

The Right Use of the Law

By Paris Reidhead*

Romans chapter 3. Verse 19 to 28.

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 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. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe: for this is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded by what law of works, nay but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

Let's bow our hearts in prayers. Our Father, we would thank Thee and praise Thee for Thy Word given to us and preserved for us throughout these centuries. We have it as Thou didst intend us to have it. But more than having the word in its many translations and paraphrases, all to help us understand how it was given from Thy heart to ours, we rejoice that the very one who moved upon men of old to record that which Thou didst want us to hear, is with us. That Thou will touch our eyes to see and our minds to perceive and our hearts to receive and our wills to submit. We thank Thee for the ministry of the Holy Spirit by and through the Word. Speak to us today, in all the sessions and grant that because thou art here and we are here, that insights will be given, decisions will be made and that our lives will become more effective for the glory and the honor and the praise of the Lord Jesus Christ in whose name and for whose sake we ask it. Amen.

As you've surmised or known, my wife and I had the privilege of going to Africa in 1945, and going among tribes of people, some 10 that up until that time had had no contact or, if any most sporadic and occasional, with the gospel. There were occasions when great insight ... I'd spent seven years after high school getting ready to be a missionary. I thought I was rather well prepared, but I must say my training really began when I arrived, not before.

I remember going into one community and wanting to get a sample of the language. I did, as we usually did, picked up whatever was handing, a stick, a stone, a leaf, something nature had produced, hold it up and say, "Who made it? Who made this?" Always the answer would come back, a name, and always the name of the one who had made the world. How interesting it was that in these primitive sin-darkened land, God had succeeded in keeping the testimony of creation, His.

There was no challenge to that. Now these people worshiped Satan by name. They sacrificed to Satan, but God had shut the mouth of Satan and refused to allow him to claim creation. Only place that he's been deprived of that testimony is in the so-called Christian lands. We're the ones that have devised very cunning and crafty ways by which we can rob him of the testimony of creation, but there, there was no question about it. He made the sun, He made the moon, the made the stars, He made the stream, He made the fish in the stream and the birds in the air and the grass in the field. Always the same one. In this particular tribe, Wanamish.

Where is Wanamish, where was He? He said, "He was way off there, up in the Ethiopian mountains. Way above them, where the sun came up in the morning, that's where Wanamish lived." I said, "Do you pray to Wanamish?" "No." "Why?" "Well we don't know what kind of prayers He wants." "Do you sacrifice to Wanamish?" "No. We don't know what he wants." "Who do you pray to?" Then they gave me another name. It wasn't the name of God. It was the name of Satan, prince of darkness. "Is Wanamish bad or good?" "Oh He's good." "Then this other." "He's very bad." "What's he do?" "He kills our cattle, he kills our children, he makes fire come down and burn up our crops and sends the locusts in to eat them up. He's very bad." "Who do you sacrifice to?" Then they would use the name of the evil spirit, of Satan. "Why?" "Because if we give him chickens or we give him this or we give him that, then he doesn't burn our fields or he doesn't kill our children. We have rain." Now I again

moved on and I said, "Well, if ... What happens to you? If Wanamish doesn't bother you while you're alive, what's going to happen?" "Oh when we die, then it's Wanamish. Then he's angry with us, because of what we did that was wrong." "What do you mean wrong? What's wrong?"

Now I'm coming to a people who've had no contact with the Bible, never heard the name of Jesus and they're going to start telling me what's wrong. "Well, don't you know what's wrong?" "Oh, I think I do, but why don't you tell me what's wrong?" Someone said, "It's wrong to lie. It's wrong to steal. It's wrong to commit adultery. It's wrong to kill, and so on." Till they got all of the, almost all of the Ten Commandments enumerated. "Well, how do you know these things are wrong? Where did you see them? Where, do you see them in the sky? Do you see them in the stream? Where do you find out these things are wrong?" "Don't you know? Oh white man, don't you know where you find out these things are wrong? You find them out here. Your stomach tells you. That's where you'll find it's wrong." Because you see, we say heart, but for them the seat of the personality wasn't heart. They didn't know much about that, but it was the stomach. Everything was there because that was what gave them the most trouble. Hearts didn't bother them very much. They didn't live long enough to have heart trouble. Stomach trouble they had from the time they were little children. "So, my stomach tells me it's wrong."

