**Grace to You** :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

**The Answer to Life's Greatest Question, Part 2**
Scripture: Luke 10:25-28
Code: 42-142

We find ourselves in a study in the gospel of Luke, Luke chapter 10 and looking at a paragraph from verse 25 through 29 which we began last week and we'll finish next week. I've been thinking lately, just looking over my life, Patricia and I just celebrated our fortieth anniversary and thirty-four of those years have been here at Grace Church. And when I came here, 1969, as a young guy in my twenties and embarked upon this ministry, none of us, including me, had any idea where it might go. It has been one surprise after another, one joyful surprise after another. But one thing I did know at the very outset was that I wanted to teach through the entire New Testament. I asked the Lord if it would be His will to allow me to live long enough to teach through the New Testament. I had no idea that He would have to keep extending my life because I would prolong it so greatly. Some people have done it in half a lifetime.

But at the time when I started teaching, people would ask me, and they've continued through the years to ask me, how do you decide what you're going to teach next? And I can say that I really have had no plan, no particular structure. I didn't take the 27 books of the New Testament and lay them out in some fashion and work my way through some strategic plan. I would teach a book because I personally wanted to know what was in it. I confess to you that it has not been primarily prompted by what I think you need. It has been pretty much prompted by what I felt I needed. And you have sort of had the overflow of the work of the Lord on my heart. I look back and it just was kind of jumping around through the New Testament. In fact, we started very early in the gospel of John, and that was important to me because I wanted to begin this ministry here in this church by focusing on the person of Jesus Christ, the Lord of the church, the lover of our souls, our bridegroom, our friend, our Redeemer, the One who should be the focus of our lives. And we did that. And then we spent eight or nine years going through Matthew, maybe the greatest time for me in all my study of Scripture.

And now we're going through Luke. And we've been four or five years in Luke and we've made it as far as chapter 10. Realistically we probably have another four or five years before we're finished. And then all that's left for me to finish the New Testament is Mark. And so when we finish Luke, it will be time to go all the way back to the beginning again and go through the life of Christ one more wonderful time, which is exactly what the Holy Spirit wants us to do since He wrote four gospels.

And it dawned on me some time ago that I'm going to finish my life essentially in the daily companionship of Jesus Christ. I've grown to love Him more now than ever in my life. It's a desire to honor Him more now than ever in my life. He is more precious to me than ever in my life. What you

hear is only one hour of Jesus Christ, but what I have to do before I ever give you that hour is spend 15 hours with Him in every one of these incidents, every one of these conversations. And the richness of this to me is profound and impactful on my own life. And I now realize that I'm going to spend the rest of my life with Jesus Christ, for many hours every week. If I can survive to the end of Mark, I will have completed my objective. If I can get through the next ten years and you along with me, we'll be able to do that. How wonderful, and I had no plan to do it this way, but how wonderful to end up dealing with the glories of Christ in the gospel of Luke and the gospel of Mark. And if I go slow, you'll have to pardon me because I have so much more in me than I am able to give to you.

Looking then at our text, Luke 10 and verse 25, let's read the text: "And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and put Him to the test saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' And He said to him, 'What is written in the law? How does it read to you?' And he answered and said, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself.' And He said to him, 'You have answered correctly, do this and you will live.' But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'"

And so, with this reading we return to the most critical question that anybody could ever ask, or have answered, the question that appears there in verse 25...what shall I do to inherit eternal life? This was the prevailing question of the time. This had been the prevailing question among the Jews for a long time. The prophets had promised that God was going to establish an eternal Kingdom. In Daniel 12:2 the Old Testament said, "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake to everlasting life, others to disgrace and everlasting contempt."

The promise of the Old Testament was that God would send His anointed who would establish an eternal Kingdom. The Jews anticipated that eternal Kingdom where God would rule through His anointed Messiah, where righteousness would prevail and peace, where all that was ever promised to Abraham and to David and all that was promised in the New Covenant to Jeremiah and Ezekiel would come to fruition and fulfillment. There would be a realm of perfect righteousness, perfect joy, perfect peace, perfect fulfillment, perfect satisfaction, perfect relationships. They wanted to be there. Their preoccupation was with eternal life. And by that, they were referring to the next world, the next life, God's eternal Kingdom of heaven, not the current world and not the current life.

