

Keeping What Has Already Been Kept – Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

One of the things that should define our life under the sun is keeping God's commandments. When we look at scripture, we can see a couple reasons why this is fundamental: God's commands are good (Ps 19, Rom 7:12) and He has made us accountable to them (Mt. 5:17-20).

- 1) Why does seeing the goodness of God's commandments matter? What might we do when we don't see it (think about Solomon earlier in Ecclesiastes)?**
- 2) What about recognizing the authority of God's law over us- why does this matter? What happens when we lose this?**

This is all well and good until we consider what level of "keeping" is required of us. God's perfect law must be kept perfectly (Mt 5:48, Gal 2:10, Jam 3:10). This makes God's good law very bad news for those of us unable to be perfect. We often cope with this reality in really damaging ways, but God uses the crushing weight of our lack of perfection to wonderfully good end.

- 3) What are some of the ways we tend to react to or cope with the weightiness of God's law and our guilt? What damage do these things do?**
- 4) What is God's intention when he exposes our guilt and failure through his law?**

What the weight of the law should do is cause us to despair of ourselves and look outside of ourselves for the righteousness to Jesus (Gal 3:24). In Mt 5:17-20, Jesus said he came to fulfill the law – to complete it. He kept the covenant of works we are all born under – living in perfect obedience and bearing the curse of our sin (Heb 4:15, 1 Pt 2:24). In doing so, he established a new covenant of grace – through which he gives us all he has won as a gift through faith. This fundamentally changes our relationship to God's law.

- 5) What changes for us when we are brought into the covenant of grace?**
- 6) If we are not "under the law", why should we keep it? What drives our obedience now?**

Antinomianism rejects God's law, while legalism seeks to inject our efforts at obedience into what Christ has already finished for us. The church has always struggled with drifting into both errors, then often over-reacting to try to cure one with the other.

- 7) How do you see the pulls of antinomianism and legalism in your life?**
- 8) How do we confront these without whiplashing into the other error?**

Praise God that in Christ we strive to keep what has already been kept for us!

PRAYER

Let's pray for each other against these errors we can so easily drift in to:

- Where are you beaten down by your guilt and failure right now?
- Where are you neglectful and cold towards God's good commands right now?

*A great resource on this is our confession. The 2LBCF covers God's Law in chapter 19 and 16 hits Good Works.