What have we found out? We found out that God made the world, that God is holy, that God doesn't trouble them in the day to day life but He's going to deal with them when they die because of the things they've done that are wrong. They've enumerated the Ten Commandments until they've gotten down to the place that they have almost all of them. This is quite a bit of insight that I'm getting in a little while, among a tribe of people we're seeing for the first time. God is holy. God is going to judge them when they die for the things they've done that are wrong.

Now, I made a mistake at that point. You see I made a very, very crucial mistake. What have I found out? I found out that they know about sin. Then I turned to them and I said, "Have you done things that are wrong?" "Yes." "Have you lied?" "Yes." "Why did you lie?" "We wanted to." "Have you stolen?" "Yes." "Why did you steal?" "Because he had what I wanted." I remember I said, "Have you killed?" And I looked right at one man, "Have you killed?" I'm doing all this through an interpreter, you know, an interrupter. I didn't speak their language. No white man in the world had spoken their language. I said, "Did you kill?" And it came back just like that. "Who are you? Are you with the government?" I said, "No I'm not with the government. I'm here for Wanamish." Oh. Well he won't bother is. Yeah, he knows I've killed. I've killed. But if I was with the government, oh well hey, I didn't do it. I don't admit it. Take the fifth if you please. But you see, I've now induced them to admit that they have done what is wrong. In other words, they have acknowledged their sin. What's going to happen to you when you die because of these things you've done? Wanamish is going to deal with us. He's going to punish us. Well we don't know, but he's going ... We don't know just what it is, but he's going to punish us.

Well, now is that not a marvelous opportunity for me to give the gospel? It sounds like it, doesn't it? They've acknowledged they've sinned. They're going to be punished and judged. Isn't that wonderful? I said now how many of you would like to have peace with Wanamish? You'd have to have peace with God and so you wouldn't be afraid when you die. Oh ho, several hands. I would. I took them into the inquiry room. That was the next tree. I said those of you that would like to go with us, move over there and I'll talk with you.

So four came. I didn't want to press too much. After all, I'd been with missionaries that had been there for years and hadn't had any decisions. This is the first forenoon and I got four. Pretty good, huh? I took them over and then I taught them how to pray. You know, God be merciful to me a sinner, and taught them the name of Jesus and they all nodded and all smiled. It was great. Well I was only there another day. They came the next day. We talked some more. I told them some more, and gave them. Then I went in that night and I wrote my letter back to the church in Grand Rapids, Michigan that supported me. I wanted them to know what a good investment they were making in this hotshot missionary. He got four converts the first day. I figured that they'd really going to feel they'd pick the right one to put their money on.

I wrote my letter, got it all ready to mail. Took it back, sent it out in the post boat. About two and a half months later, I came back, same place. I asked for the Jesus boys. They came. You know what I found out? They still went to the pig feasts, which

were dedicated to Satan. They still went to the demon dances. They still sacrificed to evil spirits. They still got drunk, and everything they'd done before I arrived, they were still doing.

Now, it was kind of a shocker, because this was my first real occasion of getting there, and I believed if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. But I'm finding out that people I dealt with before slept between sheets, ate with silverware, put on clothes before we ever talked about Jesus. That was part of their culture. Now I'm with people that have their culture, which is going to the sacrificing to evil spirits and going to the beer feast and the pig roast for dedicated to Satan, going to the witch doctor. The only difference was I'd given them a hell insurance policy, you see? They didn't need to be afraid of Wanamish anymore. I began to realize what missions had done, what I had done, what the church at home was doing. We were making a very fundamental error. We were failing to distinguish between a function of the mind and a supernatural operation of the Holy Ghost.

