



Scriptures and Doctrine :: Law and evangelism

Law and evangelism - posted by coops (), on: 2005/7/12 23:00

I have recently learned about the importance of using the law as a backdrop (the bad news), so the gospel (the good news) makes sense and is effective.

While there is no "formula" for what to preach... the gospel does include some fundamentals, and we are told to be prepared to share...

Someone told me the other day that the law is one way people can come to Christ. Apparently Paul didn't use the law when preaching to the gentiles.

Be it the law, or the Holy Spirit convicting them, I don't understand how people can come to Christ without conviction. I don't understand how we can be convicted unless we are shown that we are sinners?

I was wondering if anyone had a list (or we could create one here) where people in the NT didn't seem to use the law to bring people to Christ?

Maybe it will help understand it better?

Re: Law and evangelism - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/7/12 23:04

One theme I have been praying about is the phrase: "preaching the kingdom of God" Acts 28. This is a great discussion and it would be neat to see more examples from scriptures as we continue discussing this important topic.

Re: - posted by coops (), on: 2005/7/12 23:22

Well I might as well get the ball rolling, if someone has another idea on how to do this let me know, but I might as well start from the start of Matthew...

Laying a foundation of repentance

Mat 3:1 "In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." 3 This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

"A voice of one calling in the desert,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.' "

Mat 4:17 "From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

That's all right... now we have v18-25...

Re: - posted by letsgetbusy (), on: 2005/7/13 0:04

Sorry. See other message!

Re: - posted by letsgetbusy (), on: 2005/7/13 0:14

If there is a message that must be preached to the lost, and one absolutely refuses to use the law, repentance must be preached. I will say foremost that basically all Gentiles today are familiar with the law. Everyone in America is familiar with the 10 commandments, so it is a valid form of evangelism to those of this country. If one was dead set on not preaching law, then he must preach repentance. However, I see the law as effective and Biblical as a use in evangelism. See from Scripture how you can't get around repentance:

To the people, soldiers, and publicans, John Baptist said, "Repent." (Matt, Mark, Luke)

The message Jesus told his disciples to leave with, when He told them to go out two by two was "that men should repent." (Mark 6)

Jesus twice said in Luke 13, "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

The Great Commission given in all 4 gospels and in Acts 1, is summed up in Luke 24:47: "...repentance and remission of sins should be preached...among all nations"

Acts 2:38, Peter says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ."

Acts 3:19, Peter says, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted."

These two verses should answer any question as to what message should be given to what crowd (although the Great Commission in Luke 24 covered it):

Acts 17:30, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth **all** men every where to repent."

Acts 20:21, "Testifying **both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks**, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

These are only some of the 66 times that the New Testament uses the word "repent." The law is simply showing someone what they need to repent of. Shows them their sinful nature in God's sight that they need to turn from. God's grace then makes sense.

The message of repentance was not missing from Wesley, Finney, Ravenhill, etc etc, but it is missing from our church to day. Brothers, we must tell men to repent!

Re:, on: 2005/7/13 1:04

Keep in mind many people don't know what that precious word means. Always be willing to break down what you preach, cause how can you talk to a 10 yr old with intellectual words??

Always be willing, or prepare them in a manner of 'understanding'. But also causing them to think. This is where the Spirit helps me most, cause there are no examples that I say to you all..lol

Re: - posted by coops (), on: 2005/7/13 3:58

Yes! there is no repentance without salvation and the law leads to repentance...

But are there other ways someone can be brought to repentance? Is there another way someone's conscience can convince them they are sinners before God?

Re: - posted by todd, on: 2005/7/13 5:29

Coops,

Let me give a disclaimer up front here and say that I do not think that using the Law is wrong in evangelism. It seems to be a pretty effective method. I just wonder if there's a better way. I think the Bible reveals there is.

Either way you understand it, this post should be helpful as far as the list you are working on.

Quote:

"But are there other ways someone can be brought to repentance?"

How about God's kindness demonstrated through healing, deliverance, signs, wonders, miracles, etc. Is this not a common New Testament model?

In the New Testament, doesn't preaching the gospel (especially the gospel of the Kingdom), healing the sick, casting out demons, and other demonstrations of power often go hand in hand?

Matthew 4:23-24

"And Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and **proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom**,

and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. And the news about Him went out into all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, taken with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them."

Luke 9:1-2, 11

"And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons, and to heal diseases. And He sent them out **to proclaim the Kingdom of God, and to perform healing...** But the multitudes were aware of this and followed Him; and welcoming them, **He began speaking to them about the Kingdom of God and curing those who had need of healing.**"

Luke 10:8-9

"And whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat what is set before you; and **heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The Kingdom of God has come near to you.'**"

And the following Scripture seems to speak very plainly to our discussion...

Luke 10:13

"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! **For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented** long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes."

Acts 8:5-7, 12

"And Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed... But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike."