This question was so much on their minds that it surfaces numerous times in Jesus' encounters in His ministry. As I pointed out last time, there are several such incidents recorded in the New Testament, each gospel refers to it; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Different occasions when people came and essentially asked the same question...what do we do to receive eternal life, what do we do to make sure that we do the works that are going to bring us into Your eternal Kingdom? They had that forward look. They had that perspective about the life to come and thus they asked the most critical question.

Put that against the backdrop of contemporary thinking today. Rarely is that question ever asked in American society. The question asked in American society is...how can I have a better career? How can I bump myself up on the economic scale? How can I feel better about myself? How can I make my marriage better? How can I have a better family? How can I meet this felt need and that felt need and the other felt need? And it's all about here and now and evangelical Christians are spending a fortune virtually to try to influence Washington, to try to influence the various state capitals in order that they can do things that are going to somehow to make them more comfortable in this world. Rarely am I ever asked the question...what do I do to make sure that I will receive eternal life? I could count on one hand the times I've been asked by somebody...how do I escape hell and get to heaven?

I'm not sure that that question would be interesting enough to draw a small crowd. If you put a sign out in front of this church, "How to get to heaven," and had it on a Tuesday afternoon so that none of you were here normally, it would be interesting to see how many people seeing the sign would come in to find out. I don't know whether anybody would show up. If you put a sign out there that said, "Come one, come all, how do double your income," etc., etc., you'd get a crowd. People don't ask the question about eternal life. Death is an obscenity you don't talk about. People who are dead, you know, in the typical funeral, they look like horizontal members of a cocktail party, all decked out and made up. It's an obscenity we don't want to deal with, the reality of death. We're so consumed with this life, we need to learn how important it is to think about eternal life as opposed to eternal death.

This scribe asked Jesus the right question. Now last week I told you we see here Jesus in personal evangelism. And He becomes our model for effective personal evangelism. Even though the Jews wanted to believe, and I think it was part of their sort of traditional conviction, that they by being Jews were guaranteed the Kingdom, that they by being circumcised were guaranteed the Kingdom, that they by going through the ceremonies and the rituals and the sacrifices were guaranteed the Kingdom, certainly the Apostle Paul affirms all that in Philippians 3 when he says, "I did all those things and I assumed they were all gain to me."

And I think it's true to say that in the system of Judaism that existed in the time of Jesus that still exists today, being Jewish, being circumcised, following the Sabbath law, maintaining the rituals and the ceremonies and the traditions is at least on the surface a wishful hope that they're going to make it in the Kingdom of God. But still, there was the underlying nagging reality of their own sin and guilt and a conscience that was always assaulting them for their conscience had never been put to rest because their guilt had never been dealt with and they were still having to grapple with their sin under the surface. They were like the Pharisees, white on the outside and inside full of stinking dead-men's bones and they knew it. And from time to time the real longing of the heart, the real question surfaces...Yes, I'm Jewish...Yes, I've been circumcised...Yes, I maintain the ceremonies...Yes, I keep the Sabbath...etc., etc. But there's this nagging possibility because I know my own heart that I'm not fit for the Kingdom of God. And so the question arises. It is the right question.