It's the function of the mind to remember sin, and it's the function of the mind to know the law. But it is the supernatural work of the Holy Ghost who convicts of sin, and there's a difference between recollection and conviction! Our churches have been filled with the unconverted because we'd not distinguished between recollection and conviction. But I was just beginning and therefore I had the freedom and the option to undo what I had done. I didn't know how to rebuild, but I did have sense enough to disband that little group and give them no encouragement to think of themselves as Jesus boys any longer. They'd fallen into the hands of an unskilled amateur workman who didn't understand the work of God in the human heart, but who'd been brought face to face with it.

Now, I was in a much better state than C. T. Studd was. He had been nearly 18 years with some 115 churches established in what was then the Belgian, Congo when he came to the realization that it was a new cultural phenomena that he had planted and not a church of Jesus Christ. After 18 years, he disbanded all the churches, and disbanded the organization and began again. Mine was after less than 90 days, but I made the discovery that there's a very real difference and distinction between the natural phenomena of recollection of sin.

Now let's turn the second chapter and find out how it was that these people should know that they had sinned. I begin reading in verse 12 of chapter 2 of Romans. "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law. (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. Now "when the heathen," that's the word for Gentiles, "which have not the law" written in a book, "do by nature the things contained in the law," written in the book. "These having not the law are a law unto themselves, which shew a work of the law written in their heart, their conscience also bearing witness and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.)"

Now why is it that these people knew that it was wrong to steal, and wrong to lie and wrong to kill? Answer, because everyone who comes into the world comes in with the law written on their hearts. I have in the last four months been dragged, kicking and screaming, in opposition into the 20th century. Associates of mine had agreed and I had to consent that we would do some work with small micro-home computers. I had studiously closed my mind to the fact that computers existed. I used to get cards and letters, the cards you know in letters, do not fold or mutilate, and after being harassed by a computer that kept sending me a bill for, that you owe \$0.00 and unless you pay \$0.00, we're going to turn it over for collection. I figured the only way to do it was to mutilate, so I put on my golf shoes and put the card down on the floor and stomped on the card with my golf shoes and sent it in. Then the computer had a nervous breakdown and they stopped sending me this \$0.00 bill that was going to be turned over for collection. I just figured computers had not place. I used to say whenever computers would go bad, "Well what can you expect of the iron maiden? Absolutely, no way you can deal with it."

All of a sudden I'm being told we are going to buy a computer. I find out that the little commodore computer that we got had a ROM memory. R-O-M. I still don't know what it means. I don't know what R-O-M stands for. It's an acronym but I know it means the part of the memory built into the computer that won't erase when you shut it off. That I know. I think. Then, there's the RAM memory. I know RAM means, random access memory. That means that when you shut it off, everything you put in is flushed away. It's gone. It's erased.

I'm not really interested in computers, but I tell you, I'm interested in people. You know what I discovered? That part of the ROM memory of the human spirit is the law of God. It won't erase. You can't close it out. IT'S THERE. IT'S BUILT IN. Everyone who came into the world came in programmed with the law of God.

Now, Charles Finney had a marvelous illustration on this point. He was saying, "Why can you go to the heathen that have never heard the name of Jesus, and preach the law and expect conviction to result?" He said, "It's because God has built into the human spirit the millstone, the lower millstone with 10 grooves on it. That's the law." And you bring down the outer revelation of the law from the book upon the human spirit? And when the outer revelation meshes with the inner revelation, the human spirit is ground as is the bed of wheat, exceeding small. Because God has built, if you wish, a lower millstone of the law, or if you want to use a 20th century illustration, he put in a ROM memory of the law. It's there. It stays. You can go to people wherever they are, whatever their skin color, red or yellow, black or white or chartreuse with pink polka dots. Wherever they are, if they breathe the breath of human life, you can preach the law of God and expect the Spirit of God to work conviction in the heart, because it's the outer revelation from the book coming down upon the inner revelation in the heart, and the human spirit is ground between the same.

