

Pew and Pulpit #01: The Pew Looks at the Pulpit

by Ernest C. Reisinger

The pew longs for a minister who has a devotional life, a proper doctrinal foundation, and who understands the connection between the law and the gospel.

Duration: 1:00:23

Scripture: Exodus 20:1-17, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Matthew 22:37-40, Romans 7:7-9, Romans 13:8-10, Galatians 3:24, Philippians 2:1-17

Topics: "Preaching"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of the law of God, the cross of Christ, and the judgment of Almighty God in the preaching of the gospel. He argues that these three truths are interconnected and cannot be separated. The speaker also highlights the role of the Holy Spirit in directing believers and ministers in their work. He references Romans 8 as a profound chapter on the work of the Spirit. Additionally, the speaker mentions the use of the law in evangelism and cites John Bunyan as a commentator who understood the significance of the law in relation to evangelism.

Transcript

I think it proper and in order that I say a word about being here. I want to express my appreciation to the banner of truth, trust for inviting me and allowing me this privilege to share and this responsibility to share this hour with you. We don't, haven't said much about the banner.

This, in this conference, I don't hear it said, but I feel as though I ought to say a word of how greatly used the banner books and many other books that we get from your country, how greatly they've been used in America. We express our gratitude to you. I say this for myself and probably hundreds of others to express our gratitude for what we owe to banner and to many others in this country.

We don't usually see behind the scenes, but I thank God for Mr. Cullum and Ian Murray and others who've been corresponding with, I guess, with Earl Holtz and others for years. And I do thank God for them. I had the wonderful privilege of sharing a few days with Mr. Cullum when he was with us and we went off to a cabin and I described it to others as golden hours.

We spent in prayer and time in the word together and they were rich hours, I say, what Bunyan called golden hours we spent together. So I appreciated the devotional aspect and get to know some of the spirit of prayer that was behind this work. I appreciate knowing him and knowing you.

This morning, Mr. Murray has also asked me to read the scripture. And so if you have your Bible, I would like to turn to Exodus chapter 20. I'd like to read the law of God and then a New Testament passage, Philippians, beginning at Exodus 20, verse 1 to 17.

And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth.

Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me and bless God showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son nor thy daughter nor thy manservant nor thy maidservant nor thy cattle nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day. Wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. Honor thy father and mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet the summary of all the others, the commandment that goes to the heart, the commandment that shows us how the others are to be interpreted, the commandment that goes into that area of our life where no man can go, the commandment in particular that God used to slay Saint Paul, the tenth commandment. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, thou shalt not, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything, anything that is thy neighbor's.

And all the people saw the thunders and the lightnings and the noise of the trumpet and the mountains smoking and the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, you see, they needed a mediator after that. They needed a mediator.

And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear. But let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not, for God is come to prove you that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

Philippians chapter 2, just a few passages. If or since there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels of mercy, fulfill ye my joy, that ye may be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves.

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, sought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient, obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should consent that Jesus Christ is L-O-R-D, to the glory of God the Father. I'm meant to speak about spiritual needs, and I didn't realize that Mr. Alexander has already, I could just say he's expressed my whole message, because the spiritual needs I wanted to talk about is pulpits filled with ministers of a special kind, men of God, the greatest needs, spiritual needs in our world today, I believe with all my heart. I want to represent the pew today.

I'm not a minister, but I want to represent the pew. And let me tell you, the pew is listened to a lot of preaching, if they attend church regularly. In fact, I met a fellow once, and one of his apologetics for believing that the Bible was the Word of God, he said any book that could take such punishment by so many people for so many years, he said it must still be alive, he said it must be the Word of God.

That was his apologetics for believing the Scriptures. I figured out just roughly in 25 years, I've attended church regularly. As far as I know, I've never missed church unless it was sickness.

And so if I went twice a day for 25 years, prayer meeting, I figure that's about 2340 sermons I've listened to. And I doubt if as many preachers here have listened to anything like 2000 sermons, because you're busy preaching. So you know, the pew ought to have some idea about what to look for in the ministry.