And I told you last time I want you to see four things as we look at this conversation. If you're going to evangelize somebody, this is the issue. This is the issue. I'm not going to go over thing I said last week, I am going to say that I reminded you last week that Jesus doesn't promise you health, wealth, prosperity, a better career, a perfect marriage, a great family, freedom from problems, not at all. Those are not guarantees in the gospel. Those are not attendant blessings to salvation. The ability to endure difficulty is in salvation. The ability to see God work good out of the bad things that come in life is part of the guarantee but there is no guarantee that you're going to be free from pain and suffering and trouble etc. That's not what salvation is designed to do. Salvation is about the next life, not this life. And so, if you're going to evangelize somebody, instead of focusing on this life you have to get them to the next life. Instead of saying, "We're here with our gospel to make your marriage better, or your family better, or your life better, or whatever," we're here to talk about the next life, forget this life. It's eternity that you need to deal with. And we went into detail last time on how the Bible indicates that all people are going to live forever, either in heaven or in hell. And the first task of every evangelist, of every witness, of every Christian who goes out to present the gospel is to show someone that what matters is the next life because it is forever and it is either forever in the bliss of heaven or in the horrors of conscious punishment away from God in hell. The message of the gospel is about eternal life, life in the next world.

All evangelistic appeals then have to start at that point. This is what we said. The first point was the recognition of eternal life. If you're going to witness to somebody, they have to recognize they're going to live forever. You've got to get them to that point. And I only made that point and no other point last week. But occasionally for me just making one point is some kind of achievement because it takes me a long time to cover everything sometimes that God has to say about things. The gospel offers hope for a joyous, blessed, rich, happy, satisfied, amazing, astonishing eternity in heaven. The gospel doesn't promise any particular comforts, successes in this life. And anybody who does say the gospel offers that isn't telling you the truth. That's the deception.

The man in the story, the scribe, the lawyer, he comes, he asks the right question. And here we are living in our culture, people aren't asking the right question. Instead of cultivating their minds in the direction of the right question, we reinvent Christianity as some kind of a message to change your current circumstances. That is not what it is. We've got to get back to the fact that our message is a message of deliverance from eternal damnation and punishment in hell into eternal life. And so, we started last time with the recognition of eternal life.

We come to the second point. After there's a recognition of eternal life, there needs to be a motivation for eternal life. If the person will come to the place where they recognize that the gospel is not about here and now, it's about then and there, it's about eternity not time, if we can get them to understand that they're going to live forever, that there are two places where they will possibly live, either heaven or hell, then we move to the motivation. And obviously as we come to the text now, this particular

man was motivated for eternal life.

How do you get somebody motivated for eternal life? The only thing you can do is explain the joys of heaven and the horrors of hell. You explain to them that everybody is immortal, everybody lives forever in one of those two places. Take the time to lay that out. Don't give the gospel on the basis...do you have trouble in your life, do you have pain, do you feel bad about things? Let Jesus fix you up. That is superficial and may be not even saving. That isn't the issue because as soon as you start talking about heaven and hell, you have to inject into the discussion sin because somebody is going to say, "Well, I'm not going to hell, am I?" And then you're in to the issue aren't you? You're into the issue of sin, why you're going to sin and why God justly condemned you to hell because of your violation of His Law and what you did and what you said, what you thought and what you are. That is where you start effective evangelism. You get their attention off this world into the next.

And if you present the joys of heaven, the glories of heaven, the horrors of hell, the reality of sin, the desperate need for forgiveness, the provision of God in Christ to provide that forgiveness and to deliver the sinner from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son, you've now at least put them in a position to be motivated toward eternal life.

This lawyer that came to Jesus must have known that there was some place that he definitely wanted to be, and that was in the Kingdom of God. He wanted eternal life. He did not want what Daniel 12:2 said, he did not want a resurrection that would bring him to eternal disgrace and contempt and shame. He wanted eternal life. He had the motivation for eternal life. That is the first necessary attitude in bringing a person to Christ. You've got to get them away from wanting something in this world to desperately wanting eternal life in the world to come. That raises the stakes very highly.

So, a certain lawyer, verse 25, oh by the way, and behold, a surprising encounter, that's simply an indication that it was a rather surprising moment. Jesus was in the midst of teaching, most likely. "And behold, a certain lawyer stood up," this would not be unusual for someone to stand up during a teacher's lesson with a question or a query or a comment or a clarification. And in this case it was a certain lawyer. With that simple designation, we're introduced to the nameless man who converses with Jesus. This is not parallel to any other encounter so this is all we know about him.

