

Sin, It's Nature and History - Part 2

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon explores the nature of sin as an inordinate and improper self-love, and the need for repentance as a change of mind, will, and purpose.

Duration: 1:02:53

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:12, Matthew 22:36-40, Romans 3:20, Galatians 3:24, Ephesians 6:1-3, Colossians 3:20

Topics: "Sin"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker recounts a story about a child named Sarah who disobeys by touching a plant despite being told not to. The speaker then discusses the concept of righteous indignation and anger, emphasizing that emotions are not under our control. The speaker also mentions the importance of the law in bringing sinners to Christ and criticizes the idea that God deals with each generation differently. Finally, the speaker explains that embracing the commandment to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength requires a total commitment of our mental understanding, emotional desire, and volitional choice.

Transcript

But when the Pharisees--and I begin reading, by the way, with verse 34-- but when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting, testing him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. It's that fortieth verse that I call to your attention particularly.

As a door swings with two hinges, so the door of understanding of the message of the prophets and the place and importance and meaning of the law swings on these two commandments. These are the hinges. And you'll understand what was meant by the law, and you'll understand the message of the prophets, so you're told to the degree to which you ponder and meditate and understand these two commandments.

Now anything that has this kind of importance attached to it ought to demand and receive a great deal of our attention. And yet I find that very frequently we rather slide by this without examining it in the detail, the

intensity that it deserves. Let's go back in our thinking to where we were last evening when we closed.

That God made man to be the object of his love, to receive his love, enjoy it, and return it in a fashion that would be acceptable to God and satisfy the ancient longing in the heart of God. Man was made to be the object of God's love. Now we find that the event that occurred in the garden had to do with this.

The basis of the relationship was that God poured his love upon man, woman, and they received it and were completed by it and in turn returned their love to him and thus satisfied his heart. But something happened. What was it that took place there when Mother Eve listened to the seduction of our ancient foe and made her choice? But it was essentially this, that her love turned away from God unto herself.

The essence of this crime that we call sin is an inordinate and improper self-love. Now we're using a term without defining it adequately and we must define it if we're to understand what we're talking about. The love of the Bible is not to be confused with the love in common parlance.

That which we hear in modern music or even in much of our hymnody implies that love is an emotion, a feeling, a sensibility. The commandment here is in the imperative mood, Thou shalt love. Are your emotions under the command and the control of your will? If God intended love to convey emotion and sensibility and feeling, he would have to take us back off and put us on the drawing board again and reconstruct us.

We're not capable of controlling our emotions by our will. Let me illustrate it. Without identifying any particular thing about which you might feel righteous indignation and anger, I'm going to appeal directly to your will.

On the count of three, I want you to be angry. Are you ready? Three. How will you ever achieve it if you're going to laugh? You're going to spoil everything.

Now, tense up a little bit. Now, one. Two.

Three. Be angry. Three.

Didn't work, did it? Much as you'd like to please this poor beleaguered speaker, you still weren't able to cooperate. Well, why? Because your emotions are not under the control of your will. Last night I told you about stopping the fans in the country church.

You don't need to run that all the time. Will you do me a favor? Will you go to our triangle here and put an arrow pointing up at the end of mental? This way? That's right. No, just pointing toward the apex of the triangle.

That's right. Now, there you go. Now, come down the other side with a shorter arrow.

This way? That's right. Now, come there. Right.

Now, come over there. That's the way it works. If I can control what you think, then I can control what you feel.

And if I can control what you feel, I can control what you choose. But I can't reverse the process. I can't make it slow the other way.

It doesn't work that way. Love, therefore, has to be not an emotion, a feeling, or sensibility. It has to be something that is under the direct control of the will.

Thou shalt love. Love, therefore, must be redefined. Love is the commitment of the will to seek the highest good and blessedness and happiness and joy and satisfaction of the beloved.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, a commitment of the will to please God, to satisfy Him, to make Him happy with you, to bring joy to His heart. Thou shalt love thy neighbor to seek the highest good and greatest blessing and well-being and satisfaction and fulfillment and happiness of your neighbor. As thou dost love thyself.

