

The Law of Christ 3 of 3

by Charles Leiter

The Law of Christ is a principle of love and relationship that fulfills the law and shows love to one another.

Duration: 1:11:16

Scripture: John 13:34, Galatians 3:14, Ephesians 4:31, Ephesians 5:1-2, Philippians 2:3-4, 1 Timothy 1:5, 1 Peter 2:21-23

Topics: "Christian Love", "Gods Deliverance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of understanding the law of Christ rather than simply following a list of rules. He shares a story about a Chinese brother who faced a difficult situation with his neighbor and demonstrated the law of Christ by showing love and forgiveness. The preacher highlights that victory over sin and a deeper relationship with God cannot be achieved through human effort alone, but through God's deliverance. He emphasizes that the heart of everything is love for God and love for one another, which is more wonderful than just following the law of Moses.

Transcript

We were talking over there as we ate together about another one of those irrelevant signs that said there by the basketball goal, it said, no dunking. That's totally irrelevant to me. That doesn't affect me at all.

That'll be a good servant illustration for what we were talking about last time. Another thing I wanted to mention, one of the brothers pointed out to me, we were talking about the scripturalness of this term, Law of Moses, right here in 1 Corinthians 9, verse 9. It is written in the Law of Moses, you shall not muzzle the ox while he's stressing. So that is scriptural to say that.

And it's good to ask those questions and to make sure as we're studying saying these things, it's very easy to get to using terminology that we've heard all our lives and never questioned, is this scriptural? And so what a blessing to be even to be thinking along that line, asking those questions. But it is scriptural to say the Law of Moses. Well, amen.

Let's pray before we look into this Word once again. Our Father, we are thankful, so thankful for this time that we've had together. And we confess our need of You.

Once again, we pray, would You open up Your Word to us? Would You help us? Would You manifest Yourself to us in Your glory? We pray in Jesus' name, amen. I was thinking here when Brother Mack was speaking, I've heard him give that basic message before, but I've never heard it before. Until today,

because the Holy Spirit was making a little bit of it real to me as he was giving it.

How dependent we are. And there's nothing quite so disheartening to a preacher as when you have wonderful, wonderful things to say and you're not moved by them yourself and you just feel helpless to attain to it. And we are helpless.

We need, we're desperately dependent upon the Holy Spirit. And we still are right now, even more so. As we, even our bodies get tired and we've just eaten lunch and so on.

We need Him to help us. We've been talking about this subject of the Law of Christ. Let's just read the verses again one more time.

1 Corinthians 9, verse 19. For though I am free from all men, I've made myself a slave to all that I might win them all. Then he explains what he means.

To the Jews, I became as a Jew that I might win Jews. To those who are under the law, as under the law, though not being myself under the law, that I might win those who are under the law. To those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God, but under the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law.

To the weak, I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

So, we considered in this last session something of what it means that we have died to the law. That we're free from the law. That we've been released from the law.

But we really never have gotten down to what this matter of the Law of Christ. What the Law of Christ is. And in this section here in 1 Corinthians 9, we don't get very much help from Paul.

What is the Law of Christ? He says that I'm under the Law of Christ. Well, what is it? And so, I just want to ask you a question. Can you think of anywhere else in the New Testament where this particular phrase, the Law of Christ, appears? Anyone? That come to your mind, maybe, a verse.

Excuse me. I don't, I wasn't able to hear. So, let me just give you the verse, especially since I can't hear from up here.

In Ephesians 6, he says, Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the Law of Christ. There it is. Very same words.

Now, two passages of Scripture where we have this phrase, the Law of Christ. And that really ought to amaze us. It's even more significant than if we had it everywhere.

Because Paul doesn't even find it necessary to tell the early Christians what this was. He takes it for granted. They know what it was.

The Law of Christ. Isn't that something? Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the Law of Christ. In other words, in the early church, this thing of the Law of Christ, having to do with laying down your lives for one another, loving one another, was so understood that you didn't have to explain it.

Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the Law of Christ. Now, the question comes up, How would love come to be known as the Law of Christ? Anybody have any ideas on that? Why would love be called the Law of Christ? Well, the last night there in the upper room, you remember what he said? A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you. A new commandment I give unto you.

On this very last night, let's turn to it. John chapter 13 and verse 34. A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

By this all men will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another. And then again in chapter 15, this comes up again in verse 12. This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.

And again in verse 17, this I command you, that you love one another. Now, think of this. That last night in the upper room, he says, I'm giving you a new commandment.

Now, think of everybody's eyes turned to him. What's this going to be, this new commandment? What is this? Well, it's not some new commandment. It's the same commandment that they had before.

Love one another. But it is new. Now, what makes it? Why would he call it a new commandment? Why would he do that? Well, let me begin by asking you a question.

Was there anything else new that night? This is the new covenant in my blood. And you remember, just like when the old covenant was given, there was a fellowship meal and they ate. It says the elders of Israel ate in the presence of God.

And in the connection with that was the giving of the law of Moses and the sprinkling of the blood. Now, look what we have here. They're eating in the presence of God, God incarnate.

And we're at the inauguration of a new covenant. And he says, now I've got a new commandment to give you. Nothing different than what was given before.

It's the very heart of what was given before. But he's saying, I want to bring before you the heart and essence of everything. I want you to remember this.

