

Title: A Mature Church Uses the Law Well

Text: 1 Timothy 1:8-11

I have a question for you this morning. How does one establish a relationship with God?

Millions are unsaved because they think that all that is necessary to get right with God is to ask for His forgiveness. Unfortunately for them, this is only part of the story.

A criminal is standing before a good judge in a court of law, guilty of a terrible crime for which there is a \$50,000 fine. If he simply says, "Judge, I know I'm guilty of this serious crime, but I'm truly sorry and I won't do it again," is the judge going to then let him go? Of course not. He should be sorry for what he's done, and of course, he shouldn't do it again. The judge is bound by the law. He must fine him. He must make sure that justice is done or the judge himself is corrupt.

God Must be true to His just character and punish those who break His law - which is everyone. And if you think about it - this is a terrible scenario for us.

Main Idea: Know and Use the Law to Glorify God

If you remember from last week, Paul sent Timothy to Ephesus to confront in love the false teachers that were using God's law as a means of salvation. This was a heresy of the highest order and would lead people away from God, not to Him!

But for the believer, what is the point of the law? Certainly the principles in God's Law will lead us as followers of Christ to holy living.

But there is another use for God's law that is quite relevant for today.

Verses 8-11 give three uses for the law of God.

The first is...

1. The Law Reveals Sin (vs. 8-9a)

[1 Timothy 1:8-9](#) (ESV)

Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane,

The "certain people" that desired to be "teachers of the law" were very confident in themselves, but like MacBeth says in William Shakespeare's play said, "*they are full of sound and fury signifying nothing*" (*MacBeth act 5, scene 5*)

Listen again to verses 6-7

[1 Timothy 1:6-7](#) (ESV)

Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

These wannabe “teachers of the law” got the purpose of the Law wrong. So now Paul is obligated to speak to Timothy about the profound and wonderful blessing the Law is...

Paul says,

“The law is good” - This is true because God’s law reflects perfectly the perfect nature of God. God is good and so is His law.

Yet from our sinful, human perspective, the law is hard and harsh because of it’s exacting nature.

Look at the Ten Commandments with me this morning. These Ten encapsulate the whole of God’s law!

- 1. You shall have no other gods before Me** - This commandment emphasizes the exclusive worship of God.
- 2. You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything in heaven above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth** - This prohibits idolatry.
- 3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain** - This is about treating God's name with reverence.
- 4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy** - This commandment calls for a day of rest and worship.
- 5. Honor your father and your mother** - This instructs respect for parents and authority.
- 6. You shall not murder** - This prohibits the unlawful taking of life.
- 7. You shall not commit adultery** - This addresses marital fidelity.
- 8. You shall not steal** - This prohibits taking something that does not belong to you.
- 9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor** - This forbids lying or providing false testimony.
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house, wife, or belongings** - This cautions against envy and jealousy toward others' possessions.

Now, let’s be honest. True confession time. How many of these commandments have you broken over the course of your life. How many of these have you broken in the last year? Month? Today?

And the chilling fact is if we break but one of these, we are guilty before God.

[James 2:10 \(ESV\)](#)

For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.

And those who break God's law are considered "Lawbreakers"

[1 John 3:4 \(ESV\)](#)

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

What happens to those who practice lawlessness / sin? They are separated from God.

[Matthew 7:23 \(ESV\)](#)

And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

Do you hear the words of Christ here? Depart from me! Get away from me! Why? Because God/Jesus didn't KNOW / have a relationship with them.

These were people who were doing religious things. Spectacularly religious things and yet Jesus said, get away from me.

God is not interested in our **religiosity**, God desires relationship with His creation.

Sin corrupted that relationship. Sin broke that relationship. Our desire to be a law unto ourselves devastated the sweet fellowship that once existed between God and man.

And this is the beautiful thing about our God. He was not content in humanity staying in the place of separation from Him. No way! Before the foundation of the world, God devised a rescue plan for those who would believe Him, a plan that would deliver them from the ramifications of breaking God's law and delivering them to Him for relationship.

This was not some impersonal rescue, it was a plan that included the incarnational reality of God Himself.

[Titus 2:11-14 \(ESV\)](#)

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Do you see this friends?

The grace of God has appeared. God showed up. God showed up to rescue us - bringing the opportunity of salvation for ALL people.

This salvation that God offers isn't simply a "get out of Hell free" card, but it is also a means by which we change and become more like Christ in this life.

