

# God's Law

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Good morning. Good morning. On a slightly chillier day, it's great to see you. My name's Chris, if you don't know me.
- I'm on the pastoral staff here at Watermark, and you're just really welcome to Watermark. One of the things I'm just so aware of, just even looking around this morning, is just, you guys are amazing.
- I don't know if you get that. Like this morning, there's just been so many people just serving in different ways. You know, there's people serving the kids. There's people who've been setting up in different ways, and other people serving in CGs.
- And really, this is a family. And it's just exciting to see how you guys just really serve each other as part of the family. That's just really one of the things this church is here to be, is that family in a performance-based world where everyone's trying to compete against everybody else.
- God has placed us here to be this family who know the grace of God, who are transformed by that. So we're not just here to take, but we're here to serve. We're here to love. We're here to reach out to this city with the gospel.
- [ 1 : 0 7 ]     So that's just really struck me, just even this morning. So before I stop, before I kind of speak now, I want us just to stop for a second.
- Because last week, we talked about the idea that we have a God who actually wants to speak to us. And this morning, I'm convinced that God wants to speak to you.
- And so I want us to stop right now, and I want each of us in our hearts to pray, God, living God, I want you to speak to me.
- I want to hear your voice, and I want to respond and obey whatever you say to me. So let's just stop for a second. And in your heart, just pray that prayer. Living God, thank you that you speak.
- I want to hear your voice this morning, and I want to obey and respond to whatever you say to me. In Jesus' name, amen.
- [ 2 : 1 2 ]     So today, we're looking at God's law, okay? That may not sound the most fun topic for you, but this is an exciting topic, I think.
- Because in Deuteronomy, the word Deuteronomy actually means second law. And what's basically happened is Moses is reiterating the laws that God had said 40 years previously to the people of Israel at Mount Sinai.
- And the people had screwed up time and time again. They'd forgotten all the laws. And now it's kind of time number two to remind them of what they should have been doing all this time.
- And he's telling them that you're about to go into the promised land, and now this is what you need to remember. Just like Eric said earlier. And when you come to these laws that Moses says to people, you've got to remember, this is like me listening in to my wife talking to a friend.

And as I'm listening, she's not directly addressing me. But as I'm listening in and I'm getting to know my wife, it's giving me a little extra picture of who she is. And as Christians, we are not under the Old Testament law because there is a new testament, a new covenant which Jesus brings in.

[ 3 : 31 ] And if you're not sure about that, well, if any guys here had an eternal emission last night, you shouldn't have come to church this morning, okay? Because that's in the law. So today, we need to remember that what God is saying to us through his word in the Old Testament is run through Jesus, and we understand what he was trying to say to them then so that we can understand what through Jesus and through the gospel he wants to say to us, and we apply it to our lives.

And Deuteronomy, by the way, is Jesus' favorite book. It's one of Paul's favorite books. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy more than any other book in the Bible. So we've got to listen to what this is going to say to us.

Now, one of the things that when I say a law, when you read the Ten Commandments, I think there's two ways that we kind of tend to respond to them. Some of us, kind of like me, we're religious Pharisees.

We like rules. You know, we're very obedient externally to the rules we have. I went to see a grandmother dying in a hospital a while back, and the family WhatsApp chat kind of went round, and the unwritten rule was this.

You have to be at the hospital. If you don't go to the hospital, you're a bad family member, okay? That's the unwritten rule that went round. So everyone turns up to the hospital.

[ 5 : 00 ] I turn up at the hospital bed, expecting this kind of warm, caring time with the grandmother in her last days. But in 30 minutes of being at her bedside, nobody talked to her once.

Nobody even acknowledged her existence. Everyone just talked to each other. And I stood there shocked. But they were all there.

They had kept the family rule. Everyone was there. That's what were counted. They kept the rule, but there was no love. And often, that can be what my Christian life can be like.

I keep the rules, but there's a love that's missing. You know, that's what some of us are like. Some of us are totally the opposite. We're like, rules are there to be broken.

You know, it's kind of like the French. You know, rules, you know. Is there anyone French here? Sorry, forgive me. You know, I see parents, and your kids sit there, and you say, okay, sit and eat your food.

[ 6 : 08 ] And they're hungry. They want to eat. But because mommy or daddy said you need to eat this, they deliberately refuse to eat. Have you seen that? I'm sure some of you experience that.