Oh, you noticed a moment ago I used the word an inordinate and an improper self-love? Because now I've got to be honest and fair and tell you there's a proper self-love. A commitment of your will to seek the highest good and blessedness and joy and happiness and well-being and fulfillment of yourself, consistent with the commitment of your will to seek the highest joy and happiness and blessedness and satisfaction of God and to seek the highest joy and blessedness and satisfaction and fulfillment and well-being of your neighbor. Now when you put self-love into that environment, it becomes ordinate, it becomes proper, it becomes right.

Now the way some people seem to feel about themselves, I hope I never become their neighbor. Because it would be a wretched thing to be treated by them the way they seem to be content to treat themselves, to despise themselves, to have no sense of their value, their worth, their importance. I suppose we as evangelicals have contributed to that.

We have taken the idea that in order to prepare people for grace, we've got to take the sledgehammer of the law and reduce man down to a worm in the dust. The only problem is after he's put his faith and trust in Christ, we've never quite understood how to bring him back to being a human being again. Many times after they've been forgiven and pardoned, they seem to go right on as worms in the dust.

And I believe it's dishonoring to the Lord for that to be the case because for all he loved us, he gave himself for us. He saw worth and value and importance in you. And it's not improper for you to see worth and value and importance in yourself.

So what we're trying to do is not to destroy personality and personal sense of worth and value, but to bring it into the right relationship. Now what happened back there in the garden is what we've all done. What was it that took place? Well, Mother Eve, whose heart had been fixed and set to please God, listened to the seduction of the ancient foe and her intention and commitment to please God and satisfy his heart, turned away and she made the supreme commitment of her will to please herself at the expense of God without regard for his interest, without regard for his pleasure and his joy in her.

And the consequence? The consequence was that Mother Eve sinned. And so did Father Adam. And so did you.

And so did I. We only understand the law when we understand that the intent and the purpose of the law was to protect God's interests, your neighbor's interests, and your own interests from the people about you and around you who would deprive you of those rights, privileges, blessings that God had intended you to have and to experience. So, now the text tells us that God has established the law, quoted by Christ from the Old Testament, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy mind and all thy soul and

all thy strength, your total being focused on this commitment of the will, the supreme choice governing principle of the life to please God in everything. Now, I must help myself, and I trust you with me, to understand that one can embrace this as a mental concept.

One can understand this as a philosophical principle or a biblical truth. One can give assent to it as being taught in the Scripture without ever having made a commitment. A totality experience, that's what we're talking about, totality experience, requires mental understanding, clear understanding, emotional stimulation and desire, and a volitional choice.

Only then does it become an experiential reality. Now, the experiential reality of the sinner is quite the reverse of what we've been talking about. Mentally, the sinner has listened to the beguiling lies of the enemy.

Ye shall be as God. The soliloquy of the sinner is, I'm going to do what I want to do. I'm going to please me.

I'll choose how to gratify my appetite and satisfy my urges and fulfill all these propensities that I have. I don't want God telling me how to do it or any book telling me how to do it or my mother or my father or my teacher or preacher. I don't want anybody telling me, I'm going to do what I want to do.

And we have a whole hymn that he dedicated to this, I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of myself. We have those popular songs, I did it my way.

Everything is supporting this commitment of the will to the principle of pleasing self. It begins early. I don't know just where or how it gets in so early, but we were living in Orlando, Florida, and our third child, daughter Sarah, now with her doctorate in education and her administrative responsibilities in the Virginia school system, was then just under four.

I came into the living room and saw my daughter who looked so much like me that when I would carry her and her face was next to mine, I'd hear people murmuring, beep and repeat, or something like that. And she had a lot of other things in common, I guess. But at any rate, I came out where my study was in our bedroom, and my little daughter had gone to her mother's plant.

We had a beautiful Florida plant in the living room. And she had taken off a leaf. I saw her take it.

I knew it wasn't that important. I saw her pull it. And she took that leaf and looked at it and knew what to do with it.

And she peeled it up and she tore it in two. And then she looked at the edges and smiled a little bit and pretty proud of herself. And she took those two pieces and fitted them together, and then she took it and tore it again and tore it again.

And she liked what she was doing and kind of felt good. So she put those four pieces together and she tore it again, but a little harder. She knew she wasn't going to get another doubling of it, so she took those pieces and wondered what to do, and she held them up like this and watched them fall one at a time and drift to the floor.