Do you see this?

His salvation also TRAINS us to say NO or to RENOUNCE all things that are contrary to the character of God.

His salvation TRAINS us to turn away from worldly passions that never give the satisfaction they promise.

His salvation TRAINS us to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the generation in which He placed us in.

In other words, this salvation causes us to walk, talk, and act like Jesus in our context, wherever that might be. At GVSU, or at WORK, or at HOME, or in our NEIGHBORHOODS.

And this then is how we live, as Christ's representatives in a crooked and perverse generation.

We are Christ as we wait for Christ to save us from this world that would destroy us apart from Him.

This is our BLESSED HOPE!

That one day He will appear to redeem or rescue us from the lawlessness that separated us from Him in the first place. That we might become a people possessed by Him to zealously serve Him in this life and the next.

This is the point of Christianity - True believers are a redeemed people no longer slaves to sin, living contrary to God but now living for Him with the promise of being with Him forever!

And the Law's job in this process of redemption is to point people to the redeemer. To point them to the only one who lived out the Law perfectly on their behalf.

Imagine being lost in a forest and finding signs that guide you towards safety. In the same way, the law pointed people to the safety and salvation found in Christ.

There is a two-fold application for this point.

First - if you are not a Christian, use the Law to drive you to Christ.

Second - if you are a Christian, use the Law as a tool to help others see their need for Jesus.

[Psalm 19:7 \(NKJV\)](#)

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;

Review - Know and Use the Law to Glorify God

- The Law Reveals Sin

2. The Law Addresses Specific Sin (vs. 9b-10)

[1 Timothy 1:9-10 \(ESV\)](#)

...for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,

Do you notice any similarities from these verses and the Ten Commandments I just walked through with you?

for those who strike their fathers and mothers

[Exodus 20:12](#) (ESV)

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality

[Exodus 20:14](#) (ESV)

“You shall not commit adultery.

[Leviticus 18:22](#) (ESV)

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.

enslavers

[Exodus 20:15](#) (ESV)

“You shall not steal.

liars and perjurers

[Exodus 20:16](#) (ESV)

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

...and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine...

Sound doctrine - *“Sound” refers to that which is healthy and wholesome. It is the kind of teaching that produces spiritual life and growth, which implies that false doctrine produces spiritual disease and debilitation.” MSB*

We all have a tendency to minimize the sin in which we engage. We think it’s not that bad. I can do whatever I want. I’m the boss and I’m in charge of my life.

But when we are confronted with our Creator’s law, we are stopped in our tracks. Because this is God’s Word and His Law reflects his character, we soon understand clearly the exacting nature of His expectations.

And to be clear, His expectations are exacting. God demands perfection from each one of you otherwise there is no hope of you having a relationship with him or a home in Heaven when you die.

[Matthew 5:48](#) (ESV)

You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

By a show of hands, how many of you are perfect this morning? How many have been perfect throughout this week? How many of you are always perfect, without flaw, sinless, never having broken God's law once?

No offence, but if your hand is up, you are a liar and you have just broken God's ninth commandment.

Folks, God's requirement of perfection is real. You must be perfect to have eternal life and not suffer eternal condemnation.

There are a couple of problems with this.

First, none of us are perfect.

[Romans 3:10](#) (ESV)

as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one;

[Romans 3:23](#) (ESV)

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

So if none are perfect and all have fallen short then no one is going to escape God's eternal Hell. All of us will miss out on eternal Heaven. This is a problem.

Second, it is not God's will that all are separated from Him.

[2 Peter 3:9](#) (ESV)

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

[1 Timothy 2:3-4](#) (ESV)

This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Why is this so? Because God is LOVE!

[John 3:16-17](#) (ESV)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

So how does God solve these seemingly incongruent truths that

1. We have sinned.
2. No sinners allowed in God’s eternal presence,
3. Yet He desires for you to be saved because He loves you.

How are these truths reconciled? Two words...

JESUS CHRIST

Jesus lived a perfect life on your behalf!

[Hebrews 4:15 \(ESV\)](#)

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

His perfect life qualified Him to be a perfect sacrifice for your sin or lawlessness

[1 John 2:2 \(ESV\)](#)

He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

His death on the cross satisfied the wrath of God that was destined to remain on you for all eternity.

