

The Uses of the Law

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon explains that while the law cannot justify or save, it serves crucial purposes such as revealing human guilt, condemning sin, and driving sinners to Christ for salvation.

Scripture: Galatians 3:19, Romans 3:20, Matthew 5:21-22, Matthew 5:27-28, Exodus 20, Jeremiah 13:23

Topics: "The Law", "Justification by Faith", "Sin and Salvation"

Description

In 'The Uses of the Law,' C.H. Spurgeon expounds on the vital role of God's law in the life of a believer and sinner alike. He clarifies that the law does not justify or save but serves to reveal human sinfulness, condemn self-righteousness, and drive souls to Christ for mercy. Through powerful biblical exposition, Spurgeon demonstrates how the law acts as a divine tool to humble and prepare hearts for the gospel. This sermon challenges listeners to see the law's purpose beyond condemnation and embrace the grace offered through Jesus.

Transcript

"Wherefore then serveth the law?"—Galatians 3:19.

THE APOSTLE, by a highly ingenious and powerful argument, had proved that the law was never intended by God for the justification and salvation of man. He declares that God made a covenant of grace with Abraham long before the law was given on Mount Sinai; that Abraham was not present at Mount Sinai, and that, therefore, there could have been no alteration of the covenant made there by his consent; that, moreover, Abraham's consent was never asked as to any alteration of the covenant, without which consent the covenant could not have been lawfully changed, and, besides that, that the covenant stands fast and firm, seeing it was made to Abraham's seed, as well as to Abraham himself. "This I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise." Therefore, no inheritance and no salvation ever can be obtained by the law. Now, extremes are the error of ignorance. Generally, when men believe one truth, they carry it so far as to deny another; and, very frequently, the assertion of a cardinal truth leads men to generalise on other particulars, and so to make falsehoods out of truth. The objection supposed may be worded thus: "You say, O Paul, that the law cannot justify; surely then the law is good for nothing at all; 'Wherefore then serveth the law?' If it will not save a man, what is the good of it? If of itself it will never take a man to heaven, why was it written? Is it not a useless thing?" The apostle

might have replied to his opponent with a sneer—he must have said to him, “Oh, fool, and slow of heart to understand. Is it proved that a thing is utterly useless because it is not intended for every purpose in the world? Will you say that, because iron cannot be eaten, therefore, iron is not useful? And because gold cannot be the food of man, will you, therefore, cast gold away, and call it worthless dross? Yet on your foolish supposition you must do so. For, because I have said the law cannot save, you have foolishly asked me what is the use of it? and you foolishly suppose God’s law is good for nothing, and can be of no value whatever.” This objection is, generally, brought forward by two sorts of people. First, by mere cavillers who do not like the gospel, and wish to pick all sorts of holes in it. They can tell us what they do not believe; but they do not tell us what they do believe. They would fight with everybody’s doctrines and sentiments, but they would be at a loss if they were asked to sit down and write their own opinions. They do not seem to have got much further than the genius of the monkey, which can pull everything to pieces, but can put nothing together. Then, on the other hand, there is the Antinomian, who says, “Yes, I know I am saved by grace alone;” and then breaks the law—says, it is not binding on him, even as a rule of life; and asks, “Wherefore then serveth the law?” throwing it out of his door as an old piece of furniture only fit for the fire, because, forsooth, it is not adapted to save his soul. Why, a thing may have many uses, if not a particular one. It is true that the law cannot save; and yet it is equally true that the law is one of the highest works of God, and is deserving of all reverence, and extremely useful when applied by God to the purposes for which it was intended.

