

The Lawful Use of the Law – I Timothy 1:8 (1:1-11)

I. Introduction:

- A. I plan to use both messages today to consider the subject of *“the law.”*
1. My subject is not the United States Constitution or the 200,000 pages of the Code of Federal regulations.
 2. There is a message in those two documents, but as I say, that is not my theme.
 3. I will confine myself to the law which Paul mentions to Timothy – whatever that is.
 4. And I will try to define that law as we move forward.
 5. Please make plans to join us again at 6:00 tonight, for more explanation and application.
- B. This morning’s message is entitled *“The **LAWFUL** Use of the Law,”* while our evening message will be more about some ways in which the law is **NOT lawfully used**.
1. If you don’t get both of these book ends, you might end up with your library on the floor.
 2. Of course, the **secular world** – the world of **the lost** and **unbelieving** – abuse the law in various ways.
 3. That will be a part of my evening message.
 4. But this morning while looking at the lawful use of the law, I’ll refer to ways in which the **religious world** is guilty of misuse.
- C. I was ordained to the gospel ministry fifty years ago this coming Thanksgiving Day.
1. Victory Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas was the ordaining church, and nine men sat on the council.
 - a. I was as nervous as I had ever been in my life, partially because I didn’t know most of those men.
 - b. Buddy Bryant, my pastor, was the ordination chairman, and E.L. Bynum later preached the charge.
 2. I did reasonably well during the public interrogation, but there was one question that I completely muffed.
 - a. I can’t remember who asked, but I’m pretty sure that it was one of the brethren whom I didn’t know.
 - b. I had previously been asked some questions about salvation from sin, so that was in my mind.
 - c. And then there came the question: *“Is the law good or bad?”* I was caught over-balanced.
 3. Thinking about the way some people use the law to try to save their souls, without saying, *“as far as salvation from sin is concerned,”* I simply said that it is not good.
 4. Whoever asked the question kindly replied that Paul declared in **Romans 7:12** – *“The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.”*
 5. I passed the test that day with a score less than 100%, nevertheless I was ordained as a Baptist minister.
 6. And as far as I know Victory Baptist Church has not regretted in their decision.
- D. That verse from **Romans 7** to which my interrogator referred is a part of Paul’s four chapter study of the law.
1. The law comes up again in Paul’s letter to the **Galatians**, and also to the **Hebrews**.
 2. Perhaps the reason for those references, was that there were Jews who were accusing Paul of casting aside God’s law.
 3. They were saying that **Paul did NOT** have a very high regard for the law, because he didn’t demand that the non-Jewish converts keep all the details found in **Leviticus** and **Deuteronomy**.
 4. But the truth was: Paul that had **a VERY high opinion** of the law when properly understood.
 5. His problem was that he had a **very low regard** for the way that sinful men abused & tried to use that law.
- E. It needs to be pointed out that we sometimes substitute in our minds the word *“Bible”* for the word *“law.”*
1. **Romans 7:12** doesn’t say, *“Wherefore the Bible is holy, and the Scriptures are holy, and just, and good.”*
 2. That is absolutely true, but it is not what Paul is saying in this verse.
 3. In **Romans 3**, Paul says that the Jews had a wonderful blessing that the Gentiles at the time didn’t have.
 - a. *“What advantage then hath the Jew...? Much every way: chiefly, because unto them were committed the oracles of God.”*
 - b. In **Romans 3:2**, Paul spoke of the *“oracles of God”* – he didn’t use the word *“law.”*
 - c. And in the next verse he differentiated between the law and another part of the Old Testament.
 - d. *“The righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.”*

4. Elsewhere Paul speaks of *“the scriptures”* which means *“holy writings.”*
 - a. *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the SCRIPTURES might have hope.”*
 - b. *“All SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”*
 5. The law is certainly a part of the scriptures, but the scriptures include other things beside the law.
 6. The Bible marks a difference between *“the law”* and *“the prophets,”* and sometimes it differentiates between *“the law”* and the *“Psalms”* and the *“writings.”*
- F. What Paul says of *“the law”* in some places relates to God’s **moral** and **universal laws**, and at other times he speaks about the **ceremonial laws** of the Jews.
1. And it is to this that I will return this evening.
 2. The distinction between the moral law, the ceremonial law and the judicial law is important.
- G. Getting back to my subject, the proper use of the law requires an understand of its purpose.
1. And I’d like to show you that purpose comes in three parts.
 2. There is the **primary** purpose of the Law, a **secondary** purpose, and then there is an **ULTIMATE** purpose.