[Romans 5:8–9 \(ESV\)](#)

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

But the really good news is this. Jesus didn’t stay on the cross. He was taken down and buried. And on the third day He rose from the dead.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is THE most significant event in the History of the world!

[1 Corinthians 15:17–19 \(ESV\)](#)

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Praise God that this hypothetical scenario is false!

1 Corinthians 15:20 (ESV)

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

He has risen! He has risen indeed!

And those that believe - not only recognize what Christ accomplished but give their allegiance to Him, will be saved from God's terrible wrath.

Jesus Christ is the solution to your problem with God. There is no other way!

John 14:6 (ESV)

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Friends! This is the gospel! This is our hope! Faith in Christ is our ONLY hope!

Jesus came to fulfill God's law because you couldn't

Matthew 5:17 (ESV)

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

And the capacity to understand the gospel or good news I just shared with you is predicated on your understanding of God's law.

"When a sinner understands the horrific consequences of breaking the Law of God, he will flee to the Savior, solely to escape the wrath that is to come."

— **Ray Comfort**, *The School of Biblical Evangelism*

Remember, God's Law is good...

1 Timothy 1:8 (ESV)

Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully,

We use it lawfully when we use it not as a means of salvation, but rather as a guide to salvation.

How does it guide us to salvation?

The law points out specific sins that demonstrate our desperate need for rescue from God's wrath.

Imagine you're feeling unwell and you visit a skilled doctor. After running tests and examining your symptoms, the doctor gives you a diagnosis. While it might not be what you hoped to hear, the doctor's job is to identify what's wrong and suggest a treatment plan. Without an accurate diagnosis, you could not address the underlying problem. The doctor is honest, direct, and clear about the steps you need to take to get better.

Similarly, God's holy law is like a good doctor. It reveals the truth about our spiritual condition, exposing areas in our lives where we've fallen short or where sin has taken hold. Just as the doctor doesn't create the illness but merely identifies it, God's law doesn't create sin—it reveals it. Through the law, we understand what it means to live righteously and where we need correction.

The doctor provides a prescription or treatment plan to restore health. God's law does the same by pointing us toward the remedy: faith in Jesus Christ. Just as the doctor's guidance leads to physical healing, God's law leads us to spiritual healing and redemption. Both are crucial in guiding us toward a healthier state, physically and spiritually.

What is God's Law showing you about you? God's law is like a mirror that reveals our imperfections.

Just as a mirror reflects our image, the law reflected our need for a Savior, pointing us to Christ who fulfills the law and brings true transformation.

Are you willfully breaking God's Law in the areas Paul mention in these verses?

Are you willing to finally surrender your life to God through Christ?

Will you give your life to Jesus and entrust your soul to Him for safekeeping?

Friends, if you get nothing else from these verses, get this.

You have broken God's law.

You deserve eternal Hell prison.

But, God has a rescue plan!

And that is what the last point of this sermon is all about.

But before we get there, remember...

Review - Know and Use the Law to Glorify God

- The Law Reveals Sin
- The Law Addresses Specific Sin

3. The Law Leads to the Gospel of God (vs. 11)

[1 Timothy 1:11](#) (ESV)

in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

This is the point I've been making throughout this sermon. The Law is a signpost that points to Jesus.

Remember verse 9-10?

1 Timothy 1:9–10 (ESV)

understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,

Sound doctrine “accords” or “according to”...

I like how the Christian Standard Bible translates verse 11 speaking about “Sound doctrine”...

1 Timothy 1:11 (CSB)

that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which was entrusted to me.

“sound teaching that conforms to the gospel”

*“Paul’s yardstick for measuring what is and is not sound teaching, of course, was **the message of God’s great good news in Christ** with which he had been entrusted, and which he had faithfully preached in Ephesus.” - A. Duane Litfin, “1 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary**

Do you see the incredible tie between God’s Law and God’s gospel?

The Law of God reveals His character. He is holy, righteous, pure, and without error. So it is with His Law.

The gospel of God reveals His character as well. He is love, full of grace, mercy and kindness

It was at the cross of Christ that mercy and justice met. God’s wrath was satisfied and I was free from eternal condemnation.

A youth once borrowed a fast car, and in a drunken stupor, sped through his hometown at 120 m.p.h. Since everything was horse-drawn in his country town, there were no laws against speeding. So the council passed a law saying that 30 m.p.h. was the maximum speed, and that any transgressors would be fined \$100 for every m.p.h. over the speed limit.

