

Theme: 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.

## I. Intro - The Importance of Clear Standards

- A. Academy, Corps, several jobs - what is expected?
- B. Where do I find what is expected?
- C. Without this, we really have no idea of what is expected of us, how we are doing, etc.
- D. Catechism Q8 & Q9 - law, God's character, holiness, love, integrity

## II. God's Law

- A. God wrote His Law on the heart of every human  
(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, <sup>15</sup>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
  - 1. Paul says that the requirements of the Law are written on the hearts of humans - even if they have never heard Scripture.
  - 2. When God made us in His image, His Law was inscribed on our very nature so that every human instinctively knows what God demands of us.
  - 3. This Law is a reflection of God's own character which is inscribed on all of creation and especially on human nature.
  - 4. This is usually referred to as "natural law".

- 5. This is seen in the fact that across cultures and times there has been a very similar understanding of right and wrong.
- 6. CS Lewis pointed this out in *The Abolition of Man*, giving many examples.

### B. The problem with the natural law

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, <sup>19</sup> since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. Romans 1:18–20

- 1. Sinful humans are at war with God's truth and suppress it.
- 2. God's truth and demands are clear to every human, but we deny, distort, and suppress God's truth and law so that we can go our own way.
- 3. Example: today many claim that good and evil are not real but only social constructs forced upon us by religion and society at large. The reality is that good and evil are objective, revealed by God in all of creation and in our very nature, and society is working overtime to alter and deny reality itself!

### C. God wrote His moral Law in Scripture for us

I gave them my decrees and made known to them my laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. Ezekiel 20:11

1. Because we distorted, denied, and suppressed the Law written on our nature, God gave us His moral Law in written form.
2. God is speaking here primarily of the Ten Commandments which He gave to Israel when he brought them out of Egypt (see Ezekiel 20:9-10)
3. God's written moral law is a gift of God's grace, by which we can check our own desires and conscience to know what God has demanded of us.
4. Our response to the Law is therefore to obey - not to judge it to determine whether we agree with it, accept it, or reject it.

#### D. We will be judged by God's Law

Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, James 2:12

1. We should live based on God's Law which will be the source of judgment - not our own opinions.
2. On judgment day the standard to judge righteousness will not be human opinions or standards, but the perfect Law of God, which is a reflection of God's character.

### III. The Three Uses of God's Moral Law

#### A. God's moral law restrains evil in society (civil use)

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly.

<sup>9</sup>We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, <sup>10</sup>for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers — and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine 1 Timothy 1:8–10

1. The law is needed for lawbreakers to restrain them
2. The law does not change the human heart; it can't. But it does serve to restrain the effects of sin to enable us to live together and build community.
3. Any society that encourages dishonoring parents and authorities, violence, sexual sin, stealing, lying, and greed is a society that is sowing the seeds of its own destruction.
4. This is why laws against such behaviors have been consistent in cultures across time and place, and when cultures begin to ignore these laws they go into precipitous decline.

#### B. God's moral law convicts us of sin & points us to Christ

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. <sup>20</sup> 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

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

1. The law silences us, shows us our sin
2. Even if our conscience is seared, the law can break through and open our eyes to our sin
3. The law does its work so it can lead us to Christ, who gives us His perfect righteousness.
4. We must be very clear - the law is important in showing us our sin and pointing us to Christ, but it NEVER will save us.

5. This is why we must not stop with just the law but move to the Gospel. Christians are not justified by our adherence to the law, but through our belief in the Gospel.

C. God's moral law guides Christians into true holiness, love, and integrity

1. Christians have been justified by faith alone, apart from works, but faith will produce obedience to the law.
2. When we became Christians God's Law was written on our minds and hearts  
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 (quoting Jeremiah 31:33)

3. The Spirit empowers us to obey God's Law  
And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.  
Ezekiel 36:27

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, <sup>4</sup>in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.  
Romans 8:3-4

- a. In the new covenant, the Spirit is given to empower us to obey God's Law
- b. Our sinful nature short-circuited obedience to God's law, but the Spirit now enables us to walk in obedience to God's law.

4. The law does not give the power to obey; it only points the path of holiness, love, and integrity. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to walk in the path.

#### IV. Applying the Word

- A. Do I look to God's Law to define holiness, love, and integrity?
  1. God did stamp this on our nature - but sin often obscures this, so God wrote it down in His Law
  2. Cultural concepts of right and wrong shift like the shadows; some even deny right and wrong exists (until they are wronged!)
  3. This desire to define good and evil on our own lay at the heart of the first temptation and the fall - and it is a temptation still!
  4. Is God's Law defining holiness, love, and integrity for me, or is the culture?
  5. Is God's Law defining holiness, love, and integrity for me, or is Christian culture?
  6. Am I meditating on God's Law day and night so it shapes my thinking?
- B. Is the Law doing its work in my life? (2nd and 3rd use)
  1. Do I try to redefine what Scripture calls sin so I can justify myself before God?
  2. Have I seen my sin and been silenced before God?
  3. As a Christian, am I letting God's Law inform my lifestyle?
    - a. Is God's Law regularly convicting me of continuing sin in my life?

b. Is God's Law showing me where the Spirit is working to conform me to the image of Christ?

4. As a Christian am I drawing upon the Spirit's power to help me walk in growing holiness, love, and integrity?

### C. The Table of the Lord

1. Come and confess your sins

2. Come receive forgiveness

3. Come receive strength from the Spirit

### How Do We Know What God Demands of Us?

Romans 2:14-15; Ezekiel 20:11; James 2:12

October 13, 2019

Communion

Hebrews 13:20-21

Teaching keywords: Catechism; God's Law; law and gospel; holiness; love; integrity, honesty, faithfulness, and truth

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, <sup>21</sup> equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:20–21

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, <sup>15</sup>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

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