

Hell's Best Kept Secret (Mandarin)

by Ray Comfort

Ray Comfort's sermon highlights the necessity of understanding God's law to recognize sin and the importance of genuine repentance for salvation.

Duration: 55:43

Scripture: Matthew 5:3, Mark 2:17, Luke 10:25, Romans 3:19, 1 Corinthians 1:18, James 2:10

Topics: "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker, Ray Comfort, shares his personal experience with evangelism in the 1970s. He noticed that a large percentage of those who made a decision to follow Christ eventually fell away from their faith. He attributes this to the modern evangelism approach that focuses on life enhancement rather than the true message of the gospel. Comfort uses the analogy of a parachute to illustrate the difference between a genuine response to the gospel and a superficial one. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the true motive for accepting Christ and the resulting transformation in one's life.

Transcript

This is a comprehensive and systematic international Christian teaching course. It is jointly produced by church services all over the world. The purpose is to help churches around the world to better equip themselves, so that believers can understand their own faith, and become faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

My name is Ray Comfort, and I'm going to share a teaching with you called, Hell's Best-Kept Secret. In the late 70s, God opened an itinerant ministry to me. When I began to travel, I found to my horror, that up to 80% of those making a decision for Christ, have fallen out of the faith.

Let me bring it up to date for you. In 1991, a major denomination was able to obtain 294,000 decisions for Christ. They could only find 14,000 fellowships.

In other words, they couldn't account for 280,000 of their decisions. This is normal, monotheological result. I discovered this way back in the 70s.

So I made it a matter of prayer, and began to study the gospel proclamations. Of men like Charles Spurgeon, John Wesley. And others that God greatly used down through the ages.

I found they used a principle, which is almost entirely neglected by modern evangelists. The Bible says that the law of the Lord is perfect. Converting the soul.

To illustrate the function of God's law, let's look for a moment at 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 probably react by saying, 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, too. It would be foolishness. But more than that, it would be offensive to you.

Because I'm insinuating you've broken the law when you don't think you have. If I had put it this way, it may make more sense. On the way to this meeting, the police, the law, blocked you from 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.

But you went straight through at 55 miles an hour. What you did was extremely dangerous. It was a \$25,000 fine.

The law was about to take its course. Someone you don't even know stepped in and paid the fine for you. You are very fortunate.

Can you see that telling you what you've done wrong first actually makes the good news? If someone paying the fine for you makes sense, if I don't clearly bring instruction, you've violated the law. Then the good news would seem foolishness and offensive. If I clearly bring instruction, you've violated the law.

Then that good news will become good news indeed. In the same way, if I approach an impenitent sinner, someone who is understanding in the dark, let's say Jesus Christ died on the cross for you, it will be foolishness to him and offensive to him. Foolishness because it won't make sense.

The Bible says that. It says the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. So the preaching of the cross to them is indeed foolishness.

It is offensive to him. Because I'm insinuating that he's a sinner. But he doesn't think he's a sinner.

As far as he's concerned, a lot of people are worse than him. But if I follow in the footsteps of Jesus, it may make more sense to me. To open up the divine law.

To open up the ten commandments. And show the sinner precisely what he's done wrong. Then when he becomes, as James says, convinced of the law as a transgressor, the good news will not be foolishness.

It will not be offensive. It will be the power of God unto salvation. Now with those few thoughts in mind, as a way of introduction, let's look at Romans 3 verse 19.

We're looking at God's word. To see what it says about the law. In Romans 3 verse 19.

Now we know that lots of the things the law says says to them who are under the law that every mouth may be stopped and all the world not just the Jews but all the world might become guilty before God. So

one function of God's law is to stop sinners' mouths and leave them guilty before God. Following verse, Romans 3 verse 20.

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh 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 says sin is transgression of the law. 2 John says transgression is transgression of the law. 3 John says transgression is transgression of the law.

Now let's look at Romans 7 verse 7. Romans 7 verse 7 says Paul speaking What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. No, I had not known sin but by the law. Paul says he didn't know what sin was and sin the law told him.