Quote:

"Is there another way someone's conscience can convince them they are sinners before God?"

I don't know if someone's conscience in and of itself will convict them, but it is part of the Holy Spirit's work to convict the world concerning sin.

John 16:8

"And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin..."

In the Bible, is there any reference to the Law being used in preaching after the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost?

Re: preaching the gospel - posted by coops (), on: 2005/7/13 7:28

Hey todd, thanks for your input...it is really helpful :)

I don't really know much about "the gospel of the Kingdom"... can you explain how it is different from using the law in evangelism?

You have brought up a really good point with the miracles, and the verse comes to mind..."When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven" (Luke 5:20) and "For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness" (Romans 4:9) so I guess when miracles happen people see and have more faith and it counts as righteousness?

Another can of worms...miracles confirmed Jesus' authority and claims. Through His miracles, Jesus revealed His glory as the Son of God, His supernatural power, His glorious character, divine thoughts and principles, the beauty and holiness of His attributes, His transcendent teachings, and His great love for mankind. They revealed His authority over nature, His authority over Satan, and His divine authority to forgive sins. When the paralytic man was lowered through the roof in front of Jesus in the crowded room, Jesus said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." Then the religious people who heard these words accused Jesus of blasphemy, saying, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Jesus replied, "Which is easier to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'?" But **"that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"** - He said to the man who was paralyzed, **"I say to you, arise, take up bed, and go to your house."** (Luke 5:23, 24).

So in summary:

What is the difference between preaching "the gospel of the Kingdom" and using the law as a foundation?

Is it right to say that in many cases the miracles could lead to faith which leads to righteousness?

It seems the miracles were not to fix the current need of the world, but to prove that Jesus had the power to forgive sins (which I think we need the law to understand...)

On Todd's question about preaching the law after Pentecost: I don't necessarily mean naming a commandment etc, but just appealing to the conscience about their sin, (which is known by the law), you don't need to quote verses, but still point out sin and urge repentance... But the question still stands to anyone: Where did people preach using the law after Pentecost?

:-)

Re: - posted by couch (), on: 2005/7/13 11:53

Brothers,

We must take this discussion to the same place we must all go, to the cross.

The issue of one being converted is the issue of their death. Plain and simple. Jesus said "Any man who desires to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will surely find it."

The cross of Calvary is where we must all come, laying down every kind of sin and iniquity, doubt and shame, and let Christ put us to death to ourselves so that we might "have life in His Name".

How can one come unto the cross without turning away from themselves and turning towards God in repentant, desperate faith? And how can one repent if he knows not what he is repenting from?

"I would not have known what sin was, but by the law." Paul said in Romans 7:7

"The Law IS our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ." Galatians 3:24

So what is it that Paul wrote AFTER PENTECOST to show people how to lead them to Christ? The law.

Now, the overall principal I believe is found in James. James says "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

In my own experience, I've witnessed to people who could care less about sin, and need the law of God to break down their hard hearts and see their need for God's forgiveness. These people are proud, and God opposes them with the law, which is able to break through and convict them of "sin, righteousness, and the coming judgment".

However, there are other people who I've met, who are so overwhelmed with guilt over their sin that they are humbly broken, but without the understanding of the gospel (good-news) of Christ. These people, like the man I met almost crying outside of a club because he just found out his wife had been cheating on him, are already humbled by their own sin and are truly ready to receive the grace of God. They know they've messed up their lives, they just need to know God can come in and work a miracle in them.

In that case, a person may not need the law presented to them, because they are ALREADY AWARE that they are a sinner.

In either case, the person MUST have an understanding that they have sinned against a Holy God, and that God now commands "...every man, everywhere TO REPENT, for He has set a day in which He will judge the earth by the man (Jesus) He has appointed." Acts 17:31

I am in complete agreement that God can, has, does, and will use signs and wonders to accompany His word, so that p

people might believe. But even then, the person who has seen or heard such a mighty and awesome act MUST then THEMSELVES come unto the realization that they have sinned against this Holy and Powerful God, and that Jesus is the way in which they might be restored unto God by faith alone.

There are two kingdoms in this world, the Kingdom of darkness and the Kingdom of God. One must not only turn from one unto the other, but understand why and what it is (sin, by the knowledge of the law) that they are turning from.

As far as the law being used after pentecost?

Paul preached against false Gods (1st comm.) in Acts, wrote about the law to the Romans, and expounded about it to the Corinthians and Galatians, instructing them so that they may know how others might come unto faith (Galatians 3:24).

And what of the mighty works of God in America, Wales, and Shantung? Are they not after Acts 2? It would be laughable to say that the law was not preached in these to bring massive repentance and massive life! Ask Whitfield, Wesley, Spurgeon, Roberts, Campbell, Ravenhill, Finney, Culpepper, etc, etc.

And what of those who yet preach the law today as a schoolmaster unto Christ? We here are after pentecost aren't we?