Lawyer is the word *nomikos*in the Greek, *nomikos. Nomos* which makes up part of that word is the word for law; *ikos*, icon, he is a legal icon, he is a lawyer. And when we talk about a lawyer today we obviously think about civil law primarily, or criminal law, we don't think about religious law. But in a theocratic kingdom, in a government like Israel's, these were the law experts not in civil law, not in Roman law, but in the law of Judaism, religious law starting with the law of Moses. He is a scribe, that's a normal term used to describe these people. He is one of those Jews who had become expert in the knowledge and the interpretation and the application of Judaistic legal rules and regulations.

Now whenever you see the Pharisees, you usually see the scribes because the Pharisees had the scribes along as their legal advisors. And as the Pharisees worked to discredit Jesus, eventually to murder Jesus, they needed to consult with the religious lawyers to find ways in which they could bring indictment against Him. So they were the accompanying lawyers to the Pharisees, looking for ways to discredit Jesus, to catch Him in violations of Judaistic law and eventually bring Him to His death. They were experts, not just in the law of Moses, but in all of the rabbinical traditions that had grown up through the centuries. The Pharisees and the Jewish leaders, the high priests, the Sadducees, the Herodians and the rabbis hated Jesus. And they used these scribes to finagle accusations against Him as their legal consultants. In their role, they're often seen questioning Jesus along with the Pharisees. They didn't have any power. They didn't have any authority. They were just council for those who bore the power.

And so, this man comes whether or not on behalf of the Pharisees on or his own, we don't know. But since it doesn't say the Pharisees were behind him, let's just assume that this was an issue for him...for him. He may have come at the behest of Pharisees to question Jesus. He may have been in a meeting and arisen to ask the question because he was prompted or even paid to do it. But we don't know that. So let's just take it at face value and as Jesus was teaching, perhaps about the Kingdom of God as that was always His subject even after His resurrection, for 40 days He spoke of things pertaining to the Kingdom, this man stood up. This is not a disrespectful interruption because it says that he stood up and addressed Jesus as teacher, *didaskala*, very respectful, very appropriate, something that would normally be done in a teaching context.

But that interesting phrase between those two indications is he stood up and put Him to the test. This doesn't necessarily ascribe to this man some evil intent, nor does it sort of open the veil a little bit on a plot. It's just really a test as any question is a test when you want to know the answer. You're testing the person's knowledge and ability to give you the answer. This word can be used for a temptation as it is in Luke 4:12 when it says Satan put Jesus to the test, same Greek word. But it doesn't necessarily have to be a temptation. It's just an effort to find out if Jesus knows the answer.

You say, "Well how would he know if Jesus knew the answer?" Because he knew the answer. And he was just going to find out if Jesus knew the right answer to the question. And maybe he wanted to sort of reinforce the answer that he knew to be the right answer.

The question was fair, the question was important. The lawyer appears to be genuinely interested. I don't think we can read anything else into it. We know from the fact that this question was asked so often that it was a general question on the minds of Jews under the surface and so there's a certain level of honesty here for him to jump up and ask this question. And he does say this, he doesn't ask it as a third person, he doesn't say, "What is necessary for someone to inherit eternal life," he says, "What shall I do? What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Can you think of anybody who has ever come up to you and asked you that? I'm a preacher, I'm a Bible teacher, as I said, I could count on one hand in my life people who asked me that question. I was asked that question once that I can remember on an airplane. A gentleman turned over to me sitting on an airplane and said, "I see you have a Bible, you wouldn't know how I could have eternal life through Jesus Christ, would you?"

I said, "I th..th...I..th.the, you've got to be kidding?"

"Yes."

