

Sunday, November 3, 2024 Sunday Morning Worship Sermon

["Liberation from the Law"] Pastor Takaaki Inoue

Romans 7:1~6, John 19:28~37

## ① 【We are dead】

Verse 1 says, "Don't you know that the law rules over man only while he lives?" Paul here uses the example of the "marriage covenant" to illustrate the relationship between the law and the gospel. A person is bound by the law only while he is alive. Those who die will be freed from debt, from all relationships, from all jobs and contracts. In marriage, the wife is bound by the marriage relationship as long as the husband is alive, but when the husband dies, she is released. If she marries another man while her husband is alive, she will be charged with a crime, but if her husband dies, she will be free, so it is not a sin to marry another man. People live by "rules" when they live in this world, and it is called a sin to violate these "rules". These "rules" are called the law or commandment in the Bible. Verse 4 says, "Now, brethren, you are also united to the body of Christ, and have become dead before the law, that you may be of the other, that is, the one who was raised from the dead, and thus we may bear fruit unto God." There is. We used to be married to the law. The law bound us and judged us, and we could not be free. But we died by baptism. Baptism is the ceremony of becoming one with Christ, the wedding ceremony with Christ. It is a God-ordained ritual for the dead and resurrection. You can't really kill them and bury them in the soil, so you submerge them in water as a disguise. But because we are one with Christ, we are resurrected. In Christianity, this "dying" must be done. It is important to kill your old self and bury your old self. Without it, it doesn't work because you're trying to put Christ on it.

●A long time ago, I went to Mt. Hiei for a tour and heard an interesting story from the guide there. He said, "Mt. Hiei Enryakuji Temple is a comprehensive university of Japan Buddhism and a place to wash your mind. I was told. I think it's the same with churches. Don't come to worship just because you think, "I wonder if I can hear something good today." When you come to worship, you have to throw something away. It's about letting go of selfishness, letting go of resentment and resentment, of giving up preoccupation, of wanting to do something. In Buddhism, donations are called "giving." It's about being willing to throw it away. If you want to get something, you have to part with something. How can we grasp what God gives us if we don't open our clasped hands?"

I sometimes wonder why the sick and disabled, who are said to be weak, cannot glorify God. It's not that they're really weak. There are people who are physically

weak, but who are really stubborn in their hearts. They never bend their minds, insist that they are right, and refuse to admit their weaknesses. I think they probably think that if they admit it, they won't be able to live, and they are desperately trying to become stronger. That strength is the reason why God's Holy Spirit does not enter. If the shoji is not broken, the light on the other side cannot enter. In order to die to yourself, you have to work hard at the law and experience that you cannot keep it on your own. Or you have to face people thoroughly, make an effort to love, and know the limits of loving. Modern Christians don't make an effort to keep the law from the beginning, and they teach us that we don't have to keep it anymore because we know the gospel. They are moderately smart and have so much money that they don't have the experience of knowing the limits of their power. The important thing is to be crushed, to be broken, to abandon righteousness, to admit one's weakness. This is called the experience of dying.

**② 【Christ ended the rule of law】** In the Gospel of John, which I read earlier, the scene of Jesus dying on the cross was described. Here the words "knowing that all things have now been accomplished" (v.28) and "accomplished" (v.30) appear twice. What has been achieved? It would be that salvation had been accomplished, and that the old world would have ended and a new world had begun. The death of Jesus marks the end of the rule of law. In the law, those who sin die. But because Jesus, who had not sinned, died, the dominion of the law was destroyed. When Christ was torn, so was the old law. The fact that the veil of the temple was torn in half from above also tells us that God personally tore the veil and ended the temple system. Our guilt was torn in the same way. Paul wrote: "God has forgiven us all our sins, destroyed the deeds which had accused us of the rules and put us against them, and nailed them to the cross" (Colossians 2:13~14). When the perfect (Christ) comes, the imperfect (the law) retreats. When the master (Christ) returns, the reign of the servant (the law) ends. Originally, the Old Testament law (the Ten Commandments) was given by Christ and was not perfect, but only a part of it. It was a temporary work (only teaching sin) until the appearance of Christ, the perfect One, and the substance was in Christ. That is why the law is included in Christ. The law is holy because it was ordained by Christ, and it is still in effect, but if you teach people about their sins, you will leave the place and pass the baton to the doctor who is Christ. Christ is the new law. What he said and did became the new standard.

### **③ 【The change of rulers】**

"That we may be of Him who was raised from the dead, and thus that we may bear fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4). We have become one with Christ through

baptism, and we have become His possessions. That's why it's okay for Christ to treat his things as he pleases. He is very generous and treats us in this way. "I have mercy on those whom I seek to have mercy" (Romans 9:15), and "I am this ... I want to pay them as much as you do. Shouldn't we take our own things the way we want them to? Or are you jealous of my generosity?" (Matthew 20:14~15) He blesses those who have no work, has mercy on the sinful, forgives them, and gives them eternal life. We have been brought out of the rule of the law into the dominion of Christ.

●The other day, I was watching a program on TV called "A House with a Gap". It is a program that asks about a house that is located deep in the mountains. On that day, I asked about a house in the mountains of Okinawa. How much did your husband buy this mountain for? When I asked, the answer was "〇〇 dollars". After the war, Okinawa was a territory of the United States, so until it was returned to Japan, the dollar dominated the market, and the law was also governed by American law. I saw a video of a bank clerk counting a wad of dollars, and it was a strange feeling.

The nation of Israel was destroyed by Babylon, the temple was burned, the walls were torn down, the cities were destroyed, and kings, nobles, and scholars were taken captive and enslaved and taken to Babylon. Seventy years later, when the Persian nation destroyed Babylon, the Persian king Cyrus issued a decree throughout the country. "The LORD God who is in heaven has given me all the nations of the earth, and he has commanded me to build his temple in Jerusalem in Judah. Whoever among you belongs to the Lord's people, let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah to build the temple of the LORD the God of Israel who is in Jerusalem. May God be with you." (Ezra 1:2~3) Thus, at the command of King Cyrus, the Israelites were freed from slavery and set free. Furthermore, all the temple utensils that the king of Babylon had stolen were returned. These historical stories teach us that when rulers change, the laws change.

The Jews revere King Cyrus as the Messiah. Because he is a liberator. We call Jesus "LORD." Lord is not "Master" but "LORD" in English. In Greek, it is "cyrilos". It is said that the word "LORD" is a word that should only be used by God. King Cyrus is a model of Christ. Just as Cyrus became king and ruled the world, so when Christ becomes king and rules the world, we are freed from sin and death. What a wonderful world Christ reigns. This is called the kingdom of God. Don't stay outside of this world. Don't go back out of this world. Let us remain under the dominion of Christ. It is the dominion of love, the dominion of life, the dominion of forgiveness. May there be infinite glory to Christ, who created such a world, for generations to come.