I mean, deliberately, and you're like, this is insane. Right? It's crazy. But they have to be the ones who are in control. Some of us are like that when God tells us something. We're either the Pharisees or the ones who want to be the ones in control.

We're the rebels. So when we're looking at the Ten Commandments, I want you to think about where do you line up? Are you the Pharisee, or are you a rebel in your heart? And so what I want to do is I want to look at this in four different things.

I want to talk about the purpose of the law, the content of the law, the problem of the law, and the goal of the law. Okay? Purpose, content, problem, and then goal of the law.

Okay? Tracking with me. So let's have a look in the passage. So please just have your passage open. We'll kind of skim through it as we go. Verse 2.

[ 7 : 10 ] Purpose of the law. Verse 2 tells you, the Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. Okay? So Horeb means Mount Sinai. Now, a covenant, this kind of covenant is what technically some people call a suzerain vassal treaty.

You don't need to learn that. Okay? But what that meant was in their times there was a great king who would reach out to a smaller king and offer him protection in return for loyalty.

And the language they'd use was kind of father and son language. The great king would say, I'll be your father. And the son would be, I'll be your son. You know, you would be, I'd be the strong one.

You'd be the one who enjoys my relationship as long as you're obeying me. That's the way it worked. And the laws would be the kind of stipulations of how the relationship was going to work. Okay?

And there's a little bit of connection here with the Ten Commandments. But it's different from the way other people did their treaties. What's the first part of the Ten Commandments?

[ 8 : 12 ] First part of the Ten Commandments. You shall have no other gods before you. That's good. That's good. But that's not the beginning.

Yes. I am the Lord your God. I'm Yahweh. That's what we said. That's the name Israel's God. I'm the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the land of slavery.

That comes first. Now, we've got to get this. Because what he's saying is, before you have to do anything, I'm going to tell you who I am. I'm the God who takes the initiative in this relationship.

I'm the God who brings you into relationship with myself. I save you. I rescue you out of slavery in Egypt.

Relationship comes before morality. Before you have to do anything, realize, I save you first. I accept you first. I bring you into relationship with me first.

[ 9 : 13 ] Then you obey. And you obey as a response out of grateful obedience. And also what he's saying is, so it's not just know who I am and that I brought you and I've saved you.

He's also saying, God brought you to himself that you may be free. You see, the Egyptian king Pharaoh set himself up as a god.

And when you lived under his rule, you were a slave. But when I come and I tell you don't have any other gods before me, the reason I tell you that is because I don't want you to go back in slavery.

You put any other god before me, you'll become a slave. But you let me be your god. And I want to set you free to be who I designed you to be. Because I kind of know how this thing works.

Because I created you. Right? And God says, this law is to be the kind of constitution of this community. They're kind of like the freedom constitution of how you're to live in this land under me.

[ 10 : 20 ] And three times in this chapter, 16, verse 29, verse 33, he tells you the motivation for these laws is that it may go well with you.

Did you get that? That it may go well with you. He's saying that your life can flourish. That you can enjoy true, satisfying, fulfilled life.

That is what my commandments are about. Okay? When you make life about him more than about you, you'll get freedom to be who you were always meant to be.

You see, sometimes I think we think God's salvation, it's kind of a bit like he opens the prison cell for us to go out. But then he kind of lets us come back in, like brings us back into the prison cell with a lot of restrictive, repressive rules.

Because, you know, he doesn't want us to have too much freedom, really. But actually, that's not what he's saying. And I think as Christians, and I know for myself this has been very true, many of us as Christians and even non-Christians, we're actually scared of obeying God.

[ 11 : 26 ] If we're really honest. Because what we really think is, if I really obey what God tells me to do, I'm going to miss out. You know, we say, God is good. Yeah, I know he's good.

But if I actually follow him, like really follow him, like get serious about him, then he's going to make my life miserable. Right? He's going to call me to be like a poor single nun in North Korea, like sleeping on a bed of nails or something like that in my life.

But, and that's why we don't want to obey him, because that's sometimes how we think God is like. But David, in the Psalms, when he's looking at this law, do you know what he says?

He says, I lie awake at night kind of salivating over this law. He says, I delight in it. He says, I pant after it. I'm longing for it. And he says, these are my joy.

These are my delight. And we think, what are you on, David? And because we're like, okay, how far can I go before I sin? You know, where's the line?

[ 12 : 30 ] There. Okay, I'll get just up to the edge. Because we don't realize that this is for our joy and our freedom. I mean, just take sex, for example. Take sex. The Bible's contention is sex is reserved for one woman, one man in a marriage relationship.

