***We are the Bride of Christ
RO83-02***

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We are studying Romans 7:1-6. Our subject is "The Jurisdiction of the Law.” This is section number three,

It is obvious to everyone that no normal person ever claims that he always does what is right. Everyone admits that he fails to live up to what he ought to be by some standard: either divine; or, human. Everyone admits that he fails to achieve, as a matter of fact, even his own standard of what he thinks is right conduct. And when compared to the standard of conduct which is demanded of human beings in the Bible, the failure of people to do what is right is even more pronounced.

The apostle Paul, here in the book of Romans, has been using the word "law" to refer to standards for human conduct which are compatible with absolute righteousness; that is, a standard of conduct which is absolutely perfect. The Mosaic Law expressed such a standard of conduct. It was an expression, as a matter of fact, of the holiness of God. God's standard of law for human conduct then is absolute perfection or absolute righteousness. Failure to live up to God's standard of the righteousness that He demands is punished by eternal death in hell.

So, the human race is under the demand of the divine law of absolute righteousness if a person is to have eternal life in heaven. And it is clear that no one fulfills his own ideas of right living, let alone the divine standard of absolute righteousness. For a while, Adam and Eve did achieve the standard of absolute righteousness. Then they fell into sin, and that came to an end. The only other person who ever achieved the standard of absolute righteousness in living was Jesus Christ, and He maintained it throughout His life.

**Eternal Death**

The law of absolute righteousness, therefore, brings us to the judgment of eternal death, and there is no escape for anyone from this. A person can be released from the demand of the law of absolute righteousness only by paying the penalty of death.

**Marriage**

Paul, in the first few verses here of Romans 7 has been illustrating this principle of release by death, by using the law of marriage, which binds a wife to her husband until he dies. If a wife should go to live with another man while her husband is alive, she is guilty, Paul says, of practicing the business of adultery. But once a wife's husband is dead, her wifehood dies with him, and as a woman, she is then legitimately free to remarry.

Paul applies this principle to Christians who are joined to Jesus Christ as He pays the penalty of death for their failure to live up to the law of absolute righteousness. By the vicarious death that we experience with Jesus Christ, the believer is released from the jurisdiction and the condemnation of the law of absolute righteousness.

This is taught us, for example, in Galatians 4:4-5, where we read, "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under the law." Jesus Christ came, and He lived under the condemnation of the law of absolute righteousness. He did this, verse 5 says, "To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." He came to do this to release us from the penalty of the law of absolute righteousness, which is eternal death.

We may add to this Romans 10:4, which says, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes." So, all of us are born into the human race under the judgment, and under the condemnation, and under the moral guilt penalty of death of the law of absolute righteousness.

Now, this penalty of death demanded by the law of absolute righteousness, was paid by Jesus Christ through His physical death on the cross. 1 Peter 2:24 says, "Who, his own self, bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes you were healed." So, the stripes that shed the blood paid for our sins. The physical suffering on the cross, bearing the sins of the world, paid for our sins. We are released from the judgment of the law of absolute righteousness by a death, and that death was the physical death as well as the spiritual death of Jesus Christ.

In other words, you and I are not saved merely because Jesus Christ was a God-man, you and I are not say just because a God-Person became a human being in the person of Jesus Christ. We are not saved by the life of Jesus Christ on this earth. Don't make the mistake of thinking because He lived a perfect life, that's why you are saved. That is not true. Nor are you saved because He gave you techniques on how to live – the principles of morality. You are not saved by the principles and the teachings of Jesus Christ, nor are you saved by His example.

That is a favorite liberal concept: "We are saved by the example of Jesus Christ: being a good person; living a good life; and, doing good things." Never! The demands of God's integrity, as expressed in the Mosaic Law, are what put Jesus Christ on the cross in violent spiritual and physical death. Everything God does is always legal. Remember that. God never breaks His own laws.

Romans 3:26 has already told us: "To declare, I say at this time, His righteousness (that is, God's righteousness), that He might be just, and at the same time, the justifier of him who believes in Jesus." God has certain rules that are the integrity of His character. He never breaks His own laws. And that law demanded death for sin.