This is my new commandment for this new covenant. Love one another as I have loved you. So it's a new commandment because it's connected with a new covenant.

It's also a new commandment because it is the brightest, clearest revelation of man's duty that has ever been given. Because he didn't just say a new commandment I give you that you love one another. He says a new commandment I give unto you that you love one another the same way I have loved you.

Even as I have loved you. Now, there has never been anything ever given like that. There has never been a standard like that.

That we would love others as Christ loved us. There's a whole new depth of meaning. It's new.

There was never a word ever spoken like that. Love one another the way I've loved you. That's never been said before.

So it was new in that sense. There could be, there cannot be anything any more demanding than loving people the way Christ loved us. There can't be anything higher or more wonderful than what He did.

His example to us. So we have a new commandment. It's associated with a new covenant.

It's new because it's as I have loved you. And there's another reason why it's new. And John brings that out in 1 John.

Let's just turn to that. 1 John chapter 2. John brings up this commandment. 1 John chapter 2 and verses 7 and 8. Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning.

The old commandment is the word which you have heard. On the other hand, it is new. On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you which is true in Him and in you.

Because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. This commandment's new because we're new. We've been made new.

We've had, we're so new in fact, we've got hearts that have been shaped just like this new commandment. That makes it new. We're not serving in the oldness of the letter.

We're serving in newness of the Spirit. The Christian has had the very essence of the law written on his heart. This new commandment is written on his heart.

In fact, in 1 John 3 and verse 14, he says this is the way we know that we've passed out of death into life because we love. See, that's got that new commandment written on you. It's there.

In Thessalonians, he says concerning love for the brethren, you don't need for anybody to teach you about that. You yourselves are taught by God to love one another. Now think about this.

God said in the Old Testament, He said, I'm going to write my laws on their hearts. I'm going to put it inside of them. What is it that He writes on your heart? When you become a Christian, you just automatically don't want to light a fire in your dwelling on the Sabbath day.

I don't think that's one of the things. It's automatically there. Or when you become a Christian, you just automatically don't want to wear a garment of mixed fibers.

That isn't there. But when you become a Christian, automatically, love flows out of your heart towards God and towards your fellow man. It just happens immediately.

You see, the essence of the law is what's written on the heart. Supreme love to God. Equal love for a fellow man.

That's what happens here in the New Covenant. He writes His law on your heart. And that is the very heart and essence of everything that came before you.

Remember what Jesus said in His teaching. They said, what's the great commandment? He said, the greatest commandment, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength. That wasn't even in the Ten Commandments.

And the second commandment, it's likened to it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Now, listen to this. On these two commandments hang the law and the prophets.

He doesn't say that those commandments hang on the law and the prophets. He says the whole law and the prophets hang on those two things. Now, look at this.

We're talking about that which is abiding and continuing. God's character can never change. And the essence of God's character is love to God and love to man.

That's the thing that never changes. And that's what's written on the heart. When we talked about the law written on the heart in the sense of the Gentile, he has knowledge in some way of right and wrong.

What is it that's written on his heart? Well, not all those individual Mosaic laws, but the essence of all that. And that is, he knows that he ought not to kill his neighbor. He knows that he ought not to do this thing and that thing.

That's why you have some form of the golden rule, so-called, in all the heathen religions. Because men have that written on their hearts. They know they're not supposed to treat each other like that.

That's the essence of the law, you see. They've got knowledge that they're supposed to love their fellow man. They also have knowledge that they're supposed to love God.

That's why they're killing these chickens and sacrificing them and that kind of thing. Because they know they've sinned against God. You see, that's the very same thing written on the heart of the Gentile in terms of information and knowing what's right and wrong.

That's the very essence of the law of Moses. On those two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. But it's also the very essence of the new commandment.

See, God's character doesn't change all the way through. That part carries through. It's always the same.

Always will be. Forever. There'll never be a time ever, no matter what state we're in, where it won't matter whether or not we love God and whether or not we love our fellow man.

That is the unchanging duty that rests upon all rational creatures for all time and all eternity. You see that? That's unchanging. And that's the law that is written on the heart of the Christian.

And it's so basic, so foundational. You see, Jesus, once again, He's not coming at us with some new legal code to keep. He's showing us the heart of everything.

And the heart of everything is love. I remember one time, I was thinking about this whole thing, and I just thought, I'm going to write some commandments up. And I just put number one, love.

Isn't that what He said? Number two, love. And really, in some book, they both put them both together. It's love.

And anything that we have, and isn't so much of what we have of this sort, anything we have that is not just love flowing out of love, love for God and love for other people. What is it? It's a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. And you can actually give your body to be burned.

And have it mean nothing. The center, the heart of everything, love. Love for God and love for one another.

Now, let's look at this. This new commandment is the very center of the whole New Testament teaching about how we should act and live. Let's just look at a few passages.

I just want to do this so you'll have a feel for it. 1 Timothy 1, verse 5, Paul says, "...the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and a sincere faith." He said that's the center of all this. Why is it that we are coming week by week, and Wednesday and whatever day we meet, together together, and to receive instruction from the Word? Not so we can know what the tenth toe on Daniel's image represents in prophecy, or something like that.

The reason that we're gathering together is that we might commence to begin to start to learn a little bit about loving God and loving one another. That's the center of everything. And that's where the reality comes in, or the lack thereof, isn't it? I mean, we're very, very sanctified until it gets down to what I'm acting like at home.

