

Soundly Saved - Kirk's Hbks

by Kirk Cameron

The speaker argues that modern evangelism has abandoned the biblical principle of using the law to convert the soul and drive sinners to Christ, leading to a decline in the effectiveness of evangelism.

Duration: 57:26

Scripture: Psalm 19:7, Mark 10:17

Topics: "True Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of following Jesus' example in biblical evangelism. He refers to the story of the Woman at the Well in John chapter 4 as a beautiful example of how Jesus engaged in conversation, starting with natural topics and transitioning to spiritual matters. The speaker also mentions the use of gospel tracts, specifically a million dollar bill, as a tool to initiate conversations about the gospel. He highlights the need to present the full gospel message, including God's holiness, sin, God's punishment, and the mercy and compassion of God demonstrated through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

Transcript

Welcome! We're thrilled to have you here. Ray and I got in early this morning, so if we have circles under our eyes, because we're working on about an hour's sleep. But we have been so pumped up about this event, and this is so exciting to see all these people here, with a heart desiring to learn more about how to share your faith effectively.

And there may be some people here this afternoon who have not really stepped foot in church, but you're here to maybe check out what Mike Steber has to say from the pulpit. That's okay, too. I'm not all that comfortable in a lot of churches, but everybody here is really friendly, and so I'm comfortable, and I hope you are, too.

Most people ask me when they meet me what I have in common with Mike Steber, and I usually point out the fact that we tend to look a lot alike, and the fact that we both married the same woman. See, Mike Steber married a girl named Kate on the show, and the girl that played Kate is Chelsea Noble, and I married her in real life. We've been married for 12 years now, and we have 6 kids.

And my kids are 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, and Chelsea is 8 months pregnant. So we have a real full house at home, and that's why I took the red eye last night, so that I can spend as much time here as possible. But it's an

honor and a privilege to be here with you this afternoon.

I want to tell you really quickly how I became a Christian. I was the last guy in the world that I ever thought would become a Christian. I thought Christians were just religious fanatics, weirdos, people believing in fairy tales.

I was a devout atheist most of my life. When I was 14 years old, I got this job on Growing Pains. I had the world by the tail.

I was doing everything that I wanted to do. I was making money, rich, famous, could hang out with actors, actresses, movie stars, parties, whatever I wanted. If I didn't have something, it was simply because I didn't want it.

I had never heard the gospel before in my entire life. My mom tried to talk to me about God when I was a little kid, and I just laughed at her. I said, Mom, that's fairy tales.

You know, like, come on. We didn't have a nativity in our house at Christmas time. I had no clue who Jesus was or what that was all about.

I was an atheist. And I met a girl. She was cute.

She invited me to go to church. I thought it would be a good idea to accept the invitation, even though it was to a church. I sat in the back row with my arms folded, and I heard this pastor begin to explain what the Bible said about God.

And he shared the gospel, the whole gospel, the whole thing, from beginning to end, about God's holiness and purity and his righteousness, his power, his awesome God. He's talked about sin and selfishness and how God is offended and angry by the sin of people who rebel against him and do what they know is wrong. It's just sort of do it in the face of God.

And he talked about God's punishment. And he talked about hell. But then he talked about the mercy and compassion of God and explained about how Jesus died on the cross to provide a way for us to be forgiven in this incredible demonstration of God's love for those who have offended and angered him.

And I was just blown away by this. I'd never really heard it this way before. I left the church with lots of questions for my friend.

And it was about a month later, I couldn't stop thinking about this stuff, and it finally occurred to me that one day I would die. I knew that I was going to die one day, and if this was true and there was a God and a heaven, I wouldn't be going. And I knew that my attitude had separated me from God and that there's no reason he should let me into heaven.

And it really bothered me. And I thought, maybe I'm wrong about this, I don't know. I'm going to pray.

I didn't know how to do it. I pulled my car over. I closed my eyes and I just said, God, if you're there, I need to know.

If you're real, would you please show me? And would you please forgive me? And would you change me into the person that you want me to be? And I opened my eyes. I didn't see a vision of Jesus on the windshield. I didn't feel the Holy Spirit rushing through the air conditioning vents.

Nothing weird. I just had this very strange sense that God was there. That he heard me.

That he was listening. It was real to me. I can't prove it to you.

I can't explain it. But it was just real. And I went home.

Someone gave me a Bible. I began to study it and learn about this amazing God who revealed himself in nature and in sunsets and in space. And in the Bible.

And instead of just treating me according to my sins and what I deserve, he's looked beyond that and said, No, I want to provide a way for you to be forgiven and give you something you don't deserve. My love and my forgiveness. And he paid the price to make that possible.

That's the God I've fallen in love with and I've surrendered my life to. And I can tell you of all the things I've ever done in my life, of all the people I've met, of the places I've been, absolutely nothing compares to knowing Jesus Christ, being forgiven of my sin, and being in a right relationship with God. I've been a Christian for about 14 years.

And one of the things that immediately sprang to my mind was, I need to tell people about this. I need to explain to them that Jesus isn't just a fairy tale. This is important stuff.

We're talking about eternity, heaven, and hell. And Jesus said, I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me.

