

GRACE-LOVE-TRUTH COURSE.

PART 3B: CHRIST; THE END OF THE LAW

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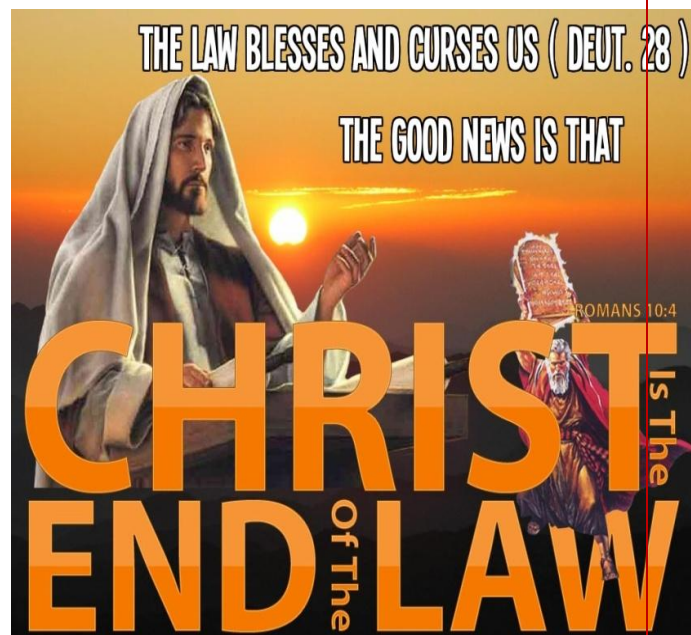
5. FOR BELIEVERS THE LAW IS NOW OBSOLETE

5.1 CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW

Mat 5:17-18 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished"

John 19:30 "When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit."

Rom 10:1-4 "Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes".



Jesus said that the Law would never pass away until he had accomplished his mission to fulfil the Law on the cross. With Jesus fulfilment of the law through the cross (Col.2:14) Jesus proclaimed the judgment of the Law to be finished and fulfilled when he died in our place on the cross. What is finished and fulfilled has legally become obsolete and been superseded by a better New Covenant. For believers under the New Covenant of grace the Law has passed away. For those still living by or under the Law, the Law is still valid but it is gradually fading as more and more are saved by grace. If we are saved and born again we are not under the law but under grace and the Law no longer has any part in our lives (Ro.6:14).



5.2 LOVE - THE LAW OF CHRIST

Gal 6:2 "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ".

The good news, the gospel, is that Jesus' life, death and resurrection fulfilled and effectively cancelled the bad news of the Old Testament Law systems that cursed us. The Cross brought in the New Covenant law system of grace known as The Law of The Sprit of Life (Rom.8:1). For those who believe and are filled with the Holy Spirit there is freedom from the old externally applied law systems. God's way of living is now written by the Spirit in our hearts and consciences. In addition to the law of the Spirit of life Paul refer to the "law of Christ" (Gal.6:2). There is debate within the church as to what the law of Christ actually means. However if one reads Gal.6:2 in context it is clear that it is addressing how to practically live out the Law of the Spirit of Life and how to fulfil Christ's new command to "*love one another as I have loved you*" (John 13:34). The law of Christ is "love" . Love fulfils all religious laws, rules and regulations (Rom.13:8-10)(Jas.2:8).

6. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN LAW AND GRACE.

6.1 LAW IS ABOUT US, GRACE IS ABOUT JESUS

John 1:16-17 From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another for the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Here is a comparison between Law and Grace living:

THE LAW....

Is focussed on us
Is based on works

GRACE....

Is focussed on Jesus
Is based on rest (Heb.4:1-6)