Yet, pardon me my friends, if I just observe that this is a very natural question, too. If you read the doctrine of the apostle Paul you find him declaring that the law condemns all mankind. Now, just let us for one single moment take a bird’s eye view of the works of the law in this world. Lo, I see, the law given upon Mount Sinai. The very hill doth quake with fear. Lightnings and thunders are the attendants of those dreadful syllables which make the hearts of Israel to melt Sinai seemeth altogether on the smoke. The Lord came from Paran, and the Holy One from Mount Sinai; “He came with ten thousand of his saints.” Out of his mouth went a fiery law for them. It was a dread law even when it was given, and since then from that Mount of Sinai an awful lava of vengeance has run down, to deluge, to destroy, to burn, and to consume the whole human race, if it had not been that Jesus Christ had stemmed its awful torrent, and bidden its waves of fire be still. If you could see the world without Christ in it, simply under the law you would see a world in ruins, a world with God’s black seal put upon it, stamped and sealed for condemnation; you would see men, who, if they knew their condition, would have their hands on their loins and be groaning all their days—you would see men and women condemned, lost, and ruined; and in the uttermost regions you would see the pit that is digged for the wicked, into which the whole earth must have been cast if the law had its way, apart from the gospel of Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Ay, beloved, the law is a great deluge which would have drowned the world with worse than the water of Noah’s flood, it is a great fire which would have burned the earth with a destruction worse than that which fell on Sodom, it is a stern angel with a sword, athirst for blood, and winged to slay; it is a great destroyer sweeping down the nations; it is the great messenger of God’s vengeance sent into the world. Apart from the gospel of Jesus Christ, the law is nothing but the condemning voice of God thundering against mankind. “Wherefore then serveth the law?” seems a very natural question. Can the law be of any benefit to man? Can that Judge who puts on a black cap and condemns us all this Lord Chief Justice Law, can he help in salvation? Yes, he did; and you shall see how he does it, if God shall help us while we preach. “Wherefore then serveth the law?”

I. The first use of the law is to manifest to man his guilt. When God intends to save a man, the first thing he does with him is to send the law to him, to show him how guilty, how vile, how ruined he is, and in how

dangerous a position. You see that man lying there on the edge of the precipice; he is sound asleep, and just on the perilous verge of the cliff. One single movement, and he will roll over and be broken in pieces on the jagged rocks beneath, and nothing more shall be heard of him. How is he to be saved? What shall be done for him—what shall be done! It is our position; we, too, are lying on the brink of ruin, but we are insensible of it. God, when he begins to save us from such an imminent danger, sendeth his law, which, with a stout kick, rouses us up, makes us open our eyes, we look down on our terrible danger, discover our miseries, and then it is we are in a right position to cry out for salvation, and our salvation comes to us. The law acts with man as the physician does when he takes the film from the eye of the blind. Self-righteous men are blind men, though they think themselves good and excellent. The law takes that film away, and lets them discover how vile they are, and how utterly ruined and condemned if they are to abide under the sentence of the law.

Instead, however, of treating this doctrinally, I shall treat it practically, and come home to each of your consciences. My, hearer, does not the law of God convince you of sin this morning? Under the hand of God's Spirit does it not make you feel that you have been guilty, that you deserve to be lost, that you have incurred the fierce anger of God? Look ye here, have ye not broken these ten commandments; even in the letter have ye not broken them? Who is there among you who hath always honored his father and mother? Who is there among us who hath always spoken the truth? Have we not sometimes borne false witness against our neighbor? Is there one person here who has not made unto himself another God, and loved himself, or his business, or his friends, more than he has Jehovah, the God of the whole earth? Which of you hath not coveted your neighbour's house, or his man-servant, or his ox, or his ass? We are all guilty with regard to every letter of the law; we have all of us transgressed the commandments. And if we really understood these commandments, and felt that they condemned us, they would have this useful influence on us of showing us our danger, and so of leading us to fly to Christ. But, my hearers, does not this law condemn you, because even if you should say you have not broken the letter of it, yet you have violated the spirit of it. What, though you have never killed, yet we are told, he that is angry with his brother is a murderer. As a negro said once, "Sir, I thought me no kill—me innocent there; but when I heard that he that hateth his brother is a murderer, then me cry guilty, for me have killed twenty men before breakfast very often, for I have been angry with many of them very often." This law does not only mean what it says in words, but it has deep things hidden in its bowels. It says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," but it means, as Jesus has it, "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." It says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," it meaneth that we should reverence God in every place, and have his fear before our eyes, and should always pay respect unto his ordinances and evermore walk in his fear and love. Ay, my brethren, surely there is not one here so fool-hardy in self-righteousness as to say, "I am innocent." The spirit of the law condemns us. And this is its useful property; it humbles us, makes us know we are guilty, and so are we led to receive the Saviour.

