

Text— 1 Timothy 1:5-17

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Among people who yet hold that there is one true God who created all things, there is much confusion as many misuse God's Law by thinking they can save themselves by the works of the Law.

For example, those among the Jewish race who have refused to accept the fact that Jesus Christ is the Messiah foretold of old, still think they can save themselves by their own works, as if such is the way of salvation taught in the Old Testament Holy Scriptures. Nevertheless, the apostle Paul sets the record straight, for by inspiration of God he writes in Romans 4:1-5, "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Indeed, concerning Abraham, the Old Testament reports in Genesis 15:6, "And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." Thus, Abraham was NOT saved by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, the promised Seed, the Messiah who was then yet to come, and who later did come.

Yes, it's as Galatians 4:4-5 reports, "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Jesus Christ kept God's Law perfectly in our place; then, Jesus Christ paid for the sins of the whole world with His own holy and precious blood which He shed while nailed to the cross of Calvary.

Nevertheless, today there are still many people who think they can be saved by doing the works of

the Law, or by doing their own self-devised works, or by doing works in addition to having faith in Jesus Christ. Some of the largest church bodies go so far as to specify what works their members must do to save themselves; sadly, by so doing, such churches are found, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Mark 7:7)

Our sermon text can be beneficial to everyone who will take it to heart, for it tells us about:

"THE RIGHT USE OF GOD'S LAW AND GOSPEL"

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) Why the right use of God's Law and Gospel is necessary
- 2) What is the right use of God's Law and why
- 3) What is the right use of God's Gospel and why

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Verses 5-7, ----- (1 Timothy 1:5-7)

Just prior to our sermon text we read, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do." (1 Timothy 1:1-4)

Hence, Paul urged Timothy to command the pastors and teachers at Ephesus to teach only the sound Scriptural doctrine which Paul and Timothy themselves taught. Anything that was contrary to godly edifying in the faith of Jesus Christ was NOT to be taught!

Paul's instructions to Timothy were not given in a spirit of unkindness. Rather, as our sermon text

states: *Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.* Yes, charity, Christian love, was the motive behind Paul's instructions to Timothy to command those pastors and teachers at Ephesus to teach no other doctrine than the sound doctrine of Jesus Christ which Paul and Timothy themselves proclaimed, that a good conscience and true faith in Jesus Christ might be urged and maintained among the people.

Thus, the right use of God's Law and Gospel is necessary, because such right use shows true Christian love and is commanded in God's Word, for in 2 Timothy 4:1-4 Paul also wrote to Timothy, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

Hence, Paul knew that the right use of God's Law and Gospel is necessary. The Word of God is to be taught in its full truth and purity, rather than listening to fables and endless genealogies which simply raise questions, for, as Galatians 5:6 relates, "in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." Indeed, one's family-line, Jew or Gentile, will NOT save one; only a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ saves a sinner, for Mark 16:16 clearly states, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Let us never forget that in John 8:31-32 our Lord Jesus Christ says, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Yes, we need to continue in Christ's WORD, GOD'S WORD, rather than being distracted by teachings spun in the windmills of men's sinful minds.

Our sermon text reveals that some at Ephesus had swerved away from the sound doctrine of Jesus Christ and had *turned aside unto vain jangling*; as they desired *to be teachers of the law*; while they actually understood *neither what they were saying, nor whereof they affirmed*. Hence, there were those who spewed out laws while they were actually without any real understanding. Sounds like more than a few preachers and teachers these days who have a lot to say, but rarely speak in full accord with God's Word, for they spew out all sorts of rules and regulations while ignoring the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ.

My friends, take it to heart that the right use of God's Law and Gospel is necessary because anything else is vain jangling and/or the spreading of falsehoods!

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As we continue to ponder our sermon text, let us see what is the right use of God's Law and why.

Verses 8-11, ----- (1 Timothy 1:8-11)

God's Law is in itself good, because God who is the ultimate good gave it. However, God's Law is to be used as God intended it to be used, which is why the apostle Paul by inspiration of God says: *we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.*

Note well that the main purpose of God's Law is to show people their sin and consequently their need for a Savior from sin. It's as we read in Romans 3:19-20 followed by Galatians 3:24-25, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith

to them who 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. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”

God’s Law is also useful in curbing coarse outbursts of sin in society, for the law still dwells in the conscience of human beings, “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.” (Romans 2:14-15) Additionally, God’s Law serves us Christians as a guide for holy living, for in Psalm 119:103-105 we read, “How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