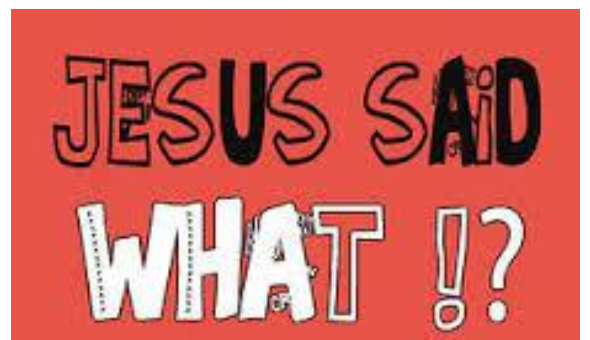
Is about doctrine & rules (Deut 30:10)	Is a person, Jesus. (Rom5:15)
Leads to self-righteousness (Rom.9:31-33)	Imparts righteousness. (Rom.3:20-21)
Demands of you.	Imparts to you.
Condemns the best of us.	Saves the worst of us.
Brings death. (2Co.3:7)	Brings life. (2Co.3:6)
Demands righteousness.	Gives righteousness.
Is focused on sin. (Joh.9:2)	Is focused on our righteousness in Christ
Defines sin. (Rom.7:7)	Reveals true holiness
Leads to hardening of heart.	Leads to repentance and a change of heart.
Stirs up sin and lusts.	Overcomes sin (Ro.6:14).
Results in condemnation. (Rom.8:1)	Affirms us.
Leads to people being cursed. (Gal.3:10)	Blesses twice over (Joh.1:17)
Brings sickness (Deut:28:61)	Brings health (Acts 10:38)
Is fear driven.	Is love founded.
Reveals God as fearful (Ex.20:18)	Reveals God is loving (1Jn.4:10).
Is about our self effort.	Is our rest and peace in the cross
Is about "I must do"	Is about "Jesus has done"
Leads to control	Leads to freedom.
God will not clear sin to 3-4th generation.	God will never remember our sins
Focuses on our obedience	Focuses on Jesus' obedience
Demands that we serve God	Demands that we let Jesus serves us.
Says that we are God's servants.	Says that we are God's children
Teaches that angels are God's representatives	That we are God's ambassadors and representatives
Is conditional on our performance (Deut 30:10)	Is unconditional (Based on Jesus performance)
Is purpose driven	Is Holy Spirit lead
Is about outward appearance	Is about the inner heart
Is flesh	Is Spirit
Is to be achieved	Is to be received
Is works based	Is faith based

Exercise: Add any more contrasts that you believe may apply between Law and Grace give scriptural references where possible.

6.2 JESUS SOMETIMES PREACHED LAW BUT DISPLAYED GRACE

Jesus obviously knew that The Law was given to expose self righteousness and for bringing people to an end of themselves. This is the only reason Jesus preached the Law from time to time. He never preached The Law to condemn people. The Jewish teachers of Jesus' day, the Scribes and Pharisees, had totally misunderstood the purpose of The Law of Moses. They used it for the exact opposite purpose

for which it was intended. They taught that people could be saved and become holy and righteous by obeying The Law. (Our teaching on righteousness in part 5 will show that this is the exact opposite of God's intention).



Jesus preached the Law to show that no one could ever be saved by keeping the Law and that all fall short, all have sinned (Ro.3:10-20) and all need a Saviour and God's grace. Jesus never preached the Ten Commandments as an external moral code for man to live by or for a way of obtaining righteousness. Jesus knew that righteousness and right living can only come about through a heart transformed by God's grace and by living in a love (Jn.13:34) whose source is God himself - the Spirit within us. Let's be honest, we all would like to keep the Ten Commandments, but the truth is that we all fail (Just like Israel did) no matter how hard we try. The good news is that under The New Covenant, our role is to recognize that we fall short of God's holy standard, and we therefore rely on God's grace and find rest in Christ from the Law. The Law brings terrible condemnation and death (2Cor.3:7-9) so we need to get free from it. It is only from position of grace that we are able to live in the way God desires; a loving, generous, holy life full of the fruit of the Spirit. Right living flows from a heart that is full of grace and love, which can never come about through trying to obey the Law. Traditionally we have been taught that Jesus preached the Law for believers to aspire to and live by. However this twists the truth as both Jesus and Paul used The Law in a different way, in the way for which it was originally intended i.e. to expose sin, the sin of self righteousness, pride and the sin of

unbelief. Moral sin flows out of unbelief, moral sin is the fruit of man's pride and independence from God. This misunderstanding of the purpose of the Law has led to confusion in the Church and has resulted in an erroneous deadly mixture of Law and grace that has produced terrible fruit in many Christian lives. Looking at the two parables of the Rich Ruler and Zacchaeus help us understand how Jesus correctly applied Law and Grace with amazingly different results.

7. THE LAW AND GRACE AFFECT

7.1 ZACCHEUS AND THE RICH RULER

There are two linked Bible stories reveal the differences between the effect of The Law and the effect of grace. Jesus gave the Law to the self righteous while to the humble and lost he showed grace.

7.1.1 THE RICH RULER & THE LAW (Lk.18:18-24).

Luke 18:18-23 "A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"¹⁹ Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honour your father and mother.' "All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said. When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth. Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"

This parable typifies the Principle that to the self-righteous Jesus preached The Law.

