> *1 Corinthians 15:56, NKJV*
> “The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.”

This verse, written by the Apostle Paul, carries deep spiritual truths about the human condition, the purpose of God’s law, and the victory we have in Christ Jesus. Let’s explore what it means in light of biblical theology.

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1. The Sting of Death is Sin

What Happened in the Garden of Eden?

When Adam sinned by disobeying God’s command (Genesis 2:17), two major consequences followed:

1. The Curse of the Ground – Humanity would now labor and struggle to survive (Genesis 3:17-19).
2. Spiritual and Physical Death – Adam and his descendants would eventually die physically and be separated from God’s presence spiritually.

> Romans 5:12 (NKJV):

> “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

Sin is what brought death into the world. It is the “sting” or painful cause of death, because sin separates us from God, the source of life (Isaiah 59:2). This “sting” is not only physical death but eternal separation from God what the Bible calls the “second death” (Revelation 21:8).

Why Was Death So Painful Before Jesus Came?

Before Jesus’ resurrection, even the righteous did not go directly to heaven. Instead, they went to a temporary place called *Sheol* or *Hades*, described in Luke 16:19–31 (the story of the rich man and Lazarus). This was a place divided into two compartments: one of comfort (Abraham’s bosom) and one of torment.

Death was not a place of rest, even for the righteous, because Satan had authority over death to some extent (Hebrews 2:14). But when Jesus died and rose again, He took the keys of death and Hades (Revelation 1:18), breaking Satan’s hold.

> 2 Timothy 1:10 (NKJV):
> “But has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

Now, those who die in Christ are said to be “asleep” in Him (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14) and go to be “present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8).

What Happens at the Resurrection?

At the Second Coming, the dead in Christ will rise with glorified bodies:

> 1 Corinthians 15:52-54 (NKJV):
> “For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed... So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.'”

For believers, death is no longer something to fear. It has lost its sting.

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2. The Strength of Sin is the Law

What Does This Mean?

At first glance, this statement might seem confusing. After all, isn’t God’s law good?

Yes — the law is holy, righteous, and good (Romans 7:12). But the law reveals sin. It defines what is wrong but offers no power to overcome sin. Instead, it increases awareness of sin and, for the sinful nature, it stirs rebellion.

> Romans 3:20 (NKJV):
> “For by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

> Romans 7:8-9 (NKJV):
> “But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced

> in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.”

The law shows us our sinfulness but does not provide the power to live righteously. This is why Paul says the law strengthens sin not because the law is bad, but because it exposes and even inflames our sinful desires without transforming the heart.

How Did Jesus Change This?

Jesus fulfilled the law on our behalf (Matthew 5:17) and introduced a new covenant based on grace and faith, not legal performance. Through the Holy Spirit, believers are empowered to live righteously not by external law, but by internal transformation.

> Romans 8:2-4 (NKJV):
> “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death... that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

So now, Christians are no longer under law but under grace (Romans 6:14). This doesn’t mean we live lawlessly it means our ability to live holy lives comes from God working in us, not from legalistic self-effort.

What Should We Do With This Truth?

1. Accept Jesus Christ – If you haven’t received Christ, the sting of death still remains. Sin will continue to reign in your life, and death will lead to judgment and eternal separation from God (Hebrews 9:27).
2. Receive the Holy Spirit – When you believe in Christ and are baptized, God gives you the Holy Spirit to live in you and empower you to overcome sin (Acts 2:38; Galatians 5:16).
3. Be Baptized Biblically – Baptism should be by full immersion, as modeled in Scripture (John 3:23; Acts 8:38), and done in the name of Jesus Christ, as a declaration of faith and obedience (Acts 2:38; Acts 10:48).

Final Word of Encouragement

The gospel is not just about going to heaven. It’s about new life now freedom from the power of sin, peace with God, and the hope of resurrection. Don’t rely on your own efforts to overcome sin. The more rules you create for yourself, the more you’ll fall. Instead, turn to Christ, who has conquered both sin and death.

> John 8:36 (NKJV):
> “Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”

Receive Him today. Salvation is free, and eternal life begins now.

God bless you.

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