Well, I couldn't do anything about that leaf, could I? I'd lost the plant. And I wanted to see what she was going to do, so I just stood there and watched her until she reached to take another leaf. And then I spoke

and she looked around and she saw me and I said, Sarah, don't touch that plant again.

And her hand kept moving. I said, Sarah, stop. And do you know what she did? That sweet little immature hand.

She put her little foot down on the floor. She said, her jaw. And she looked me right in the face and she said, I won't.

Well, now I know where she got that from. The neighbor's kid. I won't.

Well, I got to the scene of the problem immediately and convinced her that she would. And she did. Sorry.

But in that incident and in that illustration was all of the history of the race. I'll do what I want to do. And that's what Mother Eve did and that's what Father Adam did.

And I regret to say it, that's what my little Sarah did and that's what you did and that's what I did. When we reached the age of accountability, we made a governmental decision to live by the rule of I'm going to do what I want to do please me. And our love, our intention to seek the highest good and blessedness and happiness and satisfaction of God turned in upon ourselves.

And our neighbors became fair game. Mother's flower was just a toy for a child. It didn't belong to Mother, who tenderly taken it from a slip and grown it to be what it was.

It made no difference to her. It was for her to tear it up. According to this principle that she was learning to use for governing her life, seeking to use.

That's exactly what you did and that's exactly what I did. In fact, the scripture says, All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And what does it mean? It means that at some point in time every one of us made that governmental choice.

We committed our will to the principle and the policy and the practice of pleasing ourself. Now, when the Lord Jesus said to the Pharisees, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy mind and all thy soul and on another occasion with all thy strength. He was telling them something they could do.

They'd made a choice to please themselves. They hadn't lost their ability to choose. They hadn't lost their capability of making that choice.

But they didn't do it. You know the reason why sinners don't repent? It's not because they can't repent. It's not because they lack any ability with which to repent.

The reason sinners don't repent is because they won't repent. If they would repent, they can't repent. Because repentance means a change of mind.

A change from to. Now, back in the garden, there was repentance. Mother Eve changed her mind about living to please God and make Him happy and it was a 180 degree turn to live to please herself and make herself happy at the expense of God.

It was a change of mind from that which she'd said. Now, she had to repent. She had to change her mind.

We get the idea that to repent feels sorry. No. Or to have emotion.

No. Repentance is a change of mind. A change of will.

A change of purpose. A change of governmental principle. And so, what she has done, what we have here, is the Lord Jesus saying to His generation Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.

This is a principle that shall govern your life. To please God in everything, to seek the highest good of your neighbors, even as you would your own. But, in order for that to be implemented, it's going to require that something happen.

Now comes the function and the use of the law. We talked about the crime of our love turning away from God, enthroning ourselves, and fixing our love upon ourselves. How are we going to prepare Pharisees for grace? You go to that arrogant, hearty Pharisee who's trying to test Christ by asking which is the great commandment.

And you say to him, Mr. Pharisee, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. And you are casting pearls before swine. There isn't any way in this world that that message can have any meaning whatever.

He already has his own plan of salvation. Fasting, tithing, praying, evangelizing, all of these things are part of the Pharisee's life. Orthodoxy is theology.

My gracious, he's not a Sadducee. A Sadducee did not believe in the inspiration of the Torah. A Sadducee did not believe in life after death.

A Sadducee did not believe in the necessity of blood atonement. A Sadducee didn't believe in the existence of angels. Why, the Pharisee is Orthodox, fundamentalist in his theology.

He believes in the inspiration of the Torah. Why, he even believes in the inspiration of the Talmud. The Talmud was the Old Testament version of the Scofield Notes.

I mean, it was there as part of the heritage of the people and it was given almost the same degree of inspiration as the Torah. And so, he believed in the Torah, but he also believed very early in the Talmud as well. He was also, as I said, evangelistic in his zeal.

He said he would circle the world to make for one proselyte. I mean, there wasn't any limits to which he would go to get people to turn to Judaism. That was their only hope.

And he was devout in his practice. As I said, praying three times a day and the shortest of the prayers would be twelve minutes, unless you really rushed it. And he tithed everything, even down to the mint you put in your tea and the anise to flavor your cookies and the cumin, which was so valueless, only the poorest of the poor used it, you wouldn't even stoop to pick it up like our pennies and nickels are now.