As it so happened, I actually got to know him on the plane, he was baptized here. But that's rare. And you remember the rich young ruler in Matthew 19, came running to Jesus, slides in, falls onto his knees, "What do I do to inherit eternal life?" Same question, this was the topic of conversation. They were interested in living forever in the Kingdom of God. And we live in a society where that is not the issue but it has to become the issues and preachers need to stop preaching that Jesus is going to fix your life here, and start talking about what's going to happen in the life to come. And he also knew that this was not corporate. He also had the understanding that there was something that he needed to do. There was something inside of him, the realization of his own sinfulness and his guilt, his own fears, the same ones the rich young ruler had, that made him worry about the fact that because he was a Jew might not get him there, because he was circumcised might not be enough, and there was something that he needed to do. The question indicated then that the Jews understood individual salvation, that they weren't just swept away by some kind of Judaistic salvation, some kind of corporate salvation. They understood individual salvation and he understood his own human responsibility. This is really about life after death, it's about resurrection, it's about heaven, it's about the presence of God. How do I know I'm going to have that eternal life?

So he not only had the recognition of eternal life, he had the motivation.

That's where the gospel has to go, folks. That's where it has to go. We have to stop talking about peripheral issues.

I talked to a gentleman a couple of days ago, very, very prominent gentleman. He said to me, he's been in Washington for many, many years, he said, this is an other than the gentleman I told you about that is the assistant to the President a few weeks ago, he said to me, "Everything that Christians do, everything that they do here in Washington to lobby, everything they do to put pressure to get their Christian agenda through is counterproductive to the gospel. All of it because the people here see them as just another political pressure group with a temporal, earthly agenda. And they succumb to the pressure because these people put a lot of money into it to put the pressure on, as soon as the money runs out and the pressure runs out, the people they've influenced revert to the

way they used to be only the difference is, they have a deep resentment for those people who pressured them to conduct themselves in ways inconsistent with their own convictions and it's counterproductive to the gospel." When will the church wake up to the reality that we have one message and it's not about this life, it's about the next one?

And so, the man understood that there was eternal, immortal life and he wanted to be in God's Kingdom. He was motivated because he knew he was a sinner. He knew there was something he needed to do. He had a sense of the individuality of salvation and his own responsibility. And so evangelism requires the recognition of eternal life and the motivation for eternal life. Thirdly, in evangelizing we must talk about the complexion of eternal life...complexion being a form of the word complex, that is the order of it, the nature of it, the structure of it. The complex of elements that refer to eternal life.

Let's look at verse 26. "And He said to him," here's how Jesus answered the question, "What is written in the Law?" The Master responds by asking the question to him. "What is written in the Law?" Boy, that is just so important because there was one thing that the Jewish leaders wanted to indict Jesus for, there was one great categorical violation and it was this, He breaks the law. Anywhere and everywhere that Jesus violated the Mosaic Law, or the traditions that grew up around it, they wanted to find it to label Him and indict Him for it.

And here, by asking the question He does, what is written in the Law, Jesus affirms His commitment to the Law. And when He said, "The Law," the man knew exactly what He's referring to and He was referring to the Mosaic Law. The first five books of the Old Testament summarized in the Ten Commandments and further summarized in the answer the man gives. This is wise in response. He shows His affirmation of God's Word, forces the lawyer to answer his own question and he could answer it. What is written in the Law? Jesus said. You're the expert. And here Jesus also affirms that what God has written is the authority. Jesus is affirming the Scripture.

The Law, as I said, refers to Torah, the Mosaic Law which established what God requires. The Law given to Moses in the first five books summarized in the Ten commandments, summarized yet in the answer yet that comes here was the basic truth, the basic standard. The Jews had embellished that Law but not forgotten it. They had created a quirky, bewildering, imaginary self-styled system of obligations, having nothing to do with Scripture or the will of God and gone way beyond that Law. For example, I don't know if you know this but the rabbis said there were 613 separate laws that had to be kept. Why 613? Because there are 613 letters in the Ten Commandments. So the secret meaning of the Ten Commandments is that there are 613 separate laws to be kept. And so all they had to do was keep inventing until they hit 613.

Oh by the way, they also divided those. There were 248 positive laws. Why? Because there were 248 parts of the human anatomy. I don't think they got that right, but that's what they said. Somebody

counted all the parts, I suppose, on a cadaver, came up with 248 so there were 248 positive laws. There were 365 negative laws and you can guess why. That's one for every day. When you add 248 and 365 you get 613 and that's the number of the Ten Commandments and that's like Bible codes, you know, that's that secret stuff.

