

Having considered last week, How to obey God, I made the bold assertion that a Christian has an obligation to obey God's gospel and God's law—wherein I placed the emphasis upon the latter of those two, namely, the law of God—but if you recall with reference to the gospel I stated that a Christian must continually obey the gospel throughout the entirety of his life, and will never come to the place where it is beneath him or unneeded by him—thus the Christian life is a life lived out of and from the gospel—it is a life lived in the grace of God that enables us to keep, fulfill, and do the law of God—in the words of the apostle we considered last week—“do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law...”

Thus foundational to the Christian life is the necessity to distinguish between the law and the gospel, Earnest Reisinger—“...the law and the gospel are the center, the sum, and the substance of the whole Bible. How important then is it to properly relate and distinguish the two? The closer we get to a clear view of the difference between the law and the gospel and the connection between them as they serve to establish each other, the more we will understand the Holy Scriptures and thus the will and mind of God, and the more useful we will be in His service...”

- I. Its Relation to Law
- II. Its Relation to Christ
- III. Its Relation to the Saint

I. Its Relation to Law

1. I don't think its possible to overstate the importance of having a right understanding of the relationship between law and gospel...
2. By law I refer to the moral law of God, as summarized in the Ten Commandments, and by gospel I refer to the good news of Jesus Christ...
3. In summary the law demands and the gospel provides—that is, the law tells us what we need and the gospel gives us what is needed...
4. The law says we must be perfectly righteous, the gospel provides a perfect righteousness—the law says all sin must be judged, the gospel provides a sin-bearing substitute...
5. The law says do—the gospel says done—the law reveals the righteousness of God, the gospel provides a righteousness from God...
6. Thus the law and the gospel are to be found together throughout the Scriptures and often times in the same verse...
7. For example, Rom.6:23—“for the wages of sin is death [law], but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord [gospel]...”
8. Rom.3:19-22—“now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe...”
9. Notice two things—[a] the purpose of the law (vv19-20)—it reveals our unrighteousness and renders us guilty—it closes our mouth before God...
10. Without the law there would be no need for the gospel, as the law shows us our sin and thus need of a Savior...
11. Let me put it this way—without the bad news there would be no good news—if we are never made sick by the law we would never seek a remedy from the gospel...
12. The law as it is a perfect representation of God's own righteous character, shows us our unrighteousness and condemns us for it...
13. It leaves us guilty before God as a condemned unrighteous sinner—“for by the law is the knowledge of sin...”

14. Thus historically, our forefathers understood of the necessity to preach the law as preparatory to the gospel that sin might be exposed...
15. CHS—"I do not believe that any man can preach the gospel that does not preach the law. The law is the needle, and you cannot draw the silken thread of the gospel through a man's heart unless you first send the needle of the law to make way for it. If men do not understand the law, they will not feel that they are sinners. And if they are not consciously sinners, they will never value the sin offering. There is no healing a man till the law has wounded him, no making him alive till the law has slain him..."
16. John Bunyan—"That man that doth not know the law doth not know in deed and in truth that ht is a sinner; and that man that doth not know he is a sinner, doth not know savingly that there is a Savior..."
17. Notice [b] the purpose of the gospel (vv21-22)—it reveals a righteousness from God which is received by faith...
18. This is to say, that in the gospel there is a righteousness answerable to the law—all that the law demands is provided in Christ...
19. How is this righteousness obtained but by faith—"the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all who believe..."
20. This righteousness is apart from the works of the law, v21—"but now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets..."
21. It is a righteousness unmixed with our own efforts—unmixed with any deeds of the law—"being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets..."
22. Here Paul speaks about the collective Old Testament Scriptures—the righteousness of the gospel was foretold throughout the OT...
23. In other words—this righteousness of the gospel is nothing new in one sense—it was already known by OT saints through type and promise...
24. Thus the apostle could say in Rom.1:1 he was—"separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord..."

II. Its Relation to Christ

A. He purchased it

1. This is to say, all that the gospel possesses and provides, has been obtained by the work and merits of Christ...
2. Thus it is referred to as—"the gospel of Jesus Christ" and "the gospel of His Son..."—as it is a gospel that concerns Christ and purchased by Christ...
3. You see my brethren, while the gospel comes to the sinner free and without cost, this does not imply that it is a costless gospel...
4. No—all that the gospel provides was purchased at the cost of our Savior's humiliation and subsequent exaltation...
5. Rom.5:19—"for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one man's obedience many will be made righteous..."
6. It is through the obedience of Christ, which includes His perfect life and atoning death, that many people will be made [or declared] righteous...
7. 2Cor.8:9—"for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich..."
8. Thus we could say that the gospel was purchased at the expense of Christ's riches—it was obtained through the poverty of the Son of God...