Now if I deduct off days for sickness, and I could surely add on enough days for those special meetings and conferences, it would come out to somewhere between, a conservative estimate would be 2000, and probably between 2000 and 2500 sermons I've listened to. And besides that, elders are meant, the ruling elders or the deacons are meant to put their arm around their minister once in a while if there's something about the preaching. This idea that you can't talk to the preacher about his preaching is false piety, I think, if you do it in the right spirit.

So I want to represent the pew today. Another thing about the pew, that very few ministers have ever been called upon by virtue of their calling, and that is you very seldom, I doubt if there's a minister here, many, unless he did it before he went in the ministry, has ever been on a pulpit committee. So you have no idea what those elders and men talk about, I guess you do have some idea of that, what they look for.

What is it that they look for when they think about a minister? Well, three times I've had that privilege to be one of several men seeking a godly under-shepherd to shepherd our flock. Now, I want to say at the outset, when I say I want to represent the pew today, I want to represent a special part of that pew, not with a censorious representation. I want to look at the pew today representing that host of men and women who love Christ's church, who love Christ's servant, those men and women who give and pray and sometimes sacrifice, that group of men and women who long to see our pulpits filled with ministers who are called and equipped of God to serve Him in the ministry.

I mean those men and women who want ministers with a God-centered motive for being in the ministry, with a God-revealed message from the Scriptures and God-honoring methods both in their living and in

their preaching. So I would like to qualify the kind of people I want to represent, not people who take the minister apart and scold, but long for it, they pray for it. Now the approach I want to take to this is twofold.

I want to take the, first of all, I want to use the approach from reading, studying, observing those men whose life and preaching has left a trail behind them. They've left their marks in the sands of time. The fact is they've left two trails.

They've left a trail of life and a trail of death. Reading about these men. You don't have to be a preacher to read the sermons of Whitefield and the sermons and study the lives of men in the past and the present that God is using, that God is honored, that God is blessed.

My first source is by comparison. What right do I have to speak to ministers except I bring it from some source by comparison? And so that's the first source. The second source, I mean when we study the life of those men and their testimonies, some of which seal their testimony with their blood.

Those men that every minister ought to want to emulate, the people we esteem, men like John Bunyan and Richard Braxter and John Brown and Nicholas Ridley and Hugh Latimer and George Whitefield and John Owen and well name them, Spurgeon, Bishop Ryle, men that we esteem, men that we long to emulate and from the Pew point of view, men that we long to see our ministers emulate and esteem. So the first source of approach would be from studying and reading the lives of this kind of men. The second, of course, the more important is from the Holy Scriptures themselves.

The Bible does have something to say about what a minister is meant to be and to do and therefore I would kind of divide the rest of what I want to say into kind of two parts. The minister and the ministry. First, let us take a look at the minister.

We had a, I could, it's almost anticlimactic to say anything about that after the nights we've spent together in the presence of God as his servant has ministered to us. I think I went back that first night to my room Monday night and I don't think I said five words to my wife because it was a searching message to me and I hope you did what I was forced to do. I hope you did what I was forced to do.

But let me just, a little repetition won't hurt. It's probably good to repeat. We want to look just a bit at the minister.

Baxter said the life of the minister is the life of his ministry. It is devotion that gives power and unction to the calling and to the commission. Therefore the minister, as well as the people in the pew, must taste and see that the Lord is good before they can ever tell it.

We've had that. A thousand wonderful sermons on holiness will never cover a cold, callous, careless life. A holy sermon is but for an hour.

But a holy life is a perpetual sermon. And oh dear servants of Christ, what I'm trying to say today is the pew longs to see men in the pulpit, not men who are just instruments of grace, but men who are subject to grace. Men who not only know how to explain, by definition, sanctification, but men who are experiencing God's sanctifying power.