Mark this, moreover, my dear hearers, one breach of this law is enough to condemn us for ever. He that breaketh the law in one point is guilty of the whole. The law demands that we should obey every command, and one of them broken, the whole of them are injured. It is like a vase of surpassing workmanship, in order to destroy it you need not shiver it to atoms, make but the smallest fracture in it and you have destroyed its perfection. As it is a perfect law which we are commanded to obey, and to obey perfectly, make but one breach thereof and though we be ever so innocent we can hope for nothing from the law; except the voice, "Ye are condemned, ye are condemned, ye are condemned." Under this aspect of the matter ought not the law to strip many of us of all our boasting? Who is there that shall rise in his

place and say, "Lord, I thank thee I am not as other men are?" Surely there cannot be one among you who can go home and say, "I have tithed mint and cummin; I have kept all the commandments from my youth?" Nay, if this law be brought home to the conscience and the heart we shall stand with the publican, saying, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." The only reason why a man thinks he is righteous is because he does not know the law. You think you have never broken it because you do not understand it. There are some of you most respectable people; you think you have been so good that you can go to heaven by your own works. You would not exactly say so, but you secretly think so; you have devoutly taken the sacrament, you have been mightily pious in attending your church or chapel regularly, you are good to the poor, generous and upright, and you say, "I shall be saved by my works." Nay, sir, look to the flame that Moses saw, and shrink, and tremble, and despair. The law can do nothing for us except condemn us. The utmost it can do is to whip us out of our boasted self-righteousness and drive us to Christ. It puts a burden on our backs and makes us ask Christ to take it off. It is like a lancet, it probes the wound. It is, to use a parable as when some dark cellar has not been opened for years and is full of all kinds of loathsome creatures, we may walk through it not knowing they are there. But the law comes, takes the shutters down, lets light in, and then we discover what a vile heart we have, and how unholy our lives have been; and, then, instead of boasting, we are made to fall on our faces and cry, "Lord, save or I perish. Oh, save me for thy mercy's sake, or else I shall be cast away." Oh, ye self-righteous ones now present, who think yourselves so good that ye can mount to heaven by your works—blind horses, perpetually going round the mill and making not one inch of progress—do you think to take the law upon your shoulders as Sampson did the gates of Gaza? Do you imagine that you can perfectly keep this law of God? Will you dare to say, you have not broken it. Nay, surely, you will confess, though it be in but an under tone, "I have revolted." Then, this know: the law can do nothing for you in the matter of forgiveness. All it can do is just this: It can make you feel you are nothing at all; it can strip you; it can bruise you; it can kill you, but it can neither quicken, nor clothe, nor cleanse—it was never meant to do that. Oh, art thou this morning, my hearer, sad, because of sin? Dost thou feel that thou hast been guilty? Dost thou acknowledge thy transgression? Dost thou confess thy wandering? Hear me, then, as God's ambassador, God hath mercy upon sinners. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. And though you have broken the law, he has kept it. Take his righteousness to be yours. Cast yourself upon him. Come to him now, stripped and naked and take his robe as your covering, Come to him, black and filthy, and wash yourself in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; and then you shall know "wherefore then serveth the law?" That is the first point.