B. He dispenses it

1. By this I mean, Christ is the one who gives or hands out the gospel to poor sinners—because He purchased it He alone has the right to share it...
2. But to be more specific—[1] Christ offers the gospel to all men without exception—He raises His voice at the gates of the city—"How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity..."

3. He sends forth His disciples to preach the gospel to every person, Mk.16:15—“and He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature...”
4. Notice [2] Christ applies the gospel effectually and savingly to His elect people—this is to say He sends His Spirit to accompany the gospel in power...
5. 1Thess.1:4-5—“knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit...”
6. How did he know they were elect but because when the gospel was preached to them it came in the power of the Holy Spirit...
7. Thus Christ is not only a priest to secure gospel benefits, but He also a prophet to teach them, and a king to apply them...

C. He embodies it

1. By this I mean that the gospel is not only purchased and dispensed by Him, but it is found in Him—He Himself is the gospel...
2. Thus Christ bids sinners to come to Him and not to a set of abstract doctrines, Mat.11:28—“come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden...” Jn.7:37—“if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink...”
3. Come to me—not to a system, creed, or doctrine—but to me personally and individually—why—because I am the gospel...
4. Thus John could say in Jn.1:14 that Christ is—“full of grace and truth...” and then two verses later—“and of His fulness we have all received, and grace upon grace...”
5. This is to say, having been given Christ in the gospel, we are then given the necessary grace for justification and sanctification...
6. Thus the apostle told the Colossians in Col.2:10—“you are complete in Him...”—that is, all that is needed is found in the gospel, or in Christ...
7. Thus when I speak about living from the gospel, I mean we are to live from Christ, Col.3:4—“Christ, who is our life...”

III. Its Relation to the Saint

A. The gospel gives liberty

1. It is a matter of extreme importance that we get very clear in our minds, that a Christian is absolutely and totally free from the law with reference to their justification...
2. Martin Luther—“When we are in the matter of justification, that is not the time or place to speak of the law: but the question is, what Christ is, and what benefit He has brought to us...”
3. Christians are dead to the law as a covenant of works—that is, as a means of our justification, as a way of finding acceptance with God...
4. Rom.7:1-6—“or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? 2 For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of *her* husband. 3 So then if, while *her* husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. 4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another -- to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. 5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. 6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not *in* the oldness of the letter...”
5. Here the apostle likens our native relationship to the law as a covenant, similar to that of marriage, v2 —“for the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband...”
6. This is to say that the covenant of marriage carries with it a binding obligation—which continues as long as a spouse lives...

7. V3—“so then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law...”
8. The apostle’s point is obvious—he is comparing our native relation to the law as a covenant similar to marriage...
9. The only way to be relieved from our obligations to that covenant is death, which is precisely what happens in the gospel...
10. V4—“therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God...”
11. Christians have been liberated from the law as a covenant of works—they have no further relation or obligation to it in this capacity...
12. Historically we make a distinction between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace—the first has to do with Adam and his posterity and the second with Christ and His...
13. Adam was promised eternal life based upon His obedience to God’s command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil...
14. In short the covenant made to Adam was—obey and you and your posterity [the human race] shall live—but sin and you and your posterity shall die...
15. Thus when Adam sinned he plunged his entire posterity into condemnation, Rom.5:18—“...through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation...”
16. But this covenant was not abolished when Adam sinned but continues—that is, every son of Adam remains under the law as a covenant of works...
17. And we remain under the law in this capacity until we die in Christ and are wed to another, v4 —“therefore, my brethren, you have become dead to the law through the body of Christ. That you may be married to another...”
18. Notice how we have become dead to the law—“though the body of Christ...”—that is, through His atoning death...
19. When a person is united to Christ they share His death and resurrection—the old man is put to death and a new man is raised in his place...
20. This new man is no longer in Adam and thus bound by the first covenant but is dead to the law as a covenant...
21. But to be more specific, Christians are dead to the law in two ways—[1] they are dead to the curse of the law...
22. Gal.3:10-13—“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them...Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us...”
23. Notice [2] they are dead to the bondage of the law—because the law can only command, expose, and condemns sin it results in bondage...
24. Rom.7:5-6—“for when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter...”
25. When a person is under the law as an attempt to be justified with God, all the law can do is to tell us what to do...
26. And then the flesh, in an attempt to obey the law, only sins more—because, all the law can do, is command and expose sin...
27. But when a person dies to the law and is married to Christ, they are now given His Spirit who gives them the ability to obey the law...
28. We could liken our relationship to the law as a covenant to that of the Hebrews and pharaoh, who commanded them to build bricks but provided no straw...
29. So too, the law as a covenant of works, demands from us what it does not provide for us, and this results in bondage...
30. Thus for Paul the phrase—“dead to the law” is synonymous with being—“dead to sin...”—as they amount to the same thing...
31. Rom.6:11—“reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord...” v14 —“for sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace...”

