

Theme: God's Law is holy, righteous and good - but we must use it properly, allowing it to define righteousness, convict us of sin, and point us to Christ.

## I. Intro – Thorny Topic of God's Law

- A. Discussion on the web this week
- B. The place & purpose of God's Law is important - but tough!
- C. Consider these seeming contradictions in the NT:
  - 1. The law is good (1 Tim 1:8; Rom 7:12)
  - 2. The law is useless (Romans 8:3; Heb 7:18-19)
  - 3. The law brings curse - not blessing (Gal 3:10-13)
- D. How can all of this be true?
- E. Key is proper use of the Law (1 Timothy 1:8)
- F. We will look at proper and improper uses of the Law

## II. Proper and Improper Uses of God's Law

- A. The Law shows us true righteousness and holiness
  - 1. The law is holy, righteous and good (Rom 7:12)
  - 2. The Law is perfect (Psalms 19:7-10) - descriptors
  - 3. It is a reflection of God's character (Psa 119:37)
  - 4. Catechism Question 18
  - 5. The Law is a clear representation of what is right
- B. The Law shows us our unrighteousness (mirror)
  - 1. Even written on our hearts (Rom 2:14-15)
  - 2. Shows us our sin (Romans 3:19-20)

- 3. Catechism Question 22
- 4. The Law shows us our sin clearly
- C. The Law restrains evil men from acting on evil impulses
  - 1. Law made for evil, not righteous (1 Tim 1:9-11)
  - 2. Law informs conscience to restrain (Rom 2:15)
  - 3. Law/authorities can punish; we obey (Rom 13:3-5)
  - 4. The Law's threats keep us from sinning all we want
- D. The Law can not solve our sin problem
  - 1. It can not save us from sin (Rom 3:20; Gal 2:16)
  - 2. It can not remove sin (Hebrews 10:1-4)
  - 3. Powerless - because of our sinful nature (Rom 8:3)
  - 4. Catechism Question 20
  - 5. The Law can't save - to try is improper & destructive!
- E. The Law points to Jesus - who can save from sin!
  - 1. Law and Prophets testify of Jesus (Rom 3:21-22)
  - 2. It leads us to Christ, justified by faith (Gal 3:23-24)
  - 3. The purpose of ALL Scripture - point to Jesus
  - 4. Justification was ALWAYS by faith in God
    - a. Genesis 15:6 - Abram believed, counted righteous
    - b. See Galatians 3 and Romans 4
  - 5. As we read the Law, it should point us to Jesus!

F. The Law is a guide in our sanctification by the Spirit

1. I will just mention this for now
2. Next week - the Law and the Spirit in sanctification

### III. Applying the Word

A. Are we letting God's Law define righteousness and sin?

1. What shapes my thoughts on righteousness & sin?
2. We try to define these ourselves since the Fall
3. For the Nazis, will power was virtue, mercy was vice
4. Our culture has its own ideas of virtue and vice
  - a. 'Tolerance' is often viewed as the ultimate virtue
  - b. Same could be said of 'choice', 'freedom'
  - c. Any idea of judgment, right & wrong are vilified
5. Am I meditating on God's Word so it defines these for me?
6. Has God's Law shown me my sin?

B. Are we letting God's Law point us to Christ?

1. When I see my sin, how is it dealt with in my life?
2. Do I try to use the Law to deal with my sin?
3. This is the approach of Pharisees, moralists
4. Do I let the full weight of the Law point me to Christ?
5. Have I taken my sin to Him for cleansing & forgiveness?

C. Communion - taking our sin to Christ

### The Proper Use of God's Law

1 Timothy 1:7-8

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Communion

Hebrews 13:20-21

the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. Rom7:12

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. Romans 8:3

The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless 19 (for the law made nothing perfect)... Hebrews 7:18–19

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” 11 Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, “The righteous will live by faith.” 12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, “The man who does these things will live by them.” 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” Galatians 3:10-13

the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. Romans 7:12

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. 10 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. Psalm 19:7-10

Righteous are you, O LORD, and your laws are right. Psalms 119:137

Question 18: What has God given to teach you his demand?  
God has given us His law, which is a reflection of His character, to teach us how to be perfect in holiness, love, and integrity.

Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, 15 since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them. Romans 2:14-15

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. 20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. Romans 3:19–20

Question 22: How do you come to learn of your sin and guilt?  
The law of God shows me my sin and guilt.

since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them. Romans 2:15

For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4 For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. Romans 13:3-5

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. Romans 3:20

know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified. Galatians 2:16

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. 2 If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. 3 But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, 4 because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Hebrews 10:1-4

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, Romans 8:3

Question 20: Can you live up to all of this perfectly?  
No. I have a natural tendency in thought, word, and deed to not love God and my neighbor as He has commanded.

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. Romans 3:21-22

Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. 24 So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Galatians 3:23-24

Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness. Genesis 15:6

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. Hebrews 8:10

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. Psalms 119:105

By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. Ps 19:7–11