And that's where we get down to the reality of love. And beloved, that's the heart of everything. Jesus said this is the big one.

This is the center of it. This is the core of it. Loving one another as I have loved you.

That's the center of everything. Paul says that's the goal of our instruction. Now, these men are wanting to wrangle and talk about this, that, and the other.

But let's just every now and then, let's get back to what the center of this thing is all about. Because we forget so quickly. We forget so quickly.

How much is in the New Testament about this? Well, 1 Thessalonians 3 and verse 11, he says, Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you. And may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another. And for all men, just as we also do for you, so that He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness.

You're talking about growing in holiness? Increasing and abounding in love. And it takes care of so much, doesn't it, if you love? It takes care of so much. Galatians 5. We need to take the time to do this.

I could just say it, but it's not the same as when you begin to be bombarded. And that's one thing I appreciated so much about Max's messages. Scripture after Scripture after Scripture saying these things.

Galatians chapter 5 and verse 13, For you were called to freedom, brethren, only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word in the statement, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Go back up to verse 6, For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision or uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

And go on down to verse 22, But the fruit of the Spirit is love. First thing, right off, love. In Galatians 6, 1 and 2, we already looked at that one.

Bear one another's burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ. 1 Peter 4, 8, you remember that? Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another. Above all, everything.

That's going to take care of a multitude of things, because that's the heart and center of everything. Keep fervent in your love for one another. You know, when things are right, you don't just sort of love one another.

You're fervent in your love for one another. And the devil cannot get any kind of wall in there. Colossians 3 and verse 14, Beyond all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

And then after that, Ephesians 4 and verse 31, Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Therefore, be imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you.

You see that? Same thing. Love one another as I have loved you. And then one more.

And there are many others, but this gives us a little taste. Romans 13 and verse 8, Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another. For he who loves his neighbor, Now this is Paul, who used to be a Pharisee of Pharisees.

He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet. If there is any other commandment, it's summed up in this saying, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law. Do you see how central this thing is to the New Testament? Now, beloved, think about this.

Not 613 rules or 6013 rules to follow, but one thing to keep in mind. Love one another. And boy, it goes out the window awfully quick sometimes.

It's the center. It's the heart of everything in our relationship to God. God does not want us to carry out some kind of list of rules.

The heart of everything is love to God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. That's the center of everything. Loving one another and loving God.

Now, how much more wonderful is the law of Christ than just the law of Moses? Think back about this. Here's some brother. Maybe somebody gives Brother Paul a new car, a new truck.

Gives him a new truck. And I look at that, and I need a new truck. Okay? And then I think of the law.

Thou shalt not covet. I said, I'm not going to covet that. I'm not going to covet that truck.

Well, that's better than coveting. But suppose I love him the way Christ loved me. You know the first reaction when I find out somebody gave him a new truck? Praise the Lord.

See how much higher that is? Here's a woman coming along dressed immodestly, and I think, Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Well, that's good up to a point.

But that's sure not the same as loving somebody the way Christ loved you. You know, Charles Finney has told the story when he was a young man. He had just met God full of the Spirit, and he was in Boston.

This girl came up and propositioned him, and he didn't know at first what she was even doing. And then when he realized, he burst into tears. Isn't that vastly superior to living just by the law of Moses? When we were over there in the Ukraine, all those prostitutes were in the hotel.

Darren had them translate a testimony to those girls so we could give them out. That's the law of Christ. That's different, you see, than just, Thou shalt not this and that.

Here's a brother in need. Well, I look at the law of Moses. It says you're supposed to give a tenth.

So I pull out. I've got ten dollars in my billfold. I give him a dollar.

What would the law of Christ do? Well, you might give him the ten dollars and your billfold. That's the difference between the two. There's no need to preach to Christians about tithe, and that's a starting point.

That just gives me a little guideline that says, look, it's reasonable that ten families ought to be able to support one family. We know we're not putting hardship on anybody. That's all the law does.

It gives you a starting point. But the law of Christ is a lot bigger than that. You see, the problem that many times, you're dealing with Christians, what you've got to do is hold them back.

The job of a pastor is not to beat the sheep over their heads with a bunch of rules of things they have to do. The job of a pastor many times is to restrain them, to keep them from killing themselves serving. And you step in and say, brother, you know, let somebody else do this a little bit.

You see that? Because we're dealing with people that have the very Spirit of Christ within them. And they've got the law of Christ written on their heart. And they love God's law, and they love one another, and they love to give themselves for one another.

That's what it is to have the law of Christ. There's a lot of talk about how the law is used by God to convict men of sin. What do you suppose will convict men of sin more? The law of Moses or the law of Christ? When I was in college, I was living with a godly family there in Iowa for a few months, and all the women were working in the kitchen.

And there was a bunch of people there to be fed, and all of them were busy and trying to get this food ready. And one of the kids came in there and got out a glass of milk and promptly dropped it and broke it all over the floor, right in the midst of all these working women. And the mother of the household turned around and she said, Oh, Stephen, I love you.

And you know, I was just a self-centered college student, but I remember it to this day. What was it? I just got a little glimpse of Christ. That's what.

That convicts you of sin a whole lot more than somebody, thou shalt not do this and that. Do you see the difference? It's the law of Christ. Watchman Nee, he told the story of this Chinese brother who, back in that day, they paddled this thing kind of like a bicycle to fill their rice fields full of water.