If a man can't persuade himself to be holy, it's not likely that he'll persuade others. In John 17, our Lord in that prayer where He prays for men to be sent, you remember it's about verse 17 to 19 along there, He prays that they would be sent. But He didn't only pray that they would be sent.

He prayed that they would be sanctified. Sanctify them through Thy truth. Thy word is true.

Again, when we hear the enthroned Christ speaking from heaven to the messenger of the church at Ephesus in Revelation, we see those wonderful commendations. He commends them for their service. I know Thy works and Thy labors.

For my sake Thou hast labored and not fainted. He commends them for their sacrifice. Thou hast borne and hast patient for my name's sake.

He commends them for their suffering. Thou hast endured. He commends them.

They were separated apparently. He even commends them for their ecclesiastical separation. Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not.

They hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans. But then we come to verse 4 and we have this, But, nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love. Now, if you haven't already chased your commentaries to find out what that means, let me save you a lot of trouble.

I have chased my shells up and down. Every commentary I have, I've looked at that verse, what that means. Thou hast left thy first love.

And let me save you a lot of trouble. I'm going to tell you what it means. It means thou hast left thy first love.

I believe that speaks of leaving the devotion to Christ. I believe a man's heart, I believe the backslider in heart is nothing less than a man not losing his judgment about the truths of Christ. If he's backslidden his heart, his judgment concerning the doctrines and the truths of Christ doesn't necessarily change.

Necessarily. But it's that devotional life. So, so much for the devotional life.

Just two other passages that come to mind that I had in my notes. I think I should share with you on that. We see it in the Song of Solomon, verse 6. This is the principle.

This is it. They made me keeper of the vineyard, but my own vineyard have I not kept. And I think the New Testament corollary passage to that would be 1 Corinthians 9, 27.

But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. Now, the pew in the next place not only looks to the pulpit for someone who has a devotional life, but they long to see that built on a proper foundation. And we should inquire, what is that foundation? In answer to that question, it follows the line of the breakdown that we've had these nights.

From 1 Timothy 4, 16. Take heed to thyself and thy doctrine. What is the foundation that life should be built on? Sound doctrine.

Sound doctrine. In our country, in many, many circles, doctrine is in disrepute. Excuse me, I'm having a little throat problem this morning.

Doctrine is in disrepute. We have these signs at churches. We see them on billboards for a church where they have their church advertisement.

Signs like this. Christ is our creed. The Bible is our textbook.

And that sounds very pious. Christ is our creed and the Bible is our textbook. But you know, somebody has to say, which Christ now and then? Which Christ are we talking about? And now and again, somebody has to say what the Bible means.

Don't they? That's why I'm dedicated to that form of doctrine expressed at least in three confessions. The Heidelberg Catechism and the Westminster Confession and the London Confession. I'd hate to think that I'd say anything out of the framework of the doctrine expressed in those three great historical documents.

If I would, I'd like to be corrected. It's been in great dispute, doctrine. It's a bad word, and yet it's clear in the Bible.

And then on the other hand, it seems there are some of the circles that I get in, that they have a great foundation, doctrinally. But you know, they're very sound. In fact, they're sound asleep.

Sound asleep. Is that the foundation? And I used to say this was dead orthodoxy. I don't say that anymore.

I just say it's dead, because if it was orthodox, it would be alive. And I'm not sure that such a thing as dead orthodoxy owns second reflection upon that. These circles that I'm thinking of, you know, they have to dot every I and cross every T, and there's no Christian charity, no Catholic spirit, no flexibility, even on the peripheral subjects.

And this crowd is straight as a gun barrel. And they're just as empty. Bishop Ryle said, it's not either or.

You see, and that's what, this is the burden of my life. Dear servants of Christ, I see these two extremes, these people over here in feverish activity, without a doctrinal root. And others, they have nothing but roots, and no fruit.

And I say, oh Lord, if you could just bring them together a bit. You know, that's what I long for. It's not either or, it's both.

