

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

The Law and the Gospel

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 80-335

Well tonight we're going to turn to a very, very important subject, the Law and the Gospel...the Law and the Gospel. In the general picture out there of evangelicalism today, there is certainly much said about God's love, much said about God's mercy, much said about His grace. There is a great emphasis on the fact that God forgives, that He empowers. Almost nothing is said about the Law of God, about the judgment of God, about the heinousness of violating His Law, and the just consequences of such a violation.

And so, in a sense the gospel which means the good news is stripped of what it is really good because people don't know what is really bad, which makes the good news such good news. The bad news is that all people are under the Law of God, they're under obligation to obey that Law. They are all violators of that Law, therefore they come under true guilt and with guilt comes condemnation and with condemnation comes punishment, and that punishment is everlasting. The Gospel cannot be understood as good news, until people understand what it is that the Gospel delivers them from, namely the bad news of eternal punishment which is a just punishment on a truly guilty sinner. People are trying to get other folks into heaven while at the same time avoiding telling them they're on their way to hell. Trying to get them to accept what is good for them, without understanding the truth about what is so bad for them.

And were you to ask the question to people out there as they looked at evangelicalism and listened to the general message that Christians give, if you posed the question...What does Jesus save you from?...they might say, "loneliness, depression, poverty, lack of purpose, lack of meaning, lack of fulfillment, etc." cause they do not understand guilt, condemnation that comes because of a violation of His Law.

Scripture, however, is very clear that anyone who is to grasp the greatness of the gospel must first grasp the greatness of judgment of sin. Salvation by grace means little to those who know nothing of damnation under the Law.

So, the divine order is Law, then Gospel. And there is a reluctance on the part of evangelical people today to talk about the Law of God because it makes people feel bad and they think it makes the Gospel less attractive, when, in fact, it is necessary to make them feel bad, really bad because that generates the true attraction to the gospel. We understand that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone, Ephesians 2:8 and 9. We understand that salvation is never by works but always by grace

through faith. All who are saved from eternal damnation at all times in redemptive history are saved by faith and grace apart from the Law. This is the repeated testimony of Scripture. In the Old Testament, Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. Or Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Or in Habakkuk, the just shall live by faith. This is not a New Testament truth, this is a universal truth throughout all of redemptive history. Salvation...deliverance from condemnation, eternal punishment comes by God's grace through faith.

In the book of Romans, we read this morning in chapter 3 and verse 20, "By the works of the Law, no flesh will be justified in His sight. Through the Law comes the knowledge of sin." That verse alone ought to be indelibly impressed upon our minds to give us an understanding of the function of the Law. The Law does not save. By the works of the Law, no flesh will be justified in His sight, rather through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. The next verse says, "Apart from the Law, the righteousness of God has been manifested, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus." This is so basic and so important, it is repeated again in chapter 4, verse 15, "For the Law brings about wrath." The Law brings about wrath. Chapter 5 repeats it again in verse 13, "Until the Law was in the world, sin is not imputed." Once there is the full revelation of the Law of God, there is the full imputation of sin. Nevertheless sin existed because death reigned from Adam until the giving of the Law. But there was not a full understanding of the Law until the written Law was laid down, though the force of the Law and all violations were in place clearly indicated by the reality of death. The Law then kills.

Chapter 5 verse 10, "The Law came in that the transgression might increase." The Law came so that our understanding of sin might increase. There was an understanding of sin from the Garden on but there was an increased understanding of sin when the Law came through Moses. In fact, in the next verse, Romans 5:21, "Sin reigned in death," that's because the violation of the Law, which is sin, always produces death. In the seventh chapter of Romans and the seventh verse, Paul says, "I would not have come to know sin except through the Law."

In Galatians, and we'll spend a good deal of time there in a few moments, chapter 2 verse 16, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law, since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified." Again, it is unmistakable. Paul later says in verse 19, "Through the Law, I died to the Law that I might live to God."

In Paul's letter to the Philippians chapter 3 and verse 8, he says, "...I suffered the loss of all things for the value of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord, to be found in Him not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that righteousness which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith."

All of these verses tells us the same thing. There's no salvation in the Law. There's no salvation in the keeping of the Law. The Law cannot save.