And some laws were heavy and some laws were light, depending on how binding they were and they decided how binding they were. Out of that background of all of that mish-mash of quirky laws comes this substantial question, "Okay, which of these will give me salvation? Where is the minimum? Where is the bottom line, non-negotiable, you have to do that one? Where is that?" And Jesus says, "You know the Law, you tell Me." And then He adds this question, "How does it read to you? How does it read to you?" That could be the way it's...that's the way it's translated in the NAS, that could mean, "How do you understand the Law?" How do you understand it? Better, the way this is framed, He's actually saying, "How do you recite it? How do you recite it?" Twice every day, two times every single day, the Jew said this, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself," twice every single day. So Jesus says to him, "What does the Law say? And how do you recite it? You know the answer to that question." That was part of the recitation of the *Shema*, Deuteronomy 6:4 and 5, that most notable portion of Scripture in the book of Deuteronomy, the second law. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might. And these words which I'm commanding you today shall be on your heart." And then they added from Leviticus, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," Leviticus 19:18.

What do you recite every day? He says. You know what is the summation of the Law. You have it in the mezuzah stuck on the house. Ever go to a Jewish house and see the little black box on the door screwed into the wall? Inside there is the *Shema*, Deuteronomy 6:4 and 5, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, your neighbor as yourself." You also find that when you go to a synagogue and you see the phylacteries, ever seen an orthodox Jew with a big box on his head or wrapped around his wrist and a box on the back of his wrist? Contained in there is the same text of Scripture with some other texts. It's repeated again in Deuteronomy chapter 11 and it's a critically important text. Deuteronomy, let me just read you briefly Deuteronomy 11 and verse 13. "And it shall come about if you listen obediently to My commandments which I'm commanding you today to love the Lord your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul. He'll give you rain for your land in its season, early, late rain," etc., etc., you'll have all these blessings. If you don't do that, it goes on to say you're going to be punished.

And then in verse 18, "You shall impress these words of Mine on your heart, on your soul, bind them as a sign on your hand and as frontals on your forehead," and all that meant symbolically was have them on your mind all the time and make sure they're on your hands in the sense that everything you do with your hands is a reflection of the Law. And instead of getting the idea they're supposed to think about them and act on them, they stuck them on their head and stuck them on their hand in a box.

"And teach them to your sons, talk of them when you sit in your house and you walk on the road and lie down and rise up. Write them on the doorpost of your house and on your gate." And all he meant there was when you go in your house and come out of your house, remember that you're to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and instead they just put a little tiny thing on there and the thing is inside so you couldn't read it anyway. If they wanted to really put it on their house, they ought to write it on the wall on the inside and outside so they're reminded of it going in and going out.

Well he knew that, he knew...he knew what the Old Testament said. He knew that. You say, "How do you know he knew that?" Well look what he said. "And he answered and said...verse 27..., 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself.'" I mean, there isn't any hesitation at all. Jesus said, "You know the answer to the question." And that's what takes you back, so he put Jesus to the test. He wanted to know if Jesus would give him back the answer that he believed was right. This was the right answer. But the problem was he knew he couldn't do that. That's why he stood up. Sure he was trying to put Jesus to the test, see if Jesus would violate the Law or if Jesus would agree with the Law, and they knew this was the Law. They knew the *Shema*, Deuteronomy 6:4 and 5, was the summation of God's Law. They knew that from that passage and Deuteronomy 11. He wanted to know whether Jesus is in agreement with that not only for the sake of the reputation of Jesus and information the Pharisees might want, but for his own information, but down in his heart he knew what every sinner knows, you can't fulfill that. So if eternal life depends on perfect love for God, nobody is going to be there. That is the summary of the Law.