But our society says, any God who says that is restrictive, outdated, just trying to spoil your fun. He's kind of Hitler in the sky kind of thing, right? That's what our society says.

But I had a colleague, and we were on a conference in Hungary, actually. We know we've got some Hungarians here. I was in Hungary, and I was dating Fiona at the time.

And he asked me, kind of out of the blue, okay, have you had sex together? And I said, no. I said, sexual intimacy is so precious that I want to reserve it only for someone that I've committed the whole of my life to in marriage.

And do you know how he replied? He said, I wish I was like you. He said, I wish I could do that.

[ 13 : 37 ] But do you know what? I just can't. I can't help myself. Whenever I see a pretty girl, I just have to try and sleep with her because I can't control myself. And he said to me, I guess I'm kind of like a slave to my desires, aren't I?

And I wish I wasn't. You see, I could not tell you how many people think that God's laws are repressive in the short term, but in the long term, they wish they knew the freedom that he calls them to give.

God is not looking for miserable Christians who are like, I love Jesus, but I wish he didn't. He wasn't so harsh. Because that doesn't give him any glory or any honor if we just think he's a miserable, tight so-and-so.

God's laws, like a good father wants good things for their children, is he wants your joy and he wants a community to live in freedom. That's why he gives the law.

Okay? So that's the purpose of the law. Now, the content of the law. And this is one sermon. There are ten commandments. We could spend like all year going through this, but we won't.

[ 14 : 45 ] So I'm just going to very briefly show you something we may not have noticed about all of these ten commandments. And you've, you know, you've seen them a hundred times. But one thing we often fail to notice is that all of them are actually interconnected.

They're all interconnected. Our society says we want morality, but we don't kind of want religion. Right? I mean, we want kind of to send our kids to kind of Christian schools and even come to church so they learn some nice moral values.

But don't get too serious about the God stuff. Right? That's kind of what we say. I read a great book, actually, by a guy called, actually by, I've forgotten his name, but it's a book called Good Without God.

And his idea was that you don't need religion to be moral. And it's true in many ways. My aunt is an amazing woman. She's an atheist, but she's very kind, very caring in many ways.

But there's something, I think, that is missing there. And I want to show you two things of how these laws are interconnected. You can't distinguish them.

[ 15 : 54 ] The laws are connected vertically and horizontally, and they're connected inwardly and outwardly. Okay? Vertically, horizontally, inwardly, outwardly. Vertically and horizontally. Just keep the commandments in front of you.

Jesus takes the Ten Commandments, and he says, you can summarize them in two. What are the two? Okay, this is kind of, yeah, it's good.

I know it's Sunday morning. Okay? Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Okay? And love your neighbor as yourself. That basically summarizes all the Ten Commandments.

Simple. How can he summarize them? Well, you look at the first four, and the first four are all about how do you love God? How do you worship God?

You know, no images, no other gods before him. Don't take his name in vain. All of those different things. The second six are all about relationships. You know, loving your neighbor.

[ 16 : 52 ] Honor your father and mother. Don't murder. That's loving. Don't commit adultery. That's also quite loving. Okay? It's all relational. Some people say, I don't want laws. I believe in love.

But the thing is, these laws are actually love in action. How you love people in action. And you can't separate the first law from the second law.

The vertical and the horizontal go together. Let me show you how that can work with just going to the fourth commandment. Okay? Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Because the Sabbath day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. And the reason for keeping it? Verse 15. You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt. And God brought you out from there.

Okay? What he's saying is, the motivation for resting in the Sabbath is God's redemption. God's salvation of you. That's the motivation for you to keep a rhythm of rest.

[ 17 : 51 ] Okay? How does that work? He's saying, in your work week, you've got to recognize that God is the Lord of your productivity. He is the Lord. He's the Lord of all your productivity.

Okay? You ought to be ruled by Him, not by your work. Work is a good thing. It's a great thing. You can be busy. But don't let it rule you. The Sabbath is to God, but it's for us.

Okay? Now, I don't know if you realize how inconvenient this law is. Okay? This law is very inconvenient. You see, Israel was an agricultural society.

That meant they were farmers. And if you stop working for one day on the farm, do you know what happens? You have no idea. Slugs can come along and eat your crops.

The hail, birds, any kinds of things could come along, and you're just sitting there watching. And you can't do anything. And, you know, for them, it's like, if you stop, you don't have control.