What can you buy with a nickel, my grandchild said, when I gave it away. I said, honey, I don't know, and I gave him a quarter and took my nickel back. I didn't think he could buy anything anymore with a nickel.

And the cumin, this cheap money, if someone said, here, Mr. Pharisee, here's some mint I picked off the wall, and the big Pharisee would count it out, ten piles and give one to the Lord, keep nine for himself. He tithed, he prayed, he fasted one day out of the week, not swallowing his fiddle from sunup till sundown. And he observed all the dietary laws and rules.

You talk about religion like the doorman down in the Birmingham, Alabama hotel when Gypsy Smith went to him and said, my friend, are you saved? And he looked at him, he said, listen, I'm a member of three ledges and four churches, and you ask, am I saved? Well, that was the way the Pharisees were. That was how they were. And they had another element in their armor, their equipment.

They were premillennial in their hope. Yeah? They were looking for the personal bodily coming of Messiah to set up the throne of David and reign and rule in Israel. No.

Those are the people that asked Christ what was the first and great commandment. And you come to him and you say, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and he said, well, I got a whole box full of it. And you asking me, what do you mean? That's unnecessary.

Yeah, have you ever met a sinner who didn't have a plan of salvation? I never have. Every sinner I've ever met has his own plan. Some of them say there isn't any God.

Well, that's a cheap way out. But if there isn't, and there isn't any hell, that's another cheap way out. Some of them say, well, if there's a God, he's got a big scale in the sky, and he's putting my good deeds on one side and my bad deeds on the other, and before I die, I'll put some more good deeds up there so they'll tip the balance, and I'll make it.

Whatever it is, everybody I've ever met, when you start to talk with them, has a plan of salvation. But what do they really have? What are they? They're sinners. Now, what's a sinner? What happened? What happened when Mother Eve did that? What took place? Well, first she died.

She came under the sentence of physical death. I believe that physical death is an absolute insult to the Creator. We're made so that every cell in our body is replaced by another cell quite frequently, some as often as every seven days, and even the enamel on our teeth, we're told, every seven years.

So God made us so we'd just stay perpetually young until he had to bring another principle in, because we were capable of so much mischief that he couldn't let us trust us to live longer than the first 900 years, then 120 years, and that was too long, and then he broke it down to 70 per chance, 80, and he figured that if he got over 70, you were going to be tottering around anyway, so he couldn't do too much damage. But he couldn't trust us with what we were capable of. We could have gone on living indefinitely as long as Methuselah wasn't for evil.

Now, physical death was one of the consequences, and legal death, as Harry pointed out this morning, lost all legal claim on God. The only thing a sinner can demand of God is that God is just in his judgment, but precious little comfort he's going to get out of that. And the other, he also began to die spiritually.

No fellowship with God. Why, the sinner is as close to God geographically as the holiest saint, and he may never move and have our being, but what happened with man's sin was that God just broke the connections in his little radio that tuned in on God, and so his set's dead. He's dead in trespass and sin.

That doesn't mean he's gone down to a pile of rust. That just means that the connection's broken, and he lives and moves and has his being in God, but he doesn't have any contact with him. And then he had this awful, awful thing of living death, living death.

Now, what is this thing that produced death, soul and sin? What's involved in it? Well, first, it's treason. It's betrayal of just and proper government. The sinner is a traitor against just government, against God, who

governs justly with moral law and imposes moral obligation.

And thus, as a traitor having betrayed government just and proper government, that's a capital crime. He's under the sentence of death. Secondly, it's not just an act of treason, but it's a lifetime of rebellion, open rebellion against the rules and the regulations of God for the protection of others.

The sinner is a rebel. And then we find that he is also a transgressor. When God's law comes between him and anything he wants to gratify his appetites and satisfy his desires, he cuts a cross.

And then it is also that he's an anarchist. The only government that he has is the one that my little four-year-old tried to impose. I'll do what I want to do.

I won't do what you want me to do. Anarchy. And, of course, the worst insult of all is that the sinner is an enemy of God.

Now, God is not the enemy of the sinner. The carnal mind is enmity against God. It's not subject to the law of God.

Indeed, it cannot be because of what it is. What is the carnal mind? The carnal mind is I'm going to do what I want to do. Now let me ask you an academic question.