Now, about 100 years ago, plus or minus, a great crime was committed, two crimes were committed. I can only speak of one. In England there was a great move of God under a man whose name comes to the present as the embodiment of believing trust in Christ, George Mueller, from Bristol, England. George Mueller knew the Lord. He knew how to pray and he prayed and God answered prayer. He also had all the gifts and manifestations of the Spirit as well up at the Bristol assembly. But He had something else. He didn't like the formal organization and so they were in a very closely organized religious community of Britain, Bristol Brethren who were free. There was no pastor and there was great freedom in worship.

Well, down in another part of England, at Plymouth, there was another group that liked particularly the idea of freedom from the hierarchy of the Anglican Church, but they did not wish to be associated with the wildfire and the fanaticism that was going along with the name of George Mueller and the Bristol Brethren.

They called themselves by a place named Plymouth Brethren. One of among the group was a dear good man by the name of John N. Darby, an earnest, sincere follower of Christ undoubtedly, who was very concerned about how he could show that the supernatural had no place in the 19th century, as then it was. There came into his hands a monograph that had been prepared by a Jesuit monk in Spain, translated into English. In that monograph, he had established that the reason why the supernatural had disappeared, was because God dealt with man in different economies, different periods or the word dispensations was coined.

God would have one way of dealing in this period, and another way of dealing here. One way of being saved at one time, another way of being saved at another time. That under the law people were supposedly to have, if I can show this is from the Scripture absolutely erroneous but they were supposed to be saved by keeping the law. But in grace, they were saved in faith in Christ and there was very little carryover from one dispensation or one economy or one period to another. So much so that one of the schools in this state, one of the teachers who was utterly committed to dispensationalism, and may I say as one having come through that training, that dispensationalism is like pregnancy. There is no such thing as a little bit of it. If you accept the seed concept, it will grow until it fills you. At any rate, this particular professor was saying that in this day of the church, we do not have the privilege of accepting the promises in the psalms for our basis of our prayer expectation. One of the young students said, "Yes, but professor, George Mueller used the psalms as the basis of his prayer and God answered." The professor so is reported to me, made the statement, "Yes, but God didn't have any right to." He did it but he didn't have a right to. That's the concept of economies, of periods of dealing of dispensation.

Now, you can see what's going to happen next, can't you? Since people were saved by keeping the law, now we're in the age of grace, so what do you do? You no longer preach the law. In one fell swoop, the Spirit of God had been disarmed from the only tool He'd ever taken to prepare men for grace. Do you hear me? The only instrument that God ordained to use to prepare men for grace was the law. By one fell swoop, one cut of this size, the Spirit of God was disarmed from the only instrument that he'd ever taken to prepare men for grace, namely the wise and right use of the law.

So for 50, nearly 70 years in America, the total bible school domination of the preachers of this land has been to say the law had no place. In our period of grace we were to teach the gospel. The gospel in its element is this. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, buried and raised again the third day. According to the Scriptures, that's the gospel. Anything other than that is the Word. We were to preach the gospel, that Christ died for our sins. Well how do you know about that? Everybody knows. Why? Because it's there. But there was the difference, but everyone knows they've sinned. That's recollection. What have we done? We have robbed in the profession of faith in Christ through our evangelism through the last 60 or 70 years, people like those I dealt with in Africa, that have a recollection of sin and have little or no conviction of sin.

Now conviction is a supernatural operation of the Holy Ghost on the human spirit. It is the result of the right use of the law. "For by the law is the knowledge of sin," not the knowledge that one has sinned, but the awareness of the nature of sin. Not the knowledge of the events, the incidences, of the kinds of sins. That's not what it's saying when it talks about the knowledge of sin. It's talking the nature of it. What is it? In its essence, sin is a committal of the will to the principle and the policy of pleasing oneself and governing one's life by their own whim and their own fancy. It is the supernatural operation of the Spirit of God to convince the sinner that he is a criminal.