Thank you Lord! You showed me my need for grace that I might appreciate it all the more! Seeing Your love for what it really is! Hallelujah!

Re: - posted by todd, on: 2005/7/13 13:38

Coops,

Quote:

"I don't really know much about "the gospel of the Kingdom"... can you explain how it is different from using the law in evangelism?"

The Kingdom, and the gospel of the Kingdom, seems to have been a neglected and little understood subject in the body of Christ since the times of the Early Church. Your sharing that you don't know much about it does not surprise me. I went for years in the Church and don't think I ever heard a teaching on it. At least not with the understanding I now have of it. This is tragic. But God is restoring understanding concerning the Kingdom.

It is a foundational subject. It's a vast and wonderful subject and reality. I would love to discuss it but we should probably start a new thread to do so. I think Greg also mentioned wanting to start a discussion about the Kingdom.

As to the difference between the gospel of the Kingdom and using the Law... The gospel of the Kingdom is the message of good news about the Kingdom of God and seems to go hand in hand with demonstrations of the reality of His Kingdom. Using the Law in evangelism is a method. So an easy distinction is a message versus a method. The gospel of the Kingdom seems to be accompanied by power, while using the Law doesn't necessarily demonstrate any power.

Quote:

"I guess when miracles happen people see and have more faith and it counts as righteousness?"

Good observation. And, yes, I think this is often the case if it leads to faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, but this is not always the case I suppose.

Quote:

"Through His miracles, Jesus revealed His glory as the Son of God..."

Was this the purpose of His miraculous works? Did Jesus do His miracles as God, or a man in right relationship with God? You're certainly right, this is opening a whole 'nother can of worms. A big one.

I will attempt to begin discussion of this topic by laying a foundation.

Philippians 2:6-7 seems to indicate that although Jesus was certainly God, He laid aside His privileges as God and

emptied Himself of them, and took on the form of a bond-servant in the likeness of men.

Hebrews 5:7-8 seems to confirm this. It says:

"In the days of His flesh, he offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although he was a Son, He learned obedience through the things He suffered."

Jesus took on the likeness of man and took on the challenge set before Him as a man. It seems clear that, in a sense, He laid aside His divine privileges and related to God and the world around Him as any other man would have to.

Why did Jesus have to pray? And He prayed with loud crying and tears. And it says He prayed to the One who was able to save Him from death. Why did He need someone to save Him from death? It says that Jesus "learned" obedience. If He came as God, would He have to "learn" anything? And why does the Scripture say He was heard by God? Because He was the Son of God? No, it says He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He *learned* obedience and was pious and because of His piety God heard Him.

Luke 2:40, 52 further reveals this...

"And the Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him... And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

Jesus physically grew and became strong, going through the natural growth process as a man.

Jesus "increased" in wisdom. So there was a time when Jesus had a certain amount of wisdom, and then a later time when He had more.

The grace of God was upon Him. Why would this matter if He was functioning in the world by His divine privileges?

Jesus increased in favor with God. There was a time when Jesus had a certain amount of favor with God, and then a time later on when He had more favor with God.

Luke 3:23; 4:1-2

"And when He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age... And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days; and when they had ended, He became hungry."

Jesus got hungry. He got tired.

He didn't begin His ministry until the Holy Spirit came upon Him.

In my NASB study Bible there's a note for the phrase "by the Spirit" in verse 1. It says, "under the influence of the Spirit."

So Jesus, under the influence of the Spirit, began His ministry. Why did He wait for the Holy Spirit to descend on Him?

Do these things reveal Jesus as the Son of God or the Son of Man? Yes, He was both, but is it not clear that He emptied Himself of His divine privileges and walked the earth "in the days of His flesh," relating to God and the world as a man?

Quote:

"It seems the miracles were not to fix the current need of the world, but to prove that Jesus had the power to forgive sins."

I think that part of the reason for miracles was to prove Jesus, as the Son of Man, had the power to forgive sins. But could the main reason for miracles be that they reveal the nature of God?

Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2005/7/13 13:43

Here is my take.... You must repent to be saved... you must know what sin is to know what to repent of.... the law brings knowledge of sin.

Re: - posted by todd, on: 2005/7/13 14:47

Couch,

Some good point there. It seems Romans 7 and Galatians 4 are very relevant to this discussion.

Romans 7:7

"I would not have come to know sin except through the Law."

First, I think it might be relevant to point out that this text refers to an experience of coming to the knowledge of sin *before* Pentecost.

I wonder, could it be now said, in the days after Pentecost, "I would not have come to know sin except *by the Spirit*"?

I guess the "better way" that I have mentioned and that I am contemplating has to do with the power of God opening the door to the unbelievers heart.

