

## 引言 INTRODUCTION

Freedom is something we cherish as important. We can voice our opinions about the government and worship in churches because U.S. is “a land of the free.” When I wrote this sermon, I was in the process of refinancing my mortgage. The interest rate has dropped significantly in recent months. I can save a big chunk of money in the long-run and pay off my debt sooner after the application is approved. That reduced financial burden gives me a sense of freedom. In comparison, our relationship with Jesus Christ gives us the most important freedom of all. We have the liberty not to do what we want, but to do what we should that pleases God. In our discussion, we will skip chapter 6 of the Romans. We studied it twice on previous baptism Sundays. But I will give you a brief summary of the main teachings in that chapter. Paul uses baptism as an analogy to illustrate our death to sin when we became Christians. The procedure of immersing into water and coming out from water symbolize our identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. As a result, when Christ rose from the death, we also receive a new life as we commit ourselves to Him. We are no longer slaves of sin. Rather, we become slaves of Christ. We can resist temptation if we rely on God’s power. We can also actively choose to offer ourselves to serve the Lord. In chapter 7, Paul talks about the Law. He draws a parallel to the previous chapter. We see the same concepts of dead versus alive, bondage versus freedom, the objects our service and bearing fruits. The Old Testament Law was from God, and everything God gives us is good. The Law governs the life of the Israelites. However, the Law and sin share similar enslaving power on us. First, the Law gives us a false sense of hope that we can attain salvation by abiding by its stipulations. Paul invalidates that possibility in the earlier chapters of the book. Second, the Law can actually entice us to sin. In our sinful rebellion, we have an urge to do what the Law forbids. Christ’s death releases us from the bondage of the Law, and He establishes a new relationship with us. Even though we are not Jews, very often we feel restricted by the principles of the Law too. For example, we live by a list of dos and don’ts. Sometimes we even impose those requirements to our brothers and sisters. We can obey God with love only when we recognize our freedom in Christ.

## 解決 EXPLANATION

### 1. 受律法約束 Bound by the Law

First, Paul states that we used to be bound by the Law. Let us look at **verse 1**: Do you not know, brothers – for I am speaking to men who know the law – that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? When Paul uses the term “law,” it is applicable to the Old Testament Law, the Roman laws and even the laws in any society. Law is set up to constrain our behaviors. In doing so, it protects everyone and punishes law-breakers. Paul points out that the law can exert its authority only when a person is alive. That is obvious. The sentence term for an inmate ends if he dies in jail. The IRS cannot collect tax from a person who has passed away. Therefore, in the news we see people fake their death to evade their tax obligation. Paul then uses marriage as an illustration in the next two verses to explain that truth in case anyone still has doubt. We will read **verse 3**: So then, if she marries 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, even though she marries another man. The same rule is valid in every country. When a man and a woman get married, both persons will be bound by the marriage laws. A wife cannot marry another man while her husband is still alive. (Of course, there is something called a divorce. But that is a different scenario.) The lady can freely remarry when her husband passes away. She is released from the bondage of a previous relationship, and has freedom to engage in a new relationship. The same transition also happens when a person commits to Christ. Continue to read **verse 4**: So, my brothers, 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 Christ, we not only die to our sins, we also die to the bondage of the law. The controlling power of the law on us does not exist anymore. We can now form a new relationship with Christ. We are like having a happy second marriage. (Pardon me if such a description offends you.) In **Galatians 3:13** Paul explains how Christ's death delivers us from the bondage of the law: Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." Every sinner is under God's curse because we can never fulfill the requirements of God's law. By dying for us, Christ endured the curse on our behalf. Therefore, there is no more condemnation for those who are in Christ. We no longer need to earn our way for salvation too. Let me illustrate with an example. Suppose you took a required course in college. The professor had a nickname of "killer" because he rarely gave any grade above a "C." You and other students were in the final exam. Everyone felt like crying when he/she looked at the paper. Every question was very tough. No one expected a passing score. A week later the teacher gathered all the students. He shared that he would retire soon. He hoped to leave a pleasant memory in people's mind. Therefore, he announced that everyone would get an A. The students thought they were dreaming. They received the grade they did not earn and could never earn. In Christ, we receive the grace we do not deserve. God gives a new life to our spiritually-dead body. Since Christ now lives in us, we can overcome the authority of the law on us. Look at **verse 5**: For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. The Law can actually lure us into sin. How can that be? The Law declares God's standard of right and wrong. The problem is that we love the thrill of breaking the law. There is a hotel by a lake. The owner is fed up by tourists who fish from the balconies. The problem is not so much to do with catching fish. It is more to do with people making a mess when they clean up the fish they reel in. Therefore, the manager puts up signs everywhere to ask people not to fish. The result? Some visitors continue to fish regardless. They just do not like others to tell them what they cannot do. They intentionally violate a rule that is clearly set. Breaking God's law is of course sin. The results of sin are destructions, shame and guilt. However, in Christ, we have escaped the bondage of law. We can triumph over temptation. We can also overcome the urge to win God's favor by our good work. When we operate by the principle of works, we mistakenly think that God will love us more if we have a better performance. We think we are obligated to read the Bible and pray at home, attend church meetings, tithe and serve in ministries. If we miss any of those duties then God will punish us. We are scared of God's anger instead of attracted by His love. Such mentality can easily lead to pride. We think that we are a better Christian since we do more than other believers. God ought to reward us with a raise at work, a beautiful spouse and send our kids to renowned colleges. Our faith will crumble if we are bound by the law. We will be devastated when hardship comes. We wonder why God does not bless us when we do all the good things for Him. By God's power, we can free ourselves from the bondage of the law. God loves us with an unconditional love. He has