And now I understood why. Because he died on that cross and somebody explained it and it made sense to me. And so I wanted to share my faith with other people because I want the people I love to go to heaven.

I don't want them going to hell when they die. And Jesus said clearly, without Jesus, they're going to hell. Man, this is important stuff.

And so I try to learn how to share my faith and do it effectively. And whenever I had an opportunity, I'd muster up the courage and I'd share my testimony with somebody. For you non-Christians, that just means, share what Jesus has done in my life.

And I'd have two responses that were very common. Both were very frustrating. One was, people would say, hey, Kirk, I'm really happy for you.

I'm glad you found something that works for you. But I've got my own beliefs that I'm quite happy with and I don't need Jesus. And if I'd say, yeah, you do, we'd get into an argument and it would just go nowhere.

The other response is, sometimes people would say, oh man, that's really interesting. I'll go to church with you. And then the pastor would even give an invitation for people to come and receive Christ as their Savior.

And this guy wants to come forward. And I'm excited. And he says his prayer.

And I'm thinking, yahoo, this guy's God. The light bulb went off, he's a Christian. And then I find that it's not long before he stops coming to church.

I can't get him to go to any church. He's really not interested in church. He's not interested in reading his Bible.

He's not longing and seeking to obey the Lord and live in a way that's pleasing to the Lord. He's not interested in the things of God at all. He was just checking Christianity out to see if it was all that Kirk Cameron said it was.

And he kind of drifts off into Never Never Land. He's into something else and tries something else. Living in immorality and cussing and swearing and drinking and partying.

All the stuff that is not the mark of a Christian who's been changed. And he falls into the category of what we commonly call a backslider. And I found that I wasn't the only one experiencing these kinds of results in sharing the gospel with people.

And people coming forward to receive Christ. There's something in church today that we call a fallaway rate. Pastors know about it.

It's the number of people who sort of fall away and become backsliders after they've made this decision for Christ. The current fallaway rate in the church today is something like 80%. I'm going to explain to you a little more specifically what that means.

That means that there are something like 80 to 90 backsliders for every 100 decisions for Christ. And that's normal statistics right now. I'll make it even more real for you.

In 1991, a major U.S. denomination was able to obtain 294,000 decisions for Christ. That is, in one year they obtained 294,000 decisions for Christ. And unfortunately, they could only find 14,000 of those people in fellowship.

That means they couldn't account for 280,000 of those decisions. And that's normal, modern, evangelistic results. I was shocked when I heard this.

And it caused me to really look into the Word of God and study the Word of God and study other preachers, like Charles Spurgeon and Wesley and Moody and great men of God that God has used to bring people to Christ who have turned into passionate believers, not backsliders. And I found that they used a principle that was very unique to what I had been taught. And then specifically I realized that Jesus used this same principle that's very foreign to the way that I was taught to share the gospel.

And I want to give you an example. In Mark 10, verse 17, we have the story of the rich young ruler who runs up to Jesus, the Bible says. He runs up to him, gets down on his knees, and he says, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Now I don't know about you, but if someone ever did that to me, I would be pretty excited.

I mean, that would be an opportunity of a lifetime. Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Now, notice what Jesus said to the guy. First of all, notice what he didn't say.

Notice he did not say, Oh, my friend, I'm so glad you asked. Listen, you've got a God-shaped hole in your heart that only God can fill. And in a little while, I'm going to die on a cross.

And if you will just believe in me with all your heart and say this prayer and mean it, you will go to heaven when you die. No, Jesus didn't say that. He said, Why do you call me good? There is no one who is good

but one, that is God.

I'm scratching my head as Jesus said this, and I'm thinking to myself, Man, he really, where's he going with this? I mean, it really seemed like Jesus could have benefited from a friendship evangelism course. There's no one who's good except one, that is God. And then, he corrected this man's understanding of what good was and pointed him to the Ten Commandments.

And he gave him five of them. He said, You know the commandments. You shall not lie, you shall not steal, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder.

Honor your father and your mother. And the man said, Yes, I've kept all these since I was a youth. And Jesus said, Well, there's one more thing that you lack.

And he pointed him to the essence of the first and the second commandment. And he said, Go and sell all your goods and give to the poor. Then you'll have treasure in heaven.

And then come, follow me. And the Bible says the man went away very sad. He just left.

Jesus didn't chase after him, trying to strike up a friendship with the guy. He just left. And I'm scratching my head thinking, Man, what was Jesus doing? That's not the way you're supposed to do it.

I mean, that's not what I learned in my discipleship evangelism course. He didn't talk about God's love. He didn't pray with him.

He didn't talk about God's grace. Nothing. What happened? It was my immature understanding of what Jesus was doing.

He was putting into practice a principle that is extremely effective and necessary for preparing a person's heart for grace. And Jesus used it all the time with proud, self-righteous people. And so did Paul and so did Peter.

And all the great men of God who have used the principles of biblical evangelism down through the ages. I've begun putting this principle into practice myself and found the results to be life-changing and amazing in my talking with non-Christians about the gospel because it helps the gospel make perfect sense. I want to explain it to you today in a message that we call Hell's Best Kept Secret.