**Jesus Christ**

So, Jesus Christ, under the curse of the law, which demanded absolute righteousness, is the first husband of Paul's illustration to whom a Christian is married. Any personal testimony to salvation, therefore, which does not hinge on the Lord Jesus Christ, is a false testimony. You may ask a person, "How does a person go to heaven?" The first thing they should refer to is Jesus Christ. Our executive committee meets with people for church membership, they say, "How is a person saved?" The first thing they look for is that the person hinges his answer upon Jesus Christ. If they do not, red flags fly up in their mind, because it is only because Christ has died that makes it possible for us to be released from the first husband under the condemnation of the law.

You can get some strange answers when you ask people: how do you go to heaven? I know a man who asked that one time and the answer was, "Well, first you have to die." And that's not entirely wrong, but that in itself isn't going to do it.

So, we picked up the Scripture today in the middle of verse 4, and we look at the second marriage. The first part said, "Wherefore, my brethren, you also have been made dead to the law (the law of condemnation of absolute righteousness) by the body of Christ." When you were married to Jesus Christ, under the condition when He was bearing the sins of the world, you were freed, because you died with Christ to the law. And again, I point out that he did not say that the law died. That would not be true. It is we who have died to the law, and we died to the law when we died with Christ on the cross. For what reason?

The verse continues and says, "That." In the Greek Bible you would find this preposition "eis." This indicates the purpose of the death to the jurisdiction of the law of absolute righteousness. Why did God bring about the condition that we were dead to the jurisdiction of the law of absolute righteousness? The law of absolute righteousness that doomed us to eternal hell – that has been brought to an end. For what purpose? There was a reason for that.

That you (all you Christians) should be married." And here the word again is "ginomai" – not the word that you might expect, because this word means "to become:" that you might become something. This is a word that here connotes the idea of becoming in the sense of being joined to. It is in the aorist tense, which tells us that it's a point in time when you are joined to the resurrected Jesus Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is in the passive voice, which tells us that this is not something that you bring about by yourself, but it is something that God does for you. And it is infinitive. In the Greek language, the infinitive sometimes takes the word "the" with it. And when it does, that is a combination that expresses to us purpose. That's a signal that God the Holy Spirit is giving us the purpose for the new marriage, in order that we might be removed from the death of condemnation under the law of absolute righteousness, by union with Jesus Christ, that we might be joined to another.

**Our Old Husband**

That word "another" is the Greek word "heteros." You will remember perhaps from the last session that this is the word for "other," which means "other of a different kind" – a different kind of relationship. Now we are going to be related to Jesus Christ again. Let's get it straight now. The number one husband was related here to Jesus Christ under the condemnation of the Law, as exemplified in the Mosaic Law. So, here is husband number one, and that is the place of a curse of God. That is the place of death. That is the husband we were married to in the first place in the sight of God.

**Our New Husband**

However, now we're going to enter a new marriage because this marriage was canceled out by the death of that husband, Jesus Christ, when He died on the cross. We died with him, and we died to that condemnation. Now we have here instead a different condition. We have Jesus Christ resurrected and out of the tomb. Now we have Him here in glory. This is a totally different picture. He is not under the condemnation of God. He is now under the blessing of God. Therefore, this is the place of life. That is the relationship to the second husband. And it is a different kind of husband. It's a husband again, but a different one in kind.

Specifically: "Even to Him who is raised." The word "raised" looks like this in Greek: "egeiro." "Egeiro" refers to the literal, historical, physical resurrection of Jesus Christ out of that tomb. It is again aorist tense, which means a point in the past when the resurrection of Jesus Christ was brought about by God the Father after God the Father was satisfied with the payment for the sins of the world. It was passive because Jesus Christ didn't raise Himself. The Father raised Him up. It is participle which indicates a spiritual principle.

So, we will translate this as: "To Him who was raised." The same principle is referred to, we've seen already, in Romans 4:25, where we read, "Who was delivered on account of our offenses (delivered into the death on the cross because of our offenses), and was raised again on account of our justification." He was raised because justification was a reality. It was an accomplished fact.

So, here we have Jesus Christ as the second husband who has been raised. And it says specifically, "From." And this is the word "ek" which means "out from within: "the dead" ("nekros"). This is a noun, and it is referring to the group of people who are physically dead as human beings.