The context of this parable is that Jesus was speaking to men who trusted in themselves, their righteousness was something they had earned through the Law of Moses and

consequently they despised others who they considered to be "sinners". Jesus was out to expose the primary sin of pride and self-righteousness that the Law of Moses was producing in the religious Jews. At the same time he was also starting to reveal God's grace once again to Israel. Jesus knew that the exposure of self-righteousness is crucial, as the self-righteousness cannot see the need for salvation, after all who needs to be saved if they are righteous through their own efforts. Self-righteousness is the ultimate manifestation of man's pride, man's self sufficiency and the fallen nature of mankind. The issue of righteousness by self effort or righteousness by grace is, in fact the

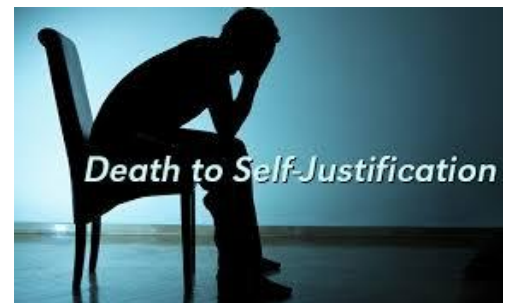


key theme of Scripture, it is crux of the Cross and is one of the keys to fully understanding the New Covenant, the Kingdom and the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Rom.14:17).

Points from the story of the Rich Ruler:

Jesus' intent in this encounter was not to give us another impossible Law to obey "You must sell everything and give all your money to the poor". Jesus was actually exposing self-righteousness and the bondage to money from which self-sufficiency and self-righteousness often flows. Jesus was responding to a very specific question (v18) from a self-sufficient, capable and rich ruler who asked: "*What must I do to inherit Eternal Life?*". The rich ruler's question reveals the foundations of self-righteousness i.e. self effort and doing. This trait happens to be particularly pertinent to the rich because they are self- sufficient, able and "doers" based on the erroneous and arrogant belief that they are able "to do" things that make them worthy, holy and sufficiently qualified to spend eternity with God.

Jesus is also addressing the fallen assumption that if we are good we don't need a Saviour and God's grace. Jesus demolishes the mistaken belief that we can obey laws and keep the Law to the perfect degree that God's Holy Law demands. Jesus' usual response to people wanting to 'do things' to obtain salvation was



to preach the Law in an extreme form that would force them into a place of "doing" what was impossible for them. In this case it was "*Go and sell everything, give it to the poor and follow me*". Jesus knew that the rich ruler believed he was good, able and righteous, Jesus also knew that he was obsessed with money. Despite his claim of having kept The Law since childhood, through his money making, he had actually repeatedly broken the Law "*Thou shalt not covet*". Sadly the rich ruler was blind to this fact. For the rich ruler ever to be saved Jesus had to first reveal his self-righteousness, spiritual blindness and bondage to money. What is interesting is the actual affect the preaching of Law had on the rich ruler. Did he repent? No! Instead he hardened his heart and turned away from Jesus because he realised he could not do what the Law required. In a way it seems like a strange story. No one was saved, no one repented and no one followed Jesus. However it needs to be said that firstly, the rich ruler missed the point of Jesus' teaching. Secondly, not everyone is saved and the Lord gives us freewill to turn away if we choose. Thirdly, the sermon was not wasted as the listening crowd understood what was being taught and responded in the right way to Jesus' teaching. The response Jesus was looking for was actually for people to understand their precarious position and cry out for God's grace. Luke 18:26 Those who heard this asked, "*Who then can be saved?*" Jesus replied, "*What is impossible with men is possible with God.*"

Some of the lessons we can learn from the Rich Ruler:

Self righteousness is a strong deception and bondage which spiritually blinds people. The religious and rich are particularly prone to self righteousness. No one can save themselves by keeping The Law. Law preaching results in condemnation and turning away from Jesus. Law preaching just reinforces how much we fall short and fail. Preaching The Law doesn't get people saved. Preaching The Law does not lead to repentance.

Thankfully Jesus didn't just leave us with this story as He desired was to teach us what happens when we preach the Law and what happens when we share grace. The teaching continues and Jesus reveals the way of grace in the very next chapter. And thank God the results are astoundingly different!

7.1.2 ZACCHAEUS, THE RICH TAX COLLECTOR AND GRACE

Luke 19:2-10 "A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a "sinner."" But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

The context is that the man in this story called Zacchaeus which means "an Israelite" was also very rich. He was a Jew just like the Rich Ruler and as such he was also under the Law of Moses. Zacchaeus was a very rich Jewish tax collector who worked for the Romans. These tax collectors exploited and defrauded the Jewish people and they were intensely hated.

The Jews considered them to be a traitor, a sinner and unclean (v7) and no one would associate with him.

What is crucial in this story is for us to see that Zacchaeus was desperate to have an encounter with Jesus. This desperation for Jesus is what determined Jesus' actions and response to Zacchaeus.