I first heard it from a man named Ray Comfort. It rocked my whole world. And I want to share it with you just the way that I was taught it.

If you have your Bibles, pull out your Bibles. You don't want to take notes. We're going to put the verses up on the screen so that you can see them.

And we're going to go through them kind of quickly just in the interest of time. So, listen fast. If you don't have a Bible and notes, that's okay.

You can hear this message later on tape through our website and we've got resources out in the back and you can catch it all in the notes and things later. Okay. The Bible says in Psalm 19, verse 7, The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.

Now, what is it that the Bible says is perfect and actually converts the soul? It's right there. The Scripture makes it clear. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.

Now, to demonstrate the function of God's law, I'd like us to look for a moment at our own civil law. Imagine if I said to you, I've got some good news for you. Someone has just paid a \$25,000 speeding fine on your behalf.

You'd probably look at me and say, What? What are you talking about? That's not good news. It doesn't make sense. I don't have a \$25,000 speeding fine.

My good news wouldn't be good news to you. It would sound like foolishness. But more than that, it would sound offensive.

Because I'm actually insinuating that you've broken the law when you don't think you have. As far as you're concerned, you're a very good driver. However, if I said it to you this way, it might make more sense.

On the way to this meeting today, the law clocked you at going 55 miles an hour through an area set aside for a blind children's convention. There were 10 clear warning signs stating that 15 miles an hour was the maximum speed, and you went straight through at 55 miles an hour. What you did was extremely dangerous.

There's a \$25,000 fine. The law was about to take its course when someone you don't even know stepped in and paid the fine for you. You are very fortunate.

Can you see that by telling you precisely what you've done wrong first actually makes the good news make sense? If I don't help you clearly understand that you've broken the law, then my good news is going to sound like foolishness. It's going to be offensive. But once you understand that you've violated the law, then the good news of the fine being paid for you becomes truly good news.

Now, in the same way, if I go up to a normal, unrepentant, non-Christian, and I say to him, I've got some good news for you, man. Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins. It's going to sound like foolishness to him.

It's going to be offensive. It's not going to make sense. It's foolishness because it really doesn't make sense.

The Bible says that. The preaching of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. And offensive because I'm insinuating that the guy's a sinner when he doesn't think he is.

As far as he's concerned, there's plenty of people far worse than he is. He doesn't think he's a bad guy at all. But if I take the time to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, it might make more sense.

If I take the time to open up the divine law, the Ten Commandments, and show him precisely what he's done wrong first, that he's actually angered God by violating his law, then when he becomes convinced that he's guilty, or as the Bible says, convinced by the law a transgressor, then the good news of the fine being paid for him will not be foolishness. It will not be offensive. It will be the power of God to salvation.

Make sense? Now with that thought in mind, let's take a look at Romans 3, verse 19. Now we know that whatever things the law says, it says to those who are under the law that every mouth may be stopped

and all the world may become guilty before God. So that's one function of God's law.

To stop the mouth of sinners and leave the whole world guilty before God. To stop the mouth of a person saying, I'm not a bad person. No, I'm a very good person.

It stops the mouth of a person trying to justify themselves and leaves the whole world guilty before God. Next verse. Therefore, by the deeds of the law, no flesh shall be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

So God's law tells us what sin is. 1 John 3, verse 4 says, Sin is transgression of the law. That's the biblical definition of sin.

Transgression of the law. Romans 7, verse 7. I had not known sin except through the law. So what Paul is saying here is, I wouldn't have known what sin was unless the law had told me.

That's how he knew what sin was. And Galatians 3, verse 24. The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.

So the law teaches us. It is a schoolmaster that leads us to Jesus Christ so that we might be justified through faith in his blood. The law doesn't justify us.

It just leaves us guilty. The law doesn't help us. It just leaves us helpless.

We are saved by God's grace. We are not saved by the law. The law is just like a mirror that shows us that we're filthy, dirty, and in desperate need of God's cleansing, which comes through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ.

And the tragedy of modern evangelism is that around the turn of the last century, about 100 years ago, when it got rid of the law and its ability to convert the soul, to drive sinners to Christ, modern evangelism therefore had to find another reason for sinners to respond to the gospel. And the issue that modern evangelism chose to attract people to Jesus was the issue of life enhancement. The gospel degenerated into Jesus Christ will give you love, joy, peace, happiness, and lasting fulfillment.

Now to demonstrate the unscriptural nature of this very popular teaching, I'd like you to listen to the following story because the essence of what I'm saying pivots on this particular point. Two men are seated on an airplane. The first is given a parachute, and he's told to put it on because it would improve his flight.

Now the guy's a little skeptical at first because he can't see how putting a parachute on in a plane could possibly improve his flight. But after a while, he decides to experiment and see if the claim is true. And as he does, he notices the weight of it on his shoulders and the fact that he can't sit straight up.

But he comforts himself with the thought that he was told the parachute would improve his flight, so he decides to give the thing a little time. And as he waits, he starts to notice some of the other passengers are laughing at him because he's wearing a parachute on a plane. He starts to feel a bit humiliated.

