> Once I was alive apart from the law; but when the **commandment** came, **sin sprang to life and I died.**

- Sin is really evil.
- When it is undisturbed it kills slowly and insidiously like a virus that tries to keep its host as long as possible.
- But when sin is threatened, it becomes violent and tries to kill off its host.

# *Observation – V. 10-11*

## The Meaning of the Law (7:7-13)

*<sup>10</sup> I found that the **very commandment** that **was intended to bring life actually brought death**. <sup>11</sup> For sin, **seizing the opportunity** afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to **death**.”*

What then is the answer to Paul’s Question?

- The law was **given for life and his therefore holy and good** (Lev 18:5)
- **Sin abuses** law to deceive us to follow our desires and rebel against God
- It shows not that the law is evil, but that sin is really evil.

# *Observation – V. 12.13*

## The Meaning of the Law (7:7-13)

*“<sup>12</sup> So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.*

*<sup>13</sup> Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! Nevertheless, in order that **sin might be recognized as sin**, it used what is good to bring about my death, so that through the commandment **sin might become utterly sinful.**”*

**The law: good and holy – fulfils what it was made for:**

- (1) Recognize sin as sin
- (2) Show the sinfulness of sin

**The fact that sin becomes alive through the Law shows that sin is not a concept created by the law but a real entity and evil power.**

# Chapter 7: Sections

**7:14-25 The victorious life through Jesus Christ**

“sin”, “sinful” – 7 times

7:14 The fatal diagnosis: The law is spiritual, we are unspiritual

“law” – 9 times

7:15-20 The inner spiritual conflict: The power of sin leads him to do the evil works although his mind wants to do good

7,21-24 Without God, we hopelessly lose the war / fight against the law of sin

7,25 The turning point: Through Christ, we can be delivered from sin to the victorious life

# Observation – V. 14

The Victorious Life With Christ (7:14-25)

<sup>14</sup>We know that the **law is spiritual**; but **I am unspiritual**, sold as a slave to sin.”

The fatal diagnosis: Paul describes who he is in a life under law & sin, without Christ

- Self-realization:
  - The law is spiritual (s. preceding verses)
  - But “I” – Paul – is unspiritual because he is sold as a slave to sin



# *Observation – V. 14*

The Victorious Life With Christ (7:14-25)

## “Spiritual”:

- gr. πνευματικός (*pneumatikós*)  
= driven by the spirit, divine in essence and origin
- The law originates from God
- **It shows the holiness and the character of God = as such it is holy, good and righteous**

## “Unspiritual”, “fleshly”:

- gr. σάρκινος (*sarkinos*)  
= from flesh, made out of flesh
- **Flesh = our sinful human nature**  
(*gr. sarx*)  
→ **Pauls speaks about his being without God**  
– **being weak and in a state controlled by sin and ist fleshly desires**

# Observation – V. 14

The Victorious Life With Christ (7:14-25)

<sup>14</sup>We know that the **law is spiritual**; but **I am unspiritual**, sold as a slave to sin.”

CONTEXT: the status of slaves in ancient Rome:

- Not citizens, **but property**
- **No rights**: beaten, bought, sold, even killed
- Complete dependence from his / her lord, **no protection to the arbitrariness of the tyrannic lord**  
→ **No hope in freedom, because children of slaves were slaves as well!**



# Observation – V. 14

The Victorious Life With Christ (7:14-25)

<sup>14</sup>We know that the **law is spiritual**; but **I am unspiritual**, sold as a slave to sin.”

Paul, a slave to sin:

- helpless against the command of his Lord – the power of sin.
- Paul does not do what he wants to do = he wants to do the good
- He does what he hates to do! = in reality, he does the sin that he does not want to do



# Observation – V. 15.16

The Victorious Life With Christ (7:14-25)

**“<sup>15</sup> I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.**

<sup>16</sup> And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.”

- Repeated: “do” – 10x in 3 Verses → This is about practical life
- “I do not understand what I do” - γινώσκω (*ginōskō*) → more than knowledge / understanding

= realize, identify, have insight, self-reflect

What Paul says: I cannot recognize myself in what I do. I cannot reconcile my actions with what I actually want! → Desperation

- Sin is not understandable. It is not rational. It is an evil power.