So, this refers to Jesus Christ now in a new relationship to the law of absolute righteousness. Jesus Christ now is the one who has paid the law's penalty of death in behalf of mankind, and He now stands as the One who is resurrected by the Father. It is very important that you notice that the Greek says, "Ek nekros" – that here is the mass of human beings who are dead in this graveyard, and Jesus Christ is out of it. It isn't only that He died. It is that He was also raised from the dead so that He is now alive again. That is the husband to which you are now related.

So, Jesus Christ as a resurrected one, free now from the condemnation (the jurisdiction) of the law of absolute righteousness, under which He once was placed, is the second husband of Paul's illustration. You and I as believers, are now married to the resurrected Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are sharing His absolute righteousness, and thus forever free from the condemnation of the law of absolute righteousness.

This same principle is expressed in Romans 6:3, which we've already studied, where Paul said, "Don't you know that as many of us were baptized (that is, baptized by the Holy Spirit) into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death." Therefore, we are buried with Him by Holy Spirit baptism into death, such that, as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so, we should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. And that's exactly what Paul is saying here.

Your first husband was Jesus Christ under the condemnation of the law of death, that absolute righteousness demanded. He died. Your wifely relationship died. Now you can be married to a new husband, Jesus Christ, the One who is resurrected, free of all condemnation, and Who lives forever. This is a fantastic, marvelous change.

**What Constitutes Being a Christian?**

What this tells us is something very, very important about what constitutes being a Christian. And, of course, this is where the great debate is today among the cults (among the religions) of the world. What constitutes being a Christian? Or let's put in practical terms: what constitutes escaping hell and ending up in heaven? That is the question that every normal human being is concerned with.

**Possessing an Entirely New Life**

Well, the first thing this text indicates about what constitutes being a Christian is that being a Christian is a means to possess an entirely new life from the one that you have by natural birth. A vicarious death and resurrection to a new life is what is involved in being a Christian. Being a Christian does not mean a mere modification of your habits. It does not mean a mere modification of your practices. It is a profound change that is described in the Bible by such words as "born again;" "new creation;" and, "a new creature." The difference between being a Christian and a non-Christian is the difference between eternal life and eternal death. You have to have a different kind of life to be a Christian. If you don't have a different kind of life from the one you were born with, then you are not a Christian.

There are many people who delude themselves by cleaning up their lives – that they've got a different kind of life, and they don't. They still have just the life that they were born in, which is under the judgment of death.

**God is Your Father**

The second factor of being a Christian is that you enter a totally new relationship with God as Father. You go from total alienation and separation to being a child of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ – from the wrath of God to the eternal blessing of God, and from being under the judgment of God to being under the care of the integrity of God, where you can be nothing but a winner. That's what it means to be a Christian. You are no longer fearful of facing a God of integrity in eternity. There is no such thing as the Fatherhood of God, apart from regeneration through faith in Jesus Christ. You have to enter a new relationship with God as your Father. That constitutes being a Christian. And you don't get a second chance: after death comes judgment.

**In Christ**

Another factor that that is involved in being a Christian is that you are removed from being in a position in Adam to a position in Christ. You're born in Adam. We've all understood that – that condemnation. By divine holiness, we're placed in Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Now we're free from all moral guilt. We possess the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ. That is the product of the grace of God, apart from all human doing. So, you have to be in Christ to be a Christian, and you only get there by trusting Christ as Savior.

**Free from Slavery to the Sin Nature**

Furthermore, we're freed from slavery to the sin nature. That's what constitutes being a Christian. You're no longer a helpless victim of your evil desires. You become instead a slave of absolute righteousness and the indwelling Holy Spirit. So, you no longer have to be ashamed of the life you live. As Paul has pointed out in this section here, you look back on that old life, and you're ashamed of those things. Now you have a life that you don't have to be ashamed of.

Becoming a Christian depends on something that Jesus Christ has don – on what He is in his sinless perfection, and on that alone. Grace brings all those benefits to us.