And over in Galatians 3 verse 24 says these words Let's take a look at what it says. Galatians 3 verse 24 says Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ so we might be justified by faith. So the law acts as a schoolmaster to bring us to Jesus Christ so we might be justified through faith in his blood.

The law doesn't help us. It doesn't justify us. It just leaves us guilty before the judgment bar of almighty God.

Now the tragedy of modern evangelism is that around the turn of the century when it pursued the law and its capacity to drive sinners to Christ modern evangelism had to find another reason for sinners to respond to the gospel. And the issue that modern evangelism chose was the issue of life enhancing. The gospel degenerated into Jesus Christ will give you peace joy, love, and fulfillment.

That will illustrate the unscriptural nature of this very popular teaching. I want you to listen very carefully because the essence of what I'm saying pivots on this next story. Two men were seated in a plane.

The first is given a parachute and told to put it on because it would improve his flight. He's a little skeptical at first because he can't see how wearing a parachute in a plane could possibly improve the flight. After time he decides to experiment and see if the claim is true.

As he puts it on he notices the weight upon his shoulders he finds it difficult again sitting upright. And when he consoles himself the fact he was told the parachute would improve the flight so he decides to give the thing a little time. As he waits he notices some of the other passengers laughing because he's wearing a parachute in a plane.

He begins to feel somewhat humiliated because they begin to point and laugh at him. He can stand it no longer. He slinks in a seat grabs the parachute and throws it to the floor.

Disillusionment and bitterness fill his heart because as far as he was concerned he was told an outright lie. 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'd be jumping 25,000 feet out of the plane.

He gratefully puts the parachute on. He doesn't notice the weight upon his shoulders nor that he can't sit upright. His mind is consumed with the thought of what would happen to him if he jumped without the parachute.

Let's analyze the motive and the result of each passenger's experience. The first man's motive for putting the parachute on was solely to improve his flight. The result of his experience was that he was humiliated by the passengers and somewhat embittered against those who gave him the parachute.

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

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

It says, put on the Lord Jesus Christ. He'll give you love, joy, peace, fulfillment and lasting happiness. So the sinner responds in an experimental fashion puts on the Savior to see if the claims are true.

And what does he get? The promise, temptation, tribulation and persecution. The other passenger mocks him. So what does he do? He takes off the Lord Jesus Christ.

He's offended for the Lord's sake. Knowing all these trials and humiliation his bitterness is directed at those who gave him the so-called good news. His latter end becomes worse than the first.

Another inoculated and bitter backslider. And instead of preaching that Jesus improves the flight we should be warning the passengers they're going to have to jump out of the plane. The point is the man wants to die.

And after this is the judgment. And when the sinner understands the horrific consequence the horrific consequence breaking God's law then he will flee to the Savior solely to escape the wrath that's to come. And if we're true and faithful witnesses that's what we should be preaching.

That there's wrath to come. God commands all men everywhere to repent. Because he's appointed a devil to judge the world in righteousness.

This issue is one of happiness. It's one of righteousness. It doesn't matter how happy a sinner is.

How much he's enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season. Without the righteousness of Christ they'll perish in the day of wrath. Scripture says riches profit not on the day of wrath.

Righteousness delivers from death. Peace and joy are legitimate fruits of salvation. But it's not legitimate to use these fruits as a draw card for salvation.

If we continue to do so sinners will respond with an impure motive. Whacking repentance. Can you remember why the second passenger had joy and peace? It was because he knew that parachute was going to save him from sure death.

As a believer I am joy and peace in believing. Because I know that the righteousness of Christ is going to deliver me from the wrath that's to come. Now that thought in mind let's take a close look at an incident on board the plane.

We have a brand new stewardess. She's carrying a tray of boiling hot coffee. It's her first day.

She wants to leave an impression on the passenger. And she certainly does. Because as she's walking down the aisle she trips over someone's foot and flops that boiling hot coffee all over the lap of our second passenger.