[ 18 : 53 ] Right? And it's life and death for them. Like, for us, it's not life and death. For them, it was life and death. For us, it's more like, you know, if I stop and rest for a little while from my work, it's like my reputation, my achievements, my financial security.

That's what I feel like is on the line. And we fear. Don't we? Some of us who just, we live in a culture which tells us just to keep working and keep working and keep working.

And you know what often keeps me just keep working? It's those what ifs. Because this command is a command to trust God and let Him have control of my productivity. But I have these what ifs.

What if I'm in the field? And what if I'm not in the field and there's a wind and it blows all my olives away? What if that email comes in and I miss it? What if that WhatsApp, I don't see it?

And I've got to keep going from my phone. I've got to keep doing these things and we become these slaves. What do we, do we ever live with what ifs? You see, it's my idolatry of things like success, the boss's approval, the control.

[ 19 : 57 ] I want to have them, which means that drives me to sometimes overwork. And if you don't have a God who's big enough to trust with all the other what ifs in your life, if you don't have a God who's loving enough to trust with all of those things, then you'll just get drawn back to be a slave to your work again, to your phone, to your computer, to whatever it is that gets you.

When maybe you're supposed to be spending time with your kids or spending time with your community group or spending time with other people. But the call of Sabbath is to trust God and rest and leave him to take care of the what ifs.

Now the vertical affects the horizontal because look at who else has to rest in this passage. Everyone. Did you get that? I mean, this is pretty comprehensive.

I mean, sons, daughters, such as children, servants, employees, even animals. Okay, I don't know how you make a donkey rest, but anyway. Okay, animals, immigrants, the whole lot, they're meant to rest on a day.

Because why does he say that? If you trust God, then actually you will not exploit the workers around you. Because what happens normally is if I'm resting, then I'm going to make somebody else do the work. Right?

[ 21 : 18 ] Right? But do you see what he's saying? If you put God first, do you see what that change comes in the whole community? Because think about Hong Kong.

Why does it groan under the slavery of working hours, which are ridiculous, and of this culture which keeps driving us to kind of work more and work more and work more? Why do we do that?

Because as individuals in Hong Kong, including me, we worship the gods of money. We worship the gods of convenience and self-promotion. We make idols out of them, and that's what drives us.

Because when work consumes your waking thoughts, you actually stop loving people around you. And all of us are culture shapers.

We all shape it by the way that we do and deal with our work. But you see, if we trust in a God who takes care of us, we can actually take time out to rest with our families, with our friends, with other people.

[ 22 : 21 ] And didn't you think it would actually be a much healthier community? Physical health would be better. Your productivity at work would be better. In fact, you're less stressed. God wants a community like that.

And the challenge is, where in my life am I making my work more than him? Because that's actually flowing out and affecting the horizontal. Because actually, when you do that, you break the first commandment, don't have any other gods, right?

And then it's working that all the way. What that also means is this. You cannot say, I'm a spiritual person.

Read your Bible every day. Look all holy on Sundays. And then also treat your parents like crap. Or treat your spouse or your helper terribly.

You cannot do that because God is not impressed by quoting Bible verses or singing songs. If in my heart and in my relationships, I am not reaching out in love.

[ 23 : 24 ] Because the vertical and the horizontal are connected. And this is so challenging for me. Because actually, the sign of my spiritual health is often shown in the way I'm doing my relationships with others.

So how am I treating the people around me? Because that may be a window into where you are in your relationship with God. And the inward, sorry, the vertical and the horizontal go together.

But secondly, the inward and the outward go together. Most religions, and, you know, most people really, would say the Ten Commandments are pretty good.

Okay? Most of them, they're not bad. Don't murder, don't steal, don't commit perjury in court. All fairly common stuff. You go to prison for things like that, right? Honestly, looking at these, I feel pretty okay about the lack of murder in my life.

Okay? Just being real. Stealing. The odd watermark pen, but nothing in particular major. Okay? I know that was a guilty laugh, that was.

[ 24 : 33 ] You know God's talking to you right now. But, you know, in James, in James, the book of James in the New Testament, it says, when you break one command, you break all of them.

Which, to me, sounds pretty unfair, you know? Because 90% on an exam is kind of like an A, you know? Right? It's only 10% I didn't get. Yet, you and I can seem nicer on the outside and kid ourselves that we're doing okay, but then you get to the 10th commandment.