II. Now, the second. The law serves to slay all hope of salvation of a reformed life. Most men when they discover themselves to be guilty, avow that they will reform. They say, "I have been guilty and have deserved God's wrath, but for the future I will seek to win a stock of merits which shall counterbalance all my old sins." In steps the law, puts its hand on the sinner's mouth, and says, "Stop, you cannot do that, it is impossible." I will show you how the law does this. It does it partly thus, by reminding the man that future obedience can be no atonement for past guilt. To use a common metaphor that the poor may thoroughly understand me, you have run up a score at your chop. Well, you cannot pay it. You go off to Mrs. Brown, your shopkeeper, and you say to her, "Well, I am sorry, ma'am, that through my husband being out of work," and all that, "I know I shall never be able to pay you. It is a very great debt I owe you, but, if you please ma'am, if you forgive me this debt I will never get into your debt any more; I will always pay for all I have." "Yes," she would say, "but that will not square our accounts. If you do pay for all you have, it would be no more than you ought to do. But what about the old bills? How are they to be receipted? They won't be receipted by all your fresh payments." That is just what men do towards God. "True," they say, "I have gone far astray I know; but then I won't do so any more." Ah, it was time you threw away such child's talk. You do but manifest your rampant folly by such a hope. Can you wipe away your transgression by future

obedience? Ah, no. The old debt must be paid somehow. God's justice is inflexible, and the law tells you all your requirements can make no atonement for the past. You must have an atonement through Christ Jesus the Lord. "But," says the man, "I will try and be better, and then I think I shall have mercy given to me." Then the law steps in and says, "You are going to try and keep me, are you? Why, man, you cannot do it." Perfect obedience in the future is impossible. And the ten commandments are held up, and if any awakened sinner will but look at them, he will turn away and say, "It is impossible for me to keep them." "Why, man, you say you will be obedient in the future. You have not been obedient in the past, and there is no likelihood that you will keep God's commandments in time to come. You say you will avoid the evils of the past. You cannot. 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.'" But you say "I will take greater heed to my ways." "Sir, you will not; the temptation that overcame you yesterday will overcome you to-morrow. But, mark this, if you could, you could not win salvation by it." The law tells you that unless you perfectly obey you cannot be saved by your doings, it tells you that one sin will make a flaw in it all, that one transgression will spoil your whole obedience. It is a spotless garment that you must wear in heaven; it is only an unbroken law which God can accept. So, then, the law answers this purpose, to tell men that their acquirements, their amendings, and their doings, are of no use whatever in the matter of salvation. It is theirs to come to Christ, to get A new heart and a right spirit; to get the evangelical repentance which needeth not to be repented of, that so they may put their trust in Jesus and receive pardon through his blood. "Wherefore then serveth the law?" It serveth this purpose, as Luther hath it, the purpose of a hammer. Luther, you know, is very strong on the subject of the law. He says, "For if any be not a murderer, an adulterer, a thief, and outwardly refrain from sin, as the Pharisee did, which is mentioned in the gospel, he would swear that he is righteous, and therefore he conceiveth an opinion of righteousness, and presumeth of his good works and merits. Such a one God cannot otherwise mollify and humble, that he may acknowledge his misery and damnation, but by the law, for that is the hammer of death, the thundering of hell, and the lightning of God's wrath, that beateth to powder the obstinate and senseless hypocrites. For as long as the opinion of righteousness abideth in man, so long there abideth also in him incomprehensible pride, presumption, security, hatred of God, contempt of his grace and mercy, ignorance of the promises and of Christ. The preaching of free remission of sins, through Christ, cannot enter into the heart of such a one, neither can he feel any taste or savor thereof; for that mighty rock and adamant wall, to wit, the opinion of righteousness, wherewith the heart is environed, doth resist it. Wherefore the law is that hammer, that fire, that mighty strong wind, and that terrible earthquake rending the mountains, and breaking the rocks, (1 Kings 19:11-13) that is to say, the proud and obstinate hypocrites. Elijah, not being able to abide these terrors of the law, which by these things are signified, covered his face with his mantle. Notwithstanding, when the tempest ceased, of which he was a beholder, there came a soft and a gracious wind, in the which the Lord was; but it behoved that the tempest of fire, of wind, and the earthquake should pass, before the Lord should reveal himself in that gracious wind."