**Eternal Security**

The death of Christ under the curse and the penalty of the law of absolute righteousness, for us as sinners, was a death that is once-and-for-all. Now here is a very critical, important point. Someone may come up to you and say, "Oh, I don't believe that just because you're born again once – that you'll be saved forever. I don't believe that 'once saved, you're always saved.' You can be lost again. You have to do this. You have to do that. It is very hard to explain that question. People don't understand that question until they have an area of truth such as this right here. This is a little deeper truth, but if they'd grasp this, they'd see: "Why it's impossible for me ever to be lost again."

Notice: the death of Jesus Christ was under the curse and the penalty of the law of absolute righteousness for sinners. How many times does He have to die? How many times will God permit Him to die to pay for the sins of the world? Well, I don't want your opinion. Let's see what God says. God the Holy Spirit, in Romans 6:9-10, gives us the answer: "Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more. Death has no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died under sin once-for-all. But in that He lives, He lives unto God," and by implication, once-for-all.

So, now the question is: when is your second husband, Jesus Christ, the resurrected One, going to die? When is He going to die again? Well, the Bible says, "He can't die again." The Bible says, "He has died once-for-all." The Bible says, "It cannot be repeated."

Well, let's go back to the law of marriage. When can you be separated from Jesus Christ? And that's the only way you can be lost again – is to be separated from Jesus Christ. When can you be separated? Well, He has to die again. Do you see the point? Your second husband can't die again.

Now, in the human realm, that can be a great tragedy. You might get a second husband. That's really somebody that you'd like to see off in the great glory land in the sky. But this is not true of Jesus Christ. This is a husband that you don't want to lose. This is a husband that you want to keep. And the only way you can keep Him is for Him not to die, because death will separate you from Him. And the only way you can be separated from Him is for Him to die.

**Nothing can Separate you from the Love of Christ**

So, when people think that their salvation is here today and gone tomorrow, what they're saying is that Jesus Christ, their second husband, can die again. The Bible says, "No, He can never die again." And if He can never die again, you can never be separated from Him. That is what Paul the apostle comes to at the end of Romans 8, which is still before us – that tremendous final declaration that he makes on the basis of that fact that your second husband, Jesus Christ, the resurrected One, can never die again. In Romans 8:35, Paul says, "What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake, we are killed all the day long. We are counted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Why not?

Why can nothing that you do separate you from Christ? These verses talk about doing. All these doing things: the good things; the bad things; and, the wrong things that you do. None of those can separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Why not? Because the only way you can be separated from your second husband is for Him to die, and He's never going to die again. You got it? Jesus Christ cannot, and He need not, die again for the sins of the world. The law of God's absolute righteousness can make no further demands upon Jesus Christ for the payment of anybody's sins. The law of God's righteousness has been eternally satisfied because the law's own demand for death has been met. The law says, "Pay the price of death, and you're free." Christ has done that. No further demands can be made upon Him.

Galatians 2:19 says, "For I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. For I, through the law, am dead to the law." What does he mean? Paul means that the law says, "Death is the way to be released for me." That's what the law demanded. Paul says, "Wonderful! Jesus Christ came along and did exactly what the law demanded to have done, so that now he says, "I am free. The very demand that the law made is the instrument of my freedom. I, through the law, am dead to the law;" that is, released from it. The believer shares in the payment of Jesus Christ on the cross, so he can never again come under condemnation from the law of absolute righteousness.

Romans 8:1: "There is therefore now no condemnation who are in Christ Jesus." And I trust that as you look at Romans 8:1, you understand that that's where the verse stops: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" – period. And if you have a King James translation, take a pencil and wipe out the rest of that sentence: "Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Do you know why that's in there? Because some legalistic copier who did not understand this principle of first husband and second husband just could not put that kind of a sentence in there. He looked at that, and he was horrified. He said, "That's madness. That will cause everybody to live an evil life: There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. Well, if I'm not condemned, what do I have to worry about?"

So, this old, sincere monastic scribe said, "Man, I have to slip something in there to clarify that. I don't like that. And we have it in the old manuscripts where this part is not there, and then in later manuscripts, we can just see that somebody slipped it in. He slipped it in from verse 4. From verse 4, that statement is true: "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." In experiential daily sanctification, that is what is true. It's how you live and how you walk that sanctification is achieved. But salvation has nothing to do with how you live and how you walk.