Unlike the Rich Ruler, Zacchaeus' focus was not on 'what he should do' but on who Jesus was. This



rich man humbled himself and even climbed a tree just so he could see Jesus. This must have been quite a sight and quite an effort for this short man. Jesus' response to the rotten and corrupt Zacchaeus was one of pure love and grace. *"Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today."* This was amazing as Jesus knew that Zacchaeus was despised and a "sinner". Jesus also knew that his offer to go to Zacchaeus' house would offend people as Zacchaeus was clearly a Law breaker and traitor to the Jewish cause. In stark contrast to Jesus' response to the religious Rich Ruler Jesus never preached the Law to Zacchaeus, Jesus never once pointed out his sin, or that Zacchaeus lacked anything, Jesus never indicated that he required Zacchaeus to do anything, He never condemned Zacchaeus in any way, Jesus simply showed him Grace and acceptance – by going to his house to eat. The affect of Jesus' grace and acceptance is nothing short of miraculous and in stark contrast to the Rich Ruler who turned away from Jesus, Zacchaeus is overwhelmed by Jesus' grace and he welcomed Jesus and with full of joy (v6). He received salvation through Jesus (v9&10). The kindness of Jesus causes him to repent of his sinful way of life (v8). He was contrite and humble of heart and confessed his sins. Without being told what to do, his heart which had be impacted by Jesus love and grace, led him to do what was righteous. He was set free from his bondage to money, he showed a heart for the poor and needy and he set out to make right the affects of his past sins. An amazing story of hope!

It should be pointed out that it was not his actions of giving away his money that gained him salvation and righteousness, meeting Jesus, experiencing grace and receiving salvation lead to him giving his money away and making right with others. True salvation and grace always results in a transformed character and Godly good works that are from the heart (Eph 2:8-10).

There are a number of lessons we can learn from Zacchaeus:

When people seek Jesus He responds in grace because Jesus is grace! Jesus shows grace to those who are humble and not self-righteous. When we share grace; God's unconditional love and acceptance, people will be saved. It's the kindness of God that leads to repentance, not the Law. People don't need the Law to know that they are sinners and fall short in some way. Repentance is a change of mind, a change of belief, an acknowledgement of sin, which results in a change of actions. True 'good works' come from a heart transformed by grace. A heart touched by grace will show concern for the oppressed and needy.

To conclude:

The preaching religious Laws exposes peoples short coming but it doesn't bring people to salvation. There is a better way than preaching Law, revealing God's love and grace through Jesus Christ. Not

only does the grace of Christ bring people to salvation but it transforms people's characters and enables them to live righteously.

8. JUDIAZERS

Wikipedia states "Judaizers is predominantly a Christian term, derived from the Greek verb ioudaizō "to live according to Jewish customs". This term is most widely known from its single use in the Greek New Testament in Galatians 2:14 where Paul publicly challenges Peter for compelling gentile converts to early Christianity to "Judaize". This is also known as the Incident at Antioch. The term Judaizers also includes groups who claim the necessity of continued obedience to the Law of Moses found in the first five books of the Old Testament. The term Judaizers is typically used as a pejorative.

Most Christians believe much of the Old Covenant has been superseded, while some modern Protestants believe it has been completely abrogated and replaced with the Law of Christ. Thus, "one who has been



Judaized", refers to a Christian who believes it is necessary to adhere to the Mosaic Laws or to specific laws such as circumcision, Sabbath observance, observation of the Passover etc. The ongoing Christian debate over Judaizing began in the lifetime of the apostles, notably at the Council of Jerusalem and the Incident at Antioch, and parallels the ongoing debate about Paul the Apostle and Judaism, Protestant views of the Ten Commandments, and Christian ethics etc."

Reading scripture in context and using scripture to interpret scripture. There is an indication that Paul's thorn (Ezek.28:24) in the flesh (2Co.12:7) was not some sickness from God as many would have us believe, but the constant attack and Paul's angry response to the demonically inspired (2Co.11:13-14) Legalists and Judiazers, who he called false apostles and who purposely followed behind him constantly undermining his preaching of the gospel of grace. God's answer to this problem was that grace was sufficient for him to overcome them. Historically this proved to be the case as their teaching never gained a strong foothold.

8.1 GROUP TIME

1) A scriptural exercise in legalism:

Read through the following scriptures and then write some short notes on what they are saying about legalism and misuse of the Law in the early church.

Act 11:2 "So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him".

Acts 21:20 "When James and the elders heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law".

Gal 2:11-16 "When Peter came to Antioch, I, Paul opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs? We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' 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".

Gal 2:4 "This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves".

Php 3:2-3 "Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh".

Tit 1:10-11 "For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain".

Col 2:8 "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ".



Col 2:16 "Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ".

2) Discuss and write down the purpose of the Law.

9. GROUP QUESTIONS

What is the Torah?

Who were the Pharisee?

What was their focus?

Who did Jesus condemn and why?

Name some of the different spiritual laws.

What does the scriptures say about the ministry of the law in 2 Cor.3?

What is the law of Christ?

What can nullify grace?

Was grace revealed in the Old Testament, give two incidences.

List five purposes of the Law.

What does Pentecost celebrate in the Old and New Testaments?

Did Zacchaeus fulfil the Law in any way?

What spiritual laws apply to believers today?