And as they point and laugh, he finally can't stand it any longer. He slinks in his seat, unstraps the parachute, and throws it on the floor. Disillusionment and bitterness fill his heart.

Because as far as he's concerned, he was told an outright lie. Now the second man is given a parachute, but listen to what he's told. He's told to put it on because at any moment he would be jumping 25,000 feet

out of the plane.

He gratefully puts it on. He doesn't notice the weight of it on his shoulders or the fact that he can't sit straight up. His mind is consumed with the thought of what would happen to him if he jumped without that parachute.

Now let's analyze the motive and the result of each passenger's experience. The first man's motive for putting on the parachute was solely to improve his flight. The result of his experience was that he was humiliated by the passengers, he was disillusioned and somewhat bitter toward those who gave him the parachute.

As far as he's concerned, it'll be a long time before someone gets one of those things on his back again. Now the second man put on the parachute solely to escape the jump to come. And because of his knowledge of what would happen to him without the parachute, he has a deep-rooted joy and peace in his heart knowing that he's going to be saved from sure death.

This knowledge gives him the ability to withstand the mockery of the other passengers. His attitude toward those who gave him the parachute is one of heartfelt gratitude. Now listen to what the modern Gospel says.

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. He'll give you love, joy, peace, happiness and lasting fulfillment. In other words, Jesus will improve your flight.

And so the sinner responds and in an experimental fashion puts on the Savior to see if the claim is true. And what does he get? Just what Jesus promised. Temptation, tribulation, persecution.

The other passengers mock him. So what does he do? He takes off the Lord Jesus Christ. He's offended, for the word's sake.

He's disillusioned and embittered. And quite rightly so. He was promised peace, love, joy, happiness, fulfillment.

And all he got were trials and humiliation. His bitterness is directed toward those who gave him the so-called good news. And now he's worse off than he was before because now he thinks he's given Jesus a try and all he got was a big letdown.

Another bitter and inoculated backslider. Instead of telling people that Jesus improves their flight, we should be warning the passengers they're going to have to jump out of the plane. That it's appointed for a man once to die and then comes judgment.

And when a sinner understands the horrific consequences of violating God's law, then he will run to the Savior to escape the wrath that's to come. And if we're true and faithful witnesses, that's what we'll be telling them. That there is wrath to come.

Just like Jesus did. Like Paul did. Like Peter did.

Like all of Scripture does. This is nothing new. We've just gotten away from it over the last hundred years.

Acts 17.30 says, God commands all men everywhere to repent. Why? Because he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness. You see, it isn't an issue of happiness, but an issue of

righteousness.

It doesn't matter how happy a sinner is, how much he's enjoying the pleasures of his sin, without the righteousness of Christ, he's going to perish on the day of judgment. The Bible says, riches are worthless on the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death. You see, that's how I knew I needed a Savior.

Kirk Cameron had riches. I had happiness. I had everything going for me.

But I knew that none of those things would do me any good when I stood before God on the day of judgment. That wouldn't impress God. He saw my sin.

In spite of the fact of how he's blessed me, I sinned and offended him. It was the righteousness of Christ that I needed in order to be saved. Now, this is important.

Please listen. Peace and joy are legitimate fruits of salvation. They are the results of salvation.

But it's not legitimate to use these fruits as draw cards for salvation. Why? Because if a person comes to God to find peace and joy and happiness without a truly repentant heart, broken over their sin, grieved in their heart that they have offended their Creator, and come through the door of repentance, they will not find peace with God. They will not know the joy of the Lord.

They will remain separated from God by their sin. By nature, children of wrath, the wrath of God will still abide on them. Enemies of God.

Separated from God, from Christ, without hope. Now, think of the second passenger. He had joy and peace in his heart.

Why? It was because he knew that the parachute was going to save him from sure death. That's why he had peace and joy. And as a believer, I have, like Paul said, joy and peace in believing.

Because I know that the righteousness of Christ is going to save me from the wrath to come. Now, with that thought in mind, let's take another look at an incident on board the plane. We have a brand new stewardess.

It's her first day on the job, and she's carrying a pot of boiling hot coffee. She really wants to make an impression on the passengers. And that's exactly what she does, because as she's walking down the aisle, she accidentally trips over somebody's foot and slops this boiling hot coffee into the lap of our second passenger.

Now, what's his reaction as this boiling hot liquid hits his tender flesh? Does he go, Man, that hurt! Yes, of course, he feels the pain. But then, does he stand up, unstrap the parachute, throw it on the floor, and say, This stupid parachute! No, of course not. Why should he? He didn't put the parachute on for a better flight.

He put it on to save his life. And if anything, the hot coffee would cause him to cling tighter to the parachute and even look forward to the jump. And if you and I have come to the Lord and put on the Savior for the right motive, to escape from the wrath that's to come, then when tribulation strikes, when the flight gets bumpy, we're not going to get angry at God.

We're not going to lose our joy and peace. Why should we? We didn't come to Jesus for a happy, more fulfilled lifestyle. We came because we know we violated His law, and we've run to the love of Jesus Christ

on the cross to escape from the wrath that's to come.