And he worked filling his field full of water. And at the end of the day, in the night, the neighbor came and opened the gate down at the lower end and let it all run down into his field. And so the Christian came the next morning and he saw that gate open.

He went over and closed it. Didn't say anything. Did the whole thing again.

Filled his field full of water. That night, that neighbor comes again, opens the gate again. And they were having a prayer meeting and he confessed to them.

He said, I just don't feel like I've entered into the reality of the Lord in this whole thing. And they prayed about it. Next day, he went down and opened the gate himself and filled his neighbor's field first.

And then he closed it and filled his field. And that neighbor broke and gave and came broken to the Lord. What happened? He saw a little bit of the law of Christ working.

He saw a little bit of the life of Christ. You remember what Jesus said? When they compel you to go one mile. And we think, well, I went the mile, you know, and I didn't get angry too much.

And I didn't say anything. And that's it. You got your mile.

That's not what Christ did, is it's not what he would have done. And it's in the second mile that they can't figure out what is different about this person. It's in the second mile that I have the opportunity to say something to them about the Lord.

The law of Christ to convict of sin, you see. Well, another question comes up. You say, you're talking about the law of Christ is kind of a mushy standard, you know.

I mean, two college students living together and they say, well, it's all right. We love one another. Or Jack Kevorkian, he says, you know, I love these old people.

I'll help them to kill themselves. Or the abortionists. You know, if you loved these women, you wouldn't just leave them in their plight.

You'd help them kill their baby. It seemed like Jesus left us kind of a mushy standard, you know, love one another. Well, that's not what he left.

He didn't say love one another. He said, love one another as I have loved you. In other words, the very person of Christ, his actions, his example, all that he is, is our standard of righteousness.

And you don't ever have to worry about going wrong if you've got Christ and the way he loved as your standard. It's plenty demanding and plenty clear what a thing it is. The very person of the Lord Jesus himself.

Now, I want to talk to you a little bit about how the New Testament teaches ethics. Notice this. Now, think about this.

This ought to be the focus of our thinking and everything. In the area of giving, Paul wants to talk to those Corinthians about giving. Now, he could go back and he could quote the law of Moses and he could come up with a lot of different things.

Say, look, they gave a tenth. Not only did they give a tenth, but they gave these extra offerings and gifts and so on and talk about how giving they were. Well, you could do that, but I'll tell you what, there's an example of giving that goes beyond anything beyond our wildest imagination.

There was somebody who was infinitely rich. And though he was rich, yet for your sakes he made himself poor that you through his poverty might be made rich. And he said, look at the example of giving.

Was anybody ever more rich than he was? Did anybody ever give up more of their riches than he gave up in order to make anybody that was any poorer than we were rich? You see, it's the greatest example you could ever have. Christ, that's what that means. Love one another as I have loved you.

That's what it is. How about the way we treat our wives? Well, you know, you could go back and there's a lot of examples of godly husbands and what have you. Talk about that.

And go to those commandments about what you're supposed to do towards your wife and how you're not supposed to beat her or whatever. That's nothing compared to the love of Christ for his bride. So when he's wanting to teach us about loving our wives, what's he do? He goes to the example of Christ and he says the same way he loved the church and gave himself, husbands, love your wives.

Love your wives, even as. You see, love one another just as. Love your wives even as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for, not just randomly, but with a purpose that he might sanctify her and cleanse her, establish her.

See, there's purpose behind his love. Serving. You remember what Jesus did? He took off his outer garments and clothed himself with that towel and washed their feet.

He says, I've left you. You call me teacher and Lord. That's good.

But he says, if I, the teacher and Lord, do this, what should you do? I have left you an example. The servant's not above his master. I've left you an example that you should do just like I've done.

See the very same teaching again in the area of yielding our rights. Romans 15, 1 through 3, Paul says, we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves. Why not, Paul? Well, he says, if even Christ pleased not himself, but as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproach thee fell on me.

If Christ didn't please himself, the one person of anyone who has ever been who had the right to please himself, if he didn't please himself, then we ought not to please ourselves. You see, the greatest example I could ever have, again, love one another as I have loved you. Kindness.

We just read that in Ephesians 5, 1 and 2. He says, just like Christ forgave you, you forgive. You be kind. You be loving.

Just like he forgave you. The way we treat the poor. James chapter 2, 1 through 13, he talks about this law of liberty, the royal law, the law of our Lord, and having being merciful to these people.

See, the same type of thing. Laying down our lives, 1 John 3, 16, we know love by this. This is the definition of it.

He laid down his life for us. We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. See how much this comes up? Not striking back.

1 Peter 2, 20 to 23. You remember that? He says, you ought not to be retaliating or striking back. Look at the example of Christ.

Let me just read it to you. For you have been called for this purpose since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps. Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in

his mouth.

While being reviled, he did not revile. In return, while suffering, he uttered no threats, but kept himself trusting to him who judges righteously. He left us an example.

Humility. Suppose you're going to write a letter to somebody about humility. Paul did that, didn't he, to the Philippians? And I want to really use a good example, try to help people to see whether they ought to be humble.

Well, let's bring up the case of Moses. The Bible says he was the meekest man on the earth. Can't beat that.

