



Jesus, the Taxidermist, & the Veterinarian

September 2, 2018

WONDERFUL MERCY CHURCH

Rules for Life

- Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9
- Mark 7:1-8

There's A Difference

- During the 2000 Democratic convention, someone commented that many of the views of Democratic vice-presidential candidate, Joseph Lieberman, seemed not too distant from those of George W. Bush, the Republican nominee for president. Lieberman laughed. “That’s like saying there is no difference between a taxidermist and a veterinarian, because in both cases you get your dog back.” [Steve Brown, *A Scandalous Freedom*, p. 5]

The Law: Confidence, Not Complaint

- Most of us take a dim view of the Law because we don't like restrictions placed on our freedom
- The Law is God's kindness made plain and graspable: here's what will keep you safe and alive and free



“Where you are going it will not be easy. When you get to Parris Island you will find things plenty different from civilian life. You won’t like it! You’ll think they’re overdoing things. You’ll think they’re stupid! You’ll think they’re the crudest, rottenest bunch of men you ever ran into! I’m going to tell you one thing. You’ll be wrong! If you want to save yourself plenty of heartache, you’ll listen to me right now: you’ll do everything they tell you and you’ll keep your big mouths shut!”

[Winston Groom. 1942: *The Year That Tried Men’s Souls* (p. 420) Grove Atlantic.]

God's Law Reveals God's Love

- Just as God's love gave us the gospel, God's love gave us the Law
- **Deuteronomy 6:20, 24** NLT
“In the future your children will ask you, ‘What is the meaning of these laws, decrees, and regulations that the LORD our God has commanded us to obey?’ ²⁴ And the Lord our God commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear him so he can continue to bless us and preserve our lives, as he has done to this day.”

God's Law Reveals God's Love

- **Deuteronomy 4:7** NLT

“For what great nation has a god as near to them as the Lord our God is near to us whenever we call on him?”

Love the Law Because Jesus Does

- **John 17:21** MSG

“The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind—just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, so they might be one heart and mind with us.”

- **1 Corinthians 2:16b** NIV


“We have the mind of Christ.”

Matthew 5:17-19 THE MESSAGE

“Don’t suppose for a minute that I have come to demolish the Scriptures—either God’s Law or the Prophets. I’m not here to demolish but to complete. I am going to put it all together, pull it all together in a vast panorama. God’s Law is more real and lasting than the stars in the sky and the ground at your feet. Long after stars burn out and earth wears out, God’s Law will be alive and working. Trivialize even the smallest item in God’s Law and you will only have trivialized yourself. But take it seriously, show the way for others, and you will find honor in the kingdom.”

Matthew 23:23-24 PASSION TRANSLATION

“Great sorrow awaits you religious scholars and Pharisees—frauds and pretenders! For you are obsessed with peripheral issues, like insisting on paying meticulous tithes on the smallest herbs that grow in your gardens. These matters are fine, yet you ignore the most important duty of all: to walk in the love of God, to display mercy to others, and to live with integrity. Readjust your values and place first things first.



Matthew 23:23-24 PASSION TRANSLATION

“What blind guides! Nitpickers! You will spoon out a gnat from your drink, yet at the same time you’ve gulped down a camel without realizing it!”

All Religious Rules are Not Equal

- The Law is lovely, Jesus shows us, but human religious rules are the stench of death
- **Mark 7:8** NIV
“You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”
- Consider Colossians 2:16-23, where Paul tells us not to let anyone steal away our real life in Christ for the false unlife of rules, regulations, and requirements

All Religious Rules are Not Equal

- Don't let anyone put the chains of legalism on you and cancel your liberty in Christ
- **Matthew 11:28-30** MSG
“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.”

Two Ways to Know Who You Are

- One is by rule-keeping and performance. Not only will you know where you stand but you'll be able to tell who's in and who's out
- The other is this: we were made to know ourselves solely in the reality of being chosen and loved by God

Safe, Alive, Free

- Steve Brown's advice in *A Scandalous Freedom*: live your life with such freedom and joy that uptight Christians will doubt your salvation
- It's a way of being that happens within the boundary markers of God's law, which will keep us safe and alive and free
- That's because the Law is an expression of his love



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