On his way back through the town, the speedster decided to pull the same prank. He was apprehended, tried, and found guilty by his father, who was the town’s only judge. He was fined \$9,000, and because he had no money and no words of defense, the youth was led off to prison. As he sat in despair behind bars, his father appeared at the door, and told him that he had sold all his own prized possessions and paid the fine for him. The son couldn’t believe that he loved him that much. They embraced as they never had before, and walked off in a new-found relationship, bonded together with love.

That’s a picture of what God did for us through the gospel

We have all broken God's Law a multitude of times, but God came to this earth in the person of Jesus Christ, and paid the fine—"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Jesus satisfied eternal justice, and then rose from the dead, defeating death. Hundreds saw Him after His resurrection; it's no fairy tale. Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies about the promised Savior, written in the Holy Scriptures hundreds of years before His birth. But just as we cannot earn a gift, so we cannot earn eternal life by our good works—"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

My Soul Found Rest - Steve Green

*It was the Holy love of God
That took my penalty
The Judge and Savior gave Himself
For my iniquity
Then, from the fountain of His grace
I felt forgiveness flow
To wash away the deepest sins
My heart had ever known*

*And there my soul found rest
My soul found rest*

Friends, does your soul long for rest?

Are you weary?

Has the law added a burden to your heart that you can no longer bear?

There is an answer for your condition.

And the answer is - the ONLY answer is...Jesus!

Listen to His own words and listen as if Jesus Himself were speaking them directly to you...

Matthew 11:28-29 (ESV)

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Paul was entrusted with the most beautiful message to ever come into the ears of humanity - The gospel message. The good news that Jesus Christ died for sinners, was buried and rose again so that sinners could become saints.

Friends that same message was entrusted to Timothy and those after him. And what was he to do with that glorious message? Pass it down...

2 Timothy 2:2 (ESV)

and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

And pass it down they did throughout the centuries to our present day - even to us sitting here this morning.

They were faithful with which they were entrusted.

You and I must be faithful in communicating the same message that we have been entrusted with.

What an amazing privilege.

So a two-fold application here.

Have you received this good news?

Are you aware that God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 3:16), and that He died for the sins of the world?

Are you convinced that Jesus suffered and died on the cross for your sins, and that He rose again on the third day?

Will you come to the Savior because you know that you have sinned against God?

Will you truly repent and put your faith in Jesus?

Have you called upon His name?

Acts 4:12 (ESV)

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Jesus Christ will save you right now in your seat if you but open your heart to him. Call upon His name and be saved.

For those of you who have received and believe the good news, a question for you.

Who are you sharing it with? Paul shared it with Timothy. Timothy shared it with others. Who are you sharing it with?

Like Paul, God has entrusted to you the precious life saving message of the Gospel. You have a responsibility to share this message with the people in your circle of influence.

"The biblical way to express God's love to a sinner is to show him how great his sin is (using the Law—see [Romans 7:13](#); [Galatians 3:24](#)), and then give him the incredible grace of God in Christ."

— **Comfort , Ray**, *The School of Biblical Evangelism*

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Conclusion

Paris Reidhead: If I had my way, I would declare a moratorium on public preaching of "the plan of salvation" in America for one to two years. Then I would call on everyone who has use of the airwaves and the pulpits to preach the holiness of God, the righteousness of God, and the Law of God, until sinners would cry out, "What must we do to be saved?" Then I would take them off in a corner and whisper the gospel to them.

That they should repent / agree with God about their sin and turn to Him in faith. Believing that Jesus is their only hope for rescue from the wrath of God.

Remember how to use the law well, church? We don't live out God's Law to be saved, we use the Law to get people saved!

Just as Jesus did it: Law to the Rich Young Ruler in [Mark 10:17-22](#); and Grace in [John 3](#) to Nicodemus.

"Biblical evangelism is always, without exception, law to the proud and grace to the humble. Never will you see Jesus giving the Gospel, the good news, the cross, the grace of our God, to a proud, arrogant, self-righteous person. No, no. With the law He breaks the hard heart and with the Gospel He heals the broken heart." ~ Ray Comfort

What if ABC got really good at using God's law well? I think we would start seeing more and more converted to Christ.

Why? Because when used correctly, it leads people to Jesus.

[Psalm 19:7](#) (NKJV)

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;