Well, you can, can't you? Let this mind be in you, which also is in Christ Jesus, who, although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be held on to, but he emptied himself and came down and took the form of a servant. There is no example anywhere, anywhere close to the example of Christ, how he loved us in his humility, condescending. If Christ could come all the way from there down to here, surely I can get down just a little bit to help this guy out.

I mean, how far have I got to come down? Unbelievable, isn't it? If you just summed the whole thing up, you go to 1 Corinthians 13, that chapter on love, it's patient and it endures all things and believes all things and all that. You just put in the name Christ all the way through there. And it would fit, wouldn't it? He did all of that.

That's what he was, the embodiment. He was the very express image of the Father. And if you look at him, you see everything that you're supposed to be.

You can't be any of that, but his spirit is put in you. His life is put in you so that you can have that life. Now, where have we come here? Well, look at this.

We're new creatures, alive in a new realm. We've passed out of that old realm of law. We're in a new realm and we're alive unto God.

And the very essence of God's character has been put in our hearts. And it hadn't just been put in our hearts in some mechanical way. God himself has come to live inside of us.

Christ has come to live inside of us, to live his life in us. And the law of love that he's written in our hearts is not fulfilled by obedience to some external code. It's fulfilled by the outworking of an inward life.

That's what Paul's talking about. That's why he can't get it. He's, somebody called him the apostle of the heart set free.

That's what it is. He's not back there serving in oldness of the letter. He's serving in newness of the spirit.

And the reality, the heart of everything is right there. Love for God and love for one another. Our standard is the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

He's the ultimate revelation of God's character. And he's the ultimate revelation of what we ought to be like. The way we ought to be.

And there's nothing any higher or nothing that could ever surpass what he is. And he's at work in us right now, as Brother Mack brought out, to will and do of his good pleasure. And if I understood rightly what Mack was saying, this deal of God working in us and us working, it's not like, you know, a yoke of oxen going like this.

God's working in you and you're working. They're concurrent. They're right there together as he's working it in you.

I mean, you get the feeling, you know, I want to read my Bible. You know what just happened? God worked in you to will and to do of his good pleasure. It's not some deal like a yoke of oxen.

It's God working it and you working it right at the very same time. He's ultimate and we're there involved as real persons. And he makes it in such a way you know it.

It's very real. But he's the one that gets all the credit because he's working in you to will and do. And he's put his Spirit within us and given us the supreme example and the supreme lawgiver, the Lord Jesus himself.

But it's no longer an external rule. It's something, it's an inward life. And he's our standard.

I don't know, do you want to have any time for questions? Okay, we've got some more time. And I know, see actually we haven't even touched on a lot of things. There's a lot of things that we could, these things have ramifications in a lot of areas.

For example, should we take the law of Moses and make it the law of the Lamb? There's some people that are saying that. Or on the other hand, should we take the law of Christ and make it the law of the Lamb? There's some people saying that. You know, the government ought not to fight back, ought not to have any bombs or anything like that.

You see, all of these areas are involved in this. And should we teach our children the Ten Commandments? That kind of thing. So there's many, many things that we could talk about.

And I don't know what, you know, if there's something that you want to talk about, I could share whatever thoughts I have on it. Maybe some other brother here would have some other things to share. These are far-reaching things.

And we don't want to lose the center thing, which is what we've just talked about. All right. All right.

The question is, is sometimes people feel guilt and doubt their salvation. Is it possible that it's because they're being put under the law of Moses or being hammered away? And a lot of times that is true. And a lot of times, this isn't always the case, but a lot of times the people that are struggling the most about assurance of salvation are the ones that are saved.

And the ones that are not struggling and incompetent and cocky, they're living in sin. And I remember old B.B. Caldwell years ago, he said, be careful about throwing rocks at those wolves, because every time you'll miss and hit a sheep. And a lot of times pastors get up and they rail on different things.

And I experienced this when I first began to preach. You know, I thought I was really going to get things straightened out and get all these lost people converted. The only person that came up to me after the meeting was the godless girl in the whole church, and she was doubting her salvation.

And so that can be a problem. And, you know, there is so much due in the Christian life, but it's based on what's done. And you look at the thief on the cross, for example.

When he said that one thing, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom, there was more righteousness, real heart righteousness, in that prayer than the scribes and Pharisees had in their whole lives. Every prayer they prayed. And a lot of times a sinner, I mean, when you become a Christian, it's pretty small.

But the fact is, it's real. And it's a new life that's been put within you. Those tests have to be applied rightly.

And the question was, understanding when we begin to think about the law of Christ, first of all, it goes back to regeneration. And that's this thing when God says, I will write my laws on their hearts. He's not talking about putting information on there.

We already know too much. What he's talking about is shaping our hearts in a new, making us a new creation. In other words, that is the promise of regeneration.

He'll give you a new heart. When you become a Christian, the moment God regenerates you, He puts His very life within you. He says there in Ezekiel 36, I'll take the stony heart out of them.

And I'll give you a living heart, a heart of flesh, not with a bad connotation, but a living heart that's sensitive and can feel. And I'll put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes. Now again, if you read that in the Old Testament light, you'd say, walking in statutes, oh, that means you shall not boil a kid in his mother's milk.

And that means, no, that's not what He's saying. This is the promise of the new covenant, walking in My statutes, the essence and heart of the law, you see. And so He says, I'll put My Spirit within you and cause you to do that from the inside out.