So, the believer has shared the payment. He's free. You and I are under the authority of our new husband, the resurrected Christ. The only way you can lose salvation, and come out from under that authority, and come back into the condemnation of the law of absolute righteousness is for your new husband, the resurrected Jesus Christ, to die again, and thus to terminate the new marriage. There's no reason to fear the old husband again.

That's how Christians are. They walk around, boy, and they're fearful of that old husband under the condemnation of the law. They're fearful of what they're going to do because God's going to judge them and they're going to be lost again. They're pathetic creatures. What a disloyalty. What an insult to the new husband, Jesus Christ, the resurrected One. And that's what you're doing. You're insulting your new husband, the One Who is never going to die; the One that's done everything for you; and, the One that's caring for you. Instead, you're looking back to the old one. The old husband has no authority, and He never will again. He's dead.

The Christian remains married to the resurrected Jesus Christ, even when the Christian is very carnal. It's a vital union of one flesh. That's why the marriage illustration is used here. Even a wife who can be a very carnal wife, and who can be a very "unwifely" wife is still the wife. Her conduct does not change.

So, you should live in total subjection to your new husband under life, as you once lived in subjection to your old husband under death. Forget the old, the Bible says: "Delight in the new."

**We have a New Name**

Now this new marriage brings us certain privileges which you should be aware of. One of the privileges that comes because we're married to Christ now (we have a new marriage) is that we have a new name: His name. So, we are called "Christian." That is the normative response of a married woman. She gives up her father's name, and she assumes her husband's name.

**Feminism**

The feminists have an abnormality about getting married. I heard about a Christian woman (who used to attend church here once) who has recently gotten married, and she kept her father's name. She's a feminist type, and she's showing her liberation and her freedom. She doesn't take her husband's name. She uses her old name. Well, where did she get that old name? She got it from another man: her father. Now what kind of liberation is that? She's taking her old man's name instead of her new man's name. That's all. She's just taking the old man's name instead of the new man's name. That's feminism. This is intelligence on the highest level. And I have to look at these girls and smile when they tell me, "I have a freedom, and I'm keeping my own name." It's very disconcerting to them to say, "You mean you're keeping your daddy's name, huh? What name do you have except a man's name?"

At least, if you were going to be consistent, she should say, "I'm going to invent a new name. I'm just going to make my own name. Then I'll have my name. Instead I'm keeping my father's name. That's feminism – to show that they're liberated.

So, when you get married to your new husband, you take his name. And we have the new name of "Christian." The feminist says, "No, we don't want that name." And the whole ERA concept is to destroy this biblical relationship of a woman to her husband.

**Alexander Solzhenitsyn's Gulag Archipelago**

You may have occasion to read the second volume of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's Gulag Archipelago It's tough reading because the first volume takes you through what happens to an average Soviet citizen who resists the government for the purpose of freedom in any way. And it brings him up to the door of the concentration camp. Volume 2 takes you into the concentration camp. You will read a section in there on what happens to women – women who are treated like men, and women who are forced to do the labor of men. And one of the things that Alexander Solzhenitsyn observed, as he was in those concentration camps, and he observed these women, was that as they came in, and they had to be men (they had to carry the load of men), they began talking like men; they began to act like men; and, they began to be filthy; think filthy; talk filthy; and, do filthy, and they became harsh, and they became absolutely unfeminine in every respect. And, of course, they endured the physical deterioration. A woman cannot do hard work without certain things happening to her body.

Along with that, these people were transformed into totally strange creatures from another world, because they could not be men, and they were not permitted to be women. But Solzhenitsyn says, "I also observe that those who, in time, by the grace of God, were released from imprisonment, and who had devolved into this bestial animal level of having to act like men – once they were released from that pressure, very quickly dropped all that crudity, and all that vileness, and resorted to their natural normative pattern of femininity. The Soviet state could not keep them in that degraded condition. That is what ERA is all about.

We have taken the name of our new husband, "Christian." And it is a sign of the one-flesh reality that we have with Him. That's why a woman takes her husband's name – to show that she is one flesh with him. All that a husband is, is represented by his name, which the wife also then becomes. Jesus Christ is the Beloved Son and the Heir of God. Matthew 3:16 says, "He's my Beloved Son." Romans 8:17 says, "He is the Heir of God." We are now the same because we bear His name. The wife is to live in a way which is befitting the name of her husband. 2 Timothy 2:19 says, "That we who bear the name of Christ should escape and eschew to all evil."