Much of our preaching today, I remember speaking on the university campus, the University of Minnesota when I was a student there. I was sitting on the bench, reading my testament between some classes. I'd been studying and I picked it up and started to read. A young man on the other end of the bench said, "What are you reading? That's a funny little book. I never saw that here." "Oh, that's a New Testament." We got to talking and came around to the subject of sin. He said, "I'm a sinner," and he began to enumerate some of the things he did. He said, "Well why do I do that?" Well, I was, remember I was in Bible school, just out of it, and I said, "Well it's because you have a fallen sinful nature." He said, "You mean to say that the God you serve and worship sends me to hell for doing what I can't help doing, what I was born with, mandatory that I do?" He said, "The reason that I thought I sinned was because I wanted to." I tried to talk him out of that, to get him theologically straightened out, until I began to discover that that ignorant university student was right, and the bible school graduate was wrong. That the reason that he sinned was because he wanted to sin. He chose to sin. He made a committal of his will to the principle and the policy of pleasing himself as the end of his being.

Strange isn't it? How that the deviations in theology create the heresies. Isn't it interesting? You hear certain groups of other days say, "As in Adam, all, underlined three times, capitalized, die, so in grace shall all be made alive." But somebody else comes along and he says, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all, underlined three times and capitalized, remain alive." The one is Calvinism and the other is Universalism and they both come out of the same verse because they both miss the point. Missed the point. Why was it that Adam died? Because he chose to govern and rule and control his life. Why do sinners die? Because they choose to be rebels against a holy God, traitors, anarchists. If one is born with a congenital disease, a venereal disease, and the doctor says you have congenital syphilis or whatever, that person can feel terribly sorry for themselves but they can't feel convicted because they're guilty of no crime. A congenital disease does not bring guilt to the victim, only to the parents that passed on the disease.

You cannot view sin as a congenital disease and see conviction. So if they're going to treat it as a congenital disease, it's a good idea to get rid of the ministry of the Holy Ghost producing conviction. It won't work. Only when you see sin to be a crime, the crime certified at the age of accountability, when all did as first parents had done, and turned to their own way. "All have sinned," said the Scripture.

Augustine was asked, asked the question why? Why did they do it? He answered it. He brought the world into darkness with the answer that the Scripture didn't give. If you tell me why 100% of all the people alive before the fall sinned, then I'll tell you why 100% of the people after the fall had sinned. The Scripture doesn't tell us why. It tells us that, and how much time is wasted on trying to produce why's that the Scripture don't give answers to it. If the Scripture doesn't tell us why, let's not discuss it. Let's stick with what it says. It doesn't say why. It says that. The moment you move into why, you get into philosophy. You get into metaphysics. You get into the morass and quagmire that Augustine went into.

He turned to heresy, the heresy of Manicheism and Dualism, Gnosticism to find the answer to the why, and made heresy synonymous with orthodoxy. Stick to what the Scripture says. It doesn't tell us why. It tells us that. It tells us sin is a crime and it tells us that when He, the Holy Spirit, the truth has come; He will convict the world of sin. He does it by the law. He does it by the law; apply to the consciences of men.

Now, what's the right use of the law? What's the right use of the Scripture? Anybody who begins by trying to prove the existence of God begins communicating on that basis, is foolish. If God isn't going to begin His Bible by trying to prove His existence, then why should we begin communicating about Him by doing what He doesn't do? He doesn't begin by trying to prove He exists. You know, if the Bible began with a first chapter on proving the existence of God, I wouldn't believe it, that chapter or any that followed.

If just begins the way it has to begin. "In the beginning, God." (Gen. 1:1) You know something? The only problem I've had with the Bible were those first four words. When I went to the University of Minnesota, I expected to be jolted, but I didn't realize what a jolt I was going to get because so many of my professors looked at this recent graduate from a Bible school and decided that he was fit for a good brainwashing.