And what happens in regeneration is, I become in the center of my being a new creation who loves and delights in God's laws the same way God does because the new man has been created in righteousness and true holiness. Now the question comes up, why do I still have any problem with sin then? If I'm a new creation, why am I still having a problem with sin? Well, even though God has made me a whole new person in the innermost being, I have a new heart, I have a new spirit within me, I'm a new creation, He has not yet redeemed me totally. There's one aspect of my personality that has not yet been redeemed.

And it has to do with this physical body that's not yet been redeemed, and the Bible calls it the flesh. The flesh is one aspect of my personality, but it is the most superficial aspect. And you get down to who you really are as a Christian, who are you really? You're a new man.

You're a new creation. You know, this idea that we've got two natures, and there's a black dog and a white dog inside of us fighting. That isn't it.

Who are you really? You're a new man. That's who you really are. And I can prove it to you if you're a Christian.

Whenever you sin, what happens? It grieves you deeply. That tells you who you really are. Now, the flesh still gravitates for sin just as much as it ever did, but he said you don't have to walk there anymore.

You're alive in the spiritual realm. Walk in the Spirit, and you won't fulfill the lust of the flesh. If you, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body.

Now, it's amazing. He didn't say if you mortify sins. He said you mortify the deeds of the body.

He uses that phrase. Not that the body's sinful, but the body has not yet been redeemed, and that's the place where sin tries to assert itself. So, who are we really? We're new creatures in Christ.

Why do I still have all this fire of temptation? That comes from the flesh, but we don't have to be defeated by it. We can walk in the Spirit and we'll not fulfill the lust of the flesh. These things are remnants, the remnants of sin.

They're on the way out. The axe has already been laid to the root, and it's just a matter of time. I like the illustration of a war.

Here's a war going on, and the enemy surrenders, and they sign the peace treaty, and it's over. The war's over. But oftentimes, there's people out on those islands somewhere, they don't even know the war's over.

They're still fighting like crazy. They're totally defeated. They have no chance whatsoever.

That's the way sin is in the life of a Christian. It is defeated. Its power is broken.

It's on the way out. It has no chance whatsoever of winning in the life of a Christian. The axe has already been laid to the root.

And so we have the work of believing, trusting what God has done, who He's made us to be, and rejecting and refusing those things. As Brother Mack said, mortify them. Put them to death.

Kill them. Take a stand there and say, sin shall not have dominion over me, for I'm not under the law. I'm under grace.

And it's not going to happen. Let not sin reign in your mortal body. I don't have to anymore.

If you through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, I can by the grace of God. You see, that's where faith enters in, taking hold of those promises. God has made me new.

I don't have to be like that. Even though the body's not yet been redeemed, I don't have to walk in the flesh. And there's a day coming.

We're waiting right now for the adoption to wit, the redemption of our bodies. When that's done, then the whole problem will be gone completely. Well, first of all, in our own lives, we know what it's like to struggle with the same issues.

And if we have confidence that we're dealing with a true child of God, God is going to deliver them. And we present to them the realities of what God has done for them, and the reality of the fact that they do not need to be defeated. And we put them in God's hands.

And blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. God really will deliver them. Now, there comes a point where you're dealing with somebody.

I mean, this guy falls into some sin. And this happens again a year later or whatever. There comes a point where you have to start talking about, now, wait a minute.

And maybe sooner rather than later, you start saying, wait a minute now. He that is born of God does not practice sin. He can't do that.

Because why not? Because he's got a strong will? No, because God's seed remains in him. And he can't live that way any longer. And if a person lives in defeat, and that's the characteristic and the tenor of their life, then they're not a Christian.

And a lot of times we don't know what we're dealing with, but we can just say the truths. And the truths will fit. And God will apply the truths, whatever we may not know.

Maybe somebody else could help more on this. Question from the audience. As faith increases, love increases.

As love increases, faith increases. The fruit of the Spirit is love and also in their faith. So, all of these things are mysterious, aren't they? I don't know.

When I look back, I don't know how I got victory over any sin that I struggled with as a Christian. I don't know how I got victory over that. I know it was not from squinting my eyes harder when I was trying to repent.

That isn't it. God delivers you. He delivers you.

But, on the other hand, every time we come back, all those verses Mack shared with us, I want to know God. I want to cry out to Him. I beg, Lord, take me on.

Lead me higher. But there is no how-to. It's mysterious.

What did Jesus say? He says the kingdom of God is like this man that went out and threw this seed in the ground. And He says the earth brings forth fruit of itself. How? He doesn't know.

He goes to bed at night. He gets up in the morning and this thing's growing. It's mysterious.

And if you've got any how-to, well, these five steps on how to get victory in the Christian life, you might as well throw all that stuff in the trash can. That will not work. But God will deliver you.

I think it's very close. I think it's the same idea. Of course, a lot of the Bible writers approach things from different angles and we get different aspects and ways of looking at it.

But I think that's the law of our Lord and the law of liberty. See, judgment will be merciless to him who broke the law of Christ completely. That's the person who's going to go to hell.

But mercy triumphs over that. The man who shows mercy is the man who's fulfilling the law of Christ. Also in James chapter 4, I think that's again, Paul says that.

He says you can give your body to be burned if you don't have this reality in your heart. You're just a sounding brass and a tingling cymbal. So the acid test of true Christianity is whether or not Christ is living in me and which is this thing of love.