And sadly, we have literally millions of professing Christians who lose their joy and peace when the flight gets bumpy. That shouldn't happen. If anything, tribulation drives the true believer closer to the Savior.

It doesn't make them fall away. Why is this happening? Why do they fall away? Why do they lose their joy and peace? Because they're the product of a man-centered gospel. They came forward lacking repentance.

And without repentance, you cannot be saved. For years, I struggled with something called evangelical frustration. I so wanted people to come to Christ.

I wanted them to get it and understand and surrender their life to Jesus that I unknowingly gave them this man-centered gospel with lots of enthusiasm, trying to really sell it. And I'd say something like this, Man, you're never going to find peace without Jesus. You're never going to find it.

I've tried everything. Money, celebrity, everything. Nothing's going to fill that hole like Jesus.

And if a person would respond and say, Hey man, alright. Yeah, alright. I'll pray a prayer.

Cool, let's try it. And I'd pray with them. And I'd tell them, Man, when you say this, you've got to mean it with all your heart.

You've got to be sincere. It's not the words. It's the sincerity of your heart.

And if we'd pray together, God, forgive me. I'm a sinner. He'd be like, God, forgive me.

I'm a sinner. And I'm thinking to myself, Man, this guy doesn't seem sincere. He doesn't seem broken over his sin.

There's no outward sign that the guy is really broken hearted before the Lord. But if I could see inside of his heart, I would see that he was 100% sincere. He sincerely wanted to give this Jesus thing a try to see if he could get a buzz out of it.

He had tried sex, drugs, money, alcohol. Why not try this Jesus thing and see if it's as great as all these Christians say that it is. He wasn't broken over his sin.

He wasn't fleeing from the wrath to come. I hadn't told him there was wrath to come. He wasn't repenting over his sin.

He didn't even know what his sin was. I glossed over that. Remember Romans 7 verse 7? I would not have known sin except through the law.

How can a guy repent if he doesn't even know what sin is? You see, in our culture today, people don't want to believe something is true unless they experience it for themselves. They don't want to take my word for it. They don't want to take your word for it or your pastor's word for it.

They don't even want to take the Holy Bible's word for it. They want to experience it for themselves. Then it becomes true for them.

Think of it this way. If you saw a man out on a lake who's drowning. But he doesn't think he's drowning.

And you think to yourself, man, I think that guy's drowning. Yes, he's in trouble. He's drowning.

I'm going to go save him. You run out into the lake. You grab the guy by the neck.

You swim up to the shore and you throw him up on the sand without telling him anything. He's not going to be very happy with you. He's not going to want to get saved until he sees that he's in danger.

Or think of it this way. If you came up to me and said, hey, Kirk. I'd say, yeah? Hey, man, this is a cure for Groninson's disease.

I sold my house to raise the money to buy this cure for you and I'm giving it to you as a free gift. I'd probably look at you and say, what? Groninson's disease? You sold your house to raise the money to buy this stuff for me and you're giving it to me as a free gift? Oh, gee. Thanks a lot.

Bye. Oh, man. That's another one of those nuts.

That guy's so strange. I mean, that's probably how I'd react if you told me you sold your house to raise the money to buy a cure for a disease I hadn't even heard of. But if you said it to me this way, it might make more sense.

Hey, Kirk. You've got Groninson's disease. You're going to be dead in two weeks.

I can see ten clear symptoms on your flesh. And then we talked about it and I became convinced that I had the disease because the symptoms were so evident. And then I said, oh, man.

I see what you're saying. What do I do? And then you said to me, don't worry. This is a cure for Groninson's disease.

I sold my house to raise the money to buy this cure for you and I'm giving it to you as a free gift. I'm not going to despise your sacrifice. I'm not going to think you're strange.

I'm going to appreciate it. I'm going to thank you and I'm going to appropriate it. Why? Because I've seen the disease so that I appreciate the cure.

And sadly, what's happened is that we have preached the cure without first convincing people of the disease. We've preached the gospel of grace without first convincing people of the law, that they're transgressors. And as a result, we have literally millions of people in our country who think they have a relationship with Jesus because they invited Jesus into their heart, they accepted Jesus, but they did not come through the narrow gate of repentance, stripped of the false notion that they're a good person, surrendered to the Lord of the universe.

Why? Because they've never been convinced of a disease that they truly appreciate the cure. 1 Timothy 1, verse 8. You don't need to turn there, I'll just tell you what it says. It says, But we know that the law is good if it is used lawfully for the purpose for which it was designed.

If we use it wrongly, it's bad. People use the law and create legalism, stuff that's not good. But when it's used lawfully for the purpose for which it was designed, the Bible says it is good.

Okay, what was the law designed for? The following verse tells us. The law was not made for a righteous man, but for sinners. It even lists the sinners.

The ungodly, the unholy, adulterers, perverts, murderers, liars. You see, if you want to bring an atheist to Christ, you don't need to get tied up in intellectual arguments with the guy. Just give him the Ten Commandments, God's law, and let his own conscience work on him.

The law was made for the ungodly. If you want to bring a Jew to Christ, give him the Law of Moses. Give him the Law of Moses.