accepted us completely when we received Christ into our hearts. There is nothing we can do to earn more of His love, and there is no sin we can commit that will make Him love us less. God's heart will be glad when we give Him glory through what we do, while His heart will grieve when we disobey Him. It is a relationship of love and not duties.

## 2. 與基督聯合 Bonded to the Lord

In Christ, we are no longer bound by the Law. Instead, we are bonded to the Lord. We have a new relationship with Christ. We can stop bearing bad fruit of sin. Instead, we can bear good fruit for God. In the last part of [verse 4](#), Paul says that we now belong to Christ ...who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. We are given a new life in Christ. A life that lives for God. This is consistent with what Paul teaches us in Chapter 6. Next time when a temptation comes, we can say no to Satan by God's power in us. That is the negative aspect. On the positive side, we can make a decision to offer ourselves to serve Jesus, our new Master. Also, look at [verse 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. We no longer have to follow the written stipulations of the Law. From now on, we live a new life in the Spirit. In the Chinese Union Version, the translators rendered the "Spirit" as human's "spirit." It implies that we have a clear conscience before God after we are saved. An alternative way to understand it is that Paul is talking about the Holy Spirit. Christians now follow the new way in our new lives when the Holy Spirit dwells within us. Paul gives us further insights in Galatians chapter 5 when he compares our old self directed by our sinful desires to our new self under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Look at [verses 16 to 18](#): 16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. 17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. In the context, Paul reminds us not to use the freedom we have in Christ to sin. What follows in the next few verses is a list of sins. They include sinning against God by idol-worship, and violating others with hatred, etc. Paul warns us that we should no longer go back to our former life and indulge in sins. We have been liberated by Christ to live according to the Holy Spirit. We are familiar with the fruit of the Holy Spirit in [verses 22 to 23](#): 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. As a reminder, the word "fruit" is singular in the Greek text. It means that there is only one fruit of the Holy Spirit, while there are nine virtues. It is like what you buy a bag of candies that has various flavors in it. Those nine qualities are something every Christian should have. You may be a loving person or you have good self-control even before you know Christ. However, every believer should display all nine characteristics in his/her life. You can examine yourself before the Lord to see if there is any feature that is lacking or weak in your life. Perhaps you are too stubborn to hold onto your own opinions, or you do not show enough compassion to other's needs. You can ask God for more grace to grow in those areas. Notice that Paul mentions the Law in both passages. In verse 18, he says that we are not under the law when we are led by the Holy Spirit. Then in verse 23, he states that expression of those godly virtues is not against the law. When we live under the influence of the Spirit, our lives will supersede the obligations of the law. Some people asked Jesus which commandment was the greatest one. Jesus replied that the essence of the Law came down to two requirements: love God with all our hearts, soul and mind, and love others as ourselves. If we

