

Sermon Series: “Moses: God’s Poster Child of Meekness and Dedication”

Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN-8/22/10

Title: “The Place of God’s Law in Our Lives”

Text: *Selected Scriptures*

Intro: *Illustration: Freedom is not Autonomy*

Theme: Avoiding the extremes in how we apply God’s will in our life begins with the starting point of grace in Jesus, and searching God’s Word out so that we follow his direction, balance, and power to live it out in our lives.

Unhealthy extremes in applying the Law of God

Antinomianism

1. False teaching that a Christian is freed from all laws (including the moral standards of God/culture)
 - a. *You were indeed called to be free, brothers and sisters. Don't turn this freedom into an excuse for your corrupt nature to express itself. Rather, serve each other through love. Galatians 5:13*
2. Being careful that you don’t become an “**outlaw**”
 - a. **Illustration.:** “**Standing outside the walls of the protection of the king**”
3. Being careful not to take the path of least resistance because you are tired
 - a. Ends justifies means, watered down godliness, condoning immorality/unethical actions in life/home (wink/nod)
4. Be devoted and zealous to be about the Father’s business.
 - a. *Those who love Your law have great peace, And nothing causes them to stumble. Psalm 119:165*

Legalism

1. Creating a rigid standard of rules for self/others to gain God’s favor/salvation
 - a. **Illustration.:** **Legalism**
 - b. *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated. You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold? Matt 23:15-17*
 - c. Be silent where God is silent, personally act on what he says, and be merciful in shortcomings of others
 - d. *He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8*
2. Resist rule-based living — “**because I said so**” – in its place use faith-based living “**because it works God’s good**”
 - a. **Illus.:** **Imaginary Chains Keep Us in Place**
 - b. *Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified. Galatians 2:16*

God’s direction for using His Law in our life

Let God’s Law lead to Christ rather than you (**mirror**)

1. It does that by showing us our sin, our hopeless situation of self-rescue, and God’s only way out
 - a. *Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. Galatians 3:23-25*
2. Removing the “**I**” from your boasting about your righteousness and only allow **Christ** to be heard
 - a. *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20*

Let God’s Law **curb** your base sinful motives and emotions

1. Cut no slack for your sinful, selfish, self-centered nature
2. *No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. 1 Cor. 9:27*
3. *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Galatians 5:1*

Let God’s Law **guide** your new nature in Christ

1. *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Tim. 3:16-17*

2. Illustration: the Million Dollar Roadway

Freedom is Not Autonomy

I particularly like to warn my American audiences about this. Freedom is not the same thing as autonomy. Freedom does not mean I am a law unto myself. Prince Philip, the duke of Edinburgh, speaking to a hostile university audience that jeered him, stopped in the middle, and in nonregal language he said, "Shut up! Freedom can be destroyed as easily by making a mockery of it as it can by its retraction." That's precisely what man has done. In an attempt to be reasonable, man has become irrational. In an attempt to deify himself, he has defaced himself. In an attempt to be free, he has made himself a slave. And like Alexander the Great, he has conquered the world around him but has not yet conquered himself. **Ravi Zacharias, "The Lostness of Humankind," Preaching Today, Tape No. 118**

Legalism

"What must I forsake?" a young man asked.

"Colored clothes for one thing. Get rid of everything in your wardrobe that is not white. Stop sleeping on a soft pillow. Sell your musical instruments and don't eat any more white bread. You cannot, if you are sincere about obeying Christ, take warm baths or shave your beard. To shave is to lie against him who created us, to attempt to improve on his work." Quaint, isn't it -- this example of extrabiblical scruples? And perhaps amusing. The list has constantly shifted over the 1,800 years since this one was actually recorded. **Jim Peterson, Living Proof, NavPress, 1989, p. 106.**

Imaginary Chains Keep Us in Place

In his book *Teaching the Elephant to Dance*, James Belasco describes how trainers shackle young elephants with heavy chains to deeply embedded stakes. In that way the elephant learns to stay in its place. Older, powerful elephants never try to leave—even though they have the strength to pull the stake and walk away. Their conditioning has limited their movements. With only a small metal bracelet around their foot attached to nothing, they stand in place. The stakes are actually gone! **Adapted from Hans Finzel, *Change Is Like a Slinky: 30 strategies for promoting and surviving change in your organization* (Northfield, 2004); submitted by Marshall Shelley**

The Million Dollar Roadbed

In Western Colorado there is a road called the Million Dollar Highway. My guess is that both tourists and even most of the people who live on the western slope don't know how this road got its name. They probably assume it got its name because it was expensive to build. That's not correct—although it probably was expensive to build because it runs through very difficult terrain and at a high altitude. The real reason it's called the Million Dollar Highway is because waste material from the ore in gold mines was used as the bed for that highway, and not all the gold dust and nuggets were removed by the mining processes available at the time. As a result, there is a partial roadbed of gold that is probably worth a lot more than a million dollars. It isn't the cost that gave it its name, but rather what is inside it. The same is true for the royal law of love ("Love your neighbor as yourself"). Sure it's costly, but what gives it the name is what it is made of: it is made up of God, the God who is love." **Leith Anderson, in the sermon *How to Treat People*, PreachingToday.com**