In fact, go back to Galatians chapter 3, for a moment, and chapter 10. "For as many as are the works of the Law are under a curse. Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law to perform them." Curse is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law to perform them. If you ever violated at any time any one law, you are cursed. The Law cannot save.

Now in all those passages which tells us the Law cannot save, we also find what the Law is intended to do. It is intended to give full disclosure on the matter of sin. The Law comes with immense moral detail. I'm not talking about the special ceremonies for Israel, dietary laws and things like that, that were set aside in the New Testament, I'm talking about that Law which is the moral Law that does not change.

Put simply, the Law is revealing to us the extent of God's holiness. The Law is simply a revelation of how holy God is. This then sets clearly the divine standard for acceptable behavior. All people who ever live will be judged by this standard and justly condemned for violating this standard and sent to hell forever. It's that simple. God's Law is a manifestation, a revelation of His nature. All mankind are required to be as perfect as God is perfect. Matthew 5:48, Jesus said, "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." That was not anything new, repeatedly through the book of Leviticus it says, "Be ye holy for I am holy....Be ye holy for I am holy," again and again and again and again. Peter repeats it in his epistle, 1 Peter, "Be ye holy for I am holy." Anybody who is not as holy as God is cursed because he has violated that holiness which is revealed in His Law.

The reason there is so much detail in the Law is to show us, number one, how holy God is and, number two, to show us how sinful we are. The Law, in that sense, is not temporary. It is no more temporary than the nature of God is temporary. And since the nature of God does not change, God is immutable, He changes not, that which manifests or reveals His nature neither changes as well. It is the revelation of God's holy perfection which is unchanging. The Law then serves as a permanent disclosure of God. And since all men are required to be as holy as God, that never changes.

You say, "Well aren't we in the age of grace?" Yeah, that's the whole point. But still that Law never changes and that requirement never changes.

Even before God gave the full disclosure of the Law to Moses in a prior time, God revealed Himself to some degree so that all men were responsible for the revelation that God did give. And, in fact, He gave a revelation of His moral Law in the heart of every sinner, Romans 2:14 and 15 says the Law of God is written in their hearts. But He gave full disclosure to Moses and to Israel at Mount Sinai and it was an occasion of solemn and frightening majesty with thunder, lightning, earthquake, trumpet

blasts and angels out of heaven. That Law was condensed into ten commandments and further condensed into the first great commandment, to Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and the second which is like it, to love your neighbor as yourself. Those two are the summation of the Ten Commandments, the first half of which relate to loving God, the second half which relate to loving your neighbor.

The Ten Commandments is a summation of all moral and ethical laws which God has given, all of which have to do either with one's relationship to God or with one's relationship to mankind. This disclosure of God's morality was given so that people might see the sinfulness of sin. And as we read earlier, it increases as revelation increases.

Now with that in view, let's turn to the text that I want to read to you, Galatians chapter 3 verse 19, which poses the question in the middle of the discussion of the Law, why the Law then? And that is the question that we want to address...why the Law then?

Paul says, "It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of the mediator until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made. Now a mediator is not for one party only whereas God is only one, is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be. For if the Law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based upon Law. But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the Law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor, to lead us to Christ that we may be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor."

Now there's a lot to be said about these verses, a more intense study would be required, in fact, of the whole chapter. But let me show you the essential relation that all have to the Law.

First of all, the Law is presented as addition...the Law is presented as addition. Go back to verse 19. It was added...it was added. The Mosaic Law was an addition to divine revelation about sin. Did they know about sin? Sure. But there was a time of ignorance. There was a time when they did not have full disclosure of what sin was. And therefore, the Law was an addition, to make sin more sinful, to give a fuller revelation of the nature of the transgression and its extent. It did not come to set aside salvation by faith through grace which had always been in place. It simply came to add a fuller understanding of the nature of sin.

The Law came 430 years after Abraham. It did not annul the promise of salvation by faith that had been given to Abraham. The promise of faith is fundamental. The promise of salvation by faith is basic. The doctrine of justification by faith goes back to Abraham, as far as Israel is concerned. What the Law says is this is sin and this is sin and here's how extensive sin is. And here's one other thing,

very important that the Law added, because of violation, you will die. So the Law was added. Details because past revelation lacked a full revelation of sin and transgression. When the Law came, as we read, it shut up everyone to the faith which was the only way for salvation. That is to say, it ended any discussion about the means of salvation. The Law made it thoroughly evident that all sinners are violators of the Law of God. They are unable to earn salvation by works and therefore as we read in verse 10, they are all under a divine curse.