III. And now, a step further. You that know the grace of God can follow me in this next step. The law is intended to show man the misery which will, fall upon him through his sin. I speak from experience, though young I be, and many of you who hear me will hear this with ears of attention, because you have felt the same. There was a time with me, when but young in years, I felt with much sorrow the evil of sin. My bones waxed old with my roaring all day long. Day and night God's hand was heavy upon me. There was a time when he seared me with visions, and affrighted me by dreams; when by day I hungered for deliverance, for my soul fasted within me: I feared lest the very skies should fall upon me, and crush my guilty soul. God's law had got hold upon me, and was strewing me my misery. If I slept at night I dreamed of the bottomless pit, and when I awoke I seemed to feel the misery I had dreamed. Up to God's house I

went; my song was but a groan. To my chamber I retired, and there with tears and groans I offered up my prayer, without a hope and without a refuge. I could then say with David, "The owl is my partner and the bittern is my companion," for God's law was flogging me with its ten-thonged whip, and then rubbing me with brine afterwards, so that I did shake and quiver with pain and anguish, and my soul chose strangling rather than life, for I was exceeding sorrowful. Some of you have had the same. The law was sent on purpose to do that. But, you will ask, "Why that misery?" I answer, that misery was sent for this reason: that I might then be made to cry to Jesus. Our heavenly Father does not usually make us seek Jesus till he has whipped us clean out of all our confidence; he cannot make us in earnest after heaven till he has made us feel something of the intolerable tortures of an aching conscience, which has foretaste of hell. Do you not remember, my hearer, when you used to awake in the morning, and the first thing you took up was Alleine's Alarm, or Baxter's Call to the Unconverted? Oh, those books, those books, in my childhood I read and devoured them when under a sense of guilt, but they were like sitting at the foot of Sinai. When I turned to Baxter, I found him saying some such things as these:—"Sinner, bethink thee, within an hour thou mayest be in hell. Bethink thee; thou mayest soon be dying—death is even now gnawing at thy cheek. What wilt thou do when thou standest before the bar of God without a Saviour? Wilt thou tell him thou hadst no time to spend on religion? Will not that empty excuse melt into thin air? Oh, sinner, wilt thou, then, dare to insult thy Maker? Wilt thou, then, dare to scoff at him? Bethink thee; the flames of hell are hot and the wrath of God is heavy. Were thy bones of steel, and thy ribs of brass, thou mightest quiver with fear. Oh, hadst thou the strength of a giant, thou couldst not wrestle with the Most High. What wilt thou do when he shall tear thee in pieces, and there shall be none to deliver thee? What wilt thou do when he shall fire off his ten great guns at thee? The first commandment shall say, 'Crush him; he hath broken me!' The second shall say, 'Damn him; he hath broken me!' The third shall say, 'A curse upon him; he hath broken me!' And so shall they all let fly upon thee; and thou without a shelter, without a place to flee to, and without a hope." Ah! you have not forgotten the days when no hymn seemed suitable to you but the one that began,

"Stoop down my soul that used to rise

Converse awhile with death

Think how a gasping mortal lies,

And pants away his breath."

Or else,

"That awful day shall surely come,

The 'pointed hour makes haste,

When I must stand before my Judge,

And pass the solemn test."