What's his reaction as that boiling liquid hits his tender flesh? Does he go, that's hot. Oh yeah, he feels the pain. But then does he rip the parachute from his shoulders throw it on the floor and say, this stupid parachute no? Why should he? He didn't put the parachute on for a bit of flight.

He put it on to save him from the jump to come. If anything, the hot coffee incident causes a clean cut to the parachute and even fords the jump. How does that hold on the Lord Jesus Christ for the right motive? To flee from the wrath that's to come tribulation strikes and the flight gets bumping.

We won't get angry at God. We won't lose that joy and peace. Why should we? We need to come to Jesus for a happy lifestyle.

We came to flee from the wrath that's to come. And if anything, tribulation drives the true believer closer to the Savior. Sadly we have multitudes of professing Christians who lose their joy and peace when the flight gets bumping.

Because they're the product of modern evangelism. They came lacking repentance without but you cannot be saved. There's no way I'm going to take a cure unless I confess that I've got the disease.

Why should I take a cure? I don't believe I've got the disease. The law convinces me I'm diseased. So they'll accept the gospel.

Now biblical evangelism is always law to the proud and grace to the humble. Never will you see Jesus giving the gospel the cross, the grace of our God to a proud and self-righteous person. Now with the law he breaks the hard heart and with the gospel he heals the broken heart.

Why? Because he always did those things that pleased the Father. God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. Everyone who is proud of harm is a vomination to the Lord.

Jesus told us the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has appointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, to the broken hearted and the blind. The poor means those who are poor in spirit. The broken hearted are the contrite ones, those that mourn.

The captives are those of whom Satan has taken captive and the blind are those whom the God of this world has blinded. Only the sick need a physician and only those who are convinced of the disease will accept the cure. Now Luke 10 25 we see Jesus doing this giving the law to the proud.

Now let me paraphrase this a little bit for you. Luke 10 25 a certain lawyer stood up and he tempted Jesus. Here we have a professing expert in God's law standing up and tempting the Son of God.

He was proud, arrogant and self-righteous. Some Jews gave him the law and he said, What is written in the law? What is your reading of it? And he said, You should love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. You should love your neighbor as yourself.

And then Jesus said, This do and you shall live. And then the Bible says but he is willing to justify himself. He said to Jesus, Who is my neighbor? The living Bible brings out more clearly the effect of the law on that man.

So the man wanted to justify his lack of love for some kinds of people. So he said to Jesus, Who is my neighbor? See he didn't mind Jews but he didn't like Samaritans. So Jesus told him the story of what we call how Samaria was not good at all.

When he loved his neighbors himself he merely obeyed the basic requirements of God's law. And the effect of the essence of the law the spirituality of the law of what the law demanded in truth wasn't going to stop that man's mouth. He didn't say another word because he didn't love his neighbor to that degree.

Remember the law was given to stop every mouth. He blamed the whole world guilty before God. We see a similar thing in Luke 18 Chapter 18 We won't turn to it for the sake of time But the rich young ruler said he had kept the commandments.

So Jesus used the first of the ten commandments I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods before me. To show this man that his God was his money He cannot serve God and mammon.

So we see the Lord of the proud. Then we see grace being given to the humble. In the case of Nicodemus He was a humble Jew who acknowledged the deity of the son of God.

He was a teacher in Israel. So he obviously knew the law. The law was the schoolmaster to bring us godly to the Christ.

Same with the case of Nathanael and John 1 He was an Israelite. Brought up under the law. He was an Israelite indeed.

Not just in word. And there was no deceit in his heart. The law was the schoolmaster to bring us godly to the Christ.

Same with the Jews on the day of Pentecost. Jews without Jews. Every nation under heaven.

Therefore I drank and slept God's law. And the law was the schoolmaster to bring 3000 to Christ. First Timothy chapter 1 verse 8 which we can turn to Tells us once again what God's law is used for.

First Timothy chapter 1 verse 8 says But we know that the law is good If it is used lawfully. For the purpose for which it was designed. What was the law designed for? The following verse tells us It says the law was not made for the righteous but the sinners.