After they had been working on me long enough, I got a little bit shaky. So I said, "Well I've got to read the Bible again in this atmosphere and see if it holds water the way I thought it did." So I began the process and of course I started at the beginning. In that particular process, I got to the end of the first four words, and my mind started to work. You know, you only read till you take off in flight and thought, and I got the first four words. "In the beginning, God."

I began to weigh that and think about that and meditate on that, that here was a being that existed with dependence upon no one. He had to rely on no one for his being. He was able to support and sustain himself. No one had brought him into being. He'd always been. I guess I was two weeks, and my main intellectual preoccupation was, "in the beginning, God." Finally I came to the point where I could accept the first four words.

When I came to the point that I could accept the first four words, I had accepted all the rest of them because if God could exist with dependence upon no one, then it was absolutely possible for me to have the entire Word without, if it had told me not that a whale swallowed Jonah but Jonah swallowed a whale, I would suppose it's a big gulp but I guess he did it. I wouldn't have had any problem because I'd accepted the first four words. "In the beginning God," because once you have a being that can exist apart from all others with dependence upon none, a being who thinks and feels and wills, if you can see and understand, comprehend and accept that, you aren't going to have any problem with anything that follows. That solved it, at least it did for me.

Now, when you're preaching, when you're witnessing, when you're trying to communicate, you do not need to prove the rightness of the law, any more than you need to prove the existence of God. You don't have to do it. All you have to do is preach it. Proclaim it. Assert it. Affirm it. Why? Because God wrote the law on the heart. It's standard equipment. There's never been a generation or a model of the human family that came into being that did not come in with the ROM memory of the law, that did not come in with that lower millstone of the law. It's there.

Don't try to prove it. Affirm it. Proclaim it. Someone came to Charles Spurgeon and said, "This terrible thing of liberalism and modernism and attacking the inspiration of scripture. Mr. Spurgeon you've got to speak in defense of the bible." He said, "Nonsense. You don't have to defend the bible. The bible is a lion. Turn it loose. It will take care of itself." If I could mandate preachers at pulpits, I would just ordain and order that they preach the holiness of God and the justness of God and the law of God, as the revelation of his holiness and his justice until some people got under conviction of sin.

Last night, we talked about the work of fear, that good and godly operation of God the Holy Ghost upon the human heart, that teaches us to fear the justice and holiness of God. It's one thing to know you're in trouble. It's another thing to know what kind of trouble you're in. You don't just want to get out of trouble. The reason that God awakens the heart, shows us our bondage, brings us to fear, is to make us alert to hear what He's saying to us.

If you do not follow that up with the application of the law to the heart, and you will lead a person from awakening to a profession of faith, you're going to short-circuit the new birth. It's like the obstetrician having all of his patients deliver the baby at the end of the first two months, because it's so much more comfortable that way. They don't have to worry about those seven uncomfortable months. Yes, it helps the mother, but we call it abortion. It's aborts.

Years ago I was preaching like this at the great missionary convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. One of my schoolmates in Bible school, Dr. Mervin Roselle, who's been first to reopen big evangelism in America, in Philadelphia. I believe it was in 1942 or 3, citywide campaign. He'd gone to Des Moines. Christian New Periodical said there were 4500 decisions in three weeks in the fairgrounds campaign at Des Moines or wherever it was. Merv ordered me preaching some of the way I've been speaking to you.

He said, "Tonight after the meeting I want to come to your room and I want to talk. Talk with me till I finish." Yeah. He told me how God had been dealing with him, how after that Des Moines campaign, when the papers said there were 4550 decisions, he got on the train to go back to California, not the plane, because he had to be alone for a few days. He took a bedroom on the Pullman, and he said he didn't really, hardly went to bed. He was sitting up. He was on his knees. He was crying out to God, asking God that in the 4500 and more decisions that had been made in Des Moines, that there would be at least one person who had been truly born of God.