It seems that for many, seeing the demonstration of the power of God in the name of Jesus softens their heart towards Jesus and gets them in a place where they are more easily "harvestable." Instead of coming to Jesus for "fire insurance," they come because they realize that He is real. Then, for the rest of their lives, they have a stable foundation of their faith as it rests on the power of God and not on persuasive words of man. (see 1 Cor. 2:5)

It's been said, "If someone can argue you into it, someone can argue you out of it." But when the power of God and the reality of His Kingdom is demonstrated in the name of Jesus, a solid conviction is established in the persons core- that God is real- and it starts them off on the right foot. So that they don't just "become a Christian" and start going to church and get all into the religious routines but have no intimacy with the living God.

Now they have a reference point, right from the start, to go from. Then they would probably be less likely to fall into the trap of false religion, which I understand as basically form without power (2 Tim. 3:5).

When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, besides the fact that supernatural phenomena had just occurred, Jesus had also just recently been raised from the dead and there were many living witnesses to confirm it. There was a fresh revelation of the reality and power of God in the peoples hearts. Could this have been a big part of the reason why they were so quickly and, if you will, easily converted?

And in looking at the account in Acts 2, it wasn't until after they were "pierced to the heart" and asked "what should we do?" that Peter told them to repent. But what was it that made them so soft towards the gospel? Was it not fresh demonstrations of the power and reality of God?

How much easier would things go for us if we had more of the power of God in our ministries?

As for Galatians 3:24...

I am not fully confident in my understanding of it, but for the most part I think I might understand it differently than Comfort.

My NASB reads like this:

Gal. 3:24

"Therefore the Law *has become* our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith."

Perhaps someone who knows Greek better can explain if the verse is saying the Law "is" or "has become" our tutor. Which one is more accurate?

Anyway, I think that looking at this verse in context reveals some important things. I think a reading of all of chapter 3 will help us understand this verse.

It seems that Paul lays out what he is going to be talking about in verse 2 in which he says, "This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?"

This seems to set the stage for the rest of what Paul is going to talk about in the chapter. It seems that the Galatians were falling back into the old understanding of the works of the Law. But Paul is going to correct them and teach them about the primary importance of faith. It seems he is laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and faith towards God.

He goes on to contrast righteousness by the Law with righteousness by faith. Throughout verses 5-29 Paul goes over the people of God's history as it relates to the Law versus faith. He seems to be explaining dispensations and seasons in God's relationship towards man.

The original way to righteousness, which Abraham found, was by faith. But, Paul explains, the Law came 430 years later. And why did it come?

Gal. 3:19

"Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, **until** the seed should come to whom the promise had been made."

And verse 16 reveals that the seed here is Christ.

So when Christ came, it seems clear that relating to God through the Law became outdated, if you will. It seems that relating to God through the Law was just a temporary concession.

When Paul says the Law was just a tutor (literally "child-conductor") to lead *us* to Christ, it seems clear that he is referring to the history of the people of God. He is identifying himself and the Galatians with the people of God throughout history. And he's saying that the Law took us (the people of God) along **until** Christ.

Now we are to relate to God by faith, the way it was originally set up. The better way.

Re:, on: 2005/7/13 14:52

I read the topic of this thread and got excited. I thought of listing all the NT examples that I could think of where John Baptist, Jesus, Stephen, Peter, Paul, etc used the Law. But decided not to.

Rather I just wanted to say that I know that before I got saved, I was slain by my conscience. I was so heavily convicted of my own personal sins and the tormenting place called hell became a personal punishment which I dreaded and feared. Therefore, because my sin and the punishment were personal, Christ became personal as well. And Christ crucified became my personal Saviour of my sin.

any other personal testimonies?

Re: - posted by todd, on: 2005/7/13 14:56

Jesse,

That's awesome. Great testimony. I'm curious- how did you become slain in your conscience? Was it by the preaching of the Law?

Re:, on: 2005/7/13 14:59

I knew the Law. Though the preacher who God greatly used in my conversion did not go through the Ten Commandments, my knowledge of the Law and my violations of it, plus the personal convicting of the Holy Spirit through the preaching, prepared the soil of my hard heart for the good news of God's grace shown at the cross.

Re: - posted by todd, on: 2005/7/13 15:03

Thanks.

Yeah, I suppose most people who grow up here in America know the Law, at least to some degree. It seems to me that right and wrong tends to be understood by most. From your experience, do you agree?

Re:, on: 2005/7/13 15:13

Quote:
----- I suppose most people who grow up here in America know the Law, at least to some degree. It seems to me that right and wrong tends to be understood by most. From your experience, do you agree?

For the older generation that may be true. The older generation such as those who rebelled in the 60's knew right from wrong, and many of their parents were Christians. They had the Ten Commandments in their courts, they had prayer and the bible in public school, etc. They were an "immoral" generation.

But my generation seems to be primarily an "amoral" generation. They don't grow up in a godly family, they aren't taught the bible in school, the Ten Commandments are being hidden from their eyes, etc.

