

Law and Grace

If we are not under the Law of
Moses—where are we?

- Human conscience reveals the work of the Law—even in the lost. Romans 2.14-15
- The New Man has God's Laws written in his heart. Romans 7.22-8.14

God's Goal for man has always been
righteousness: conformity to God's
standard of conduct

- In the OT, God ruled His people within a very specific geographical sphere
- And He regulated every sphere of their lives: their worship, their government, their morals.

- Israel was constituted as a nation, and its identity was national (a kingdom)
- In the NT, God rules His people from within their hearts
- They are scattered around the globe
- They are constituted a body: the Church

This will pose new challenges for the
people of God

- John 17.9-23
- In the OT, God kept His people physically away from the world: Ex. 34:24 For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year.

- But in the NT, God's people rub shoulders with the world all the time
- In resolving this tension, we have 3 options:
 - All of the Law
 - None of the Law
 - Some of the Law

I Corinthians 8-10 address this
very issue

The Problem Paul addresses: 8.1

- How would we answer this question if we were under the Law?
- Exodus 34.12-16
- Under the Law, is there any flexibility in this?

Under Grace, nothing that we eat defiles us

- So says Jesus: Mark 7.18-23
- So says Peter: Acts 10
- So says Paul: Romans 14.14
- Nothing that we eat defiles us: not pork, not shellfish, not processed sugar, not GMO's—
NOTHING
- Not even if the food was offered to an idol first
- God makes provision for conscience, but the fact is that food does not defile us

Paul has addressed idolatry

- I Corinthians 5.9-13
- Why? Why this stance?
- I Corinthians 6.9-10
- Well, what if we all we're doing is eating food that has been offered to idols? I Corinthians 8.1-13

- Because we know, there's no such thing. Not really. 8.4-6
- But, says Paul, to act only in that knowledge is very foolish
- Knowledge makes proud, 8.2
- Your knowledge is incomplete, 8.3
- To act only in knowledge (8.7-13) is unloving.

I Corinthians 9: The Perspective Paul brings

- 9.1-6: I have rights
- 9.7-14: I have rights that are embedded in the Law of Moses
- 9.14: Not under the Law, but like the law (“Even so...”)
- 9.15-27: but the souls of others are more important than my rights

I Corinthians 10:1-22: The Peril Paul sees

- Spiritual privilege is not automatic permission; 10.1-6
- They sinned against God and were judged
- If we sin in the same way, we face judgment. 10.7-13

I Corinthians 10.14-22: The issue isn't just idolatry. It's identification

- The Church is one body, and the Lord's supper is our association: 10.14-17
- Just as Israel was one, and the sacrifices were the association. 10.18

- So to eat food sacrificed to idols is association with those idols
10.19-22

10.23-11.1: The Prescription Paul gives

- 10.23: It's no longer a question of mere legality
- 10.24-30: it IS a question of loving my neighbor as myself

So...

- If there is NO issue of conscience, eat anything sold in the market; 10.25-26
- You can't eat it IN the idols' temple: I Cor. 8.8
- But don't bring conscience in to the picture—the earth is the Lord's. Psalm 24.1-6

- Notice that Paul's view isn't, "What you don't know won't hurt you."
- If an unbeliever invites you over, you don't need to bring conscience into the decision; 10.27
- Eating without asking is a TESTIMONY to the maturity of your faith-Proverbs 24.1
- But when conscience DOES enter the discussion: 10.28

- Don't eat
- Eating/not eating changes nothing about the nature of the food—the earth is the Lord's. (Cf. I Cor. 8.8)
- Why is our liberty judged by another man's conscience? 10.29
- If I, through the grace of God, can eat meat offered to idols, why am I criticized for eating it? 10.30

- 10.31: All is to be done to the glory of God
- 10.32-33: The two demands of the Law are still the goal of our conduct
- We are governed by a commitment to the glory of God
- And the Good News of the Gospel