The name of Jesus Christ represents the only source of salvation. Acts 4:12 tells us that. The cults don't have it, though they claim the name of Christ. Christians only, with the mind of Christ and with doctrine, can alone point a sinner to eternal life. Because we bear His name, we have the name by which a person alone can enter eternal glory. What an honor, isn't it, indeed, for you and me to be called "Christian," because we are the bride of Christ? That is one of the benefits of being married to this new husband.

Another benefit is that we share His position. Jesus Christ is the Supreme Lord of the universe. I like the way Philippians 2:9-11 state that: "Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." You have that name. That is who you are: "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father." He is the Supreme Lord of the universe. You share that position because you bear His name. Can you believe it? Jesus Christ is absolute righteousness. And you and I share that as well (1 Corinthians 1:30, 2 Corinthians 5:21). We have become and been made righteousness – absolute righteousness in Him, because we share His position. That's a benefit of the marriage.

No matter how much Satan ridicules you for your spiritual failures as a Christian, remember that you are still clothed with your husband's absolute righteousness.

Ephesians 2:6 tells us another thing: that we are seated with Jesus Christ in the third heaven. That is another benefit of the fact that we are married to Him. We are seated with Him in the third heaven. It does not say that "We are *going to be* seated." Now, some of you missed it right then. "We *are* seated with Him," Ephesians 2:6 says that right now. As far as God is concerned, that is your position. He sees you right there as part of His heavenly contingent.

**Access to God the Father**

Another blessings is that we have access to God the Father as His Son's bride. Ephesians 1:6 puts it this way: "To the praise of the glory of His grace, through which He has made us accepted in the beloved." A wife has access to her husband's father because she is his son's wife. You and I have access to the Father to an unbelievable degree because we are His Son's bride. We are "in the beloved." We are in His Son. That's part of the fact that you're married to this second husband.

**The Care of Angels**

Another factor is that you receive the care and the services of angels who minister to Jesus Christ. Hebrews 1:14 tells us that the angels minister to the needs of Jesus Christ. Because you are Christ's bride, angels are ministering to you. Most of you didn't bother to think about that once this week. Not once did you say, "I'm really glad that I have so many angels working for me. I know how many demons I have working against me. I'm glad I've got these angels on my side. I am just delighted to think that I, with all the things that I'm having trouble with and things going wrong, that the angels are out there trying to help me straighten it out." That's exactly what's true. You not only have a guardian angel, which some of you need very badly. I've seen you drive. But you have ministering angels that are helping you, and keeping things moving for you in the right direction. Don't ever forget that. Why? Because they're doing this for your husband, and you are the beneficiary of what they're doing for your husband.

Of course, need I remind you that one of the greatest results and privileges of this new marriage is that you will reign with Jesus Christ in the millennium over the whole world? 1 Corinthians 6:2-3 say that we are going to judge the world with Jesus Christ. We are going to be the rulers. That's why Christians are told: "Don't go to a court of law to straighten out your problems. You're Christians. You're going to be judging those judges who are sitting on the benches. So, you get things straightened out between yourselves as Christians."

**Husbands**

Also, of course, we experience the special love and the care of Jesus Christ for His bride – that which is so beautifully described for us in the Ephesians 5:25. Here is what your husband, Jesus Christ is doing for you, which is an example for human husbands: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word; that He might present it to Himself, a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So, ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself, for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it even as the Lord the church." Jesus Christ gives you every special care that you'll need, and then some.

There is one more thing. Another great privilege of this marriage to Christ is that you're going to be the center of the great celebration of this marriage in heaven recorded in Revelation 19:6-9, which describe the marriage supper of the Lamb, and you are going to be the key.