Within one week I had tried to witness to two young people from Connecticut on two separate occasions. One kid was 10 years old, and the other was 15. When I asked them, on separate occasions, if they thought they had kept the Ten Commandments they responded with "The what?". I said "The Ten Commandments". They said "What are those?". "It's God's Law. You've never heard of the Ten Commandments." And they said "No. Never."

See they aren't being taught about God's Law by their parents, they aren't being taught God's Law by their schools, and they aren't being taught God' Law by the Church. So how in the world is my generation going to know????

We've assumed for far too long that "everybody knows that they are sinners". That is not true of this "amoral" generation. The truth is they don't believe or know that they are sinners. Many consider themselves to be decent, good, kind hearted people. It's time that we start using the Ten Commandments to bring awareness and conviction of sin to this lawless generation.

Re: - posted by couch (), on: 2005/7/13 15:17

Todd,

It is clear from Romans 1 that the Lord has written his law upon the hearts of man, so that their conscience bears witness against them and no man has excuse on the day of judgment.

I like your statements stressing the need for the Holy Spirit, His power, His conviction, His drawing people to the father. Amen! Indeed, it is only by Him that a man "cometh unto the Father." Therefore, His work should permeate every task of evangelism in Jesus' name.

And what is that work? "To convict the world of sin, righteousness, and the coming judgment." If indeed "by the Spirit, I have the knowledge of sin" as you have presented, then by the Spirit we would have the knowledge of sin by his working of conviction of that sin, the need for righteousness, and the need to prepare for the coming judgment.

The coming judgment is against those who "obeyed not the gospel", remaining in their sins, and refusing to repent of them before a Holy God.

As Jesse testified - like Paul - when he realized his sin in light of God's holiness (both revelations of one and the same Holy Spirit) his conscience (placed there by God) cut him to the heart and he turned to the savior (through the Spirit)

My point is that ultimately, whether its by the law or the Spirit, before or after Pentecost, the essential necessity for some one to repent is that they know of their sin, and know of their Savior.

The Spirit can reveal personal sin to someone in their life, that doesn't necessarily fit a particular commandment to the letter, but in some means breaks one or many.

The Spirit can break down walls of pride by directly quoting Exodus 20 to someone.

The Spirit can penetrate someone with the knowledge of their state before God in a dream or vision, without someone even speaking to them!

The Spirit can do many things, but ultimately his goal to bring them to Christ is to reveal to them:

- 1) Their sin (which means "transgression of the law")
- 2) God's righteousness in Christ
- 3) The day of Judgment is coming

And may it be for many in this very hour.

Re: - posted by todd, on: 2005/7/13 15:20

Jesse,

Wow.

Thanks for that insight.

Perhaps you are right.

This is something I have been thinking about but it's not like you can be sure of it from a book. I guess you find out through personal experience, as you are doing.

I wonder how much of this generation has knowledge of the Law, right and wrong, and how much doesn't? Would you think maybe 50/50? Or even worse than that?

Re: - posted by todd, on: 2005/7/13 15:31

Couch,

I think I pretty much totally agree with you.

Quote:

"My point is that ultimately, whether its by the law or the Spirit, before or after Pentecost, the essential necessity for someone to repent is that they know of their sin, and know of their Savior."

While I mostly agree with this statement, especially as I think you meant it, I don't want to confine repentance as only referring to sin.

Quote:

"The Spirit can do many things, but ultimately his goal to bring them to Christ is to reveal to them:

- 1) Their sin (which means "transgression of the law")
- 2) God's righteousness in Christ
- 3) The day of Judgment is coming"

This is very helpful to me- the way you expanded on the Holy Spirit's work. I think that's right on.

Excellent.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2005/7/13 16:27

Quote:
-----We've assumed for far too long that "everybody knows that they are sinners". That is not true of this "amoral" generation. The truth is they don't believe or know that they are sinners. Many consider themselves to be decent, good, kind hearted people. It's time that we start using the Ten Commandments to bring awareness and conviction of sin to this lawless generation.

I generally begin also in Romans 1 demonstrating to the folks that since they were children they have been rebelling against their conscience and the law of God written upon their hearts.

George Fox came to the USA and met with some native indians. He asked them if they felt it was wrong to tell a lie. Yes, they replied. How did you know. We just knew. (para).

I realize that many cannot quote the 10 Commandments, but I would use caution in assuming they don't know when they are doing wrong enough to realize they were sinners.

My wife was raised in a home that only really heard God's name in vain. She would ask her parents about God and get yelled at for it. I asked her also if when she did things that were wrong if she knew it was wrong. She said also- "I just knew." She was invited to church for the first time in High School.

Any time you are dealing with sinners they are in one of three states:

- 1) Careless (could care-less about their soul)
- 2) Awakened (realize they need to think about their estate before God)
- 3) Convicted (have heard from God and know what they must do...)

