

Beyond Legalism – into Grace

Keynote verse:

“Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 5.20

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Arduous religious practices

- The Fast
- The Prayer Walk

Mt Kailash – 6714m

The route: 52km – 4 weeks

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Bondage through Legalism

- The uncivilised foreigner: ‘barbarian’, ‘mleccha’
- The unbeliever: ‘kaffur’
- ‘Secondary Separation’
- “A Cohen cannot be in the presence of death”

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Freedom through Grace

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3.28

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“Truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”

Matthew 5.18

Back to basics: What is the Law?

- Good Law: Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5, Luke 10
- Bad Law: Amos 8, Hosea 12, Micah 6

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Back to basics: What is the Law?

The Good Law: Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.”

- No other gods
- No images
- No misuse of God’s name for bad purposes
- Remember
- Honour

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Back to basics: What is the Law?

The Good Law: Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.”

- No murder
- No adultery
- No theft
- No false witness
- No coveting

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Back to basics: What is the Law?

The Good Law, summarised in Luke 10

On one occasion an expert in the Law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

“What is written in the Law? How do you read it?”

‘Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’, and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

“You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live.”

Luke 10.25-28

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Back to basics: What is the Law?

The Bad Law: Amos, Hosea, Micah

Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land, saying,

“When will the New Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?” – skimping on the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings of the wheat.

The LORD has sworn by himself, the Pride of Jacob, “I will never forget anything they have done.”

Amos 8.4-7

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Back to basics: What is the Law?

The Bad Law: Amos, Hosea, Micah

The merchant uses dishonest scales and loves to defraud. But you must return to your God, maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always. Hosea 12. 7, 6

Listen! The Lord is calling to the city – and to fear your name is wisdom – ‘Heed the rod and the One who appointed it. Am I still to forget your ill-gotten treasures ... and the short ephah which is accursed? Shall I acquit someone with dishonest scales, with a bag of false weights?’ Micah 6.9-11

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Experiencing life under Law

- Does the Law help us or harm us?
- Does the Law even lead us into sin?

Is the Law sinful? ... I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the Law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the Law had not said, “You shall not covet.” But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every type of coveting.

So I find this law at work: although I want to do good, evil is right there within me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s Law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Romans 7.7-8, 21-4

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Experiencing life under Law

We were held in custody under the Law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. So the Law was our guardian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

Galatians 3.23-26

So I find this law at work: although I want to do good, evil is right there within me. ... What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Romans 7.21, 24-25

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The Law – our predicament; Grace - God's solution

- It's not 'cheap grace'
- It's not an excuse to live immorally
- It's not waiting for a death-bed repentance

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Matthew 5.18

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The Law – our predicament; Grace - God’s solution

“until everything is accomplished”

Grace:

- Is only through Christ’s righteousness
- Liberates us from legalism, bondage and pride in our own merits
- Gives room for God to act – in our lives, beyond our expectations: “safely out of our depth”
- Enables love for God and love for our neighbour

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The Law – our predicament; Grace - God’s solution

“until everything is accomplished”

“What is written in the Law? How do you read it?”

‘Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’, and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

Luke 10.27