Now look at the list of terrible and all-too-common sins mentioned in our text: *murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers*, that’s known as patricide, which has been in the news recently; *manslayers*, that’s other murderers, frequently in the news, one recent case of a father murdering his own young child; *whoremongers*, that’s fornicators, another common sin; *them that defile themselves with mankind*, that’s homosexuals and lesbians, another very common sin in these last days, for our civil leaders have gone so far as to celebrate such sinfulness by designating June as a month to be proud of such disgusting sinfulness; *menstealers*, that’s those who enslave others; *liars*, those who fail to tell the truth, as is quite common; and, *perjured persons*, those who lie in court when they’ve sworn to tell the truth. Oh beloved, when considering the foregoing list of all-too-common heinous sins, it is quite obvious that God’s Law is

needed and should be heeded in our present evil world.

However, realize that God’s Law was NOT given as a way for human beings to be saved, for NO naturally conceived human being can keep God’s Law perfectly as it demands. Rather, God’s Law was chiefly given to show us our sin and our dire need for the Savior from sin *according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God!*

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As we ponder our sermon text to its conclusion, let us see what is the right use of God’s Gospel and why.

Verses 12-13, ----- (1 Timothy 1:12-13)

Paul knew firsthand about the right use of God’s Law and Gospel— the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to Paul’s trust. Yeah, Paul knew alright, for he said: *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*

Oh, before being called to faith in Jesus Christ, Paul was a Pharisee, as he relates in Philippians 3:5-9, “Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

Yes, Paul had been a super-Pharisee, so to speak,

as he thought he could save himself by his own works until Jesus Christ enlightened him to the truth, for after Paul's conversion he wrote in Galatians 2:16, "that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

You see, Paul was a man in ignorance of God's truth before his conversion, which is why he says in our text: *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.* Jesus not only mercifully called Paul to faith; Jesus also called Paul into the ministry. Thus, Paul knew firsthand that the Lord Jesus Christ supplies forgiveness of sins and salvation, for Paul himself received those gracious gifts from Jesus Christ.

Verse 14, ----- (1 Timothy 1:14)

Take it to heart the apostle Paul himself serves as an example of the life-changing power of God's Gospel, which is why Paul confessed in our text: *And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.* Indeed, the good news of Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, being the Savior of the world blew Paul's mind, so to speak, as he thought about the Lord's undeserved love shown to him in granting him faith in Christ, love for Christ, and love for all his fellow human beings— Christ Jesus Himself being the Source of such faith and love. It's as Paul writes in Romans 8:3-4, where we read, "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." So, the Gospel of Christ is the means by which the forgiveness of sins and salvation is graciously transmitted to individuals— such is the

right use of God's Gospel.

Verses 15 & 16, ----- (1 Timothy 1:15-16)

There is one big truth that is worthy to be accepted by ALL PEOPLE, that being: *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.* Yes, the purpose for Christ Jesus coming into the world was not for earthly fame or earthly fortune or to set-up shop as the King which He most certainly is; NO, CHRIST JESUS, GOD'S ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, CAME INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS.

It's as Romans 3:23-26 and John 3:16-18 clearly states: "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. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

After Paul's conversion, he was no longer a pride-filled Pharisee, for he confessed: *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.* Yes, Paul considered himself the chief of sinners.

My friends, when we are gifted by God with faith in Jesus Christ, it humbles us when we truly think of the immense cost of our redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ; we cannot help but realize how great our sinfulness is when we honestly consider the fact that it took the perfect redemptive work of the Son of God to save us. God's grace shown to

us in Christ Jesus is truly amazing!

Paul considered himself an example of God's super-abundant patience with sinners, for Paul confessed: *Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*

Paul's statement is meant to encourage folks to never think they've sinned so badly that forgiveness is unavailable to them. Paul thereby urges people to sincerely repent of their sins and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, because Jesus Christ is calling to all people through His Gospel, that they might believe on Him and receive everlasting life.

Verse 17, ----- (1 Timothy 1:17)

Yes, all honor and glory be to God who is eternally King of over all, the only wise God, since He is the all-knowing one true God! God does the saving, all of it!

My friends, as we've pondered our sermon text we've seen what is the right use of God's Law and Gospel. Let us continue in the right use of God's Law and Gospel, highly valuing God's Word which is absolute truth, for without God's Word to enlighten us we would all be lost and damned, since we would not rightly know of our sin and our only Savior from sin, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins; let us cling to Christ Jesus in heart-deep faith as our personal Savior and Lord. *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen*

m.e.l.