That's the purpose of the Law. The Law is added to make us unmistakably clear about the extent of sin so that sinners might have no way to escape and all be hemmed in, shut up, closed in to a salvation that can only come by faith.

There's a second thing I want you to see, the Law comes as addition, it also comes as insertion. What do I mean by that? Well go back to verse 19 again. It was added because of transgression, "Until the seed should come." The seed is Christ. And here we come to a very important point, maybe the one thing you might take away from our study tonight. The seed is Christ, clearly. Go back to verse 16. "The seed...end of the verse...that is Christ."

The Law functions in a way that is critical to the matter of justification by faith. It shuts up the sinner. It closes him in. It leaves him no escape, no outlet, no door. He is trapped under a curse, under judgment. And the more extensive the Law, and the more detailed the Law, the more trapped he is, there are no ways out.

But this is, in a sense, an insertion until...it is an addition because it's important for us to have the full understanding of sin. It is an insertion until the seed should come.

What in the world does that mean? It means now...listen...that the seed has come and the seed establishes for us an even clearer understanding of the Law. For example, in 1 John chapter 2, John says this, "If you say you're a believer, you ought to walk the way Christ walked," right? Christ...the personification of the Law. To hear, "Be perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect," can be understood and yet what does that mean? It is incomprehensible. If, for example, under the old covenant people were looking around for somebody that could model that for them, they wouldn't find anyone. If they were supposed to be holy as God is holy, where would they see that? What would that look like? And so, the Law functions as an insertion until the visible living Christ comes and we can see what that holiness looks like.

In the Old Testament you can say no one would go to heaven because they kept the Law. But since Christ has come we could say it another way. No one will go to heaven because he was a perfect follower of Jesus Christ. No one could be perfectly conformed to the Law of God and no one can be perfectly formed to Christ. God is holy. God is pure. And that's in some ways abstract. There is no experience of that in the world. There's no model of that. There's no illustration of that until Christ

comes. And He is the living Law of God. Why? Because He is God and therefore He reveals the nature of God not in written form but in life. Matthew 5:17 He says that. He comes to fulfill the Law. He lives a life of perfect fulfillment. He said He had to fulfill all righteousness. It was His nature to do that. He puts pure, divine perfection on display in every circumstance of life...from childhood to adulthood and through all the experiences of every phase.

So, now we have to perhaps go beyond asking people if they conform to the Ten Commandments. It's one thing to say to someone, "Do you lie? Do you covet? Do you steal? Do you commit adultery?" And have them say, "I don't do that...I don't do that."

Perhaps you could probe a little deeper and ask them if they ever thought about killing or lying or committing adultery or stealing. And they perhaps would have to admit they did and so they would be brought then under guilt by the words of Jesus who said, "It's not enough to just not do it on the outside, it is a violation to even think of doing it on the inside." Those are His words in the Sermon on the Mount and that was an indictment of those Jews who kept the Law on the outside, but not on the inside.

But there's a deeper issue here and an even more powerful illustration of the Law and that is the person of Jesus Christ. And the right question to ask the sinner is this one, "Are you as perfect as Jesus Christ?" There's no way out of that. Anyone who understand the One who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, the one who is absolutely holy, the One in whom there is such perfection that His own Father, God, who knows everything can say, "This is My beloved Son whom I am well-pleased." That is to say there is no time in the life of Jesus where He ever does anything that displeases God.

I think the intention of what we're reading here about the Law being an insertion until the seed comes is intended to have us make a transition. Christ becomes the new standard and now the sinner needs to be measured against the perfections of Christ who is God incarnate.

The amazing thing about it, thirdly, is the Law while it is addition and it is insertion until Christ comes is also provocation. Go down to verse 24. "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ that we may be justified by faith." Christ is both the Law against which we are measured and the One who alone can save us by faith.

