

The Pattern of Law and Grace

Seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, the Scriptures told us that God would magnify the Law and make it honorable - *The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable (Isaiah 42:21).*

At the time of Christ we see the Law being dishonored (Mark 7:6-13). It had been stripped of its power to bring the knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20) and to show sin to be exceedingly sinful (Romans 7:13).

In Matthew 5:17-19 Jesus told his hearers that He came not to destroy the Law but to fulfill it, and that if they would practice and teach God's Law, they would be considered great in the Kingdom of Heaven. He then opened up the spiritual nature of the Law through the Sermon on the Mount, explaining that outward observance of the Commandments was not enough. God desires truth in the inward parts (Psalm 51:6).

Matt. 5:21,22,27,28 – Jesus using the Law

Matt. 5:29,30 – Seriousness of lust

Matt. 5:33-37 – Shall not bear false witness

Jesus was using the Law to destroy any thought they may have had of self-atonement and steered them towards faith.

The function of the Law is to convict and to shut the human mouth from justifying man (Romans 3:19).

D.L. Moody – *Ask Paul why [the Law] was given. Here is his answer, "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Romans 3:19). The Law stops every man's mouth. I can always tell a man who is near the kingdom of God; his mouth is stopped. This, then, is why God gives us the Law- to show us ourselves in our true colors.*

The Law can do nothing for us but show us our moral deficiency before God. It can't make us perfect, but it can point us to the blood of the Saviour that can. The Bible tells us, *"For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God (Hebrews 7:19).*

Examples From The Bible

Matthew 15:3,4,7-9,19,20 – Jesus warns the self-righteous.

Mark 10:17-22 – Jesus corrects the rich young ruler.

Mark 12:28-34 – Jesus teaches the essence of the Law.

Luke 10:25-29 – Jesus rebukes the proud lawyer with the Law.

Luke 16:14-18 – Jesus rebukes the self-righteous Pharisees with the Law.

John 8:3-9 – Jesus uses the Law to bring conviction to self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees.

The Law is for everyone and the work of the law is written on our hearts and our consciences bear witness (Romans 2:15-16).

When Peter preached to the humble Jews on the Day of Pentecost, they were cut to the heart and asked, What shall we do? (Acts 2:37). They were repentant. But when he preached to proud Jews they were furious and plotted to kill them (Acts 5:33). When Stephen told proud Jews that they had violated God's Law (Acts 7:54), they were also cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.

Law To The Proud, Grace To The Humble

Proverbs 18:12 -*Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.*

James 4:6 -*But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*