II. The **PRIMARY** purpose of the Law is to **REVEAL GOD** – His character, attributes and will.

- A. In **Romans 1:20** Paul tells us that – *“The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that (we are all) without excuse:*
1. *Because that, when (we) knew God, (we) glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in (our) imaginations, and (our) foolish heart was darkened.*
 - a. *Professing (ourselves) to be wise, (we) became fools,*
 - b. *And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave (us) up.”*
 2. With sin reducing mankind to not much more than brute beasts, over the centuries we have lost – or cast aside – our knowledge of the true and living God.
 3. We have retained the general fact that there must be a God, but we’ve denied almost everything else.
 4. And that is why there was such an advantage for the Jews in possessing the oracles.
 5. That nation no more deserved the blessing of God’s revelation than the Egyptians or the Philistines, but the Lord was gracious toward Israel, giving them Moses, and to Moses He gave a graphic picture of Himself.
 6. From there Moses and Israel were supposed to re-educate the world, but unfortunately they kept their knowledge of the Lord to themselves, eventually twisting and misusing the revelation they had been given.
- B. Basically, the Lord told Moses through the law that He – Jehovah – is only the perfectly holy Being.
1. The law also said that, as creatures made in God’s likeness, we are supposed to be like Him.
 2. Picture an old wagon wheel four or five feet across.
 3. It has eight or ten spokes, running from the central hub out to the rim.
 4. Each of the laws that God has given us is like one of the spokes on that wheel.
 5. Every one of God’s laws come from the Lord out to where the rubber meets the road – so to speak.
 6. And everyone of them run back to the hub – which is the holiness of God.
- C. Why shouldn’t we **murder** people?
1. Because God is holy, and man was created in God’s image.
 - a. The Lord forbade murder people for that reason, ordering us to execute murderers for that reason.
 - b. *“Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man”*
– **Genesis 9:6.**

2. Why shouldn't we **lie** or **deceive** people?
 - a. Because God is holy, and we were created to be like God.
 - b. God **cannot** lie (**Titus 1:2**), and therefore we **should not** lie.
 3. Why should we not **covet** or **steal** the property of others?
 - a. Because God is holy, and we should learn to depend upon His wisdom and goodness towards us.
 - b. If we really needed what that other person has, then our gracious God would give it to us.
 4. We could look at each and every point of the moral law and make the same kind of application.
 5. Each point goes back to the holy nature of God.
- D. So the Law is an expression of Jehovah's holiness – but also His **will**.
1. He says in the Law: *"this is what I want you to do,"* and sometime He even says, *"here is the reason why."*
 2. Very often parents tell their children to do, or not do, certain things, but those kids can't figure out reason.
 - a. Sometimes there is time to explain & there are arguments those kids can understand.
 - b. But at other times, there is no time, or the situation is beyond that child's ability to grasp.
 - c. And in those cases – to have already learned to instantly obey, might just save their lives.
 3. Similarly, sometimes the Lord explains to children like us, why we should do, or not do, certain things.
 4. But then there are those occasions, when our minds and hearts just refuse to understand.
 5. And then the Lord merely says, *"For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves ..."*
 - a. *"For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy."*
 6. The Lord is not obligated to give us specific reasons for any of His laws.
 - a. Sometimes He just says, *"Do this particular thing because I am God, and I am telling you so."*
 - b. For example, that seems to be what lay behind the very first commandment:
 - c. *"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:*
 - d. *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."*
 - e. The Lord had a purpose in that commandment, but Adam and Eve weren't given that purpose.
- E. The law is an expression of God's holiness and His **will**, but also His **justice**.
1. Justice is the expression of what is morally and ethically right – or righteous.
 2. And justice is as much a part of God as His attributes of omnipotence or eternity.
 3. God's law tells us what is right and righteous, and then it tell us what will happen when we fall short of that perfect standard.
 4. Moses was waxing poetic in **Deuteronomy 32**, but he hit the nail on the head.
 - a. *"Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.*
 - b. *My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass:*
 - c. *Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."*
- F. The **entire Bible** is the revelation of the just and holy God.
1. We see the Lord in His call of Abraham and in His destruction of the world in the days of Noah.
 2. We learn about the Lord in the establishment of His Church and, of course, we see Him in the incarnation.
 3. But in another way, we see God reflected in His Law, as if He captured His own image in a digital video.

