

The Wednesday Word, April 22, 2020: The Law and Gospel Grace

“Moreover, the Law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded grace did much more abound” (Romans 5:20).

“Many there are who think that the Law is the Gospel and who teach that men by good works of benevolence, honesty, righteousness and sobriety, may be saved. Such men do err. On the other hand, many teach that the Gospel is a Law—that it has certain commands in it by obedience to which men are meritoriously saved. Such men err from the Truth and understand it not.”

C.H. Spurgeon: Law and Grace

“Run, John, run, the law commands
But gives us neither feet nor hands,
Far better news the gospel brings:
It bids us fly and gives us wings.”
John Bunyan (1628-1688)

What a contrast there is between living under the Law and living in Gospel Grace. It can be best illustrated by the final words of the two covenants. The Old Testament ends with this somber and sober warning, “Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” The New Testament, on the other hand, ends with the heartwarming statement, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen.”

What a blessing! What a contrast!

The Law tells us what we should do but Gospel Grace tells what God has done.

The Law says, “This do, and you shall live” but Gospel Grace says, “Live, and you shall do.”

The Law says, “Pay me what you owe” but Gospel Grace says, “I freely forgive you every debt.”

The Law says, “The wages of sin is death.” But Gospel Grace replies, “The gift of God is eternal life” (Romans 6:23).

The Law is God's word of demand, but Gospel Grace is God's word of deliverance.

The Law insists that we must love the Lord with all our heart, mind and strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:30). Gospel Grace takes us away from the guilt of our inability saying, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and gave his Son as the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10).

What a contrast!

Under the Law, when they made the burnt offering, the fire consumed the offering (see Leviticus 2:1-16; 6:14-23). In the Gospel, however, it is not the fire that consumes the offering, but the offering who consumes the fire. Under the Law, when they made the burnt offering, the fire consumed the sacrifice and the sacrifice was gone never to be seen again. But in the gospel, the sacrifice rose from the dead having endured our judgment.

All claims and charges made against us have been answered in righteousness. They have been settled by Christ on the cross. He destroyed the fire of Judgment!

In addition, when the Law was given, three thousand people mercilessly died because of their rebellion (Exodus 32:28). When the gospel was proclaimed at Pentecost, three thousand people received eternal life (Acts 2:41).

What a difference grace makes!

“The law supposing I have all,
Does ever for perfection call;
The gospel suits my total want,
And all the law can seek does grant.

The law could promise life to me,
If my obedience perfect be;
But grace does promise life upon
My Lord's obedience alone.

The law says, Do, and life you'll win;
But grace says, Live, for all is done;
The former cannot ease my grief,
The latter yields me full relief.

Lo! in the law Jehovah dwells,
But Jesus is concealed;
Whereas the gospel's nothing else
But Jesus Christ revealed.”

Ralph Erskine (1560-1645)

In Summary:

The Law says Do, Gospel Grace says Done.
The Law commands, but Gospel Grace Promises.
The Law kills, but Gospel Grace gives Life.
The Law condemns, but Gospel Grace Justifies.

And that's the Gospel Truth!