You find some mean, bitter, spirited, hard, unforgiving type person. That's what Jesus said. He says if you don't forgive, don't you ever think that you're going to enter the kingdom of heaven.

That's impossibility that you know anything about grace and you won't show grace to other people. I think that's the idea. That's this whole thing.

When you're a criminal before a judge, you have sin resting upon you. You're condemned for your sins. When God justifies you, He doesn't pretend that your sins have been paid for.

They actually have been paid for. And the justification is a declaration by a judge of the way things really are. And he looks in the books and he says, look, your debt's been paid.

Not only that, you've got millions in the bank. In fact, you don't just have a good righteousness. You've got the very righteousness of God.

Alright, so you are justified in the eyes of the law. You have title to eternal life. Your sins are gone.

That whole category is taken care of because Christ paid for it. You remember the writer to the Hebrews there in chapter 10? He says, look, we know the blood of bulls and goats can't take away sins because every year they had to come back and they offered another sacrifice. And he says, if this really did the job, they wouldn't have any more consciousness of sins because the fact they came back every year and offered... Well, you could say, look, they sinned in between there and they had to have another one for those.

No, he says, if you ever get a hold of what forgiveness is, that whole category of sins and iniquities is gone forever. Their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more. You pass into a new realm.

God has put those things away, buried them in the depths of the sea, and now when you come to God, you're coming as a son to a father. You're no longer back there as a criminal. That would be if God imputed your sin to you.

I mean, if you were under the wrath of God again as a criminal, condemned criminal, then every time you come and confess your sins, you've got to wallow around there and cry out to God to get saved is really what you're doing. But as a Christian, if you're a son, when my son does something wrong, he comes to me and asks my forgiveness. Man, I'm not holding him at arm's length.

He's my son. And there's such a thing as wounding a personal relationship, and we ask forgiveness for that. Not in the sense that I'm trying to be saved again or justified again, but in the sense I say, oh, Father, I'm sorry.

That's how real and close our relationship is with God. Right, right. And when I come and confess my sin, I'm looking back to that blood.

It covers me all the time. But yes, you're resting in Him. He ever lives to make intercession for you on the basis of all He's done for you.

But you're not passing in and out of this state. How do you use it? I think it's right to teach our children the Ten Commandments. But as we teach them, we teach them the way a Christian would teach them.

And we talk to them about the meanings of those things that are much deeper than they were given. See, when God gave the law you shall not commit adultery to Israel, that was an external law that dealt with an external action in a physical nation. And in a physical nation, they couldn't tell whether you were committing adultery in your heart.

That had reference to the actual act of committing adultery. And the judge or whoever was in authority there would look at the outward actions. That's what that had to do with.

It was a law given to a physical nation. Now, underlying that is the heart of the law. And that never changes.

And that's why the Lord can say, now this is the real heart of things right here whenever He teaches in Matthew 5. So when we teach these things to our children, I think we ought to teach the heart of things. That doesn't mean the Ten Commandments are junk. They're a revelation just like the whole... The statement that you shall not plow with an ox and an ass together is not junk.

None of it is. It's all glorious. It's God's revelation.

We're thankful for it. Every bit of it. Not just the Ten Commandments, every bit of it.

See, not one stroke of one letter is worthless in what we call the Old Testament. Every bit of it. Perfect revelation of God for us.

And what a blessed thing. Now we can go back and see Christ in it. You see, Paul tells what that rock was there in the wilderness where they smote the rock and water gushed out of it.

He says that rock was Christ. And you remember, Jesus stood up on the last day of the feast, that great day, and He says, whoever thirsts, let him come unto Me, and drink out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. When they struck that rock, it wasn't just a little stream came up out of there.

You've got to get water for millions of people and their animals. That thing must have blown water all over the place. I mean, it must have been unbelievable.

It's scary to be around it when it started coming out of there. That's the picture of what was going on when that rock was smitten. All through, you know these things.

All through the Old Testament. But the Old Testament is not a place to go back and try to get health food laws. That's not what God was doing.

You see? And it's not the place to go back and say, well, look, you know, if we just have more children, the more children you can have, the more godly seed you'll have. That's an Old Testament idea. There's a lot of things like that where we live in a time where people are taking the law and messing it up in every kind of way.

And missing Christ, which is the center of the whole thing. He's the center of it all. God speaks and He looks ahead.

He talks about those eunuchs that keep the Sabbath and the blessing that will rest upon them. A lot of the brethren that view the Sabbath as being the Lord's Day as being a continuation of the Sabbath. And there may be some here today.

I don't know. But they take those passages. He says if you turn away your foot from doing your own pleasure on My holy day, call the Sabbath a delight.

Turn away from speaking your own words, doing your own pleasure, and so on. They take that to mean that on the Lord's Day we should never talk about personal matters and so on. I view those things as, for example, the eunuchs.

Now, we're applying this in the New Covenant. Are we saying that we're going to have eunuchs in the New Covenant? See, in other words, this is Old Testament language talking about spiritual reality. And I think that we can go back in the Old Testament and we can learn a lot of things as we study the Sabbath.

And there's a lot of profitable, good things. And I've been blessed myself by just studying them and go through. See how God provided for them.