Bishop Ryle said, earnestness, zeal, and work are brave words, but like cut flowers stuck in the garden, they have no power to continue if they have not their hidden roots below. And that's been my experience, where I see the lack of those doctrinal roots. Now, I don't want to be so vague about that doctrinal roots this morning.

I want to say a bit about what I mean, what he believes. The pews long for that man that believes right, because if he doesn't believe right, he doesn't think right, and he can't say right if he doesn't believe right. So they're longing for that.

And I won't be able to touch all the very important things that I think are vital to that, but I'm going to try to touch a few, and I've put them in the order, at least for today, I've put them in the order of priorities, I believe. And the first one, I'd say this, and I, this is a sad thing in our country, I don't know about yours, but the first thing I'd put on my list is this, a clear view of the law and the gospel, the whole of Revelation could be divided into those two parts. I don't know twelve men, there may be, I don't know everybody in the United States, but I don't know twelve ministers, and I get in about ten to twenty churches a year, multiply that by a few years, and so I have known some, but I couldn't name twelve, more than twelve ministers who are straight on the law and the gospel, and their relationship one to another, their distinctiveness, and

their mutual subservience one to the other.

I put it high, and I want to say a little bit about that, I'm not doing exactly what I had planned to do this day, but I want to spend a little time on that, and I want to give you a couple of quotes. John Newton said, I had a whole lot, but I don't have it with me, and I'm sorry I don't, I have quotes to show the importance of this from Luther and Calvin, but I just have one with me, and I know there's one in this book that I want to call your attention to. John Newton said, he must clearly understand the difference, speaking of the minister of course, he must clearly understand the difference, the connection, and the harmony between the law, they're not enemies, the harmony between the law and the gospel, and their mutual subservience to illustrate and establish each other.

It is a singular privilege and a happy means of preserving the soul from being entangled on the right hand and on the left. A fine line. It's easy to drift into Pharisaic legalism on the one hand.

It's easy to drift into antinomianism on the other. Just a quote, in fact that's where this quote came from too, but just a quote from Charles Bridges, a book that I think is the best book, I used it for years, and I still hold it second now. I used to think Spurgeon's lectures to his students was the best book on the ministry, until I read this book.

And I say without any reservations, I believe, and this is tough to get a Baptist to say this, but I say this without any reservations, I believe this book is the best book on the Christian ministry that I've ever found. If you don't have it, I hope you'll avail yourself to it, and I'd even help you. If you're a little short, I'd help you to, we'd float alone together, and I'd help you on that.

I get, Bob Dendel just called me before I left and said, Ernie, would you, he said there's a lot of preachers coming to a conference, he said would you kind of go along on a little support to see that they all get a Christian minister. I said amen, I'd do that with you. May I read this quote concerning this, his section on preaching the law, the mode of preaching the law, and preaching the law and the gospel is worth the book.

It says this, the mark of a minister approved of God, a workman needeth not to be ashamed, that a workman needeth not to be ashamed, is that he rightly divides the word of truth. This implies, now listen, this implies a full and direct application of the gospel to the mass of his unconverted ears, combined with a body of spiritual instruction to the several classes of Christians. His system will be marked by scriptural symmetry and comprehensiveness.

It will embrace the whole revelation of God in its doctrinal instructions, experimental privileges, and practical results. This revelation is divided into two parts, the law and the gospel, essentially distinct from each other, though so intimately connected that an accurate knowledge of neither can be obtained without the other. And I believe that with all my heart.

And I think of the host of problems that we would have solved in the United States with all these independent things that go on outside the church and these deeper life movements and a thousand other things, if a right understanding of the law and the gospel. You see, I say by comparison again to those old preachers, I didn't learn this because I'm sharp or keen. I learned it from reading the old preachers, which I'm using today to compare what I'm saying.

The old preachers preached the law to show the character of God and the condition of man. They knew that man must see their pollution before they'd ever desire Christ's perfection. That men must see sin

before they desire a savior.

