

LIFE GROUP LESSON

LAW & GRACE - Week of July 14

Introduction

Are you a good person? Think about this question. How would you respond if someone asked you? In Mark, chapter ten, we read the story of a wealthy young man running up to Jesus asking, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” The first words out of Jesus’ mouth?... “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone” (Mark 10:17-18 NRSV). Why does Jesus say this? Before the Lord makes any reference to the Law of Moses, specific commandments, doctrinal statements, or adherence to any creed, Jesus makes one thing crystal clear: *Only God is truly good*. No one can be good enough to inherit eternal life.

Read Mark 10:17-27

Notice a shift in this passage?

Looking at the man, Jesus felt genuine love for him. There is still one thing you haven’t done,” he told him. “Go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me” (v21).

Jesus looked at the young man and loved him and invited him to follow him – to be in his group of disciples! ... with treasure in heaven. But the young man turns away. Why? In another passage, Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart and to love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:36); and daily choosing to live into the very first commandment ensures that we will love God and love neighbor.

“I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. You must not have any other god but me” (Exodus 20:2-3).

In the first commandment the Lord identifies *who* he is and *what* he has done. He is the One who has breathed into us the breath of life; he is the One who has rescued us from slavery to sin. On our part, we have the freedom to choose. Created in the Imago Dei, God has given us the gift of *free will* to either choose him or reject him. Thus, daily we live into the first commandment by making a conscious, ongoing resolve (everyday) to actively prohibit any rival liturgy, rival kingdom, rival culture, or rival interest to come between us and the Lord. For he is our life; to allow such overtime will prove to be deadly in the end.

Read Romans 1:18-32

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

In the Wesleyan, Scriptural understanding of God’s Word, we believe in *Good News, Bad News, Good News*. The Good News is that we are valuable to the Lord and created in God’s very image. “... Both the mind and will of Adam and Eve, as well as their desires, were all properly oriented to God as their highest end. Being in proper *relation* to the Most High, they rightly enjoyed the fruits of serenity, grace, and innocence” (The Theology of John Wesley by Kenneth J. Collins, p.52). The Bad News refers to *original sin* and the fall of the first man, Adam. When the first couple sinned by eating from the tree with fruit against which the Lord had warned, Adam and Eve believed the lie that there was something they could ‘do’ to be like God. Yet, the Good News (restored) is God in Christ is reconciling us sinners back to God, into a personal love relationship we once enjoyed in the beginning.

Wesley held in tandem an understanding of Law and Grace. Though the Law was given from a place of love, the Law also has a way of showing us our sin (see Romans 7:7-12).

In the 1993 movie, Dennis the Menace, there is a scene when Dennis is staying at Mr. and Mrs. Wilson’s, and it happens to be the very time the Wilson’s had planned a gala event celebrating the blooming of their Forty-Year Orchid. Dennis, having been warned to be good and stay in his seat, just couldn’t seem to mind when a certain button captured his attention. Breaking Mr. Wilson’s law to be good and stay in his seat, he pressed the button that lifted the door to the garage, overturning every party table laden with foods. After being taken into the house for time-out, Dennis hears a robber at the very moment all eyes are on the orchid... Dennis comes out and screams, “Mr. Wilson, somebody robbed your house!” Muck like Dennis, we want to do the right thing, but it seems we can never measure up.

“So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. I don’t really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don’t do it. Instead, I do what I hate. But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it” (the words of the apostle Paul, Romans 7:14-17).

Wesley taught an *ordo salutis* (order of salvation) and about how *preventing grace* is the first step in the beautiful work of God’s Spirit going before us woo-

ing us (calling us in the deep place) into a relationship with the Father. Paul reminds us: "... no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3b); James reminds us: "Whatever is good and perfect comes down to us from God our Father..." (James 1:17). Thus, *preventing grace* may be described as the Holy Spirit enabling us to respond to the Gospel. God's *preventing grace* calls us away from the dead path of sin and gives us opportunity to repent, turn, and believe. The moment we believe and receive forgiveness of sin, *justifying grace* is the threshold into God's *regenerating grace*, *sanctifying grace*, and *perfecting grace*.

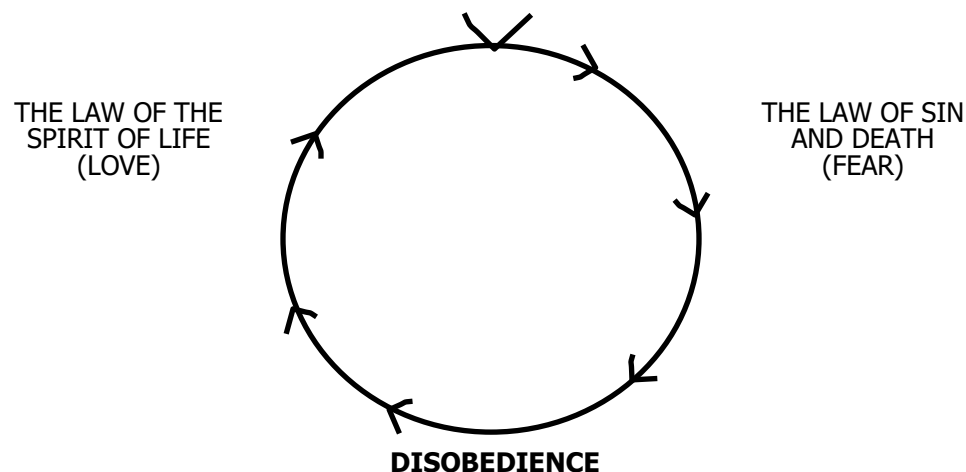
The Plain Truth states: Our sin is great, but his righteousness received by faith is greater. Jesus is the righteousness revealed by God. He wants to become our righteousness.

LAW & GRACE

Text: Mark 10:17-27, Romans 1:18-32

1. You are valuable and loved, made in the "Image of God". (Good News)
2. You're not good, we are all sinners. (Bad News) *Original SIN*
3. **Grace—Good News** is accentuated as God in Christ came to "Restore our Righteousness" or what was lost in the fall.

1. Our worship is out of _____.
2. Our lives are _____ when we place ourselves at the _____.



Why the law?

1. To convince and convict the world of sin as God's _____ which remains in heart and life.
2. To _____ the convicted sinner to Christ so they may be _____.
3. To bind us close to the Savior who _____ us to do what the law requires for Holiness.

PLAIN TRUTH

Our _____ is great, but his _____ received by _____ is greater.

One Year Bible Reading For This Week:

July 14: 1 Chronicles 16:37-18:17, Romans 2:1-24, Psalm 10:16-18, Proverbs 19:8-9
 July 15: 1 Chronicles 19:1-21:30, Romans 2:25-3:8, Psalm 11:1-7, Proverbs 19:10-12
 July 16: 1 Chronicles 22:1-23:32, Romans 3:9-31, Psalm 12:1-8, Proverbs 19:13-14
 July 17: 1 Chronicles 24:1-26:11, Romans 4:1-12, Psalm 13:1-6, Proverbs 19:15-16
 July 18: 1 Chronicles 26:12-27:34, Romans 4:13-5:5, Psalm 14:1-7, Proverbs 19:17
 July 19: 1 Chronicles 28:1-29:30, Romans 5:6-21, Psalm 15:1-5, Proverbs 19:18-19
 July 20: 2 Chronicles 1:1-3:17, Romans 6:1-23, Psalm 16:1-11, Proverbs 19:20-21

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