32. Thus how is a Christian to live out from the gospel—but to live in such a way that he is conscious of being dead to the law as a means for justification...
- B. The gospel gives strength
1. The gospel not only liberates us from the law [that is from its bondage and curse], but it empowers us to now obey its moral precepts...
 2. John Colquhoun—“No sooner does the law as a covenant urge men to Christ for deliverance from the dominion of it in that form than Christ leads them back to the law as a rule for the regulation of their heart and conduct, in order that they may express their gratitude to Him for His perfect obedience to it as a covenant in their stead, by their steady, by their sincere obedience to it as a rule...”
 3. But what I am very anxious to remind you this morning is that a Christian finds no strength from the law for his sanctification any more than he does for his justification...
 4. Put differently—we find within the gospel sufficient grace for both our justification and our sanctification...
 5. Just as much as the gospel provides a righteousness to satisfy the law’s demands, it equally provides strength to obey the law as a rule of life...
 6. This is fundamentally done in three ways—[1] the gospel gives us the heart of Christ—by this I mean a new nature that resembles Christ’s...”
 7. What kind of a heart did Christ have, Ps.40:8—“I delight to do your will, O my God, and your law is within my heart...”
 8. Everything that Christ did was in perfect conformity to the moral law of God—His life was a moral transcript of the law...
 9. Thus when Christians are told to “walk as He walked” they are being conformed to the image of the moral law of God...
 10. His nature was in perfect conformity and harmony to the law—He perfectly loved and thus obeyed that law...
 11. This is likewise true of a Christian, differing only in degree, for to have the law written in our hearts is to have a nature agreeable to that law...
 12. Thus the gospel provides a new nature, one that bears a likeness to Christ, and thus loves and cherishes that image as it is found in the moral law...
 13. Jer.31:33—“But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people...”
 14. This is one of the fundamental blessings of the new covenant or the gospel—to have a heart similar to Christ’s—to have a nature agreeable to the law...
 15. Further in this prophecy the Lord mentions another blessing, v34—“for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more...”
 16. These two go together and can never be severed—we are saved from our lawlessness, and are enabled to live lawfully...
 17. Or to put it another way—we are saved from the law’s condemnation that we might walk in harmony to the law’s moral precepts...
 18. But my point here is this—how are we enabled to walk in harmony to the law but because we have this law written upon our hearts...
 19. Oh how a true Christian loves the moral commandments of God, Ps.119:35—“make me walk in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it...”
 20. Notice [2] the gospel gives us the Spirit of Christ—that is, it not only gives a new heart [one that loves the law] but the Holy Spirit to work within that new heart...
 21. Ezek.36:25-27—“then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them...”
 22. This is a great prophecy of a returning, penitent, believing remnant, who will be brought back into the land of Canaan...

23. Everywhere the Scripture warrants us, nay necessitates us, to understand this as typical of a penitent and cleansed sinner returning to God...
24. Notice two things—[a] the promise of a new heart, v26—“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit with you...”
25. Notice [b] the promise of the Spirit, v27—“I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them...”
26. Gal.5:13-18—“for you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! 16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law...”
27. Notice [a] liberty from the law, v13—“for you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another...”
28. Notice [b] fulfillment of the law, v14—“for all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself...”
29. Notice [c] the spirit and the law, v16—“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh...”
30. Thus there are two things that Christians can fulfill—they can fulfill the law by loving one another and their can fulfill the lusts of the flesh by devouring one another...
31. Notice [3] the gospel gives us the grace of Christ—which of courses is communicated to the new nature by the Holy Spirit...
32. Acts 13:43—“...continue in the grace of God...” 2Tim.2:1—“you therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus...”
33. CHS—“We fulfill the law, but not in any strength which the law gives to us, nor in any power of our own...”

C. The gospel gives motivation

1. Not only does the gospel provide us with the necessary strength to obey God it also provides the needed motivation...
2. As we look upon Christ bearing the weight of our sin, satisfying the just demands of the law on our behalf...
3. How else can we respond but in obedience to His commandments—“love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all...”
4. Here is the fundamental difference—the law says obey me and live, while the gospel says because you live obey...
5. CHS—“The obedience to the law is fulfilled in us out of gratitude to Christ for what he has done for us.....”