He said, "I became desperate. I was seeing these great throngs come." He said, "I went back and I went through," He named a half a dozen nationally known preachers, and he said, "Look there's something wrong with this. These people come. They don't understand what it's about. They make a profession, and nothing happens. Nothing takes place. What are we going to do?" "Oh Merv, you just got through, Merv, God's, you're doing great, the Lord's blessing, Merv look at the result." He said, "All of these men that I should have found counsel," he said, "they all just patted me on the back and said I was under too much pressure and get a little rest."

He said, "Paris, you're the first person that's spoken to the fear of my heart." He told me, he said, "I've made up my mind that I took six months, canceled all meetings, just to stay and search the Scripture. I promised God that during that time, that I would from that point on preach, and preach the holiness of God and the justice of God and the law of God until people were slain and convicted of their sin, and really came to know Christ." He said, "I went to a citywide meeting in Chicago, determined to do this. I spoke Sunday night. There was, the house was full. One person came forward. I spoke Monday night, it was full. Two people responded. I found that both had been having God deal with them before our meetings began."

"But after I'd finished with those two, the committee waited on me." They said, "Merv, we spent a lot of money on this meeting. We don't know what's happened to you but you're not the Merv Roselle we asked to come and conduct this meeting. This is going to be a successful meeting Merv, either with you or without you. Now, we did not put all this money into this to have this a failure. Therefore, you've got tomorrow night. You either fill the front of the church with people that come, whatever way you want to do it, so that it's successful in the eyes of the public and the newspaper reporters, or we're going to have a standby reservation for you to get back to California tomorrow night. You choose. We've got somebody else in the wings to step in on Wednesday night who'll preach and do what we want done."

He said, "I went back, and I wept before God, and I said God it's not my fault. It's these people, these men that want the success in their evangelism to equal their success in their business and they're buying me and I feel like I'm a prostitute but what can I do? It's the only way I have of making a living." He said, "Paris, I went in the next night, sick at heart, and I did what I'd been doing. I plastered a smile all over my face and I gave an invitation and they filled the aisles and filled the front. They all came and said, oh that's great Merv." He said, "Something died in me. Something died in me."

"I've heard your speech. It made me realize what it costs." "Well," I said, "Well, Merv, we all know that it's only two or three percent of the people who make first time professions of faith in Christ in America that give evidence of the new birth a year later." He said, "Paris, what do you mean, two or three percent?" Then he told me about going to someone, a mutual friend, and he said, "He and I agree that today, one half of one percent will make first time professions of faith in America, give evidence of the new birth a year later."

That is made first time professions of faith in our big time evangelistic enterprise and effort. He said, "Paris, it takes 200 professions to get one person that goes on with Christ as a consistent follower after a year." Think of it. Why? Have they polluted the gospel? No. Has it been perverted? No. Has it been distorted? No. Are they preaching the gospel? Yes. What is the gospel? Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture. What are they failing to do? They're not preaching the law. "For by the law is the knowledge of sin."

By the law does the Holy Spirit bring conviction to the hearts of men. It's only the right use of the law that's been preparing the rebel and the traitor, and the anarchist for grace. Therefore we must have a revival of the right and proper preaching of the law. The holiness of God, the justice of God, the righteousness of his edicts and his demands, until sinners begin again to cry out what must I do to be saved? Then the gospel. Then the gospel.

The gospel ought to be whispered. Not broadcast but whispered into the ears of the Philippian jailers of the world that are, have nowhere to turn. In their desperation because they've discovered their lostness, then to them we can tell, Christ died for our sins according to the ... Then it has meaning. Then it makes sense. Then it's important.

What is the right and the proper use of the law? It's to prepare men for grace. Never, never, never did God intend the law to be the means of salvation. It never was. It never will be. Never has been. In the Old Testament, they weren't saved by keeping the law. They were saved by grace through faith in the one who was to come, who was pictured by the offerings. For when an Israelite came and brought a little lamb under his arm and he stood at the gate of the, he was looking at Christ. Here was the blue, the heavenly dweller. Here was the white, the sinless one. Here was the scarlet, the one who would die, and the purple, the one who would enthroned. He was looking at Christ in the four, five panels at the gate of the tabernacle.