**Fruit**

The last part of Romans 7:4 gives us one other very important point. We'll tie it up with that. The purpose of this, we being joined to Christ now in His resurrected condition: "That." The word is "hina," which is a conjunction indicating the purpose of the new marriage: "In order that we should bring forth fruit." The Greek word you would see looks like this: "karpophoreo." "Karpophoreo" means to bear fruit. This is a lifestyle that the Lord is talking about. It's aorist – any point that you produce divine good. It's active – Christians are producing divine good. It's subjunctive – potential, a lifestyle of one married to Jesus Christ. Maybe he is producing divine good, and maybe running your life down a rat hole and producing human good. It's potential. Produce through God the Holy Spirit using your spiritual gifts.

Here is a marriage that is issuing in fruit. And normally that's what's happened to marriages. They issue in the fruit of children. They issue in productivity. And here is the fruit that God says, "I have married you to My Son so that you will produce divine good – fruit that is produced for "theos;" that is for the object of God. He is the object of your divine service. This means fruit which is acceptable to God the Father and which is to His glory.

Being under grace does not mean fruitlessness. That is the curse of Christianity. And many Christians are fruitless. And are they ever going to be disappointed come the Judgment Seat of Christ? The great delusion today is that if you're under a law system, then you will produce what is good and acceptable to God. And Paul says, "No. It is when you're out from under the law system, through the death of Christ, your first husband, that you come into the relationship with Christ, the second husband, that you begin producing fruit.

**The Fruit of the Spirit**

Basically, Galatians 5:22-23 talks about the fruit of the spirit. That's the starting point. The character of fruit bearing. You cannot bear the fruit of divine good until (and only) when you're married to Jesus Christ, not to the law. From our union should flow the progeny of genuine good works. Fruit-bearing is the epitome of the expression of life. Dead people do not bear fruit. It is a great discredit to a Christian to be barren of divine good. It's a great shame. That's exactly what the Bible says, isn't it? At the appearing of the Lord, none of us should find that we're ashamed. And some Christians are going to be very ashamed when Jesus Christ appears. Because of what? Because they were married to Him, and they didn't produce fruit.

The fruit of human good is an evil fruit, and it has a bitter seed. And Christians should not be guilty of producing that kind of fruit.

**Temporal Fellowship**

Fruit-bearing depends upon one very important thing, and that is temporal fellowship. Jesus Christ symbolize this in John 13:2-10 by washing the feet of the disciples, and telling them that they have to have the daily dirt washed off. Confession of sin in 1 John 1:9 is the basis of maintaining temporal fruit.

If you'll turn to John 15, we'll close with this passage to show you the nature of the fruit that the Lord wants us to produce. What the Lord does not want you to be is John 15:2 – the no-fruit category. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, He takes away." That doesn't mean you get lost again. I think you understand that. But He takes away from point of blessing from productivity. If you do not bear fruit, He takes it away. He may take your life and take you to heaven. So, that's the first category of no fruit.

Then the first stage of what the Lord wants for all of us, He gives in the end the verse 2 as being fruit: "But every branch that bears fruit, He purges it," that it may then go to the second stage of bearing more fruit, and then he may go to the next stage of verse 5 which says, "I am the vine. You are the branches. He that abides in Me and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing." So, we go from no fruit, to fruit, to more fruit, to much fruit.

Then here's the climax, in verse 16, because it's divine good: "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit remain." Now that is great. In case you get discouraged sometimes, when you've been a productive Christian, and you've become unproductive, do not think that something happens to your time of productivity. Never. It's stored in heaven. You'll never lose it. It is fruit which remains. Non-bearing Christians are disciplined by God. That's what he means when he says, "He purges them."

**The Judgment Seat of Christ**

So, being married to Jesus Christ, our second husband, has this great bottom line of fruit-bearing – divine good production. The name of the game of the Christian life is storing treasures in heaven in the forms of rewards to be distributed at the Judgment Seat of Christ. What else in life is really important? What else really matters? Whatever is important to you now; whatever problem you have now; and whatever you're struggling to achieve now, don't ever lose the perspective of the thing that is really important: standing before the "bema." That is the bottom line for you and me. In the Word of God the apostle Paul is desperately (practically on his knees) trying to beg us to understand that being married to Jesus Christ has a purpose, and that is to bear fruit. And if you are not using your spiritual gift, and if you are letting the days of your life slip by without investing them in Christian service that you are capable of doing, then you are a very foolish person. And the time will come when you'll have all eternity to regret it.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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