And this is consistent with the divine intention in redemption. God is both our judge and our Savior. He is both our executioner and our Redeemer. When one violated the Law of God in the past, in the Old Testament before Christ came, a penitent sinner would come to God and plead with the very God whose nature he had violated to forgive him. God then is the holy Redeemer and He is also the merciful forgiver. He is a God of absolute justice who is also a God of pardon. He is a God of Law and He is the same God of grace. He is holy and He is forgiving. So the Law then is added to make sin

sinful. It is added as a way to understand the sinfulness of sin until the seed comes who becomes the consummate way to understand the sinfulness of sin. And while you're taking the sinner to the Law in the Old Testament, you need at some point to take the sinner to Christ and to show him that Christ is the One who personifies the absolute holiness of God and lives a life of sinlessness in which He exemplifies the holiness of God against which any sinner being compared will fall infinitely short.

Sinners may escape by some devious means in their own minds, culpability forced upon them by the Law of the Old Testament. They're going to have a much harder time escaping the culpability of violating the Law lived out in the perfections of Christ. That's why it's so important that the Bible in the New Testament gives us four gospels and that it gives us the book of Colossians to see the glories of Christ. And it gives us the book of Romans to see the glories of Christ in the gospel. That it gives us the book of Hebrews to see the glories of Christ. That it gives us the book of Revelation to see the glories of Christ.

It's so important for us to be exposed to the glories of Christ. The bulk of the New Testament is given over to the four gospels. Why? Because Christ is put on display against which every sinner is measured. And when you're preaching Christ, going through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which we have done for years and years and years, if you just add all the years up that I have stood in the pulpit of Grace Community Church and preached Christ from the gospels, it approaches twenty-two—twenty-three years. If you add the book of Hebrews, you can add a few more years. If you add the book of Romans, you can add more years. Maybe if you add the book of Colossians, you're going to be talking about a ministry that I've had here for forty years and perhaps thirty-plus of those years we have looked at Christ. And when you put Christ on display, the sinner is indicted....he is indicted. You don't need to take him necessarily back and expose him to all the details of the Mosaic ordinance because the seed has come and Christ is the standard.

And one falls under the curse by falling short of being as perfect as Jesus Christ is perfect. And the amazing reality is that when you face the Law lived in Christ, and you come under the curse, it is Christ to whom you are driven. That's why He says, "The Law's our tutor that brings us to Christ." And it is Christ when you're driven to the very one who is God in perfection, you are also driven to the one who is God in mercy. So it says in verse 13 of Galatians 3 that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us.

This is beyond the conception of any man or men, beyond the design of any false religious system, that the very God who set the standard of holiness is the very God who also forgives. All the Law can do is produce the knowledge of sin, whether written down, or before revealed little by little by little, or whether revealed fully and consummately and exemplary way in Jesus Christ, all the Law does is expose the sinfulness of sin. It excites sin in the sinner, and as Paul says, makes sin exceedingly sinful.

So that if one is preaching a true message concerning Jesus Christ, it is not some kind of sentimental sappy approach because a true presentation of Christ is an incessant exposure to the glories of one who is all holy. And being measured against Him, we all fall short.

So, that's the purpose of the law...to expose sin, whether it is revealed prior to Moses, revealed fully in Moses, or exemplified in Christ, it has the same purpose. And in any kind of evangelistic strategy there is a necessary element of exposing people to the Law of God in its fullness, and its fullness is in Christ. So eventually when you evangelize people, you want to get to them to the point of being exposed to Jesus Christ in His glory. And then asking the question...Are you as perfect as Christ? As holy as Christ? And any sinner whose heart and mind is open will run from such a comparison.

The Law then curses us in any form. I want to talk about that a little bit. Back to verse 10 of chapter 3. "As many as are under the Law are under a curse." Here's why the Law can only curse us, and I'm going to give you a list of things.

Number one, it requires behaviors opposite the desires of the heart. It requires behaviors opposite the desires of the heart. Do we need to understand that the heart is driven by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life? We understand that the human heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.. That it is proud and selfish and self-indulgent. The Law demands opposite things. The Law of God demands behaviors that are contrary to the natural man. It demands unnatural things. Sinners love sin, darkness, the world, the flesh, lust, not righteousness, holiness, virtue. So the Law is demanding of the sinner behaviors that are contrary to his nature.