abide by those two principles in everything we do, then we have met the requirements of the Law. Sometimes seeker friends hesitate to commit themselves to Christ because they think that the Bible has too many restrictions. They can no longer smoke, gamble and curse when they become believers. They have to attend worship every Sunday. They can no longer do things freely as they wish. It will be a burden if we see those instructions as duties. When your kids are small, they are very eager to help out in house-work. As they grow up, they gradually realize that they have been used by their parents all along. Chores will be seen as tedious. They grumble that those responsibilities will take away their play time. They complain why dad never asks older brother to take the trash out, or mom never asks younger sister to fold laundry. Of course, they still love their parents. They now love themselves more. If we hold the same attitude in our Christian life, then we will surely feel like monks in a monastery. When we truly understand how much God loves us, then we will be willing to love Him back. Bearing fruits for God's glory will become as natural as breathing. We can only do so when we rely on God's strength. A well-known passage is in **John 15:5** – "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." If you are not bearing fruit for God, then you have to check your connection. By fruit, it can be a display of the godly virtues mentioned above. Leading people to Christ is also another kind of fruit. Do you still live a Christian life by your own strength and wisdom? Are you bearing fruit grudgingly because of the expectations from others? When our lives are bonded to the Lord, people can discern that we are living a life that is out of this world. It can be our patience toward hard-to-please people, our sacrifice for those who can never pay us back or our courage to stand up for the truth when others feel intimidated. People can see Jesus living in and through us.

## 結論 CONCLUSION

We can obey God with love only when we recognize our freedom in Christ. Christ has liberated us from the bondage of the law. We have the freedom to do things that glorify God. We choose to love God over our own gain. I know a Christian couple who is in their second marriage. Both of their first spouses died of diseases. The former husband of the sister was a rich man. He left a hefty inheritance to his wife. But there is an important condition if she takes the money. She has to stay single the rest of her life. The man did not only want to control her wife while he was alive. He hoped to maintain his authority over her after he had died! You know already what she chose. When she met her current husband, the choice was clear. She picked love over money. Christ died to give us freedom. We should not live in bondage anymore. In every decision of our life, we must choose to love Him back.

## 引言 INTRODUCTION

自由是我們重視的東西。我們可以表達對政府的意見和在教會聚會，因為美國是個自由的社會。當我寫這篇講道時，我正在重新申請房子的貸款。最近幾個月利率大幅下降。從長遠來看，我可以省下一大筆錢。在申請獲得批准後我還可以更快償還債務。減輕的財務負擔使我感到輕鬆自由。相比之下，我們與耶穌基督的關係給了我們更重要的自由。神給予我們的自由，不是讓我們想做什麼就可以任意妄為。而是要我們做神認為該做的事。在我們的討論中，我們將跳過羅馬書的第 6 章。我們在以前兩次的浸禮主日探討過那一章的教導。但是，我會簡要概述該章中的主要教導。保羅以浸禮為類比，說明了當我們成為基督徒時我們是向罪死。進入水中和從水中出來的過程象徵著我們與基督的死、埋葬和復活認同。結果是，當我們將自己委身予基督，我們便會像祂從死裡復活一樣獲得新生命。我們不再是罪的奴僕。相反，我們成為了基督的奴僕。如果我們依靠神的能力，我們就可以勝過試探。我們也可以積極選擇服事主。保羅在第七章中談到了律法。它的內容與上一章相似。我們看到了死亡與活著、約束與自由、我們服事的對象和結果子這些相同的概念。舊約律法來自神，神給我們的一切東西都是美好的。律法維持以色列人的生活。但是，律法和罪對我們有著類似的捆綁能力。首先，律法給我們一種錯誤的希望，使我們以為可以通過遵守律法的規定來得到救恩。保羅在前幾章的經文中已經否定這個可能性。第二，律法實際上可能引誘我們犯罪。我們有悖逆的天性，有強烈的慾望去做律法禁止的事情。基督的死使我們擺脫了律法的束縛，使我們與基督建立了新的關係。就算我們不是猶太人，我們經常也會受到律法原則的限制。例如，我們心目中有一大堆信徒可以做與不該做的事情。有時我們甚至將這些要求強加給我們的弟兄姐妹。只有當我們認識到我們在基督裡的自由時，我們才能以愛來服從神。