He'd give them twice as much the day before and they could leave and He'd take care of everything. Many, many principles there. And the things that I have said here would not necessarily tell us how we are to observe the Sabbath in our dispensation, for want of a better word, in this church age.

They wouldn't necessarily say one way or the other. For that, we have to go to the New Testament and see how they treated it. My belief is, personally, my belief is that the primary meaning of the Sabbath was not as a day when we have to not work.

I don't think that was the meaning of what we're talking about in the New Testament. If you read the writings of the early church, they specifically said we do not keep the Sabbath. They said the Lord's Day we give to joy.

In the early church, what they did, they would gather in the mornings and worship on Sunday, the Lord's Day. Then they'd go to work. They didn't have a holiday.

Now, if it were a matter of committing adultery, for example, or stealing or killing, we wouldn't say, well, I have to do this. You know, I don't have the day off. But in this area, it's different.

And so the very least we can say, we know something's different about it. There's many aspects of it that have changed. And the big thing to me is that we are given liberty, you see, not to have to lay down rules because we have the New Testament teaching as our standard.

We don't have to lay down rules from the Old Testament and place them upon other Christians. We can't do that. Unless it's something where God has seen fit to reveal the meaning of it, like applying with an ox and an ass together.

He told us what that meant. We can lay that down and say, look, this is wrong. But there's some things we can't so clearly say, but we can apply them in our own lives.

Is that alright, brother? I mean, is that enough on that? Let me just say this. Covenant theology in general, what it says is, it says that God had this one overarching thing called the covenant of grace. That happened outside of history.

And they say, look, the old covenant, they said that's one administration of this overarching covenant of grace. And the new covenant's another administration of it. And they're basically the same.

They're just different administrations of this one suprahistorical covenant of grace. Now, the problem with that is, is that the Bible doesn't say that. It contrasts these two totally.

And if you have that idea, you start drawing these parallels. Well, they were circumcised as infants back here. Now they're going to be baptized as infants over here.

And you start equating the church with the nation of Israel. In 1966, Martin Lloyd-Jones made a call for true Christians to come out of these apostate denominations. John Stock got up and he said, Dr. Lloyd-Jones, both history and the Bible are against you.

The remnant is not outside the church. The remnant is in the church. Now look at what he's saying.

He's calling the church, this apostate dead Anglicanism, for example, where you've got parliament and atheists and Jews voting on what the church is supposed to believe. And the king is ahead over the whole thing. He calls that the church.

And he says the remnant's inside there. Well, if that logic is true, then there never should have been a reformation. We should have stayed inside the Church of Rome.

And that's exactly where they went. And a little bit later, you've got J.I. Packer, John Stock co-authoring a book and other things have come out about merging back into Rome. So what's the biblical teaching? That whole thing, what's wrong with it? They're equating Old Testament Israel with the New Testament church.

It's two different things entirely. And that thinking is a thinking of a mindset that keeps you in the Old Testament. That's why you had Calvin, for example, involved in the burning of Servetus.

They're trying to do what Old Testament prophets did back when they were under a civil nation. And that's the wrong idea. What's the New Testament say? It doesn't say the remnant's in the church.

It says the remnant is the church. It's all spiritual reality now. And we don't take people and beat them up when they're heretics.

You know, even though what happened, for example, in Massachusetts Bay Colony, guys like Roger Williams were persecuted and driven out because they were Baptist. The idea of saying reform Baptist is like saying heavenly devil. You can't have that.

That's impossible. Because the reformed church stood for covenant theology and they persecuted those who disagreed because they believed and church and state were together, you see, ultimately. There's a passage in Calvin, incredible.

He says, the body of Christ, one arm's the state, one arm's the church. Unbelievable that he would say something like that. I don't know, maybe we got a little far afield there.

One of the greatest things that warms my heart is the idea that it is finished and done and completed and we can rest. And every time we look at Christ, we all think it's over. We can just rejoice.

Look at this. Look what God has done. God wasn't tired when He rested on that seventh day.

What was He doing? He was looking it over and rejoicing in it. This thing is perfect and it's complete and it's done. And we who have believed do enter into that rest.

And we're resting in that. Reality and the Christian ought to have that reality every day. This is this thing that we talked about in the second point, free from the demands of the law to try to mirror up life.

It's already been done. It is finished. And if we are persuaded that the Sabbath was primarily ceremonial and related to teaching us about this rest, if we're persuaded of that, remember what he says, let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth.

And let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not. Now, here's our problem. If we've got more scruples, we tend to judge the person that has less.

And we say, they're sinning. And from the other side, the person that has less scruples about it says, no, that's not what that means. That's a picture and so on.

We tend to despise the one that doesn't. And we say, look down on them. Look at them, you know, those legalists.

It's not either one. If you're dealing with Christians, you don't have legalists and you don't have anomians among Christians. Lawless people.

Christians are not like that. They love God. They're not legalists and they're not lawless.

And there's many Christians, he that regards the day to the Lord he regards it. That's something real to him. And you can't say that he's sinning by doing that.

Maybe he can't see the thing the same way you can. And on the other hand, if here's a brother over here and says, brother, I don't really believe we're supposed to keep it. I don't think that's what the Lord's day is, is a Sabbath in the New Testament.

I don't think that's what it is. You can't judge him and say he's sinning. To his own master, he stands or falls.

And what does he say? Yea, he shall be held up or God's able to make him stand. That ought to be our attitude on these things. Amen.

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