

1998 Summer Lecture Series (Carson City)
An Introduction to the Reformed Faith
The Grace of Law: The Law of God in the Life of His Saints (#13)

O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day. (Psa. 119:97)
So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. (Rom. 7:12)

Introduction

1. We have been looking at Reformed Theology: the Solas, the Five Points of Calvinism (doctrines of grace). But Reformed Theology is much more than these truths. There are many other truths which belong distinctly to the Reformed perspective. We looked at one of these last time, namely the assurance of faith. Tonight, with our last lecture, we look at another vital and distinct aspect of Reformed Theology, and that is the Law of God and its relation to the people of God.

2. The subject of the Law of God is vast. There are dozens upon dozens of texts which deal with the Law. The subject of the Law of God is controversial. Although we will deal with the Law in a way which contradicts much of popular Christianity, we do not have the time to do a full defense of the Reformed position.

3. Our approach tonight will be to simply set forth the Reformed view that the Law of God is "a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly" (WCF, XIX. 6).

I. Antinomianism: The Enemy of God's Law

A. The term means: against Law

B. The tenets of antinomianism

1. Law and grace are opposites, enemies.
2. The Law is completely abrogated in Christ
3. The moral obligations of the Law are not binding on Christians
4. Law is always equated with legalism

Bolton, 71

"Free from the Law, o happy condition . . ."

Luther called "a blasphemous impiety"

Bolton, 68

C. Dispensationalism: Major proponent of antinomianism

1. Sharp distinction between Law and Grace
2. Sharp distinction between Israel and the Church

LSC, Grace, 121

RSB, Rom. 7:15-25, The intensely personal character of these verses seems to indicate that this was Paul's own experience as a believer. This is his diagnosis of what happens when one tries to be sanctified by keeping the Law."

Bob George, "Scripture spells it out clearly: the law has no place in a believer's life. We are under the grace of God."

II. The Reformed View: O how I Love Thy Law!

A. The uses of the term "Law"

1. Broad uses: the first five books of Moses, the whole OT
2. Torah: instruction. Bolton, 54
3. Moral, civil and ceremonial
Moral Law is the heart of the Law, summarized in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 34:28; Deut. 4:13; 9:9, 11)
The ceremonial codes applied the moral law to sin and forgiveness, centering on the priesthood and the sacrifices
The civil codes applied to the moral socially to Israel as a nation, and demonstrated their distinction as the elect nation (Lev. 11:44-45; 20:22-26).

B. The Law is the expression of God's will and His character.

God is good (Psa. 119:68)	The Law is good (Rom. 7:12; Deut. 12:28)
God is holy (Isa. 6:3)	The Law is holy (Rom. 7:12)
God is perfect (Psa 18:30)	The Law is perfect (Psa. 19:7)
God is Spirit (Jn. 4:24)	The Law is spiritual (Rom. 7:14)
God is righteous (Deut. 32:4)	The Law is righteous (Deut. 4:8)
God is just (Isa. 45:21)	The Law is just (Rom. 7:12)

Conclusion: the Law reflects the character of God (holiness) and the moral will of God

C. The moral law is still binding on God's People

Luther (94-95), Calvin (360-361) Heidelberg Catechism (Guilt, grace and gratitude, what is required, what is prohibited)

1. The relationship between law and grace
*Christ as the goal of the Law, the fulfillment of the Law
*Bolton, 71-72
2. The Law is not incompatible with faith (Rom. 3:31)
3. The Law is not incompatible with the regeneration and the new covenant (Jer. 31:33)
4. The Law is still our rule of life (Rom. 13:8-10; 1 Cor. 7:19; 1 Jn. 2:3-4; 3:2-24; 5:2-3; 2 Jn. 6; Rev. 12:17; 14:12).
5. The Law gives us concrete expressions of Spirit-filled acts of love to God and man (Rom. 13:8-10)
"Law is needed as love's eyes; love is needed as Law's

heartbeat. Law without love is Pharisaism; love without Law is Antinomianism." JI Packer

- III. Loving and Living the Law as a Christian
 - A. We love the Law of God because of what does for us
 - 1. It reveals God's will to us
 - 2. It reveals our sins to us (as unbelievers, as believers)
 - B. We live the Law of God through faith and the power of the Spirit
Rom. 3:31; 8:3-4

Conclusion

- 1. God in His grace has given us His law, to show us His character
- 2. God in His grace has given us His law, to reveal His will
- 3. God in His grace has given us His law, to show us our own sin and need of Christ
- 4. God in His grace has given us His law, to show us how we should live for His glory and our good.

Bibliography

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