## 解決 EXPLANATION

### 1. 受律法約束 Bound by the Law

首先，保羅說我們過去是受律法的約束。讓我們看一下第 1 節：**弟兄們，我現在對明白律法的人說，你們豈不曉得律法管人是在活著的時候嗎？**保羅使用「律法」一詞時，是適用於舊約的律法、羅馬的律法、甚至是任何社會中的法律。建立律法是為了約束我們的行為。這樣便可以保護所有人並懲罰違法者。保羅指出，律法只有在一個人還活著的時候才有效。那是顯而易見的。如果囚犯在監獄中死亡，則該刑期將立刻終止。稅務局也無法向已經過世的人徵稅。因此，在新聞中，我們看到有些人偽造死亡以逃避其稅收義務。保羅然後在接下來的兩節中以婚姻為例來說明這個真理，以防萬一有人仍然有疑問。我們將讀第 3 節：**所以丈夫活著，他若歸於別人，便叫淫婦；丈夫若死了，他就脫離了丈夫的律法，雖然歸於別人，也不是淫婦。**任何國家都有相同的規則。當一個男人和一個女人結婚時，雙方將受到婚姻法的約束。當丈夫還活著時，妻子不能嫁給另一個男人。(當然，還有一招叫作離婚。但那是不同的情況。) 當丈夫去世後，這位女士可以自由再婚。她從以前的關係中解脫出來，並有自由選擇新的對象。當一個人向基督委身時，也發生同樣的轉