Let it prepare his heart for grace. If you want to bring a Muslim to Christ, same thing. Give him the Law of Moses.

They respect Moses as a prophet. Give him the Law of Moses, and let it strip him of his own self-righteousness, and bring him to the foot of a blood-stained cross. If you want to bring your children to Christ, we don't need to get them to join the God Club and convince them it's cooler than MTV.

No! Show them the Ten Commandments so that they can see their personal sins against the Lord. And they'll understand why Jesus died on the cross for them. And they'll know why they should cling to him forever and never let go.

Think of the woman caught in the act of adultery. She had committed adultery. Violation of the Seventh Commandment.

The law called for her blood. She was stuck between a rock and a hard place with nowhere to turn but to fall at the feet of the Son of God for mercy. You see, that's what the law does.

It condemns. And maybe you're saying, no, no, no. You can't go around condemning sinners.

But the truth is, they are condemned already. John 3, verse 18. He that does not believe is condemned already.

All the law does is show him himself in his true state. Ladies, you might recognize this. You wake up in the morning and you notice that your dining room table needs dusting.

So you dust it clean. All the dust is gone. And then you draw back the curtains and let in the early morning sunlight.

What do you see on the table? Dust. What do you see in the air? Dust. Did the light create the dust? No.

It merely exposed the dust. And when you and I take the time to draw back the curtains of the Holy Scriptures and let the light of God's law shine on the sinner's heart, all that happens is that he sees himself for what he is. The Bible says the commandment is a lamp and the law is light.

That's why Paul said by the law is the knowledge of sin. That's why he said by the commandment sin became exceedingly sinful. In other words, the law showed him his sin in its true light.

Now I'd like to share with you how I actually witness to people personally. How to do it. I'm a strong believer in biblical evangelism and following in the footsteps of Jesus.

And the beautiful example in Scripture, one of many, is in John chapter 4 with the woman at the well. You see Jesus in action. I call it the way of the Master.

He starts in the natural realm, talking about natural things, swings to the spiritual, talking about spiritual things, brings conviction using the seventh commandment, and then he reveals himself as the Messiah. So I'll try to follow that pattern in the same way by doing something like this. Sometimes I can start a conversation with somebody with a gospel tract.

I'm not into offensive and obnoxious tracts, but there's really good ones that we produce through ministry. Here's one. It's a million dollar bill.

It's a great way to start a conversation with a waitress when you give her a tip. This is a Left Behind 2 tract. A lot of people know about the books and there's a wonderful gospel presentation inside.

Here's a greeting card with Charles Darwin on the front and it says, Did the butterfly evolve? You give it to somebody and say, Hey, check it out. Open it up. They open it up and inside it says, You've got to be kidding! And there's a gospel message on the wings and quotes from Einstein and Charles Darwin in here.

Great way to start a conversation. But if I don't have these, I'll just simply say, Hey, can I ask you a question? Do you go to church? Do you have a Christian background? They'll say, Yes, no, whatever. And I'll say, Hey, can I ask you a personal question? Do you consider yourself to be a good person? Now what I'm doing is, I'm going back to the issue Jesus made the issue with that man.

Why did he call me good? The issue is people's understanding of what good is. Do you consider yourself a good person? Most people will say, Yeah, absolutely. And then I'll say, Do you think you've kept the Ten Commandments? I just did that with a guy not too long ago.

We were on the golf course. A few other guys and this guy's name was Ray not Ray Comfort, a different Ray. And we were golfing and I said to him, Hey, do you consider yourself a good person? Yeah.

He said, Do you think you've kept the Ten Commandments? A friendly conversation. He says, Yeah, pretty much. I mean, I've never murdered anybody.

And I said, Well, let's go through a few of them and see. Do you mind? He's like, Yeah, sure. Why not? I said, Okay.

Have you ever told a lie? He says, Yeah. I said, What does that make you? He says, Human. I said, Yeah, I know you're human, but come on.

If someone murders someone, that makes them a murderer. Right? If you rape somebody, that would make you a rapist. So if you lie, what does that make you? He says, A liar.

I said, Alright, have you ever stolen anything? He says, No. I said, Come on, I don't believe you. You just admitted to me you're a liar.

He laughs and he says, Okay, when I was younger, yes, I have. Yes, I've stolen something. I said, Okay, what does that make you? He says, A stealer or a thief.

I said, Here's the one that got me. Jesus said, You know that it's been said, Do not commit adultery, but whoever looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Have you ever done that? Have you ever looked at another person with lust? He says, Yeah, plenty of times.

I said, Well then, Ray, by your own admission, you're a lying, thieving adulterer at heart. And you have to face God on Judgment Day. And that's only three of the ten commandments.

I mean, he had this look of being guilty. Because he was guilty. And if you think about it, the commandments leave us guilty.

Whether you've been going to church your whole life or whether you haven't. Ask yourself these questions and be honest. Think to yourself and be honest.

Listen to your conscience. Have you kept the commandments? Think of the first commandment. You shall have no other gods before me.

Have you always put God first in your life? Jesus said, To love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength so much that your love for your mother and father, brother and sister, your family, your friends, even your own life is like hatred compared to your love and devotion for God. Have you always loved God that much? No. The Bible says none of us have kept that commandment.