Do you think that a person who is a traitor and a rebel and a transgressor and an anarchist and an enemy can remain a traitor and a rebel and a transgressor and an anarchist and an enemy and ask for pardon while his will is still set to do evil? Absolutely impossible. Impossible. Because if God were to pardon and forgive those who hold in their heart the purpose to continue in their treason, rebellion, their anarchy, their transgression, and their enmity, God would destroy all foundation for his government.

He would destroy himself. Now the question we have to ask is this. How are we going to prepare men, women, young people? How are we going to prepare them for grace? On this we are told hangs all the law and the prophets.

Everything in the Old Testament teaches us that God hates sin. Any question about that? If there is, come down to that day when the door of the ark is closed and the fingers of the neighbors that for 120 years have taunted and mocked Noah as he built the ark slip from anything they would have to hold them as the waters continue to rise and the ark with the water. And as the last of that generation sink beneath the sunseed foam and die, one message is clear.

God hates sin. And every sin shall be punished. God hates sin.

Come with me a little later after the flood. We find that this choice to rebel, this choice to continue in defiance of God's justice to every government continues. And there is one called a mighty hunter before the Lord Nimrod.

Literally that word in the Hebrew ought to be a mighty rebel before the Lord. And Nimrod decided that he was going to make a temple that would dethrone God. Actually, there is some evidence that he was building it to go to the heavens to tear God out of the heavens.

And so he built that temple. The world was of one language, one culture, and they all rallied around him in their defiance of God. He took his father's wife, not his own mother, as his wife in a semi-incestuous relationship.

Semiramis, he enthroned her as the goddess of heaven. And he issued laws and proclamations from the throne at the top of the tower that gave man religious sanction and cover and protection for every kind of sexual indulgence and abuse. And as you see, God come down and destroy the tower, and little groups of people began to wander out from to the north and to the east and the south and the west.

Their tongues confused, no longer able to understand one another, just a few here and a few there with some common language. And as they slip away, lost to each other, God is judging the world, saying, You can't trust them to be together. One language, one culture, one people are too capable of evil.

Never again shall they so be joined. And we who've been trained as linguists and have gone to the countries where we found every one little hill in the Sudan, just a small hill no more than 1,600 feet high, and no more of its base looked like an old volcano cone, on the sides of that hill were three small tribal groups to all together no more than 250 people. And we found that they still treasured that language because it was the room and the heart of their culture.

And the people living here might know a little, a few words of the language of the people whose hut they could see, but only a few. They stayed away from each other because they were the last remnants of great tribes that had once inhabited the land, that had been pushed by their enemies up onto this hill, and now afflicted 98% of them with venereal disease. That generation would be the last generation the tribes would exist.

And you understand how thoroughly God can fuse the tongues. And every time you find a group of people like that, the testimony is God hates them. Come with me again and go down there to that little village on the plain in the sight of the Dead Sea, where there they gave themselves up to all kinds of immorality and uncleanness, and there were ten men that gave up good fine that would stand between God and his wrath.

And as fire rains down from heaven upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah, and when Lot's wife turns to look and see the devastation, she becomes a pillar of salt. The smoldering ruins have but one testimony. God hates sin.

God hates sin. Now do you believe that God can permit traitors and rebels and transgressors and anarchists and enemies to retain those attitudes and that direction and be pardoned while still continuing to live? Isn't that treason, the rebellion, the anarchy? Impossible. You would thus destroy God in your own mind, your own judgment, and he'd no longer be worthy of worship.

If he were to do it at all, what apologies he'd have to make to Noah's generation and to Sodom and Gomorrah. If he per- No respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law, without the moral law being written in their hands and their ears, shall also perish without the law.

And as many as have sinned in the law, with the law, shall be judged by the law, for not the hearers of the law just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, the pagan, the heathen, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another. Now I have read for you the secret.

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts. Everyone who breathes the breath of human life has inscribed on the fleshly tables of his heart his conscience. I don't know what you want to call it.

It's immaterial to me. Here it says the heart. The law is written in their hearts.

Every tribe of people of which I have knowledge, and I've visited some, certainly not all, but I have read many others who have had wider experience than mine, but I have never found any evidence of a tribe of people had no contact with the Bible or with missions that did not have a knowledge of the law written on their hearts. God put it there. God inscribed it there.

The same finger that traced and etched into a piece of stone the Ten Commandments wrote upon the fleshly tables of the heart the law. This is right. This is true.