Ay, that was why the law was sent—to convince us of sin, to make us shake and shiver before God. Oh! you that are self-righteous, let me speak to you this morning with just a word or two of terrible and burning earnestness. Remember, sirs, the day is coming when a crowd more vast than this shall be assembled on the plains of earth; when on a great white throne the Saviour, Judge of men, shall sit. Now, he is come; the book is opened; the glory of heaven is displayed, rich with triumphant love, and burning with

unquenchable vengeance; ten thousand angels are on either hand; and you are standing to be tried. Now, self-righteous man, tell me now that you went to church three times a day! Come, man, tell me now that you kept all the commandments! Tell me now that you are not guilty! Come before him with a receipt of your mint, and your anise, and your cummin! Come along with you! Where are you? Oh, you are fleeing. You are crying, "Rocks hide us; mountains on us fall." What are you after, man? Why, you were so fair on earth that none dare to speak to you; you were so good and so comely; why do you run away? Come, man, pluck up courage; come before thy Maker; tell him that thou wert honest, sober, excellent, and that thou deservest to be saved! Why dost thou delay to repeat thy boastings? Out with it—come, say it! No, you will not. I see you still flying, with shrieks, away from your Maker's presence. There will be none found to stand before him, then, in their own righteousness. But look! look! look! I see a man coming forward out of that motley throng; he marches forward with a steady step, and with a smiling eye. What! is there any man found who shall dare to approach the dread tribunal of God? What! is there one who dares to stand before his Maker? Yes, there is one; he comes forward, and he cries, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Do you not shudder? Will not the mountains of wrath swallow him? Will not God launch that dreadful thunderbolt against him? No; listen while he confidently proceeds: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that hath risen again." And I see the right hand of God outstretched—"Come, ye blessed, enter the kingdom prepared for you." Now is fulfilled the verse which you once sweetly sang:—

"Bold shall I stand in that great day,

For who aught to my charge shall lay?

While, through thy blood, absolv'd I am

From sin's tremendous curse and shame."

IV. And now, my dear friends, I am afraid of wearying you; therefore, let me briefly hint at one other thought. "Wherefore then serveth the law." It was sent into the world to shew the value of a Saviour. Just as foils set off jewels, and as dark spots make bright tints more bright, so doth the law make Christ appear the fairer and more heavenly. I hear the law of God curse, but how harsh its voice. Jesus says, "come unto me;" oh, what music! all the more musical after the discord of the law. I see the law condemns; I behold Christ obeying it. Oh! how ponderous that price—when I know how weighty was the demand! I read the commandments, and I find them strict and awfully severe—oh! how holy must Christ have been to obey all these for me! Nothing makes me value my Saviour more than seeing the law condemn me. When I know this law stands in my way, and like a flaming cherubim will not let me enter paradise, then I can tell how sweetly precious must Jesus Christ's righteousness be, which is a passport to heaven, and gives me grace to enter there.

V. And, lastly, "Wherefore serveth the law." It was sent into the world to keep Christian men from self-righteousness. Christian men—do they ever get self-righteous? Yes, that they do. The best Christian man in the world will find it hard work to keep himself from boasting, and from being self-righteous. John Knox on his death-bed was attacked with self-righteousness. The last night of his life on earth, he slept some hours together, during which he uttered many deep and heavy moans. Being asked why he moaned so deeply, he replied, "I have during my life sustained many assaults of Satan; but at present he has assaulted me most fearfully, and put forth all his strength to make an end of me at once. The cunning Serpent has labored to persuade me, that I have merited heaven and eternal blessedness by the faithful