We often forget the 10th commandment. Have a look at the 10th commandment for me. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbor's house or land, his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Ooh, okay. Now, think about that for a second. You can't legislate for that command, right? You can't imprison someone for saying, you looked at my handbag with jealousy.

You can't do that, right? Five years in Stanley Prison. No, you can't. Because this command is a command to be content in your heart.

[ 25 : 53 ] And I imagine the religious Israelite who's listening to this, and like the rich time ruler in the New Testament, you know, he said, I've done all of those commands. And then he gets to this one thing.

Jesus tells him this one thing. He gets to this one thing, you know, and he's listening to Moses' teaching, and he goes home after, you know, he's done his Bible study, he's done his great sermon, he goes home, and what he does, his wife's been nagging him all day, and he looks over at his neighbor's hot young wife, and he looks over into the field next door to him, and that's kind of his business, and he's got more than him.

And then he looks over and he's got more employees, and he's doing far more successful than he is his neighbor. And then he looks at the new cattle he's got in, that's a Maserati in the drive.

Okay, and he looks at all of these things, the holidays his neighbor's going on, and he looks at his life and he thinks, ooh, it's not fair. Discontent begins to come in. Maybe I should have more than this.

Anyone relate to that? Because I think coveting, lusting after something that you don't have for yourself, is kind of a national sport in Hong Kong, right?

[ 27 : 08 ] I mean, studies show that people on Facebook who go on Facebook for a long time end up miserable because they're always comparing their life to somebody else's, and everybody else's life always looks better than yours, right?

I don't meet many people who come to me and say, I am so content, I don't want anything else. My kids want nothing else, I'm fine, right? We're all the time looking over our shoulder and looking at somebody else and saying, yeah, but I can just, and you were happy before, and then you see what they've got.

You know, it's like Christmas presents, right? You were happy with what you got, and then you see what they get, and you're like, why did I not get that? But the thing is, you know, you can look over your shoulder at your classmate who got better grades than you, you know, the person who's got a boyfriend, a girlfriend, a husband or wife, and you don't.

And you know what happens? When you start coveting discontentment, it never leads to joy. Do you know, miserable people are discontent, right? Have you met anybody who covets who's filled with joy?

I never have. Which is why the commandment says, don't, because contentment is for your joy and your freedom. And what does coveting lead to?

[ 28 : 24 ] Because that's the inward thing that's going in your heart. What does that lead to? Coveting your neighbor's wife leads to adultery, right? Whether that's what Jesus said, whether that's physical or whether that's in your heart, because Jesus says you commit adultery and lust over someone in your heart, you've already committed it.

What does coveting property lead to? Stealing, maybe lying, maybe even murder. Do you see what's going on?

You see the heart of everything is what Jesus says. Out of the heart, all these other things flow. And he says, if you don't, if you just focus on the outward, you've missed the root. And the root is actually where all of these come out of.

Because the 10 commandment is telling you, you've actually broken the first commandment. Because what coveting is, coveting is wanting something more than God. Because God's given you your life now, and you're saying, yeah, but God, I don't want that.

I want this more than what you're giving me. And so coveting, it reveals we've broken the first commandment, and actually we break all of them. And if you put your trust in something other than God to give you joy, to give you freedom, it will enslave you.

[ 29 : 35 ] Long term, it will make you miserable. That's why God says, don't do it. Because morality is vertical, horizontal, it's inward and outward.

But let's come to the problem. Because you break one, you break them all. And there's a problem with this, isn't there? The purpose is for our good and our joy.

It's all of life, this law. But the problem is this. Verse 22 to 27, Moses writes these laws on two tablets as a permanent mirror up on the wall, up by the covenant, the Ark of the Covenant, for the people to measure themselves by these.

Wake up in the morning, and every morning, look at yourself in these laws and see how you're doing. And there's a problem.

Because the moment I tell you, don't covet Justin and Chris who are going on honeymoon to the Maltese soon. Don't covet that.

[ 30 : 46 ] Don't covet that guy who's got that extra bonus, which is so much more than your bonus. Don't covet it. Don't covet that person whose life is just going so much better than your life is going at the moment.

Don't covet it. What starts happening? You want it? Right? You know, it's like you have a box of chocolates and I say, don't eat this.



What do you want to do? Even if you're not hungry. You see, what the law does, it's this mirror which begins to show you what your heart is like, that your heart actually can't obey what it's telling you to do.