This was Finney's observation and I concur more or less. When we preach to people who are 'careless' we are attempting to 'awaken them' to care about their soul. If awakened God will bring them to a personal encounter with Himself and they will know what He is requiring of them. For Abraham the first step was to come out of Ur of the Chaldees. Everyone has a first step of many to take in this walk of faith.

Starting from scratch - posted by ZekeO (), on: 2005/7/13 16:41

Quote:

Lazarus1719 wrote:

When I asked them, on separate occasions, if they thought they had kept the Ten Commandments they responded with "The what?". I said "The Ten Commandments". They said "What are those?". "It's God's Law. You've never heard of the Ten Commandments." And they said "No. Never."

To put a positive spin on this, what an opportunity to introduce them to real church and a way of living that is in keeping with NT christianity.

I think that is why Paul seemed not to enjoy building on another's foundation, at least with those kids when they do find the way, via you, they will be biblical christians.

Re: Starting from scratch - posted by couch (), on: 2005/7/13 18:27

Jesse,

Good point about this generation, although the law is definitely written upon our hearts, the hearing of them often helps one go from "careless" to "awakened" and then "convicted".

Unfortunately, though, the thing that I've come across the most in my experience are people who profess Christ, say they go to church, but have no understanding of the law of God and demonstrate that by their continual, blatant, disregard of God's ways.

Especially in my town, where it is "cool" to be a "christian", 90% of the people you meet outside the club or bar will profess Christ or that "they go to church" while they are blaspheming His holy name in a drunken stupor.

This is incredibly burdensome, because the very thing that they claim to confess is the very thing they militate against by their lifestyle.

I used to wonder what the cause was for this, and what I came to was the issue of the very thing we here are discussing, the fact that these people really were never taught the law of God, and therefore have never understood their sin in light of God's holiness, never repented, and therefore still remain shackled in their sins.

They think they are "saved", but it's obvious that they aren't saved from anything. They remain under the curse, but maintain a religious "affiliation" to confront any guilt or person that might try to awaken them to the reality of their chains.

When they are told of the law, then they resort to the "prayer they prayed" when they were little, that excuses all of their later actions, no matter how rebellious or wicked they may be.

As I heard a man once say, the fruit of the true gospel is a changed life. Now this may be a process, and I believe it is, but it is a radical process that starts from the get-go of a person's death to sin and self and unto life in God through Christ.

Neglecting to use the law has therefore created a bunch of people who are still under the law and the "ministry of death" it continues. It seems to me that the Bible teaches the Law has virtually killed us (Paul - "the commandment came and I died..") but it is by the revelation that we are dead and that Christ is alive, that we can begin a new abundant life in His name.

"For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." Romans 8:1-4

Re: - posted by coops (), on: 2005/7/13 20:23

Quote:
-----I read the topic of this thread and got excited. I thought of listing all the NT examples that I could think of where John Baptist, Jesus, Stephen, Peter, Paul, etc used the Law.

hehe that's what it started out to be... but didn't end up flowing that way :-)

So can I suggest that that: **Preaching law**->conviction->repentance->grace->salvation is not the only way people get saved?

Somewhat through the preaching the Kingdom of God they can come to know Jesus... can someone explain this more? It baffles my (narrow :-)) mind how someone who asks for healing can be convicted and repent just by asking to be healed... it was obviously his faith that accounted for righteousness... so where does conviction and repentance come in?

This gospel of the Kingdom is new to me...

Re: - posted by todd, on: 2005/7/13 23:32

Coops,

It is important that you understand that preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God is not merely a form or model of evangelism. It is a proclaiming and presenting of the reality and truth of God.

It seems that preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God, if fully preached, involves demonstrating the reality of God's Kingdom in the earth.

1 Corinthians 4:20

"For the Kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power."

Luke 11:20

"But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you."

I understand faith and repentance as two sides of the same coin. Faith towards Jesus demonstrates a true change of thinking, which is what I understand repentance to really mean (especially in the New Testament). It seems clear to me that if a new kind of faith is present, then repentance has taken place. That is, if I now believe something that I didn't believe before, I have changed the way I think.

If I come to you and fully preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God, which I believe must include demonstrations of the reality of the Kingdom (i.e. demonstrations of power), it seems that the most likely scenario is that you will change the way you think (repent) and have faith in Jesus. This way actually makes it much easier, if you will, for both parties: the preacher and the potential convert. It's like a shortcut. This is what the anointing and power of God will do for your ministry. Less work, more fruit.

Don't forget, the word "gospel" means "good news." I believe that the message of the gospel of salvation (which seems to be what most of the Church has reduced the gospel to since the times of the Early Church), is merely one aspect of the much larger (broader) message of the gospel of the Kingdom. That is, the gospel of the Kingdom includes much more good news than the gospel of salvation (forgiveness of sins) does.

The good news about the Kingdom includes the forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus, but it doesn't stop there.

Isn't the gospel of salvation as simple as Romans 10:9...

"that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."