III. That brings us to the **SECONDARY** purpose of the Law.

- A. Turning what I have just said just a little bit, **the Law reveals sin**.
1. It stands between us and the eternal God. It says, *"Here is Jehovah,"* and it points upwards toward Him.
 2. But then it also points toward us, showing what failures we are at bearing the image of our Creator.

3. It provides us with a standard against which to measure ourselves.
 4. And thereby it shows to us how deficient we are when it comes to holiness or godliness.
- B. The Law of God is not simply a declaration of what is right and holy.
1. It censures and condemns what is not right and not holy.
 2. It defines and illustrates righteousness, and by doing so it defines and illustrates sin.
- C. Then it takes the next step in sentencing the sinner and silencing his protests of self-righteousness.
1. It leaves the sinner – it leaves us – without any justification, apology or excuse.
 2. Sin is not merely an act of disobedience, it is an attack upon the Person of God.
 3. In reality our ultimate standard is not the Law; our ultimate standard is the character of the Law giver.
 4. And the Lord has given us His law because we are so blind and foolish that we can't see Him without the spectacles of the two tables which God gave to Moses there on Mount Sinai.
- D. For example, **Proverbs 14:21** says, *“He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth.”*
1. Here we have one of a great many specific sins – the person who hates his neighbor is a sinner.
 2. If you hate a man for the color of his skin, or the accent with which he speaks, or for the country from which his ancestors came, or for his religion, or for his past sins, then you are a sinner in the sight of God.
 3. And then the rest of **Proverbs 14:21** says, *“But he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.”*
 4. Here we have a picture of the Lord acting in mercy, after we have been described as a sinner.
- E. In another example, **James 4:17** tells us, *“To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”*
1. God is good, and He expects us to do good, but when we fail to be good, we prove ourselves to be sinners.
 2. *“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”*
 3. The Law is the revelation of the will and holiness of God. Transgression of that Law is sin.
 4. *“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.”*
 5. The Lord and the Devil are obviously opposites in person and nature.
- F. In **Galatians** Paul deals with this subject of the purpose of the law in great length.
1. In **chapter 3** he gets to the point –
 2. *“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator....*
 3. *Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*
 4. *But the scripture hath concluded all under sin...”*
- G. Why is the Bible, and the law which it contains, so neglected by our society?
1. Isn't it because sinners don't really want to see what they look like?
 2. Sure, we don't want to come to the realization that the god we worship is not the true God.
 3. But more than that – we don't want to know how ugly and terrible we really are.
 4. It is the purpose of the Bible to do exactly that.
- H. So the oracles of God, and particularly the Law, are a gift from God – first to teach us about the Lord, and secondly to teach us about ourselves.