They knew that he must see his ruin before he would seek a remedy. They knew he must be disturbed by the law before he would ever be delighted by the gospel. And I meet good men in reformed circles that haven't preached the law.

Last fall, October, I was in a church and one night I spoke from a catechism question. Incidentally, may I just get in a little parenthesis here? The larger catechism, and I'm a larger catechism man. They keep talking about the shorter catechism.

That's only a half a catechism. It cuts out about 89 questions and some of them are very pertinent, very pertinent. My wife and I, this is by way of parenthesis, to keep our personal and private devotions from becoming perfunctory, we do different things different years.

Twice we've gone through the larger catechism, as adults, in fact as it's been in the last five years. Twice we've gone through the larger catechism. Some mornings we only take one question, but we've read every scripture.

I can't quite fit them all into the questions, but in most cases, in many cases I can. But we've read every scripture. The question and answer, and gentlemen, I want to say it's been rewarding.

It's been a rewarding experience. And the section on the law and the larger catechism is profound. It's excellent.

You don't know how to come at sin until you've read that. I don't believe. Well, I was speaking on, in this church, on the two questions.

There's the question, what is the right use of the law to the unregenerate? There's a question on what is the right use of the law to all men? And there's a question on what's the right use of the law to the regenerate? Three good questions. And I was speaking from these three questions in the catechism. And the minister of that church, and I say this not to scold him, but he said to me, would you speak some night on the seventh commandment? He said, I've never had heard a sermon on the seventh commandment.

We was in his study, and his diploma was back of his chair. And I looked up, and I saw that he graduated, I think, in 44, and never preached a sermon on the law of God. I personally believe that one of our great problems in the world, as far as immorality, is the church has not sounded forth the word of the law of God.

We live in a lawless age. A lawless age. Mr. Greer didn't tell us the man's name.

I was listening, eager to hear that fellow's name who came through Ireland thundering the law. Well, he paved the way for the other fellow who came afterwards, whoever those men may have been. You see, why am I saying this? Why, I'll tell you, gentlemen, there are three great truths of the Bible that stand or fall together.

And that is the law of God, the cross of Christ, and the judgment of Almighty God. And if you touch one, you've touched them all. No law, no sin.

No sin, no necessity for a cross. No judgment, if you touch that, then there's no necessity for a cross or a law. You can't touch one without touching the other.

And isn't that some of the things we're sent out to fight? We're sent out to fight sin. We're sent out to save sinners. Bring them the message that saves them.

That's why I say the law of God and the cross of Christ and the judgment of Almighty God are three great Bible truths that stand or fall together. That's why this is so vitally important. Now, I say this as far as evangelism is concerned.

I realize, and I say this, that we have a scripture record of God calling one man at least, or two, from the womb. John the Baptist and Jeremiah are two scriptural examples. So I suppose I must make room for that possibility today.

We have a record in God's Word of Him calling one man at the hour of death, I suppose, so that only one, so that none would presume. But on the other hand, thank God for the one so that none would despair. We have a record, at least one, of what I would call a sovereign gospel call.

That is Zacchaeus up in the tree when Jesus says, Today salvation has come to thy house. Now, I'm making room for God to do as He pleases about that. But I say in the same breath, God's most common way of calling man are not these exceptions, but God's most common way of calling man is a prior work of the law of conviction.

That's why it's important. I almost got preaching on this last night, if there is such a thing, on the question when Mr. Murray asked me what we do in our church. The law of God reveals the character of God.

It reveals the condition of the creature. And I believe with all my heart men must see the creator-creature relationship before they'll be interested in a redeemer relationship. Now, some people, when we think of the law, they think of the moral law as, oh, it pains me inside to listen to some preachers in our country when they talk about grace and then they make disparaging marks about the law.

And they act like the law is an arbitrary edict of some capricious despot. But, ah, dear ministers today, the law, the Bible tells me, is holy. It's good.

It's holy and it's good. It's not the capricious edict of some despot, but the wise and holy and loving degree, degree, degree, of one who is jealous, not only for his own glory, but for our good. I'd quit today, right now.

