

The Gospel of Glory

1 Timothy 1:8-11

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⁵ The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. ⁶ Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, ⁷ desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

⁸ Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

Two weeks ago, we started a new series with the title “Conducting ourselves in the household of God”.

Last week we saw Paul writing to Timothy his aim and motivation. Paul wants Timothy to instruct certain people to stop false teaching. And Paul tells Timothy that his inner motivation for directing such a hard task to Timothy comes from love. And that love sprang from three inner motivations – a cleansed heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith.

And Paul goes on to say that certain people have wandered away, they have swerved from these and are leading people into vain empty unprofitable discussions.

And not only have they wandered away from what is essential for the Christian life, they desire to be teachers of the law.

Teachers of the law. Who are these?

Well, we don’t exactly know who these teachers of the law are but Paul knows enough about the Law of God. He was trained under a well-respected teacher of the Law – Gamaliel. Paul was a strict follower of the Law. Paul sincerely followed the law. However, Paul did not have a cleansed heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith until after his conversion. His following the Law produced hatred towards those who opposed his religion and resulted in him persecuting others.

How could following the law produce violence in him? Was the law wrong or bad? Paul says the law is good. So, what was off? Paul himself says in the book of Romans that law of sin was his problem. Paul knew that following external rules without an internal change will never produce a cleansed heart. Paul tells us what was wrong. That he was a lawbreaker and a sinner even though he tried to keep the Law. Paul knew enough to detect the false teaching of these wannabe teachers of the law. The law is good. The

law is necessary for safeguards and boundaries. The law must be upheld. But the law cannot cleanse the heart, it cannot clear a guilty conscience. It cannot produce a sincere faith.

Only the Gospel can. That is why in verse 11, Paul says he has been entrusted with the Gospel of the Glory of God. The Gospel of Greatness of God. The Gospel is great because it is the only news it is the only remedy that can turn lawbreakers, offenders and transgressors into forgiven children of God!

So, beginning with verse 8, Paul's argument goes something like this:

The law is in your favor as long as you abide by it. The rules are in your support as long as you follow them.

However, the minute you cross any boundaries set by the law, the law is no longer in your favor. You will responsible to bear the outcome or the consequence for the violation of that boundary.

Similarly, the law of God is the perfect standard of God. Any departure from the law of God no matter how great or how small, one becomes a law breaker before God, regardless of how many laws you have actually broken.

It's like by breaking a small piece of a mirror the whole mirror is shattered.

James says it this in his epistle, *"For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it."* James 2:10

And Paul calls out these so-called teachers of the law for preaching another Gospel. It appears they were preaching righteousness by performance without knowing there is a righteousness by grace.

What do I mean?

Three observations:

First observation: The Law of God gives us knowledge of sin or lawlessness.

Romans 3:30 *"through the law comes knowledge of sin"*.

And that is what Paul does here in verses 9 and 10.

⁹ *understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine*

Paul goes through a list that is not exhaustive but he lists them in pairs. He does this to remind Timothy that in order to know sound doctrine in order to know the Gospel of grace, we must first understand that is unlawful in God's sight.

Allow me to go through the list briefly:

The first pair is lawless *and* disobedient – there are people who cross boundaries and those who willfully rebel against the laws of God.

The next pair is the ungodly *and* sinners – people who are impious and sin

The next pair is unholy *and* profane – people who have no regard for God and those are worldly and constantly swear. This is the third commandment – “you shall not take the name of the Lord in vain”.

The next pair is those commit violence – against their fathers and mothers *and* those who kill

The next pair is controversial these days the sexually immoral *and* those who practice homosexuality – there is quite some criticism about why homosexuality is singled out but notice here Paul says both heterosexual *and* homosexual immorality both are unlawful in God’s sight. Again, there are societies where immorality is not illegal. Homosexuality is considered normal these days but not according to God’s law. Again, from a biology perspective, homosexuality cannot provide a means to procreate.

Where is the honor of mothers when men claim they have become mothers now?

And the last three Paul mentions are enslavers, liars and perjurers – here again for those who think might say the Bible condones slavery, Paul is explicit in saying that slave dealing is unlawful in God’s sight.

Lastly, Paul says whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine. So, his list is not exhaustive but why does Paul mention this list?

That leads to my second observation:

Second observation: The Law of God brings wrath and judgment on those who fail follow it.

Romans 4:15 *“For the law brings wrath”*.

Romans 1:18 *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth”*

Again, this is not new. Civil governments have the authority to execute judgment on those who disregard and flout the rule of law.

Now Paul does not say that desiring to teachers of the law by itself is wrong. He probably agrees with the false teachers that the law is good, that the law bring judgment but these false teachers did not understand sound doctrine. They were promoting myths and speculations promoting that one must do better and better without understanding that the law is not the solution to man’s sin problem. They must know the better way the right way which is the Gospel of Glory. Even though you may be a transgressor of the law, an offender, a lawless person, there is a way you can be declared righteous in God’s sight. This is the greatness of the Gospel.

Third observation: The Gospel of Greatness offers a declaration of righteousness from the worst of lawbreakers to the least.

How is this even possible?

It's possible because of the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. It's possible because when you put your faith in the finished work of Jesus in his death as the payment for your sin, you are declared righteous. It's possible God credits the righteousness of Christ into your account. When you saw the futility of trying to appease God but always came short and you come to the point of true repentance and faith in Jesus that he paid the price on calvary for your sake and your sins are forgiven and you have a cleansed heart. It's possible when your conscience is cleared of guilt because Jesus has set you free from the penalty of sin. It's possible when you confess all your sin before and God justly defers judgment on his Son Jesus Christ. And you do this in faith.

This why the Gospel is the greatest news for mankind. No other news rivals this news. No other news can turn wicked lawless wretched God-hating indifferent apathetic people into God-loving neighbor- loving people.

When you trust in the Righteous Son of God Jesus Christ who perfectly kept the Law of God, Jesus Christ who took the penalty for your judgment, at the moment you are made righteous before God. This is what these teachers of the law did not understand. They were promoting a righteousness of performance do more work more but the stain of sin is still there.

Romans 5:9 *"Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God".*

Psalm 32:1 "Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ² Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit".

And because you have declared been righteous, you can now live in the freedom Christ has purchased on your behalf. You can become an agent of the Gospel and an agent of good works not to earn salvation but because you have been granted this righteousness of Christ.

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: **The Gospel Of Glory.** 1 Timothy 1:8-11

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. What does the law of God reveal about us and about the consequences for failing to follow it? Go around and share. Romans 3:20, 4:15

HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

2. Why is being declared righteous through faith in Jesus Christ the greatest news? Romans 4:22-23, 5:1-2, 6:20-23
3. What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

4. For personal reflection: In light of being declared righteous, in what ways can you live life in Christ? Ephesians 2:8-10