This must be. This you ought to do. Ought.

Ought. Ought. I asked the people of whom I spoke last evening, is it wrong to steal? Yes.

How do you know? Our stomachs tell us. Wrong to commit adultery? Yes. Wrong to kill? Yes.

Wrong to lie? Do you do it? Yes, we do those things. Why do you do it? Because we want to. Because we want to.

They weren't blaming anyone. They weren't excusing themselves. They were simply stating a fact.

We do it because we want to do it. That's the correct truth. That's the answer.

That's the proper answer. That's why everybody who does anything does it because he wants to and because he feels that in his circumstances, because his circumstances are unique, it is right. Did you know that everyone who commits a crime does it believing that with his provocation and with his situation and with his particular case, it's proper for him to do whatever it is he decides to do because we only do that which is, in our eyes, right.

We justify ourselves. Now, moral insanity, indeed, but they do it knowing that it's wrong for others but it's all right for me because my situation is so different from the other ones. So they know it's wrong but to them it's right and they do that which, in their own eyes, they excuse themselves by saying, well, even God wouldn't hold this against me.

After all, he knows what my provocations are. Everyone who does it does it that way, knowing it's wrong but excusing himself because, in his case, it's all right. You know, I was so surprised when they're caught to think that the others didn't realize how right and how intrinsically right it was for them to do it.

Well, it wasn't wrong for others, it was, but not for me. Mr. Marcos is having a terrible shock these days. They're trying to understand why the world is so critical of stealing \$24 billion.

I mean, after all, what's a little bit of money down there? I mean, one billion here, another there, mounts up to quite a bit of money after a while, and so why should anybody think it's strange? He's not the only one, many others have done the same, but now as they're justified, they're the heads of state. I often wondered why it was in Africa, where I've been so burdened and worked so hard so many years in development,

why it was that the heads of state and the government leaders could take 50 to 90 percent of all the foreign aid that came into the country and the people didn't get incensed about it. Well, the reason is this, that back under the tribal life, the big chief owned everybody and everything, and when you've got a nation and he's the big chief of the nation, doesn't he own everything? Isn't it all his? Aren't we his? Is what the people in the villages say.

But you see, they've been deceived by the God of this world. They've been misled, and the people that are in those positions have enthroned themselves in the place of God, and they think it's all right. Now, how are you going to possibly ever prepare such people with such concepts for grace? How are you going to do it? How are you going to go to somebody whose conduct in his own eyes is perfectly right and convince him it's wrong? You go to him and say, what you're doing is wrong, big deal.

What do you know about it? What do you know about the provocations he had? What do you know about the life he had? What do you know about how poor he was as a little boy? What do you know about it? You say, look, that was wrong, you shouldn't have done that. Well, you're not going to prepare him for grace, but God has a means. Now, remember what I said.

Here on the heart is written the law, but here in the word is written the law. Now, what happens when the law from the outer revelation of the word is laid upon the law of the inner revelation that God wrote on the heart and the human spirit is caught between that lower millstone and the upper millstone? What's going to happen? It's going to begin to grind. It's going to grind and grind and grind and grind.

And the scripture tells us that by the law is the knowledge of sin and the law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. And the only tool with which God ever armed himself to prepare sinners for grace was the law. But a hundred years ago, we cut God's hands off in preparing sinners for grace because some very smart teachers in England stole a monograph prepared by a Spanish Jesuit in a monastery in Spain in which he made the thesis that, presented the thesis that the absence of the supernatural was due to the fact that God deals with each generation in a different way.

And he employed the dreaded word dispensations. And that Spanish monograph fell into the hands of J. M. Darby in Plymouth, England, and he got it translated and it became the foundation of what he was later to call dispensationalism. And then he was able to get a calendar in Daniel's 70th week.

And he had now a structure that was going to take every section of the Bible and put it into its little airtight compartment so that when you got down to this period now called the period of grace, the law was no longer to be preached. You preached the gospel, the gospel. And so he went to sinners who were traitors and rebels and transgressors and anarchists and enemies, and you brought unconditional love that God loved the world and gave his Son, and if they would just believe that God loved the world and gave his Son, they would be saved.