I'd leave Christianity if I didn't believe that the law of God was for the good of man as well as the glory of God. God's law is not a tyrannical restraint upon our liberties, but it's just and holy and good and right, wholesome, highly beneficial to God and His creatures. I think I could prove this without any strain.

What would it be like in this world, in England, if everyone would love God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself? That's the summary of it. Oh, someone says that would be heaven. Well, isn't that for the good of man? What would it be like if no one would steal? What would it be like if no one would murder? No one would bear false witness? No one would covet? What would it be? It might be a little hard on our economy or our prison institutions.

The lawyers would go out of business pretty much and be a little hard on our economy, but it would be heaven. This summer I took the man I play golf with. I've witnessed him for years.

I don't believe he's converted yet, but I was speaking back to about a dozen people back in the mountains in Pennsylvania and I asked him to ride with me one night and I was speaking on the law. The next day we played golf together and he said, you know Ernie, he said the law would be good for men and government even though there's no God and no hereafter. He said it would be pretty good after listening to you last night.

Because I showed him, I took the Seventh Commandment for instance, and I said most people think of the committing adultery as some man running off for a night with his secretary or something and that's about the essence, they think of the Seventh Commandment. But I pointed out to these, or tried to rather, to these dear people that the Seventh Commandment is the commandment that protects my wife. It's the commandment for the home.

It protects my home, my wife, my sister, my daughter, my mother, my home. That's what God meant it for. And you can take the rest of the commandments and apply them likewise.

It's not some tyrant who wants to restrain our liberties. Why, you know, it's the rules of games that make the game. Could you picture American baseball with the third baseman deciding he's going to be a pitcher and the first baseman decides he's going to pitch and the pitcher decides he's going to pitch and they all start throwing balls at the batter.

You say, well that's not baseball. Well, of course not. It's not baseball because they're breaking the rules.

The rules of baseball, that doesn't spoil the game. It makes the game. It makes it.

And ah, we should know these rules make life. It's only where they're broken. And another point about this is some men seem to not read the preface to the commandment.

You will notice before God gives the commandment He reminds them of His love. And not only love in a general way, He reminds them of His redemptive love. I, the Lord thy God, have brought thee out of the land of Egypt.

That's an act of love. So we should know that what's coming next is coming from a loving hand of a Heavenly Father. And behind every thou shalt not is the loving hand of a Heavenly Father.

It's the first message of the cross. The first message of the cross is not the love of God. I beg to differ with about 90% of the evangelism in my country.

The first message of the cross is Jesus Christ satisfying the demands of a holy law. I'll never forget, I reminded Mr. Murray, maybe it was unnecessary to remind him, he's got such a keen memory. But I would ask him yesterday if he remembers once when I was in Calvary Presbyterian Church.

And I said, Mr. Murray, do you remember what you told me there about the law? And he did remember very vividly. And he told me this story. He told me about his dearest friend, Presbyterian minister who once, when he was about to administer the communion, how that he came down, when he came down from the pulpit, he took the elements and he just said in kind of ecstasy, O Calvary, whose base is divine justice, but whose spirit is divine love.

The base of the cross is Christ satisfying divine justice. If we bypass the law of God in our preaching, who cares about Jesus? Who cares about Jesus? Unless it's in a sentimental way. Unless it's in a superstitious

way.

Who cares about Jesus if we bypass the law of God? I remember once I was in a minister's study. He gave me, I was there with him for a week and he said, he left the study open and had me and that was my place of study when he wasn't there. And he said, help yourself to any of my books.

And I remember that I saw one book there by Robert Mary McShane on that text in Isaiah 42, 21, I think it is. It was on the law and this was the text. He shall magnify the law and make it honorable.

Some of the pardons that these preachers in America try to huckster off and I suppose it's not even honorable pardons because it's a lawless pardon. But when we get the pardon, it's an honorable pardon. It's a wonderful sermon.