IV. In these things we see that the **ULTIMATE** purpose of the law is to prepare the way for the gospel.

- A. **Galatians 3:24-25** uses a wonderful word which is translated *“schoolmaster.”*
1. When we dip into the original Greek, which Paul used to write this letter, we find the word *“pedagogue.”*
 2. It literally word means – *“child-leader.”*
 3. It referred to a special group of people in Roman culture – it was a special office.
 4. This kind of schoolmaster was not a simple teacher or tutor. He didn't teach a class of thirty kinds.
 5. The people who first heard Paul's letter pictured a very special person when they read *“pedagogue.”*

- B. A *“pedagogue”* in the Roman society was usually an educated **slave** whose sole purpose in life was to train up his master’s child in the way that he should go in order to please his father.
1. This school master that little boy how to read and write; how to add and subtract.
 2. He taught him philosophy and how to think; He taught him politics and whatever else his father demanded.
 3. And only when that child grew into a young man, having learned all that was required of him, was he formally accepted by the father as his legitimate heir.
 4. There was a tremendous responsibility placed on the shoulders of that schoolmaster.
 5. As a slave, his life was only as valuable as his ability to pass on to that child what the father wished.
- C. The Christians of Galatia at the time were being deceived by religious heretics into thinking that the Law was the means of pleasing God to the saving of their souls.
1. They were being told that if they obeyed the Law as best they could, they would be granted eternal life.
 2. It was nothing but lies and impossibilities. So Paul clarified their relationship to the law.
 3. **Galatians 3:21-24** – *“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*
 - a. *But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*
 - b. *But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster”*
 4. God’s law is not the sinner’s saviour, & the law is not God Himself. The Law is the slave of God – Father.
 5. *“The law (is) our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”*
 6. The law reveals the perfect holiness of God, and it clearly shows that we haven’t come up the first rung of the holiness ladder.
 7. And if this schoolmaster can teach us those two things, then its ultimate purpose may be reached.
 8. It teaches us that we need help – we need a Saviour.
- D. You don’t see this very often any more, but once in while, especially in small towns, you can see a sign that simply says *“Hospital.”* There are a number of implications in that simple, one-word sign.
1. First, in the days before sound-proofing, for the sake of the sick and suffering, it was urged that people be quiet in the vicinity of an hospital.
 - a. Second, it hinted, *“be careful,”* there might be emergency vehicles in the area.
 - b. And then third it said, *“If you are injured, there are doctors nearby.”*
 2. Let’s say that someone had cut all the fingers off his hand, and he was bleeding profusely.
 - a. What if he saw the sign *“Hospital,”* and thinking he could get some help there, he stopped and sat down underneath the sign and waited to be healed?
 - b. Chances are, he would bleed to death despite the message of the sign and all his good intentions.
 3. The sign was only an invitation to come to the hospital with its physicians for the treatment he needed.
- E. The Law cuts off our hands and feet, our hearts and our pride, and then points us to the Lord Jesus Christ.
1. *“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” – Romans 7.*
 2. We are justified by faith; we are made whole, not by the law but by the grace of the God, who wrote that law
 3. **Romans 3:19** – *“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*
 - a. *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*
 - b. *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*
 - c. *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins...*
 - d. *Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.*
 - e. *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”*

- F. The law proves that **you** are a sinner, falling infinitely short of the glory and righteousness of God.
1. It proves that you haven't got a hope, or a prayer, at obedience sufficient to make you righteous.
 2. It tells you that you need a Saviour.
 3. Then the Gospel declares that the Saviour is Christ Jesus, the Son of God.
 4. Together, the Law and the Gospel tell you to humbly repent before the Lord.
 5. Repent before God of your sinful condition and the sins that you have committed.
 6. The gospel urges you, and I plead with you to put your faith and hope in Christ to redeem you from your sins.
- G. Under the law you are condemned; you are a sinner worthy of eternal judgment in the Lake of Fire.
1. But in the gospel we learn that the Son of God, Jesus the Christ, deliberately and willingly went to the cross, to pay the ultimate price for your sin.
 2. As proscribed and illustrated in the Law, the Lamb of God shed His blood as an atonement for your transgressions against the Lord.
- H. Have you claimed that sacrifice and blood for yourself?
1. Have you repented of your sins & is your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the sacrifice God's law demands?
 2. Again, God's law tells us, each of us, that we need a Saviour.
 3. And then the oracles of God go on to tell us about Jesus Christ.
 4. *"The law is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."*
 5. Have you come to Christ? Have you trusted Him by faith for salvation? Justification?