They didn't need to repent when there was no place for the preaching of the law. And when that happened, the enemy of our souls and the ancient enemy of Christ had taken away from the arsenal of God the only tools and weapons that he'd ever used, ever prepared, to bring men to grace, prepare them for grace. When I grew up, after I got out of Bible school, and I heard one of my colleagues saying, Paris, we'd better think about this subject of repentance again, I said, now listen, I've gone with you when it came to the matter of the baptism of the Spirit, but I'm not going to go that far.

You know and I know that repentance is Jewish and it has no place in this age of grace. And he said, and not only must we restudy and rethink repentance, we've also got to start thinking about the right use of the law in preparing men for grace. And now I said, you've gone too far, boy, this is the end of it.

You go your way, I'm going mine. I know and have been taught all my life that the law is Jewish and it has no place in this time, no reason for it to be taught. It has nothing to do with us today.

That's mean. When I went to Africa as a missionary, my Bible was the size of a Sunday school quarterly. Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, all the rest had been given away.

And the people that were to come or had come or weren't coming, had all been sent away. And I came back and I had to give myself to the word as though I were seeing it afresh again. And I discovered that there was absolutely nothing anywhere that had improved on the fact that the law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

And by the law is the knowledge of sin. Now, the right use of the law, what is the purpose of it? This outer revelation laid in upon the human heart. Because as the outer revelation begins to grind, the Holy Spirit causes the inner revelation, the lower millstone to grind.

And the human spirit that's been trusted over with its sophisticated rationalization is scraped down to the plate. Men are beginning to cry out, God be merciful to me, a sinner. But if you consent that the law is Jewish and not for today, if you hold that the law has no place in the preaching of the gospel, then you have become a salesman of easy believism and shallow, shoddy evangelism.

And you can only end up with those who are doubly damned. Oh, what I would give to go back through those years and warn the products of my zealous, ignorant evangelism to flee from the wrath to come. Jonathan Edwards in his diary of David Brainerd, the one that's almost impossible to get except from a library, the one we have, the Moody one is good, but so much of it's cut out.

But in the original, as it came from the pen of Jonathan Edwards, as he had taken the diary of Brainerd, he included that period in Brainerd's life when ministering to the Indian tribes in New Jersey, he recorded on a Sunday night, Today, as I have had services in the morning in such and such a village, and in the evening in this such and another village, I have had the joy of seeing seven in the morning and five this evening that have testified to good faith in Christ. My heart rejoices that after these years of labor, I'm beginning to see some fruit. But the next day, he writes, throughout the night, I continued to cough spitting blood, for it was tubercular.

I could not sleep, because whereas when I had completed my writing of yesterday's notes, and had had that first flush of sleep, I awakened, coughing, hearing God speak to my heart, saying, What if those in whom you found such joy had mistaken the comforts that you gave to the believers as applying to them in their impenitent state, and that they are falsely assuming themselves to be children of God? He said, Today, I must go to all the seven of the morning and the five of the evening and talk with each one of them personally. And that night's note said, Alas, alas, my worst fears were realized. For of the seven of the morning, there were only three that had grounds for good hope in Christ.

And of the five of the evening, there was only one. All to think, said he, that if I had not gone back to them, and they had gone on in the assumptions that they made, and in that last day from the lake of fire would accuse me before the throne of almighty God of being a faithless laborer for Christ, having deceived them

about the most important thing in all the world, their never dying souls. Oh my, such concern, such sensitivity.

The right use of the law. You know, if I had my way, and I don't, and probably many would say it's good you don't, but if I had my way, I would declare a moratorium on the preaching of the gospel for twelve months in America. Radio, television, pulpits, wherever.

And I would order that for one year of twelve months, we preach the holiness of God, and the righteousness of God, and the law of God. Until sinners were smitten, and began to cry out, what must I do to be saved? Because we're gospel hardening a generation of sinners, and telling them how to be saved before they have any knowledge as to why they need to be saved or from what they are to be saved. I don't have that power, but you have.

You can choose what your emphasis is going to be and where you stand still in the right and proper use of the law applied to the consciences of men. Shall we bow in prayer? Our Father, we ask that somehow truth may be riveted to our minds, to our hearts, to our spirits. What is of Thee and from Thee will be remembered by us, and what is not will be quickly forgotten.

But let it be, our Father, that something that will endure to the eternal glory of Christ, that what's been said in this hour we ask through Thanksgiving in Jesus' name. Amen.

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