If you ever get McShane's sermon on Isaiah 42, verse 21, I commend it to you. It's on this subject. Now, you see, we live in a different day than we did 50 years ago.

He used to say, somebody reminded me here, a mother would say to her daughter or son, be a good girl. She may not be good, but she knew what she meant. Now we say, be a good girl.

We have no absolute. We have no standard. Our young people are at sea without a compass.

Not only that, they don't have any idea the shore they left from or that there's a shore to go to. My wife brought me home a book because she knows one of my favorite subjects. One of the magazines was about, all had to do with, she said you could use this with the seventh commandment.

She brought me home this magazine that she saw, was reading I think in the doctor's office and then picked one up at the store. And it was all this business about Mel and some of these colleges and many and most of our universities. Young people live together as man and wife without any shamefacedness about it all.

The fact is, they have the permission of their parents. Not all of them, thank God. But they have the permission of their parents to rent an apartment and live together.

That's not why she brought it. She brought it to say that when the university or college tried to put this to a stop, especially when they had permission from their parents, the university tried to put it to a stop, the young people said, why, what's wrong with it? And the reason she brought the book was the silly answer that the university gave for not allowing this practice. Sin wasn't mentioned, the commandments wasn't mentioned.

Well, this ought to teach us that obedience stems from love to Him. It's not servile slavish fear. And then another thing, and I wanted to get on to the Lordship of Christ this morning, but I'm sure I won't.

But another thing about the law of God that is so prevalent in our day, somehow they kind of make it that, well, if it's law, they say, well, we're not interested in law, just tell us about love. Tell us about love. Love, love, lovey-dovey.

Why, this lovey-dovey gospel doesn't save anybody. You know, and it's forced me to ask the question, what is the love of God? Well, gentlemen, I need not tell you that God is not silent in His word about such an important question. In fact, it is a clear, distinct definition in at least two places.

What is the love of God? Don't talk to me about the love of God that's divorced from law. 1 John 5.3, a concise, succinct definition. For this is the love of God that we keep His commandment, and His commandments are not grieving.

Doesn't it sound like a Christian? Oh, how I love thy law, isn't that the attitude of a Christian's heart? He doesn't make it perfectly all the time, but he'd like to. Isn't that the disposition of the heart of a Christian? Oh, how I love thy law. Isn't this the disposition of a Christian's heart? I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

That's because something's been done in his heart. What is the two blessings of the New Covenant? One is a new record in heaven. Their iniquities will I forgive, and their sins will I remember no more, Jeremiah chapter 31 and Hebrews chapter 10.

That's one. Their iniquities will I forgive. But what's the other blessing of the New Covenant? I will write my law on their hearts.

And that crowd you preach to Sunday morning have no reason to believe that they have forgiveness of sins if something hasn't been written on their heart. Because you cannot separate the two blessings of the New Covenant. They are inseparably joined in the application of God's grace.

Well, that's only one. Let's look at Romans for a minute. I must hurry.

Romans chapter 13. We're asking the question, what is the love of God? What is the love of God? Well, the Bible is not silent. Verse 8. O no man anything, but to love one another.

For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. What law? Well, this. Verse 9. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

If you love your neighbor, you won't commit adultery with his wife or daughter. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness. Thou shalt not commit. And if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this thing.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Verse 10. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor.

Therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. The directing principle or motive is love. But to what does love direct? If it's biblical love, to that which is right.

Love directs to that which is right. May I say it firmly? Grace never changes what's right. Ephesians 6. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

And whatever grace does, it never changes what's right. It changes my relationship to what's right. It changes and gives me power to do what's right.

But it never changes what's right. Love is a motive. The law is the direction.

Why it's vital to evangelism. Why the law is the knowledge of sin. What is sin? Verse John 3.4. Transgression of the law.

Bunyan didn't miss this point. Bunyan didn't miss this point on the use of the law in evangelism. You know, the best commentary I ever got on Romans chapter 7, verse 9. This is no disrespect to your commentary.

