

## The Law of God and Sin Part 1

For people to have a clear picture of the grandeur of the grace of God, we have to have an understanding about the law of God and sin. We will be discussing about this topic, and for the sake of brevity of episodes, this lesson is divided into 2 parts. Please make sure to listen to both parts for complete understanding.

One cannot fully grasp the majesty of the grace of God that saves, and therefore, we will not be able to appreciate it enough, if we don't see the reason for the need of grace in the first place, and that is because of sin, and we will not understand sin without knowing about the law of God. We must understand that the works of the law does not save us, but it is the law that points us to our sins, and therefore the need for repentance unto God. Therefore, teaching about the law of God, and how man was guilty of disobedience, is laying groundwork for the teaching of repentance.

### The Law of God

We will not get a hold of the gravity of sin, without understanding the law of God. We will not see the sinfulness of sin, without knowing the intensity of the offence. Probably the reason why some people do not take sin seriously, is because they do not see it in the light of God and His law. Most of the times, we tend to look at sin from our perspective, and how it affects us, (and we need to do that) but, if we will not see sin as it is, and see all things with God always at the center of everything, *"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:"* (Colossians 1:16), then we will be missing the whole picture, and so, we do not see the its real implication and seriousness. And there is nothing that can reveal to us the gravity of sin, but through the law of God;

First, we need to see God's character. He is holy, He is great, He is just. He is good. We will not be able to describe and comprehend through our finite mind, everything there is about God. He upholdeth all things by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3), meaning everything in the cosmos is being maintained, and kept together, because of God. Just like Paul said to the Colossians, *he is before all things, and by him all things consist* (Colossians 1:17). God in the beginning created everything, and the creation's entire existence is hinging on the power and character of God. Without God there would be no existence.

Not only that He created and maintains all things, but also all things were created *for* Him. He is perfectly good. He rules everything through His goodness and power. He is the Source of all goodness.

James 1:17, Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Psalms 145:9, The LORD *is* good to all: and his tender mercies *are* over all his works.

He is the Fountain of life.

Acts 17:25, Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

We are nothing without Him.

Acts 17:28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

Therefore, being the source and center of all, His goodness emanates from Him unto all beings. His holiness and justice is not in opposition against His goodness. These are all His attributes, and God rules through these characteristics,

Psalms 89:14 Justice and judgment *are* the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

His goodness and holiness requires justice and judgment, as there is no true goodness without justice and judgment executed; and justice must have goodness as its basis of execution.

Therefore, God is the Source as well of morality; His perfection requisites a standard of goodness and justice be observed throughout the whole creation; a standard of morality so perfect and holy that mirrors His own attributes. This moral code, the objective moral standard that rules the moral beings given the power of a free will, is what we call the law of God.

Because of prevailing philosophies nowadays, many people believe in subjective morality. People think that right and wrong, good or evil depends upon the person. Whatever is good or right for you, may not be necessarily good or right for me. Just like the serpent's temptation to Eve, people now have become little gods, deciding for themselves good and evil.

We need to understand that morality is not subjective. It does not depend on us. God has given a standard, an objective morality standard, His law, His word, is the standard by which we must live by. It is God's prerogative, as from His very nature of holiness, goodness and justice, that the definition of good and evil is derived.

Psalms 119:142, Thy righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness, and thy law *is* the truth.

Psalms 19:7 to 8, The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes.

Romans 7:12 Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

This law is not just limited to the written code in the Old Testament given to God by Moses, as the Lord also has written His law in the hearts of man, as an inner witness, so there is an inner voice that will accuse or excuse man. This inside witness or the conscience plus the external written witness makes the law valid and established, not just to them who has the actual written copy, but even to those without.

Romans 2:14 to 15, For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;

There is an inner witness that consent that the Law is indeed good and perfect;

Romans 7:16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good.

The writer C.S. Lewis said in his book *Mere Christianity*, compared the moral laws of God to the laws of nature. Gravity rules that rocks would be pulled by its own weight down to the ground. As nature is governed by these laws of nature such as gravity among others, so man, being a free moral agent is also ruled by a law, God's Moral Law. The difference is that, while rocks cannot choose to obey or disobey the law of gravity, man has the choice to obey or disobey God's Moral Law.

### The Demands of the Law

Since the law God is perfect, mirroring the perfection of our Holy God, it also demands perfection.

Leviticus 19:37, Therefore shall ye observe all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: I *am* the LORD.

The law of God demands obedience, and 100% at that. We are to observe all, and not just a few, not even the majority, but the entirety.