Secondly, the Law calls for things not only that are contrary but are impossible. They are impossible. In that great eighth chapter of Romans and the seventh verse, the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God, it does not subject itself to the Law of God. It is not even able to do so for those in the flesh cannot please God. So the Law is asking for things opposite the desire of the heart and it is asking for impossible things. Even if they did desire them, which they can't, they couldn't do them.

Thirdly, the Law exacts from the sinner absolute perfection of performance, equal to the perfection of God as manifest in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. That is to say the Law exacts absolute perfection and accepts nothing less. Sinners can't desire that. They can't perform that. Thus they are under a curse. They have no desire for it. They have no ability for it. And yet the Law demands perfection.

The Jews didn't understand this. They thought that if they had kept certain ones of the Law at certain times, they would be all right. The Law is a severe task master. It asks the sinner to do what the sinner does not want to do, is not able to do and demands that he do it perfectly.

Fourthly, the Law refuses to accept effort as a consolation. The Law gives nothing to diligence. God never says, "Nice try. A for effort...A for effort." Can sinners do a few humanly good things? Of

course, they can be philanthropic and they can be kind and thoughtful on a human level. They can do human good. It doesn't matter to God. They can strive to please God in their flesh, but the Law refuses to accept any effort as some kind of a consolation prize if it falls short of absolute perfection so that immoral people, absolutely irreligious people, people who run to the farthest extreme of immorality and live there are not going to be in a different hell than the moral and the good and the religious of the world. They're going to end up in the same place because the Law refuses to accept diligence and effort at a human good as any consolation. In fact, hell might be hotter for the religious people who have violated the first commandment by worshiping another God...a more severe commandment to violate than treating people in an evil way. I would expect that perhaps false religious leaders might find themselves in the same zone of hell as mass murderers.

Number five, the Law accepts no limited payment. The Law accepts no limited payment. There is the idea that for your sins you can make some payment in life...some penance can be done, some prayers said, some duties fulfilled, some personal pain inflicted on your body as if offering penance, some sacrifice made in the religions of the world, some animal sacrifice, some human sacrifice, as in the case of Israel, some baby burned to Molech to pacify that god and buy some deliverance. The Law accepts no limited payment. But it demands utter and absolute damnation for ever to anyone who violates it once. Sinners who violate the Law of God find it permanently fatal. Were they to keep the Law of God, another way to look at it, all their life and then violate one Law of God just before they died, they would be forever damned and there's no way to make a payment to reduce that.

Number six, the Law is an unrelenting task-master, never eases up or lightens the load. God never says, "You have a free week, do what you want." Never. There is no rest from the Law's obligation. There's no day off. There's no free week or free day. The extreme demands of the Law never ever let up. There's no rest for the sinner.

Number seven, consequently the Law breaks the soul like an iron rod smashes a clay pot, like a hammer shatters glass. Under the Law sinners are broken and that's the intent of the Law. Sinners are rendered guilty. They are made to feel shame, restlessness, sorrow, pain, hopelessness, futility, ignorance, fear, dread, horror. That's what the Law is supposed to do. It is supposed to be so relentless, so demanding that the sinner can feel nothing but crushed under the weight of the Law.

Number eight, the Law gives a man a severe sentence which has no equal, eternal torment in hell. You're beginning to see the severity of this issue. This is so essential for sinners to understand. The punishment is this severe. It's for life. It's a life sentence and sinners never die. It's a life sentence and sinners never die. They live forever tormented.

Number nine, the Law provides no strength to help us to keep it. The Law is impotent in that sense. It gives the sinner no power, no aid, it offers no help. It is powerless. It cannot help the sinner.

Number ten, the Law broken offers no amends, no restoration, no restitution. There is no path back. There is no way to undo. There's none offered by the Law. The Law never says at any point, "Now if you have violated the Law, if you will just make a list of your sins, here's how you can undo them." No. There is no path of recovery. There is no path of restoration. There is no path of restitution. There are no amends. There's no way to cancel out the past.

Number eleven, the Law listens to no repentance. There's no way to cry out to the Law and say you're sorry. There's nowhere in the Law that prescribes mercy, nowhere. You can't appeal somehow to something in the Law that describes a way to repent. It doesn't exist.

Therefore, number twelve, the Law gives no forgiveness. There's no forgiveness in the Law. There's nothing written in the Law of Moses that offers forgiveness because there is no forgiveness in the Law. That means there's no mercy in the Law. There's no grace in the Law. None.