How about the second one? You shall not create for yourself a graven image or an idol. Now, you can either do that with your hands or you can do it with your mind. Have you ever thought in your mind something like this? Man, my God is a God of love and mercy.

He's not a God of judgment. He would never create a place called hell. If you have thought that, you're right.

Your God would never create a place called hell because he couldn't. He doesn't exist. He's a figment of your imagination.

You've created a God in your own mind that you are more comfortable with. You've created a God to suit yourself. You may call it your own beliefs, but the Bible calls that idolatry.

It's the oldest sin in the book. And idolaters will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. Have you ever taken the name of the Lord in vain? Have you ever used his name as a cuss word? If you have, instead of using a four-letter filth word to express disgust, you have taken God's name, the one who's given you your life, your family, everything precious to you, and you've used it as a four-letter filth word to express disgust.

It's called blasphemy. And every idle word a man speaks, he'll give an account of it on the Day of Judgment. God will not hold him guiltless who takes the name of the Lord in vain.

The one that jumps out at me so vividly is the Fifth Commandment. Honor your father and mother. I broke that every day as a teenager.

How about you? How about the Sixth Commandment? You shall not murder. Most of us think we're safe with that one, but Jesus said whoever is angry with his brother without cause is in danger of judgment. And the Bible says he who hates his brother is a murderer because God sees our hearts.

He judges the intentions and desires of our heart. And hatred is as wicked as murder in the eyes of a holy God. Imagine if I could put a high-tech computer chip behind your ear.

Think of this one. A chip that monitored your thoughts and recorded all of them 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Everything you think, everything you want and desire.

When your husband and wife aren't looking, when your kids aren't looking, when your parents aren't watching, everything you say and everything you do and everything you desire. Everything you look at with your eyes. We recorded them for a month and then we held a special service at this church and we put those things up on that big screen and showed it in front of everybody.

Your family, your friends, everybody. The pastor, everybody. How would you feel? And the Bible says that's what will happen on the day of judgment when we stand before the Lord and he draws out every secret sin done in darkness.

The Bible says nothing is hidden from the eyes of God but everything is naked and open before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. You share your thought life with God and He is holy. And who of us can say that we're not guilty of coveting and being jealous and of wanting things that belong to other people? We are guilty.

So I said to my friend Ray, Ray, if God judged you by the Ten Commandments on the day of judgment, do you think you'd be innocent or guilty? I'd be guilty. I said, so do you think you'd go to heaven or hell? He said, heaven. I said, why? He says, because God is good.

He is forgiving. I said, really? You believe that God is good and therefore He'll overlook your sins? Yes. He said, try that in a court of law.

You're standing in front of a judge. You're guilty of a serious crime like murder. And the judge says, okay, you're guilty.

All the evidence is here. What do you have to say for yourself before I pass sentence? And you stand up and say, yes, judge, I would just like to say that I believe you're a good man and therefore you'll let me go. The judge would probably say something like, you're right about one thing.

I am a good man. And because of my goodness, I'm going to see to it that justice is served. Because of my goodness, I'm going to see to it that you are punished for what you have done.

And the very thing that sinners are hoping will save them on the day of judgment is the very thing that will condemn them. Because if God is good, then by nature He must punish murderers and rapists and liars and thieves and adulterers and blasphemers and fornicators and all those who have violated the inner light that God has given to every man. You see, we've been given a conscience.

We know right from wrong. Con means with and science means knowledge. Conscience.

Every time we lie and steal and lust, we do it with knowledge that it's wrong. So we will have no excuse. So I said, Ray, the truth is if God gives you justice, you're not headed for heaven, but you'd be headed for hell.

And he just stared at the floor of the golf cart. And it hit him like a ton of bricks. And he had nothing to say.

He understood that he had violated God's law and he had angered God and the wrath of God abides on him. He could now see that when he was weighed in the balance of eternal justice, he was in huge trouble. And now he could see and appreciate the need for a payment.

And I said, Ray, do you see your need for God's forgiveness? And he just looked at me. And I said, I've got some wonderful news for you. Put yourself back in the courtroom.

You're in a civil court this time with multiple crimes against you. Your fine has been set at \$500,000 or life imprisonment. You can't pay your fine and you're being let off to your prison when all of a sudden someone steps into the courtroom and walks up to the judge, hands him a check for \$500,000 and pays your fine in full.

And the judge says, Ray, wait. Your fine has just been paid. You're free to go.

We can't hold you here anymore. Leave. You're free to go on the ground that this man has just paid your fine.

And his sacrifice is a demonstration of his great love for you. I said, Ray, that's what happened. That's what God did for us 2,000 years ago.

Jesus stepped into the courtroom and paid our fine when he died on the cross for our sins. The God of the universe humbled himself, became a man, and suffered and died on the cross for you and for me. The Bible says God demonstrated his own love for us and that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Jesus Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us. We broke the law and Jesus paid our fine. It's as simple as that.

We talked about repentance. We got to the end of the golf course. We were in the parking lot.