And yet the gospel of the Kingdom is about "Heaven on earth", if you will. It includes not only forgiveness of sins, but also physical healing, deliverance, and everything else that would make it "as it is in Heaven."

I'm getting further into discussing the Kingdom than I intended to here, and I would not be surprised if you are still unclear about much of it, but let me give you a little bit more to meditate on.

Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven."

And it is in God's will being done on earth as it is in Heaven, that the Kingdom of God is manifest. Are people demonized in Heaven? No, so when God's Kingdom comes and His will is done on earth as it is in Heaven, demons go. (See above reference to Luke 11:20). Is anybody sick in Heaven? No, so when His Kingdom comes and His will is done on earth as it is in Heaven, people are healed. Is anyone depressed in Heaven? No... you are probably getting the idea by now.

When the Kingdom of Heaven is manifested somewhere in the natural realm, that area or zone in which it is manifested becomes like Heaven. It becomes a "Throne Zone", if you will (King-dom means "King's domain" and speaks of where the King reigns).

Quote:

"It baffles my (narrow) mind how someone who asks for healing can be convicted and repent just by asking to be

healed..."

I don't know if anyone would be convicted and repent just by merely *asking* to be healed. But if they actually got healed in the name of Jesus, I think we can bank on it that they will, at minimum, change the way they think (repent). And when the pieces start coming together in their mind (repenting) and they realize the implications of what just took place... "God just healed me! God really is real! Jesus is real! It's all true! God cares about me! God loves me!, etc."- conviction will likely settle in as the jealous Holy Spirit does His work. The revelation of the kindness of God, coupled with the convicting work of the Spirit, will surely lead them to repentance and faith unto salvation. Though I have had at least one experience where this did not seem to be the case, at least on the outside.

But even if they don't come to the point of conversion, surely they have been awakened to some degree, and a powerful seed has been planted.

Re: Law and evangelism - posted by Bomar, on: 2005/7/14 6:30

OK, sorry that I haven't read all posts. I'm on a dial up in India right now.

One time, I gave a copy of Hell's Best Kept Secret to an international crusader/evangelist who goes to 10/40 countries and does the big meetings. He said "I love that show (Way of the Master). That is a great way to share the Gospel in America"...meaning that it wouldn't work elsewhere.

Well, after preaching the Gospel to thousands of people on the streets in America, and now having preached to many small Hindu and Sikh villages, which have far less Biblical knowledge, I found out something....the law STILL DOES CONVICT OF SIN. Just like in America, when I preach the law (not necessarily the 10 commandments line for line, but God's holy standards, and His judgments for breaking them), I see heads begin to look down, one by one. When that happens, you know they're convicted.

The main sin I have preached against is Idolatry, seeing how almost everyone here commits it. I don't just say "don't worship idols", but I explain why the One True God hates idols, robbing Him of His glory and worship, and give parables and examples, so that it makes sense.

The "law is a schoolmaster to lead to Christ", regardless if you are in the US, India, or anywhere else.

Blessings my bretheren,

Brian

Re: Pyrofobic Salvation - posted by RobertW (), on: 2005/7/14 10:46

I think it is important to understand that whether a person speaks of the conscience or appeals to the Noachide laws, 10 Commandments, 613 laws of the Old Testament or the teachings of our Lord they can really only 'awaken' a sinner to cause them to think upon their soul.

The person must have an encounter with God if they are to come to genuine saving faith. Miracles may even get a person thinking- but they must encounter God. They must rightly respond to the revelation of God. If not- you may well gain a 'convert' but that will be it. Pyrofobic responses to messages that do not result in a relationship with God will need another pyrofobic message to keep them in the fold.

Bretheren, trust me on this, it is not about how hot you can preach hell fire. It is about whether or not the person encounters God and rightly responds. I have preached hell so hot it would singe eyebrows and nearly all of those who came forward to "get saved" are in gross sin right now. I have seen young people by the hundreds and thousands make commitments to God and fall away in time.

I preached repentance for 1+ years SOLID to a group that fell from God at the end save a few. You may scare someone into the Kingdom for a hot second- but the fruit of that will not last if they do not meet God and begin walking with Him. There must be a personal relationship with God develop and our preaching must be to that end. You are spinning your wheels in vain if not. You will get discouraged when folk do not respond and stay with it.

They have to have a God encounter. They have to meet God in the preaching. Awakening sinners with the laws of God i

s quite a job! But is not the whole of the process by any means. It is barely even the beginning. A person may mentally process their need for God in a few minutes or hours- but that is not how the heart changes. It takes God working on them for hours, days, and maybe even years. Some things cannot be taught or received in preaching- they must be an experiential reality in order for the person to grab hold of the truth. Was it not Ravenhill who said that preachers are a strange breed. They believe they can plow a field, sow some seed and reap a harvest in a couple of hours. There is wisdom in this comment. God can save a person in a few minutes (for those who would argue this point)- but this is not at all the 'standard' method of God bringing a person out of their metaphorical Ur of the Chaldees. It takes time, patience, and tenacity to get a person to Christ. It takes being ultra sensitive to the Holy Spirit. It takes a whole lot more than preaching the law.