I love it, Mr. Murray. But the best commentary I ever got was from my patron saint, John Bunyan. I must share this with you because it shows you this vital relationship.

I believe that every true minister here is interested in evangelism. But my dear brother, if you've missed the law relationship to evangelism, you've missed a salient point. Listen, let me read these two verses and then give you Bunyan's commentary on it.

Incidentally, this was the commandment that brought Paul to Christ. That's why he said in Galatians, the law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. You see, and if we lock up the schoolmaster, we lock up that which meant to bring us to Christ.

Is it any wonder people aren't coming to Christ? We've locked up the schoolmaster. Listen to this, Bunyan. Romans 7, verse 7-9.

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid! May I had not known sin. Well, how'd you find out, Paul? By the law, for I had not known lust. Listen.

Except the law said. He passed the first nine pretty well. I had not known lust.

He had not slept with his neighbor's wife or stolen from his neighbor. I had not known lust. Except the law said, Thou shalt not covet something down here.

But sin, taking an occasion of the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law, sin was dead. Now get this.

Without the law, sin was dead. Then I'll give you Bunyan's commentary on it. For I was alive without the law once.

This used to sound like double talk, I'd read this. For I was alive without the law once. But when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

Do you remember in Interpreter's House when Bunyan's... when the interpreter called the pilgrim into Interpreter's House? And he showed him a large parlor. And it was covered with dust. And they stayed there a minute.

And a man came in with a broom. And he started sweeping in as he swept. The dust kept squirting.

And then he called for a little maid. She brought in water. Sprinkled it.

The dust settled and they swept the room clean. Bunyan's pilgrim said, What might this... The interpreter said, That large parlor is the heart of an unsanctified man. The dust is the original sin.

Quite settled. I was alive once without the law. Perfectly comfortable.

The dust is his sin. The dust is his sin. That man that came in with the broom is the law.

It could sweep and sweep and sweep. Not get anything clean. It's made it worse.

But it revived it and made sin alive. That little maid with the water, that's the gospel. That's the gospel.

Is there any wonder old Bolton said, It's the sharp... Samuel Bolton. If you haven't read that book of banners, you better read it. Samuel Bolton said, It is the sharp needle of the law that makes way for the scarlet thread of the gospel.

It's the sharp needle of the law. Well, my time's up. I must do one other thing because I hear somebody say, Oh, but now we have the Holy Spirit.

And we don't need that direction. I must kill that snake before I go. Romans 8. If there's a chapter in the Bible that has anything to do with the Spirit, I think we'd all agree that there's not probably a more profound chapter on the work of the Spirit in Romans 8. Because I hear that person say, Oh, but now we have the Holy Spirit.

Well, to what does the Spirit direct? Now listen. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

Not free from the moral law, free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak to the flesh, God sending his own Son in sinful flesh. And for sin condemned sin in the flesh.

This is the verse I want you to see. For the righteousness of the law, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. Christ paid it for us, but it might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

What righteousness is fulfilled in us? Why, the righteousness of the law. Now don't misunderstand me. The law points the right road, but gives no power for the journey.

I don't misunderstand you. It gives no strength for the journey because it's weak to the flesh. You'll never know, and your people will never know, or understand the perfection and the love of Christ.

And still they've stood under the perfection in the presence of God's holy law. And the law to most minds in our day is nothing more than the cold ashes and the extinguishing fire of the religion of another day. But ah, dear friends, the truth about the law goes straight to the root of our problem, modern problem, both in the church and out.

It lays the finger on the church's deepest need in evangelism and also in Christian conduct and behavior. Now there's no power in the law to save, no power in the law to sanctify. The fact is, I like that little phrase.

It's part of one of the old hymns, I think. Run and work the law of command, but give me neither feet nor hands. A sweeter sound the gospel brings, it bids me fly and gives me wings.

The law and liberty are friends. The law and love are friends. The law and the Savior are friends.

The law and grace are friends. Well, I didn't get very far.

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