# *Observation – V. 17-20*

## The Victorious Life With Christ (7:14-25)

*<sup>17</sup> As it is, it is **no longer I myself** who do it, **but it is sin living in me.***

*<sup>18</sup> For I know that good itself **does not dwell in me**, that is, in **my sinful nature.**  
**For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.***

*<sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—**this I keep on doing.***

*<sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.*

- Paul differs between the “self” and the “sin living in me”.
- Does that mean “Paul is not responsible for his action because sin controls him”?
- **NO!**

# *Observation – V. 21-23*

The Victorious Life With Christ (7:14-25)

*21 So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me.*

*22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law;*

*23 but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.”*

**Conclusion: He was in the spiritual war.**

- Paul concludes his hopeless self, that without God and only with own strength, he wants to do good, but evil is in him and he could only do what is evil
- The law of sin always wins over / defeats the law of his mind



# *Observation – V. 24*

The Victorious Life With Christ (7:14-25)

*<sup>24</sup> What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from **this body that is subject to death?***

= sinful, hopelessly lost life, lost the war and subject to death!

- Outwardly, Paul was righteous and respected. But in his heart, he called desperately for help: “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?”

→ He not only realized that he is hopeless, but he also recognized and accepted that without Jesus, there is no hope for him.



# *Observation – V. 25*

The Victorious Life With Christ (7:14-25)

*“<sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God, who **delivers** me through Jesus Christ **our Lord!**”*

→ There is a solution! We are not hopelessly lost!

- Paul’s old body has died to sin and the law → Because he had died to the law and are alive with Jesus Christ: He could be free from the temptation of sin
- **With Jesus Christ, he may now live the truly victorious life**
- **Defeating the temptation of sin every day through Christ and his holy spirit**



Roman celebration of victory in a war

# *Observation – V. 25*

The Victorious Life With Christ (7:14-25)

*“<sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God, who **delivers** me through Jesus Christ **our Lord!**”*

- He *realized* that only through Jesus Christ who appeared him, could free him from his hopeless situation.
  - He *recognized* and *accepted* that only the Jesus who DIED for his sins on the cross, and ROSE to eternal life could free him the power of sin.
- He embraced Christ in his life as Christ and Lord.
- = Every day, he could have the victory through Jesus Christ over his sinful nature

# *Observation – V. 25*

## The Victorious Life With Christ (7:14-25)

### Paul's victorious life:

- “Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, “My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day.” (Acts 23:2)
- “But God has helped me to this very day; so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen“ (Acts 26:22)

**= Be influentially used to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth**



# Interpretation / Core Message

- The law is spiritual and holy
- We have a spiritual desire, but our flesh (self) is weak.
- We experience the spiritual war in us.
- That is good.
- We should not give up to “the entity” and become ever and ever losers.
- We should continue and win the fight in Christ!
- Because: We are free from the (condemnation of the) law, but the law continues to be the truth and target of God’s image and holiness in us!
- Because: We will receive the power of the spirit (that resurrects our flesh)
- This is the most important fight we can and have to win!
- Then we will become overcomers over the world, like Paul and Luther, and his witnesses until the ends of the earth.

# Application: Martin Luther

Martin Luther tried to live the righteous life by doing the good deeds – the hardest worker in his monastery

- He believed: I am righteous by holding God's word
- But: With his **own strength** and **good will**, he hopelessly lost against his sinful thoughts

= confessed for hours about his sinful thoughts and deeds, but hated God and condemned himself