And even not the sinners. The following verse tells us the criminals including homosexuals including those who kill parents and kill people those who do evil things These are all sins against God. We can see that they are completely away from God.

If we want to bring a Muslim to Christ Muslims accept Moses as a prophet. Well give them the law of Moses. Give them their self-righteousness.

Show them that God requires truth in the inward part. The Bible is filled with examples of the law doing its work in evangelism. Think of the woman caught in the act of adultery.

The law called for her blood. Her only avenue was to fling herself at the feet of Jesus. And that's the function of God's law.

Paul spoke of being shut up under the law. So you can't condemn sinners. They're already condemned.

He that believes not is condemned already, Scripture says. Now normally in this teaching I go through the Ten Commandments. But it may be more practical for you if I share with you how I share my faith I'm a strong believer in following the example of Jesus given to us in John chapter 4. And Jesus approached the woman at the well and spoke in the natural realm first.

So that's what I do. I go up to someone and say, hi, how are you doing? What do you do for a job? And then I say, did you get one of these? Maybe I'll give them a gospel track. And then I carry in my pocket pennies with the Ten Commandments pressed into them.

But you don't really need one of these. All you need is something Christian. And when I say it's Christian, or you say it is Christian you say, do you think you've kept the Ten Commandments? And this is usually what happens.

Oh, pretty much. I haven't killed anyone. I say, have you ever told a lie? He says, yeah.

I say, what does that make you? He says, I'm a sinner. I say, more specifically, does that make you a liar? He says, no, I'm not a liar. I say, well, how many lies do you have to tell to be a liar? Ten and suddenly a bell rings.

One lie makes you a liar, isn't that right? He says, yeah. I say, have you ever stolen something? He says, no. I say, come on, you've just told me you're a liar.

Have you ever stolen something, even if it's small? I say, yeah. I say, what does that make you? He says, a thief. I say, do you know Jesus said, if you look at a woman and lust after her, you commit adultery with her in your heart.

Have you ever done that? He says, yeah, plenty of times. You're a lying, thieving adulterer. And you have to face God on judgment day.

And we've only looked at three of the Ten Commandments. If you hate someone, you commit murder in your heart. And as you go through the commandments, they leave us all guilty.

And the wonderful thing that happens is the work of the Lord is written in your heart. It says in Romans 2, verse 15, it says the conscience bears witness. Conscience means with knowledge.

Cons means with. So science is knowledge. So whenever he's lying, stolen, or lusted, he's known in his heart, but he's done wrong.

So on the day of judgment, he will be without excuse. So the law brings the knowledge of sin. You may identify with some of you ladies.

You dust the table down in the morning. It's a clean table. Then you draw back the curtain.

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? Oh no, the light merely exposed the dust. And when you and I take the time to draw back the curtains of the holy of holies, it lets the light of God's law shine upon the sinner's heart so he can see himself in truth. The commandment is a lamp.

And the law is light. That's why Paul says, by the commandment, sin became exceedingly sinful. In other words, the law showed him sin in its true light.

And someone who has this knowledge can now understand that God is angry at them. Because wrath abides upon them. They can see their weight in the balance of eternal justice.

And found wanting. And they can therefore understand why Jesus had to die. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law.

They made a curse for us. God commanded his love toward us and a while we were yet sinners. Christ died for us.

We broke the law. We repaid the fines. The moment we repent and accept what he did on the cross we are freed from the wrath of God.

Charles Spurgeon, the great preacher from 100 years ago, said they will never accept grace until they tremble for a holy and just law. They'll never take the cure unless they first convince they have the disease. The law works.

It converts the soul. It makes a man a new creature in Christ. He puts his hand on the plow.

And he doesn't look back because he's fit for the kingdom. So why don't you find yourself a sinner and experiment on him? Just try it out. See if it works.

Follow it. Someone comes to you and says, I'm just a terrible sinner. I've committed adultery.

I've got lust burning in my heart. I'm filled with jealousy and hatred. Give them grace.

