

Read Gal 2:16-21

Essentially this will help us understand how grace works:

1. The problem with trying to keep the law to earn God's approval or get right with God.

V 16 A person is not justified by works of the law- we are not set right with God by rule keeping

Obeying rules isn't enough. However hard you try you can never be perfect. And there is also the tricky bit of what you were like before you started trying to follow the rules.

In fact the rules are **powerless** to help us they just demonstrate we have a problem.

2. Dying with Christ

So the law is powerless to help us – so what can help us? Well here Paul simply says that he died to the law and he was crucified with Christ.

V19 & 20 For when I tried to keep the law, I realized I could never earn God's approval, So I died to the law so that I might live for God I have been crucified with Christ. (NLT)

In Romans Paul uses **marriage** to illustrate this. As a woman is bound to her husband for life so we are bound to the law – and the law is not a good husband.

- > It is a **demanding** husband
- > It is an **overbearing and authoritative** husband
- > It **offers no help**
- > It **cannot be argued with** – it is always right
- > And finally **it will never pass away** – the law is a husband that will never die!

But there is a way out (and it's not murdering the husband!) It's if **we** (the wife) **die!** We get released from the power and authority of the "law" husband.

Amazingly that is what happens when we become a Christian We die to our old husband, the law - by identifying with Jesus and dying with him what happened to Christ is credited to us – i.e. his perfect life. But that's not all we get remarried!

3. Faith in Christ

V 20 it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Keeping with the marriage illustration, we don't stay unmarried but we get a **new husband Jesus** who is a much better husband to have! Unlike our old husband – **Jesus gives us life and will help us to bear much fruit.** He makes us all the things our old husband could not.

But we have to **trust** our new husband and **live in him** to do that.

But if we are no longer bound to the law does that mean Jesus is promoting sin? - That's what they were saying about Paul (v17) - They were saying hey you're not perfect, you are flouting the rules, and you are sully Jesus's reputation.

We did not kill the law, we died! Christ identified with us and our sin so we could identify with him and his perfection. As we live a life "in him" he will make us good - **the whole emphasis has changed** it's not about being good anymore it's about being living in Christ.

So by **identifying** with Christ and his death we **die** to the law (our old husband) and get **released** from it and then by putting our **faith** and trust in Jesus. He lives **in** us and **enables** us to live a life that is for God not against him. That's how grace works - the unearned favour of God.