discharge of my ministry. But blessed be God, who has enabled me to quench this fiery dart, by suggesting to me such passages as these: 'What hast thou that thou hast not received?' and, 'By the grace of God I am what I am.'" Yes, and each of us have felt the same. I have often felt myself rather amused at some of my brethren, who have come to me, and said, "I trust the Lord will keep you humble," when they themselves were not only as proud as they were high, but a few inches over. They have been most sincere in prayer that I should be humble, unwittingly nursing their own pride by their own imaginary reputation for humility. I have long since given up entreating people to be humble, because it naturally tends to make them proud. A man is apt to say, "Dear me, these people are afraid I shall be proud; I must have something to be proud of." Then we say to ourselves, "I will not let them see it;" and we try to keep our pride down, but after all, are as proud as Lucifer within. I find that the proudest and most self-righteous people are those who do nothing at all, and have no shadow of presence for any opinion of their own goodness. The old truth in the book of Job is true now. You know in the beginning of the book of Job it is said, "The oxen were ploughing, and the asses were feeding beside them." That is generally the way in this world. The oxen are ploughing in the church—we have some who are laboring hard for Christ—and the asses are feeding beside them, on the finest livings and the fattest of the land. These are the people who have so much to say about self-righteousness. What do they do? They do not do enough to earn a living, and yet they think they are going to earn heaven. They sit down and fold their hands, and yet they are so reverently righteous, because forsooth they sometimes dole out a little in charity. They do nothing, and yet boast of self-righteousness. And with Christian people it is the same. If God makes you laborious, and keeps you constantly engaged in his service, you are less likely to be proud of our self-righteousness than you are if you do nothing. But at all times there is a natural tendency to it. Therefore, God has written the law, that when we read it we may see our faults; that when we look into it, as into a looking-glass, we may see the impurities in our flesh, and have reason to abhor ourselves in sackcloth and ashes, and still cry to Jesus for mercy. Use the law in this fashion, and in no other.

And now, says one, "Sir, are there any here that you have been preaching at?" Yes, I like to preach at people. I do not believe it is of any avail to preach to people; preach right into them and right at them. I find in every circle a class, who say, in plain English, "Well, I am as good a father as is to be found in the parish, I am a good tradesman; I pay twenty shillings in the pound; I am no Sir John Dean Paul; I go to church, or I go to chapel, and that is more than everybody does; I pay my subscriptions—I subscribe to the infirmary; I say my prayers; therefore, I believe I stand as good a chance of heaven as anybody in the world." I do believe that three out of four of the people of London think something of that sort. Now, if that be the ground of your trust, you have a rotten hope; you have a plank to stand upon that will not bear your weight in the day of God's account. As the Lord my God liveth, before whom I stand, "Unless your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." And if ye think the best performance of your hands can save you, this know, that "Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness." Those who sought not after it have attained it. Wherefore? Because the one hath sought it by faith, the other hath sought it by the deeds of the law, where justification never was to be found. Hear, now, the gospel, men and women; down with that boasting form of your righteousness; away with your hopes, with all your trusts that spring from this—

"Could your tears for ever flow,

Could your zeal no respite know,

All for sin could not atone;

Christ must save, and save alone.”

If ye would know how we must be saved, hear this—ye must come with nothing of your own to Christ. Christ has kept the law. You are to have his righteousness to be your righteousness. Christ has suffered in the stead of all who repent. His punishment is to stand instead of your being punished. And through faith in the sanctification and atonement of Christ, you are to be saved. Come, then, ye weary and heavy laden, bruised and mangled by the Fall, come then, ye sinners, come, then, ye moralists, come, then, all ye that have broken God’s law and feel it, leave your own trusts and come to Jesus, he will take you in, give you a spotless robe of righteousness, and make you his for ever. “But how can I come?” says one; “Must I go home and pray?” Nay, sir, nay. Where thou art standing now, thou mayest come to the cross. Oh, if thou knowest thyself to be a sinner, now—I beseech you, ere thy foot shall leave the floor on which thou standest—now, say this—

“Myself into thy arms I cast:

Lord, save my guilty soul at last.”

Now, down with you, away with your self-righteousness. Look to me—look, now; say not, “Must I mount to heaven and bring Christ down?” “The word is nigh thee, on thy mouth and in thy heart; if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe with thy heart, thou shalt be saved.” Yes, thou—thou—thou. Oh! I bless God, we have heard of hundreds who have in this place believed on Christ. Some of the blackest of the human race have come to me but even lately, and told me what God has done for them. Oh, that you, too, would now come to Jesus. Remember, he that believeth shall be saved, be his sins never so many; and he that believeth not, must perish, be his sins never so few. Oh, that the Holy Spirit would lead you to believe; so should ye escape the wrath to come? and have a place in paradise among the redeemed!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/the-uses-of-the-law/>

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