Do you understand what we're saying here? This is devastating. The Law requires sinners to do what they do not desire to do. The law requires sinners to do what is impossible for them to do. The law requires that they do it perfectly all the time their entire life. The Law refuses to accept diligence and effort as a consolation, accepts no limited payment, never eases up on the sinner, provides no path of restitution, listens to no repentance, offers no forgiveness.

Number thirteen, the Law stirs up sin. It stirs up sin. Sinners who try to live by it are led into more and more sins. Rather than eliminating sin, the Law just creates things that the sinners desire to violate. The more things you know are forbidden, the more your fallen heart seeks to violate them.

And finally, the Law offers no promise of a better day. Nothing to look forward to, nothing. Is the Law sin? No. The Law is the righteous nature of God revealed. Before the Law it was revealed in the Law of Moses, it was fully revealed, written down and in Christ it is fully demonstrated in a life lived by a man who was without sin. The Law is not sin, we are sinful. Paul says in Romans 7, "When I understood the Law, it killed me." "The Law...he says, Romans 7:12 to 14...is holy, just and good." But the Law revealed was how wretched I am. The Law...he says...is spiritual but I am flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

All that defines the state of the sinner. And when the sinner comes to a recognition of that state and the consequence of that state, that's the time when the sinner by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit becomes ready for the gospel of Jesus Christ. If you're looking at Galatians 3, look at verse 24. "The Law then has become our tutor to lead us to Christ that we may be justified by faith." That's our only hope. That's what Paul celebrates in Philippians 3. He has spent his whole life trying to earn salvation by the Law. And then he found there was available for him by faith a righteousness he could never attain by faith in Christ.

And all along the Old Testament history, while the Law was unfolding in ever increasing revelation, there was running parallel to that a sacrificial system. It goes all the way back, doesn't it, to Adam, Cain and Abel when God revealed that an animal sacrifice was required, death was required for a violation of His Law. So all the way along from Cain and Abel on through the history of the Old Testament, there was a sacrificial system as an illustration of the need for an acceptable substitute to be found to die the death that sinners were required to die. That whole system was simply saying that there is a need for a substitute, there's a need for a substitute, there's a need for a substitute. It was never the animal, but the animal was the illustration.

And so, along comes Christ who is the Lamb of God who finally and alone takes away the sin of the world. The Law then is our tutor who will lead us to Christ. Christ is the very illustration of the Law because He is God. God then Himself and God in Christ is the personification, the essence of holiness. He is the one who is our judge but He is also the one who is being merciful and gracious, our Redeemer. And God in Christ becomes the sacrifice for sin which is the final sacrifice, the sacrifice once and for all satisfying the requirement of the Law on behalf of all who will ever believe.

This is the meaning of Hebrews chapter 10. It's worth looking at it just for a moment, Hebrews chapter 10, verse 4. "It is impossible for the blood of bull and goats to take away sin." Of course it's impossible. Just an illustration...just an illustration.

However, in verse 10, the writer says, "We have been sanctified, set apart from sin and from judgment and death and hell through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all." Verse 14, "By one offering He perfected for all time those who are sanctified." What we needed was perfection. We couldn't earn it, we couldn't attain it, He did it for us.

So, beloved, know this. God is a gospel preacher but God is a preacher of Law also. Christ was a gospel preacher but Christ was a preacher of Law also. So we must be. That's what Paul is calling for in Romans 10 when he says about the Jews, they don't understand the righteousness of God. And if you don't understand the righteousness of God, you don't understand how holy God is, you don't understand the Law truly and therefore you don't understand your sinfulness. They didn't understand that. And so the Apostle Paul says there must be an understanding of the Law of God, the severity of violating the Law of God. Not knowing about God's righteousness, he said, they sought to establish their own righteousness and didn't subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

So you must preach how righteous God is. How sinful man is. And then offer them Jesus. And as Romans 10:11 says, "Let them know whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved." Saved from what? Condemnation of the Law...hell. And how are they going to call on Him whom they haven't believed? How they going to believe in whom they haven't heard? How they going to hear without a preacher? So go preach for faith comes by hearing the Word of Christ preached,

proclaimed.