If you go back to Mark's gospel, chapter 12, just a quick look at verses 28 and following. One of the scribes, here's another occasion and another lawyer, this one is parallel to a Matthew account. "One of the scribes came and heard him arguing, recognizing He had answered them well asked Him, 'What commandment is foremost of all?' Jesus answered, 'The foremost is, Here, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,'" quoting Deuteronomy 6:4 and 5, "'And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength. The second is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. There's no other commandment greater than these.'" And look what the scribe said, verse 32, "And the scribe said to Him, 'Right, You got it right, Teacher, You have truly stated that He is one and there is no one else besides Him and to love Him with all your heart, with all your understanding, with all your strength, to love one's neighbor as himself is much more than all burnt offering and sacrifice.'" They knew that behind the whole system of laws and rules was this compelling reality in the Law of God that was at the heart of everything that had to do with the attitude of the man and the woman. The lawyer knew the answer to the question. And he was testing Jesus to see if Jesus would affirm it and agree with it, or violate it.

Now you come in to the issues of eternal life here. You want eternal life? Here's how, love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your mind and love your

neighbor as yourself." The emphasis is so...is so strong here, "with all your" is repeated four times...four times. What's the point of that? Well, the point of that is to emphasize the extremity, the perfection, the completeness of this kind of love. "With ALL your heart, with ALL your soul, with ALL your strength, with ALL your mind," so that nobody would think that He meant, "Well, with all your heart and your soul and your mind and your strength," and somehow diminish the latter three. No, this is a call for perfect love of all human faculties.

You want to go to God's Kingdom? Then love Him with all your *kardia,*you know, the cardiac area. That's...to the Jew, that's the place of thought and mind, with all the *psuche*, all the fleshly part of you, all the soulish part of you, all the human part of you with your *ischus*, your will, your volition, love Him with all your *dianoia*, all your intelligence, your intellect, with all your human faculties, love Him completely. And it's the word *agapao*in the Greek, translating the old Hebrew *ahab*or *aheb*in Deuteronomy 6:5 which refers to the love of the mind, the love of the will, the love of the emotion, the love of the affection, the highest kind of love.

So, you want to go to God's Kingdom really? You want to go to heaven, you don't want to go to hell? Then love God with all faculties that you possess totally and perfectly. They knew that was the Law. They could read it. They knew it. When Jesus answered the question, the lawyer said, "You're right." When Jesus asked the question, the lawyer answered the question with that same Scripture. They knew that. And therein, you see, was the nagging issue of conscience because they had to grapple with the fact that if they looked at their own heart, they knew that they did not, could not, would not love God like that. They couldn't and neither can you and neither can I or anybody else in this life. And the love that was referred to here was the *agapao*love, it's not *phileo*, affection, it's not *eros*, physical, sensual, it's not *storge*, family love. And the point here is not to exegete these four things. It's not as if they're separate technical categories. It's simply a way of speaking of perfection in comprehensiveness and totality, loving God fully with every human faculty, loving with the mind and the feeling and the will, and even the body.

So bottom line, folks, you want to be in God's Kingdom? Love Him perfectly, it's about love, it's not really about Law. Cause if you love Him, you'll keep His Law, isn't that true? That's why you can sum up the Ten Commandments in "Love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself." The first half of the commandments are how to love God, second half are how to love your neighbor. The summation of the Ten Commandments is the two first and second commandments, loving God and loving your neighbor. That is the complexion of eternal life, it's about loving God perfectly...perfectly.

And it connects with Luke 9:23, go back to Luke 9:23 for a moment. He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself." Remember when we studied that? The first appropriate attitude for a person who comes to Christ is self-hate. I told you, when Luther pinned his 95 Thesis on the door of the church at Wittenberg, he had 95 declarations to make. Declaration number four called for self-hate. Nobody comes into God's Kingdom that doesn't hate himself. And

the word "let him deny himself," the word here, the Greek term means to refuse to associate with. It is to disdain yourself. It is to refuse to associate any longer with the person you are. Salvation is not about self-fulfillment, it's about self-denial. It's not about self-love, it's about self-hate. It's not about self-esteem, it's about self-disdain, disappointment. It's the rejection of who you are. It's hating yourself and loving God. And so the sinner's in an impossible situation because of his fallenness pride dominates his life, on his own he can't hate himself, and because he loves himself he cannot love God perfectly. But that's how you get into the Kingdom.

