

Lesson 10: The Law and Gospel

In this section we will be discussing the vital role of the law of God in Relation to the gospel, or how it works to facilitate both the process of justification and sanctification.

1. The first fact that we must establish is what is the law of God?

A. Read: Exodus 24:12 “And the LORD said unto Moses, come up to me into the mount, and be there, and I will give thee _____ of _____, and a _____, and _____, which I have _____, that you may teach them.”

On the tables of stone were written God’s law that He called the Ten Commandments. Commandments are commands which mean they were meant to be kept.

B. The Ten Commandments are the written words of God for us to live by, however, the bible teaches that there is a deeper way to look at this law. In other words, there is a danger in seeing it merely as what is written without considering that the law is much more comprehensive than what it appears to be.

This is made clear in the sermon on the Mount.

Read **Matthew 5:17** “Do not think that I came to _____ destroy the _____ or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to _____.”

The word for fulfill is {πληρωω} It can mean to finish or complete something. It can also mean to proclaim more fully. In context of what Jesus is about to say in the next few verses it is clear that the later definition is the clear intention of Jesus. He has not come to do away with the law, but rather to show the depth and fuller meaning of it. Which has everything to do with the gospel message as we will see later.

2. In the writings of Paul when he speaks about the law or the Ten Commandments he often refers to the letter of the law and the spirit of the law, for example read the following verses.

2 Corinthians 3:6 *“who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament — not of the **letter**, but of the **Spirit**; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.”*

Romans 7:6 *“But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the **Spirit** and not in the oldness of the **letter**.”* {spirit can also mean the mind}

For Paul, the Ten Commandments written on stone by God formed what he referred to as the letter of the law, that only addressed the physical act of sinning, for Paul sin was an act of the mind or spirit. In other words, we actually began sinning the moment we thought of doing it in our mind.

A. In Matthew 5:21 Jesus quotes the 6th commandment.

How does Jesus illustrate the principle of Letter verses the Spirit in verse 22?

“But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother ^[a]without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ ^[b] shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ^[c]‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of ^[d]hell fire.”

Also read **Matthew 5:27-28**.

Discuss: Did you find the letter verses spirit formula?

3. Is there yet a deeper way to understand the law beyond the Letter and the Spirit?

Read **Matthew 5:43-44**. “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall _____ your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, _____ your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,’”

A. How does Jesus compare the law to love in Matthew 22:36-40

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus said to him, “‘You shall _____ the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall _____ your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

- Jesus is actually quoting **Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18**.
- What does the phrase “hangs all the law” mean?

Read **Romans 13:8** “Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who _____ another has fulfilled the _____.”

4. There is still one more way that we should interpret the law.

Read 1 **John 4:7-8, Romans 13:10**

- What is the relationship between what God is and what the law is?

Discuss your answer.

Read the following quotes:

“As speech is to thought, so is Christ to the invisible God. He is the manifestation of the Father and is called the Word of God. God sent His Son into the world, His divinity clothed with humanity, to make known in His life and character the attributes of the Father, that men might bear the image of the invisible God. He was the embodiment of the law of God, which is the transcript of His character.” ST, November 15, 1899 par. 2

*“The law was, in its essence, the character, will and nature of God.” Zwingli- Swiss Reformer
16th century - Pelican 213*

Discuss: How is the law a reflection of God’s character?

5. The law of God was a legally binding code of conduct that was enjoined upon the human race as a condition for eternal life, yet it was more than that it was also supposed to guide our thoughts and deeper yet it was to be written upon our hearts, and the core idea of the law is that it is a reflection of the character of God himself. In this way we could say about any sin that if I am like Jesus I will not have it in my heart to sin, and if it is not in my heart it will not be in my thoughts and if it is not in my mind it will never manifest as an outward action. With this idea in mind consider the following statement.

“To this day there are still aspects of truth which are dimly seen, connections that are not understood, and far-reaching depths in the Law of God that grace uncomprehended. There is immeasurable breadth, dignity, and glory in the law of God;” FE, 239

A. Armed with a deeper understanding of the law how might this challenge your ideas about repentance, conviction, confession, justification, sanctification, Etc.?

Read the following quote for a hint to the above question:

“The more closely we live to Jesus, the clearer views shall we have of His loveliness. As we behold Him in His purity, we discern more clearly our own faults of character. We yearn after Him, and for that fullness that is in Him, and that shines out in the perfection of His heavenly character; and by beholding we become changed into His image.” . . . LHU 266.4

B. Read: **2 Corinthians 3:18, Psalm 19:7**

The Law is the great mirror. Class discuss.

C. Read **Revelation 14:12**. Does this text now have a deeper meaning? How does the life of Jesus add meaning to this text?

On the one hand as we look into all four levels of the Law it begins to expose the