So we all have to be gospel preachers, but we all have to be preachers of the Law. What leads the sinner to true salvation is an overpowering realization and a frightening awareness of the inescapable result of breaking God's Law. You want a little divine order for evangelism? It goes like this—Law written, personified in Christ, sin, guilt, judgment, fear, gospel. Law written and personified in Christ, sin, guilt, condemnation, fear, gospel. You've got to get through those things before you get to gospel.

In fact, if you looked at the ministry of Jesus, you would have to conclude that He preached more judgment than He did forgiveness. It was Martin Luther who said, "The first duty of the gospel preacher is to declare God's Law and to show the nature of sin because it will act as a school master and bring him to everlasting life which is in Jesus Christ."

It was John Wesley who said, "Before I preach love, mercy and grace, I must preach sin, Law and judgment." It was Wesley who said, "Preach ninety-percent Law and ten percent grace."

It was Charles Spurgeon who said, "They will never accept grace until they tremble before a just and holy Law."

It was John Wycliffe who said, "The highest service to which a man may attain on earth is to preach the Law of God."

J.C. Ryle, "People who will never set their faces decidedly toward heaven and live like pilgrims until they really feel they're endanger of hell. Let us expound and beat out the Ten Commandments and show the length and breadth and depth and height of the requirements of the Law. This is the way of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount. We cannot do better than to follow His plan."

John Stott wrote, "We cannot come to Christ to be justified until we've first been to Moses to be condemned. Once we have gone to Moses and acknowledged our sin, guilt and condemnation, we must not stay there, we must leave Moses and go to Christ."

Isaac Watts, many of whose hymns we sing, wrote, "I never knew but one person in the whole course of my ministry who acknowledged that the first motions of religion in his own heart arose from a sense of the goodness of God. I think all besides who have come within my notice have rather been awoken to fly from the wrath to come by a passion of fear." In his life and ministry, only one came by the goodness of God, the rest by fear.

One writer said, "If I had my way, I would declare a moratorium on the public preaching of the plan of salvation in America. Then I would call on everyone who has use of the airwaves and the pulpits to preach the holiness of God, the righteousness of God, and the Law of God until sinners would cry

out, 'What must we do to be saved?' Then I would take them off into a corner and whisper the gospel to them. Such drastic action is needed because we do have gospel-hardened sinners. Don't even use John 3:16." Why? He wrote, "Because you tell a sinner how to be saved before he realized that he needs to be saved. And you have gospel-hardened him."

Romans 3:18 says of sinners, as we read this morning, that they have no fear of God before their eyes. So what do we want to do then? We want them to feel fear and the Law produces fear. The purpose of evangelism is not to get people attracted to Jesus because He loves them and wants to be their friend. But to get them to fear God because He hates them and wants to punish them forever. But the same God also will save him from himself.

No one is saved because...really saved...because they want a better life here. People who are truly saved are saved because they're fleeing to Christ to rescue them from damnation. This is when the good news is good news.

The Law shows a fiery face. The gospel shows enthroned grace. In the Law, God is revealed as Judge. In the gospel, He's revealed as Redeemer. You cannot diminish the condemning force of the Law without diminishing the comfort of the gospel.

Father, thank You for revealing this to us so clearly in Scripture. We're saddened because there's so much shallow understanding of these great holy truths. When we understand them, we understand the meaning of salvation. When we understand them, we understand that You have given us a gift that is beyond comprehension. We have violated Your Law, we understand that. We are violators of Your Law. We should be and are under a curse. We would remain under that curse forever were it not for the Lord Jesus who ran to us like the father in the story of the prodigal and threw his arms around us and kissed us all over the head, forgiving and reconciling us in a moment. And in that moment gave us dignity, covered us with a robe of his righteousness, gave us authority, put a ring on our fingers, gave us privilege, put shoes on our feet for we are sons and not slaves. And all heaven celebrated. We thank You for this grace.

By talking about the Law tonight, in no way do we intend to diminish grace. Grace is our theme again and again and again and will always be. But not to the neglect of Law. Help us to implement these things and grant us that we can awaken sinners, that we can alarm them, that we can bring them to fear the one that they naturally do not fear that they may flee to Christ who waits with open arms to receive them. We thank You again for Your great truth. In the name of Christ, amen.

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