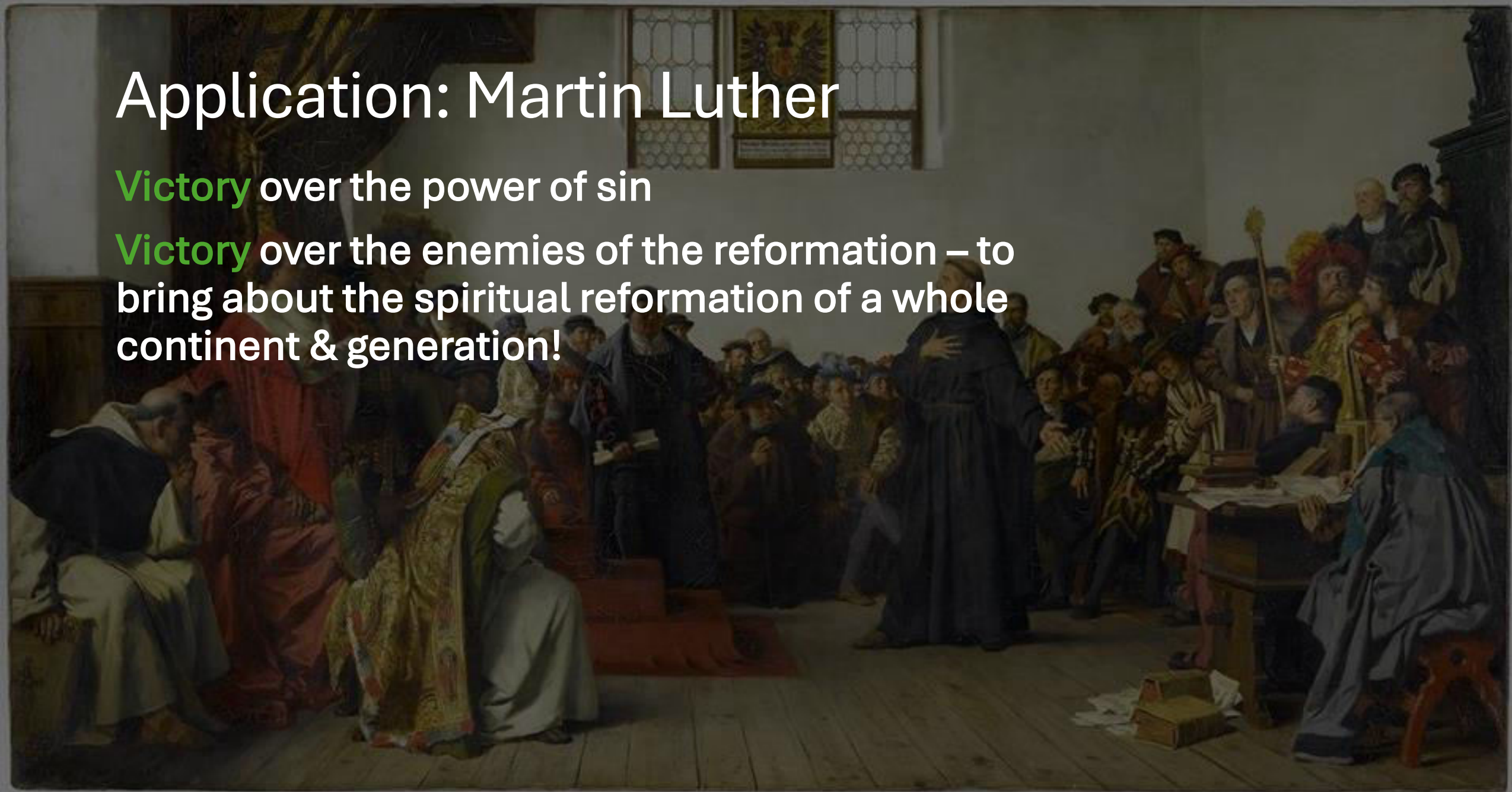
- Romans 1:17:
  - **Accepted** and **confessed** that without Christ, there will never be hope for him
  - **Accepted & invited** the died and risen **Christ in his heart** who makes him righteous by faith (Rom 1:17)



# Application: Martin Luther

**Victory** over the power of sin

**Victory** over the enemies of the reformation – to bring about the spiritual reformation of a whole continent & generation!



# Application

- I knew the law.
- It has helped me a lot, especially Deut 6:5
- I coveted worldly success, recognition, fame, wealth, also love of women.
- I realized that I am a hopeless sinner: “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death.”
- I lived in a vicious circle of sin, regret, self-condemnation, rebellion, as a loser, on and on and on.
- But in Christ I am free from the condemnation of the law.
- I can now live every day beginning from early morning prayer to struggle the good fight with confidence of victory in Christ.
- I can experience the power of the holy spirit and reap many fruits of faith.
- I can become a real overcomer and God’s witness in medical faculty and until the end of the earth.

# Application

- Don't give up!
- Don't say: I can do it later – no reason to let sin grow too deep.
- Don't say: I am too old.
- Live the truly victorious life growing in God's holiness:
  - Early morning prayer
  - Coworking for Online-Mission
  - Meditating on the Law of the Lord: 5-Books-of-Moses FBS, GLEF, 12-Step-Bible Study
  - Common life & word-fellowship in the house of God
- **Be God's witnesses through which Europe and the World will be saved!**



*“So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.” (Romans 7:4)*

*”But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”(Acts 1:8)*