But more than likely you'll find people saying, I'm really a good person. A lot of people worse than me. They go about to establish their own righteousness being ignorant of the righteousness which is God.

So you must give them that light. God doesn't want you to get decisions. He wants people to be saved.

And for that they need repentance. And they will not repent if they don't know what sin is. So as I said, try it out.

And as you do, remember this one story. You're sitting on a plane. You're enjoying the flight.

And suddenly you hear, this is your captain speaking, I have an announcement to make. As the tail section has just fallen off this plane, we're about to crash. We're 25,000 feet in the air.

There's a parachute under your seat. So we'd appreciate it if you'd put it on. Thank you for your attention.

And thank you for flying with us airline. You put your parachute on. Boy, am I glad to be wearing a parachute.

You look next to the guy next to you who's watching a movie. Say, excuse me, didn't you hear the captain? Put the parachute on. He turns and says, I really don't think the captain means it.

Size and quite half as I am, thanks. Don't turn to him. Put the parachute on.

It'll be better than the movie. It doesn't make sense. Put the parachute on.

Because it'll improve the flight. You're going to put it on for a wrong motive. You're going to put it on and keep it on.

Tell him about the jump. Excuse me. Tell him about the parachute.

Splat. Sorry, I beg your pardon. I said, if you jump without a parachute, more of gravity, so it's on the ground, goodness me, I see what you're saying.

Thank you very much. And as long as that man knows, as long as he has knowledge, that he has passed through the door, and faced the consequences of breaking the law of gravity, there's no way you're going to get that parachute off his back. Because his very life depends on it.

If you look around, you find a multitude of passengers enjoying the flight. They're enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season. You say, excuse me.

Did you hear the command from the captain about salvation? Put on the Lord Jesus' cloak. He turns to you and says, I really don't think God means it. God is love.

I think God is love. So I think God is love. So you can't do this.

You can't just let them know these things. You don't know the importance of true repentance. So you have to give your heart to God.

Then you can truly find joy, peace, and success. So you have to put God in your heart. So in your marriage, you have to follow the law of God.

Don't drink, don't smoke. You have to completely follow the law of God. So you have to give your heart to Jesus Christ.

Now, you'll give them a wrong motive for his commitment. Instead, say, God, give me courage. And tell them about the jump.

So if you die without the Savior, the point is a man wants to die. He's lost the judgment. If you've lost it, you've committed adultery.

If you've hated someone, you've committed murder. If you told one lie, you're a liar. It's a day of wrath.

See if you tell them justice will come down upon you and grind you to pieces. Now, I'm not talking about hellfire preaching. Hellfire preaching will produce fear-filled convicts.

Using God's law will produce tear-filled conflict. This one time is merely to escape the fires of hell. And because the law wasn't used to show him he deserves hell, he doesn't appreciate God's mercy.

No gratitude in his heart. But this one comes knowing he sinned against heaven. He violated the law of a holy God.

On the day of justice, God was to let all his sins as evidence of his guilt. But we're not in his holy name. Pick him up as an unclean thing, and cast him into hell.

But instead he's given him heaven. Commanded his love to water, and what if he, the son of Christ, died? Falls on his knees in the blood-sodden soil of Calvary's cross. And cries, Oh God, if you do that for me, I'll

do anything for you.

He says, I delight in you, oh my God. Your law is written upon my heart. And like a man in need, we have to pass through the door to face the consequences of breaking the law on gravity.

We'll never take the parachute off because his very life depends on it. So he who comes to the Savior, knowing he has to face the holy God on the day of wrath, never forsakes the righteousness of God and Christ. Because his very life depends on it.

Such converts become soul winners. Not people. Laborers.

Not layabouts. Assets. Not liability.

But a living church. Let's bear in prayer as we close. Father, we pray that we'd be as the Marines.

And search the scriptures to see if these things are so. And we'll examine ourselves to see if we're in the faith. Father, if we're not, let us make a calling and election show and try and grasp the identity of the sinner by exercising repentance towards God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

In his name we pray. Amen.

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