He brought the lamb and the priest would say, "Why are you here?" And he'd say, "I've broken the law." For it was by the law that he discovered his sin. The law prescribed what he'd do. He'd bring a lamb and he'd hold his hands on the head of the lamb and he confessed his sins and the knife slashed and the hand caught the blood. The embers, the smoke came from above the other side of the curtain, and he knew that sometime, somewhere, there would be not a lamb, but a man pictured, who would be known as "the lamb that taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29)

No, no, no. Don't ever tell me they were saved by keeping the law in the Old Testament. They were saved by grace through faith if they were ever. There's never been any other way. No other door. No other way. Are there as many worlds of sinners as there's sinners in this world? There's only one door by which men may enter in. It's the lamb that was slain, the Lord Jesus Christ. Only, only thus. By the law is the knowledge of sin, the eternal revelation of the character and the nature of God. What's the right and proper use of the law? To prepare men for grace. To prepare people for grace.

Oh what a better day it was, the day when even with all the other things that came with it, they taught the shorter catechism and they taught the Ten Commandments and they, the law was built into the minds and memories of men. But as was said last night, they've taken the Ten Commandments out of the schools. They've pretty well taken them out of the churches and out of the homes. The consequence, we have a generation ... When Finney preached, his task was not so great. There had been a proclamation of the nature and holiness of God, but today, we're dealing with those who are totally and utterly ignorant. Therefore we have to begin, but we begin with this. That written upon the human heart is the law of God.

We proclaim it. We preach it. You don't have to build it in. It's the ROM memory of the sinner. Nothing can wipe it away or flush it away. It's there. All we need to do is to bring the outer revelation to bear upon the inner revelation and when He, the Spirit of Truth is given the tools that we took from Him, for which to work, the world will indeed again be convicted. We can't wait for the world to do it in mass. It will be happening. It is happening one by one.

How glad I am today that the God of the Bible is the God of justice and righteousness and holiness, of law. That the purpose and function of the law is to prepare men for grace, "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." God gave the law that it might give the sin the character of transgression, that sinners might cry out, God be merciful to me, a sinner. I ask again, have you ever been lost? He died only to save lost people. If you're lost, and you do not know him, oh the best news in all the world is you're on the threshold of forgiveness. He came to save lost people.

Father in heaven, we lift our hearts to Thee this morning. Thank Thee and praise Thee, that Thou dost work. Oh Father how I wish we that thou didst have ideal conditions with which to work. Sometimes when we preach, we preach as thou we must wait for the ideal because we're so seeking to establish the principles and the truth, but Father Thou dost work with so little with which to work. Thou dost move with such little, few tools and a little help from us. Oh, that we might become more effective, more fruitful, more effective in every way, as we deal with men. Father, that which we plead for we plead for again with thee. Give us Lord a return to the preaching of the law, which is a reflection of Thy nature and Thy character, Thy holiness and Thy justice, Thy righteousness, until we shall find again Lord that the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit who brings conviction, who convicts the world, is working. We hear that cry that must rejoice, the heart of Thy heart, and heart of Thy Son. God be merciful to me a sinner.

Oh that I might be heard again Lord. We might hear it from some of our loved ones and some of our friends. Oh that we'd be willing to give up sleep Lord, willing to give up rest, willing to forego anything, in order that we might deal with those who come to us smitten by the revelation of Thy holiness, broken because they've learned their loss. We cry out to Thee for this to occur again, in our day, in our time, as it has in other days, in other times. Thank you now for this day we spend together in Thy Word. Bless the service that is to follow and all who will join us and are here. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

* Reference such as: Delivered at Bethany Fellowship, Bloomington, MN by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.

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