And verse 29 says, God says, all that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep my commands always so that it might go well with them and their children forever.

Why does God have this longing that they might keep his commands? It's because he knows that they're not going to keep them. And the rest of the story, if you've read the Old Testament, you know it doesn't end well.

[ 31 : 53 ] And actually, that's our story too. Because God knows that they're going to completely disregard everything that he's ever told them, which was meant to help them flourish.

Because you know why? We think we're better than God. We think we know more than God. And our hearts have a problem. Our hearts have a problem. God says, forgive, and we say, yeah, that's difficult.

God says, love your spouse, and you say, I'm tired, and I just want to watch the news. And you know what the law says? It says more than anything else, you can't keep this.

Because that mirror, every day you look in it, and if you see that it's vertical and horizontal, if you see it's inward and outward, there's nowhere to run, there's nowhere to hide. And that's pretty depressing.

Alan de Botton, he's an atheist. He wrote a great book called Religion for Atheists. Okay? It's well worth reading. And in it, he says this, he says, we face temptations which we hate in those moments in which we can attain a sufficient distance from the temptations, but we lack any encouragement to resist these temptations, much to our eventual self-disgust and disappointment.

[ 33 : 06 ] The mature sides of us watch in despair as the childish aspects of us trample upon our more elevated principles and ignore what we most fervently revere.

He says, and he finishes, he says, our deepest wish may be that someone would come along and save us from ourselves. Do you know what my biggest problem is?

Me. Do you know what your biggest problem is? You. I've lied to myself more than anybody else has ever lied to me. I've screwed my life up more than anybody else has.

Every, you know, there's a common denominator and all the poor choices that I make. Do you know what that common denominator is? Me. And that's, we don't like to get that, but that's what the law shows you.

It's this mirror to show you what you're really like. And it shows you that you're powerless to keep it. And the problem is, as many, many of us as Christians, when you read a command in the Bible, sometimes you read it and you realize, man, I just don't measure up.

[ 34 : 19 ] Anyone get that? Love your parents. And you're like, oh. Right? Or, yeah, I love my parents.

Don't, if they're listening to this, I obey that one all the time. But, but we read all these laws, forgive, you know, do this, help these people, and we're like, oh.

And, and what it can do is, it can just make you feel like, okay, I'm never going to be good enough. So, so we, we do this thing where, as Christians, we're running around, kind of, miserably trying to push the car of our own spiritual life forward, but the handbrake's on.

The law continually stops you. And we're exhausted with trying to match up to the expectations, you know, trying to serve enough, trying to do enough, trying to get everywhere enough. And we haven't seen a glimpse of joy in Jesus for months.

And the worst thing is, when a preacher comes along and says to you, Christians should be joyful. And that makes you feel even worse, because you don't know, you know, you're not supposed to be joyful, but you can't work up joy. Right?

[ 35 : 24 ] But the problem is, we're trying to make it all about ourselves. If you're not a Christian, and you think you're moral enough, the problem is, you're always going to be altering the standard to fit your own standard.

You see, when you tell a lie, and you read, do not lie, you'll be saying, well, it was just an exaggeration, just a small lie, nothing serious, didn't harm anyone. But then when someone lies to you, it'll be like, I can't believe they're such a liar.

Right? Anyone a liar here? I am. Anyone, anyone a murderer here?

Now, we wouldn't say that, but Jesus says, if you've been angry in your heart, you've murdered somebody. Anyone murdered anyone this week?

Right? And do you know what should happen to murderers? Murderers get punished. Right? And we fear that. That's why we think God's out to get us, because actually, he does punish murderers.

[ 36 : 30 ] And that's good. Right? That's not a bad thing. That's a good thing. Except, for me, that's not good. You see, the law is good. It's out for your freedom and joy.

It examines you vertically, horizontally, inwardly, and outwardly, but exposes you as inadequate and deserving, not of God's grace, but of his judgment. But where do we go with that?

Then finally, we come to the thing which captures Paul in the New Testament, the thing which the whole New Testament centers around.

It says, Romans 10 says, Christ is the end or the goal of the law for righteousness.

Because this law is meant to leave you desperate for a savior. How can I be free from this is meant to be the question. And the answer is meant to come as Jesus comes and on the cross, he said, I didn't come to save the healthy.

[ 37 : 36 ] I came to save the sick. And normally, you say, yeah, I'm not too sick. I'm just a little bit under the weather. But he says, no, you know, you're really sick. And on the cross, he says, there's a great exchange that takes place.