The person who perfectly loves God, who perfectly loves others, who is completely self-denying, selfless, this person qualifies for eternal life. The person who truly loves God with all his capacity demonstrates that love by perfect trust in God, perfect devotion, perfect fellowship, perfect humility, perfect obedience, perfect hatred of sin and whatever dishonors God, perfect rejection of evil, perfect love for others, perfect longings for God's presence, perfect desire for truth. You see...you say, "Well nobody's going to be able to do that." Right, isn't that the point? Isn't that what Paul was saying in Romans 3? I mean, that was everything foundational in his gospel presentation. Listen to Romans 3, "But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

Why? Why do we have to be justified by grace? Why...why does it have to be through faith? Reason: verse 20, Romans 3, "Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight." You say, "Well what good is the Law then?" Through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

You know what the whole purpose of that command was? To make you know you couldn't keep it, to confront sinners with their wretchedness and inability. That's the point. That's the point. Nobody can keep that, nobody. But that's what God asks, that's what He requires if you're going to save yourself by means of the Law. They were in to the Law. They had basically turned away from all the other statements in the Old Testament about grace and mercy and forgiveness based on faith, about righteousness granted to them, cleansing, washing, New Covenant promises. And they were still trying to figure out in their legalistic system how they were going to deal with the dilemma of being required to keep the Law, to keep this summarization of the Law knowing that in their own hearts they couldn't come close to doing it.

This is where you want to take the sinner. That's exactly where you want to take the sinner because now sin is even intensified. Now you move from the reality of hell and the issue of sin that sends you there, to the reality of the fact that I can't remedy my sin, I can't love God this way. What am I going to do? You create for the sinner a certain frightening dilemma, already recognizing eternal life, already motivated for eternal life. Now the sinner understands the complex of what God requires and realizes that he can't do that. So his dilemma, his judgment is predicated on the fact that he stands guilty of sin before God and worthy of hell and has no ability to remedy the situation. He can't save himself. It

can't be done. By the deeds of the law no flesh will ever be justified, no flesh will ever be declared righteous. No flesh will ever be made right with God through the Law.

Galatians chapter 3 says in fact the opposite happens. "As many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse." God holds all men who have broken His Law under a curse. "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law to perform them." That's Deuteronomy, that's back in Moses again, Deuteronomy 27:26, by the way, at the end of the fifth book of Moses, right at the very end of the whole Torah it says, "If you ever break one of these, you're cursed." They knew that. And then verse 11 of Galatians 3, "No one is justified by the Law before God." No one...no one. That's where you want the sinner to go.

There is a hell and your sin is going to send you there. And there is a heaven, but you can't qualify on your own because you are under a curse for violating the Law of God. You say, "Well maybe I never killed anybody or etc., etc., etc." Oh, but you didn't love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength all the time and your neighbor as yourself all the time, did you? That's it, you're cursed because, "Cursed is everyone who doesn't abide by all things written in the book of the Law, and all things written in the book of the Law are summed up in the great first and second commandment."

Well, we can't finish, we can only stop and wait till next week to see how the story ends.

Father, we thank You again for Your precious Word. What a wonderful opportunity this is for us to discuss and learn how to effectively do the work that You've called us to, the work of the gospel and evangelism. Bless this precious Word to the hearts of this precious people. Draw sinners to Christ. Draw us all to Christ but particularly those who are outside the Kingdom. May they come to the recognition that they are sinful and headed for hell, that they are impotent and incapable of saving themselves by keeping the Law, they are under a curse and salvation comes only by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Father, we ask that You would cause us to be faithful evangels of this message to a world that's more interested in temporal things than eternal things. Help us to raise the recognition of eternal life. May Your Spirit prompt the motivation for eternal life. May we be faithful to explain the nature and order of this eternal life and how one gets there cause that's why we're here, to be used in such ministry. We thank You again for the worship this morning and we offer You our praise in Your Son's name. Amen.

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