Ray stood up and began to cry. He sat down in the front of the cart and said, I've been running from God my whole life. I can't do it anymore.

I said, Do you need God to forgive you and change your heart? He said, Yes, I do. I said, Then tell him. Confess and forsake your sin.

Do it now. Pray. Then trust in Jesus with all your heart.

And Ray began to pray. I didn't lead him through a sinner's prayer. He just began to pray and confess his sin.

He knew he had lied. He knew he had stolen. He knew it had angered God.

And he said, God forgive me. And then I prayed for him. And we opened our eyes and he had a smile on his face and he said, Ray, something's different in my heart.

You can't see it, but God knows and I know and I'm a different... something's changed. The next morning I gave him a Bible. He said he was going to read it and lead his family out of the darkness and into the light.

And my wife asked him, How was your golf game yesterday, Ray? He said, Chelsea, yesterday was the best day of my entire life and golf had nothing to do with it. What happened to Ray? I didn't say anything special. I wasn't an expert evangelist.

I simply used the methods that Jesus has used that all of the people in Scripture use. The old time-tested methods of the Master. This is not a new method of using the law to show a person the disease so that they appreciate the cure.

We've just gotten away from it in the last hundred years and turned it into, God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. He'll fill the hole in your heart. The law must precede the Gospel.

Why? Because you must send the needle of the law first to open the way if you ever want the silken thread of the Gospel to follow in after it. Otherwise, you're pushing it up against a hard heart. You must plow up the hard soil of the heart if it is proud and arrogant and self-righteous.

With the spade of the law to make the ground soft so that the seed of the Gospel of Grace will take root. It's always law to the proud and then grace when they're humble. That is the way of the Master.

I'd like to close with something a little different before we break. With every eye open and with every head raised and no music playing, I'd like us to examine the validity of our own salvation. This is serious business.

You've probably heard it said never question your salvation. The Bible says the exact opposite. It says examine yourself and see if you are in the faith.

It's better now than on the day of judgment. The Bible says make your calling and election sure. And some of you know that something is radically wrong in your Christian walk.

You know that you lose your joy and your peace when the flight gets bumpy. You've never fallen on your face before Almighty God and said, Oh God, I've sinned against you. Have mercy on me.

You've never fled to Jesus and his blood for cleansing. In desperation, crying out, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. And there's a lack of gratitude.

You're a flip about being a Christian. There's not a burning passion for the lost. Those who are dying and will go to hell.

You can't say that you're on fire for God. In fact, you're in danger of being one of the ones called lukewarm and who will be spewed out of the mouth of Christ on the day of judgment when multitudes will cry out to him, Lord, Lord! And he will say to them, Depart from me, I never knew you, you who practice iniquity, lawlessness. You have no respect for the divine law of a holy God.

The Bible says, Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity, lawlessness. And so today you need to readjust the motive for your commitment. Perhaps you see your sin in a new light because you've looked into the mirror and you realize that your wandering eye that entertains lustful thoughts is adultery in the eyes of the Lord.

That your white lies are deceit in the eyes of the Lord. That your petty theft, your white collar theft, taking things from the office, from school, skimming off the top, cheating on your tax reports is wicked in the eyes of the Lord. And you need to get right with God.

What do you do? What do you do different? Repent and put your faith in Christ. Repentance simply means turn away from your sin and turn toward God. Desire to have nothing to do with sin and desire to live in obedience to the Lord.

Confess and forsake your sin and begin to move toward God with a desire to never go back to sin. You won't be perfect but Jesus was perfect and He died for you and He'll give you the power to overcome your sin when you are born again. And put your faith in Jesus Christ.

It doesn't just mean intellectually believe He died on the cross. The demons believe and they tremble. They know that's true.

You must put your faith in Jesus. That means to trust Jesus the same way you'd put your trust in a parachute if you were jumping out of a plane at 25,000 feet. You know it's the only thing that's going to save you.

If I told you you had to do that and there was a parachute under your seat, what would you do? You'd put it on. Would it do you any good to just believe in the parachute? No. And that's what the Bible says.

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. How do you do that? Obey the Gospel. Repent of your sin and trust Jesus Christ and you will become a new creation in Christ.

Old things will pass away. New things have come and you will be a faithful and true laborer on fire to seek and save the lost. That's why Christians are here on earth.

Who can say that they love the lost and not pull them from the fire? I'd like to pray really quick before we break. Father, I thank you for this afternoon. I thank you for your humbling, humbling law.

Your moral standard is so much higher than ours. We are filthy dirty in your pure, pure eyes. And I thank you for Jesus on the cross.

I thank you for his blood that cleanses us from sin. And I pray that you will humble people here today to stop being arrogant and proud and self-righteous and come to the Savior on their knees, broken over their sin, willingly crying out and begging you for mercy, surrendering their life to you as not just their Savior, but as the Lord that they desire to obey and live for. Raise up laborers today.

Turn on the lights and set them on fire to seek and save the lost, no longer being complacent, sitting in their seats worshiping you with their hands and their lips, but denying you in the way they live their life. Convict me of my sin, Lord, and refresh me with your Holy Spirit. Thank you, Father, for your love and compassion and your grace.

I pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

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