He takes the punishment that you and I deserve for the murder that we do day after day after day. Just linger on that for a moment. He took your punishment.

He took your guilt. He took your shame. You may say, there are so many things that I've done, I don't know whether I can ever be forgiven.

And he says, I've taken the train wreck of your life. I've taken the poor shame and the decisions you've made. I've taken it because I love you that much.

And the cross is the greatest confirmation that you and I are messed up. Jesus wouldn't have to die if we weren't. But the great thing is this.

[ 38 : 37 ] You see, there's a great exchange. I don't know why as Christians we keep thinking we've got to kind of try and pretend that we're okay when the very heart of our Christian faith says you're not.

But he says, what happens in this great exchange is when you look in the mirror and you see what you're really like, he exchanges your wretched clothes, your sinful nature and he places his own righteousness, his own right standing on you.

So that when he looks, you look in the mirror, when God looks at you, he sees Christ. And do you know what? He likes what he sees.

This is the gospel which means God doesn't just love you because he has to. He loves you. You know, we think he gives, he has to love me and then he gives me laws just to kind of keep me in my place.

But through Jesus, not through you, he actually doesn't just love you, he likes you. Do you get that? He actually likes you if you are a Christian.

[ 39 : 48 ] If you are a Christian. not because of your conduct, because of his conduct. And you see, his law is a gift given to you for you to have to live in freedom, in the love that he wants for you.

But some of us think, some of us are right now ignoring what God is saying to us because we think we know better. We think we know how to run our world our way.

And sometimes God in his grace, do you know what he does? Sometimes he brings tragedy into our lives to bring us to the point where we realize it's us who are screwing our lives up and we need a savior.

Sometimes he's gracious enough to allow relationships to fail, to allow your work to fail because he wants to bring you to the point of seeing you need a savior.

And some of us, like if that's you today, don't get to that point. Today, if you're not a Christian, even if you are a Christian and you'll know you're walking away, he says to you, run today to me.

[ 40 : 57 ] Come back in forgiveness and receive him. But there's one more thing I want to tell you, let's see. As Christians, we know this stuff.

there's an advert, there was an advert in the UK which said, a dog is not just for Christmas, he's for life. The idea was that people would just buy the dog and then they abandon him after kind of like getting the exciting puppy and then they forget all about him.

Jesus is not just for your salvation and kind of wiping away some of your sins so that you can kind of leave him behind and then get on with trying to just keep all the external rules afterwards.

Every single day, that great exchange means Jesus is not just your forgiveness from sins, he's your life.

Paul says it like this, he says, I no longer live but Christ lives in me. What he means by that is this, I struggle, when I read one of these laws and it says you've got to be self-controlled or it says you've got to trust me and rest and I want to be in control of my world but do you know what?

[ 42 : 12 ] Jesus submitted to his father when I didn't and Jesus says I give you my submission.

Jesus, I'm not self-controlled but Jesus was the ultimate one who lived with self-control and put others before himself and he says I give you that.

That's part of the package and your choice and your everyday way that you're going to obey my commands is not by trying to keep them, push the car of your life by yourself, it's by running to him as I see you should love your parents and I'm like, oh, but then I say Jesus, I need your love in me.

I cannot do that but you have given me the spirit to enable me to do that and do you know what? That's like rocket fuel that propels you so it's not about me it's about him.

When I mess up I run back to the cross I receive that grace and his delight in me his love in me propels me to obey not out of being a miserable follower of Christ but as someone who realizes his love is for me his power is with me so I obey because that is my life.

[ 43 : 30 ] So let's just pray. What is God speaking to you right now? I want you to think what's the one thought today that you need to go away with?

Let's just pray. Father, I realize that so much of my Christianity can be a theoretical knowledge that you saved me in the past when every day you want to save me from myself.

Forgive me where I kind of try and do it by myself. I try and think that either I can obey by myself and so I just grip my teeth but that only leaves me to feeling proud of myself and that's sinful.

or condemned and that doesn't propel me to obey but Lord, I pray for me I pray for each one of us that we would see that Christ is our life that your strength is our strength that your patience is our patience that your hope is our hope and that we would walk in obedience to you.

So what's the one thing God is saying to you right now? What is he saying to you? Take that away share that with somebody else and let's together be a community that encourages him encourages each other and looks to him.

[ 45 : 18 ]    Father, we love you. In Jesus' name, Amen.