God Bless,

-Robert

Re: - posted by couch (), on: 2005/7/14 12:16

Robert,

Amen to that brother.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" Psalm 19:7

Other translation says "reviving" the soul. This serves to awaken their heart to the understanding of their need for God, but, whatever their case, God MUST meet with the person.

Upon Peter's confession that Jesus was "The Christ, the son of the Living God" Jesus said:

"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto you, but my Father that art in heaven ."

That needs to be our desperate cry unto the Lord, that He would reveal Himself as truth through our preaching, and that we would be the emptied vessels fit for His infilling and habitating presence.

People need revelation from the living God, an encounter with the most high, for whoever drinks of that water shall never thirst...

Re: - posted by todd, on: 2005/7/14 13:41

Robert,

Thanks so much for sharing what you've learned out of so much personal experience. That is one very valuable post!

It reminds me of something John G. Lake once said:

"There were days when the church could club men into obedience by preaching hell to them, but that day has long since passed. The world has outgrown it."

Re:, on: 2005/7/14 14:05

Quote:

todd wrote:

Robert,
It reminds me of something John G. Lake once said:
"There were days when the church could club men into obedience by preaching hell to them, but that day has long since passed. The world has outgrown it."

I heard something kinda 'crazy' by my pastors, and it makes me laugh, but it was true.

During the 'Jesus freak' movement. Or w/e you wanna call it. *The radical Christians, that were filled with God's Spirit and during the 'hippie' years* There were a group of people about 3-5 in number. And they were so filled with God they h

ad to share it with someone. They jumped outta there van, touched some random guy *no conversation* just prayed over him, spoke in tongues...etc..etc.. the man fell/slain in the spirit. And they drove off.

The man who fell ended up getting saved that weekend because he was touched soo much by it.

Crazy huh?? Lol, idk your comment just kinda reminded me of that. :-D

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2005/7/14 14:33

Just hope to share some of what I see so we can all try to learn together. I heard a story of a person falling drunk in a ditch during the Hebrides Revival and waking up in the morning totally changed. Finney talked about people falling out on the floor under the enormous weight of their sins. The thing about Finney is that he believed in a solemn service. The last thing he would have ever done was slip some frivolity into his message. He was utterly serious. he once said that it was quote, "Impossible to preach too directly to the people." That tells you in itself what kind of minister he was.

I have watched so many young people turn from God. Whole generations after whole generations. Raised in the church and falling away. Some sats are as high as 85%. I have been vexed for years over it. What is going wrong here? Could we glean something from the Finney's, Ravenhill's, and even the more modern teachers such as Ron Bailey? I really encourage you to go back through Abraham My Friend and look at how God brings a person out and into where He wants them.

I think of how Finney was so successful. What did he do different? Many things! For one when you look at his methods he would have folk come up to the anxious seat. Sometimes he would allow the message to sink in for days or even weeks and not even give an altar call. I heard he had gone before for weeks without giving an altar call. Image that! We would be trying to harvest right in the middle of it all. Not Finney.

Was it the Puritains that feared plucking "unripe" fruit? Did you know that if Bananas are picked green from the vine they will NEVER ripen on their own? I used to handle Bananas in a produce warehouse. We had huge two story chambers to put skids of Bananas in to be 'gassed' with ethylene. If they were not 'gassed' they would remain pale green. Special conditions had to be followed also during the days of gassing.

I said that to say- what if we try to pluck a person when they are in an awakened but not convicted state? We press upon their minds the need and God has not brought them there. The fields are RIPE unto harvest as a human race- but as individuals God brings people along through a process and then when they are 'ripe' they are ready for salvation. Again, its about being sensitive to where a person is and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide you.

God Bless,

-Robert

Re: - posted by Nellie, on: 2005/7/14 14:49

Amen Brian.

To God be praised!

The Law is to show the exceeding sinfulness of their sin, to the Sinner.

To God be all Praise, Glory, and Honor.

Nellie :-)

Re:, on: 2005/7/14 22:32

That's an awesome story. Thanks for that.

Re: - posted by Bomar, on: 2005/7/14 23:52

Yes, after my messages here in India, some of the local pastors called for "altar calls". I really didn't feel ANYONE was ready for it, but they've all seen American TV Evangelism, and have thought that's the way to be done. After a few meetings, I began to tell the locals "no altar calls, let the Spirit work in them".

We have seen many fall away, even using the law.

Re: what an eye opener - posted by coops (), on: 2005/7/16 8:05

this has been a brilliant discussion (not meaning to round it off) thank you so much for your input and clarity.

Is there any where else I can learn more about "proclaiming the kingdom of God?"