Deuteronomy 6:25 And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

Our righteousness by the law is, if, we observe to do all the commandments. This was also confirmed by James in the New Testament;

James 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

### The Extent of the Law

Psalms 119:96, I have seen an end of all perfection: *but thy commandment is* exceeding broad.

David in his psalm, said that the law of the Lord is perfect. It is entire and complete.

Psalms 19:7, The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.

The law is not just dealing with external religiosity. It is not just dealing with the outward display of piety. It deals with the soul. As the law is exceeding broad, it encompasses even the heart. It is ever searching our motives, our thoughts.

See what David said,

Psalms 19:12 to 13, Who can understand *his* errors? cleanse thou me from secret *faults*. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous *sins*; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

Here, David mentioned 3 things pertaining to the extent of the law;

1. Errors – from the Hebrew word *shaga*, which means to go astray, or to sin through ignorance. Just like in an exam, sometimes we commit errors; we do not intend to commit mistakes in an exam, but later on it is revealed to us that they are wrong. We may have sinned unintentionally, but we must remember, that although unintended, it is still sin nonetheless. The fault may not be in the intention, but in the self restraint, or lack of discipline, or even lack of guidance from the Holy Spirit. So errors should not be taken lightly and without guilt, as it could be avoided, if we had been more careful and disciplined in the Spirit. So unintended they may be, errors are still sins that needs to be repented of. That is why David's question is, "Who can understand his errors?" Have we counted all the times we have offended God, though unintentionally?

Unintentional they may be, the law still covers errors, and makes us accountable with them. David understood the law is concerned even with unintentional sins, as it strives perfection.

2. Secret Faults – these are not sins that the sinners hide from others, but rather, sins that are hidden even from the sinner himself. There are sins that we ourselves do not know we committed, so being secret, even to the sinner. Errors are unintentional but revealed to the sinner, while secret faults are not revealed. Since these are not revealed to the sinner, and does not even remember them, they are unrepented of. That's why David's request to the Lord is that He would cleanse him of all these secret faults. Because our searching of our sins has limitations, we can only repent of the sins we remember and knew we committed. But God knows and search our hearts and mind completely.

Psalms 139:23 to 24 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

David acknowledged that the law of God is not just dealing with the external and visible deeds. It is thorough and wide, and even deals with the inner thoughts and motives of the heart.

Psalms 119:96 I have seen an end of all perfection: *but* thy commandment *is* exceeding broad.

Heb 4:12 to 13 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

So maybe there are sins that we do not even know we committed and remember. But David knows the law still covers unremembered and unknown sins, so he pleads to be cleansed from them.

3. Presumptuous sins - Presumptuous means proud or arrogant. While some sins were committed unintentionally or even hidden from ourselves, presumptuous sins are done intentionally, even proudly, and habitual. This stands in contrast to secret faults and errors. This habitual sinning is dangerous as this is what was described by Paul in Romans chapter 1, because of people's deliberate pride and not acknowledging God in their hearts, it leads to all kinds of sins, and eventually, to reprobation, or a hardened mind.

Romans 1:28, And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Also, the writer of Hebrews said,

Hebrews 3:13, But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

That's why David said, "let it not have dominion over me." This presumptuous sins stem out from pride and deliberate disregard of God and his laws, and therefore David referred to it later in the verse as "the great transgression". Then see how David ended the psalm;

Psalms 19:14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

This is the plea of someone who desires the true fellowship with God, knowing that He is a holy God that sees everything, no matter how concealed; He hears everything no matter how softly whispered. So David prays that the words of his mouth, and even the thoughts of his heart be always acceptable in the sight of God who sees everything. He knows that God's law is not meant just for outward show of religiosity, but rather, it is spiritual, it deals with the inward man. Just as Apostle Paul attests,

Romans 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

With the law so perfect and so thorough, who could claim that He is righteous?

Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

The law of God is holy and righteous. It shatters all self righteousness that any man may have. He who says that he is righteous by himself, that he is without sin or fault, needs to reconsider that position, before the law of the Lord. That is why we need to desire the law of the Lord, not to point to us that we are righteous, but rather, to point to us that we are sinners. Without the law, we will not know that we are indeed sinners, and if a person does not know and admit that he is a sinner, then salvation is far from him.

Psalms 119:155, Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes.

So when we seek the statutes, the law of the Lord, we realize our real condition before God, and that is we have violated his law, and we are in need of help, of salvation, because the righteous judgment of the law of God is against the transgressors

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This is the end of the first of the two part lesson on the Law of God and Sin. Please listen to the second part of the lesson, which is the next episode. The Lord bless you.

All quoted Scriptures are from the King James Version.