變。繼續閱讀第 4 節：我的弟兄們，這樣說來，你們藉著基督的身體，在律法上也是死了，叫你們歸於別人，就是歸於那從死裡復活的...。在基督裡，我們不僅向罪死，我們也向著律法的束縛死。律法對我們的控制權已不復存在。我們現在可以與基督建立新的關係。我們就像擁有幸福的第二次婚姻。(如果這樣的描述冒犯了你，請原諒我。)在加拉太書 3:13 中，保羅解釋基督的死如何使我們脫離了律法的束縛：基督既為我們受了咒詛，就贖出我們脫離律法的咒詛；因為經上記著：「凡掛在木頭上都是被咒詛的。」每個罪人都在神的詛咒之下，因為我們永遠無法滿足神律法的要求。基督為我們而死，代替我們承擔了詛咒。因此，凡在基督裡的人，就不再被定罪。我們也不再需要嘗試靠個人的努力賺取救恩。讓我舉例說明。假設你在大學修了一門必修課。那位教授有「殺手」的惡名，因為他很少給任何高於丙的成績。你和其他同學正在參加期末考試。每個人看到考卷時都很想哭出來。每一條題目都非常棘手。沒有人期望能及格。一周後，老師聚集了所有學生。他分享說自己打算退休。他希望在人們的心中留下美好的回憶。因此，他宣布每個人都將獲得甲等。所有人都以為自己在做夢。他們得到了他們從未努力並且永遠無法獲得的成績。在基督裡，我們得到了我們不配得到的恩典。神使我們已死的靈魂得到了新生命。由於基督現在在我們裡面活著，我們可以勝過律法對我們的約束能力。看第 5 節：因為我們屬肉體的時候，那因律法而生的惡慾就在我們肢體中發動，以致結成死亡的果子。律法實際上可能引誘我們犯罪。怎麼可能？律法宣告了神對與錯的標準。問題在於，我們享受違反律法的快感。在某個湖邊有一家酒店。老闆很頭痛，因為有一些旅客喜歡從陽台釣魚。問題與抓魚無關。問題在於人們在陽台清理釣到的魚時弄得一團糟。因此，經理到處張貼告示，要求人們不要釣魚。結果如何？有些遊客繼續釣魚。他們就是不喜歡別人告訴他們有什麼事不能做。他們故意違反明確的規則。違反神的律法當然是罪。罪的結果是破壞、羞恥和罪惡感。但是，在基督裡，我們擺脫了律法的約束。我們可以勝過試探。我們也可以克服試圖以好行為取悅神的想法。當我們按照行為主義運作時，我們錯誤地認為，如果我們有更好的表現，神會更多地愛我們。我們認為我們有義務在家裡讀經禱告、參加教會聚會、什一奉獻、並參與服事。如果我們漏掉任何一項義務，那麼神就會懲罰我們。我們害怕神的憤怒而不是被神的愛所吸引。這樣的心態也很容易導致驕傲。我們認為自己是個虔誠的基督徒，因為我們比其他信徒做得更多。神應該獎勵我，比如讓我加薪、給我一個外表不錯的配偶、並將我的孩子送到名校。如果我們仍然受著律法的約束，我們的信心就會容易瓦解。當困難來臨時，我們將覺得難以接受。我們懷疑為何自己為神做了那麼多好事，但是祂卻不祝福我們。靠著神的力量，我們可以擺脫律法的束縛。神以無條件的愛來愛我們。當我們接受基督進入我們心中時，他已經完全地接納了我們。我們無法做任何事情來贏得祂更多的愛，我們不可能犯任何嚴重的罪使祂少愛我們。當我們通過所做的事來榮耀神時，祂的心就會感到喜悅；而當我們不順服神時，祂的心就會感到悲傷。這是愛的關係而不是純粹出於責任。

## 2. 與基督聯合 Bonded to the Lord

在基督裡，我們不再受律法的約束。相反，我們是與基督聯合的。我們與基督建立了新的關係。我們停止結出犯罪的惡果。相反，我們可以為神結出美好的果子。保羅在第 4 節的後半部分說，我們現在屬於基督 ...叫你們歸於別人，就是歸於那從死裡復活的，叫我們結果子給神。我們在基督裡得到了新生命。是為神而活的生命。這與保羅在第六章中的教

導是一致的。下次當試探來臨時，我們可以靠著神在我們裡面的能力對撒但說不。那是負面的層面。從積極的一面來看，我們可以決定獻身服事我們新的主人耶穌。另外，請看第 6 節：**但我們既然在捆我們的律法上死了，現今就脫離了律法，叫我們服事主，要按著心靈的新樣，不按著儀文的舊樣。**我們不再需要遵守律法的字面規定。從現在開始，我們在聖靈中過著新的生活。在和合本聖經中，「靈」是翻譯為人的「心靈」。這意味著在得救後，我們在神面前會有個清潔的良心。另一種理解的方式是「靈」是指聖靈。當聖靈住在我們裡面時，基督徒現在按照新生命的方式來過生活。保羅在加拉太書第 5 章中給了我們更多的提醒，他比較我們過去在罪惡的慾望控制下的老我與在聖靈引導下的新我。看第 16 至 18 節：**16 我說，你們當順著聖靈而行，就不放縱肉體的情慾了。17 因為情慾和聖靈相爭，聖靈和情慾相爭，這兩個是彼此相敵，使你們不能做所願意做的。18 但你們若被聖靈引導，就不在律法以下。**在上下文中，保羅提醒我們不要濫用基督裡的自由來犯罪。接下來的幾節經文列出了一系列的罪。其中包括拜偶像的罪，以及因為仇恨而侵犯他人的罪。保羅警告我們，我們不應再回到過去的生命，沉迷於罪惡中。我們已經被基督釋放，使我們可以按照聖靈生活。我們熟悉第 22 至 23 節中聖靈的果子：**22 聖靈所結的果子，就是仁愛、喜樂、和平、忍耐、恩慈、良善、信實、23 溫柔、節制。**這樣的事沒有律法禁止。提醒一下，這裡希臘文的「果子」一詞是單數形式。這意味著聖靈只有一個果子，但是有九種美德。就像你購買一袋有各種口味的糖果一樣。這九種素質是每個基督徒都應具備的。你可能在信主前就是一個有愛心的人，或者是擁有良好的自製力。但是，每個信徒都應該在生活表現出全部九個特徵。你可以在主面前檢視自己，看看自己在哪些方面有任何不足或比較微弱。也許你太固執了，無法放棄自己的觀點。或者你沒有足夠的憐憫，漠視別人的需要。你可以求神在那些方面給你更多的恩典。請注意，保羅在這兩節中都提到了律法。在第 18 節中，他說，當我們被聖靈引導時，我們就不在律法之下。然後在第 23 節中，他指出表達這些敬虔美德並不受律法禁止。當我們在聖靈的影響下生活時，我們生活的行為表現將超越律法的要求。有人問耶穌哪一條誡命是最大的。耶穌回答說，律法的本質歸納為兩個原則：盡心盡意地愛神，並且要愛人如己。如果我們在所有事情上都遵守這兩個原則，那麼我們就是符合律法的要求了。有時候，福音朋友會猶豫是否要決志信主，因為他們認為聖經有太多的限制。當他們成為信徒後，他們不能抽煙、賭博和說髒話。他們必須在每個星期日參加崇拜。他們不能隨心所欲地做事。如果我們將這些原則視為責任，那將是一個重擔。當你的孩子還小時，他們非常願意幫忙做家務。隨著他們的成長，他們逐漸意識到原來自己一直被父母利用。從此他們覺得家務很煩瑣乏味。他們抱怨說這些責任佔用了他們的玩遊戲時間。他們抱怨為什麼爸爸從不要求哥哥倒垃圾，或者媽媽從不叫妹妹折疊衣物。當然，他們仍然愛父母。他們現在更加愛自己。如果我們對基督徒生活抱同樣的態度，那麼我們肯定會覺得自己像修道院裡的修士。當我們真正了解神多麼愛我們時，我們才會願意愛祂。為神的榮耀結果子，就會將像呼吸一樣自然。我們只有在依靠神的力量時才能這樣做。在約翰福音 15:5 中有一句我們熟悉的經文 - **「我是葡萄樹，你們是枝子。常在我裡面的，我也常在他裡面，這人就多結果子；因為離了我，你們就不能做什麼。」**如果你沒有為神結出果子，那麼你必須檢查你與神的連接。所謂果子，它可以指上述敬虔的美德。帶領別人信主當然也是另一種果子。你目前是否仍然憑著自己的力量和智慧過基督徒生活？你是否因為別人的期望而勉強結果子？當我們的生命與主聯繫在一起時，人們可以看出我們是與世人不一樣的。可能是我們對難以取悅

的人的耐心，對那些永遠無法償還人情的人們的犧牲，或者當其他人感到恐懼時我們勇於捍衛真理的勇氣。人們可以看到耶穌住在我們裡面，並通過我們的生命流露出來。

## 結論 CONCLUSION

只有當我們認識到我們在基督裡的自由時，我們才能以愛來服從神。基督使我們脫離了律法的束縛。賜給我們自由去做榮耀神的事。我們選擇愛神過於自己的利益。我認識一對基督徒夫婦，他們兩人都是再婚。他們的第一個配偶都是因疾病去世的。姐妹的前夫是個有錢人。他留給妻子豐厚的遺產。但是，如果她要拿那筆錢，那她就要遵守一個重要的條件。她必須保持單身。那位先生不僅活著時想要控制妻子，他希望在他死後保持對她的控制！你已經知道她選擇了什麼。當她遇到了現任丈夫時，選擇就很明確了。她為了愛情放棄金錢。基督的死給了我們自由。我們不再活在束縛中。在我們生活的每一個決定中，我們必須選擇愛神。