

The Covenants, Grace, And Law (Part Five)

Justification and Obligation

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I have progressed through this series in the way that I have so far for the reason that I want it deeply ingrained on our minds that God is doing more than merely saving us. Knowing this is important to understanding the new covenant. In Acts 3:19-21, it says:

Acts 3:19-21 Repent you therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

I want us to understand that the New Covenant does not stand alone as the device designed by God to merely save people. God's purpose from the beginning has been to restore all things. God is reproducing Himself. God is creating children in His image. And He is working to restore His government to the earth. It is in this area—the reproduction of Himself, the creating of children in His image, and the restoration of His government—that the New Covenant fits. It fits beautifully into this purpose!

His government was taken away through the rebellion of Helel. Then, when God gave mankind the opportunity to submit—through Adam and Eve—they too rejected the opportunity, in order to follow their own way. In this, of course, they were assisted greatly by Satan the Devil.

If you listen carefully to Protestant teaching on the New Covenant, you will invariably run across a statement that goes something like this: "Christianity is not a way of life." Or, "Christians are not enslaved by a set of rules." Or, "Christians are not subject to Old Testament laws." Or, "The Jewish Sabbath doesn't apply to us." When you hear something akin to this, do not let your attention wander from what you are reading or what you are listening to. Pay

strict attention because such a statement will very likely reveal the real source of their position, and, at the very least, reveal the attitude underlying their approach towards this very important subject.

Last week's sermon dwelt with **justification**. In the course of the sermon, we found that neither grace, nor faith, nor justification itself—of and by themselves—have anything at all with doing away with laws. And yet these three, in combination, are central to preparing a person for entering into the New Covenant with God.

Towards the end of that sermon, we looked at Romans 3:31, where Paul asks the question:

Romans 3:31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

Last week, I read that to you from an interlinear. An interlinear is an exact word-for-word translation, exactly the way the words appear in the Greek. And in the Interlinear, it says this: "Law, then, do we nullify through faith?" It is a question. The emphasis here is on the word **law**. It appears first in the sentence. "Law, then, do we nullify through faith?" Everybody knows what *nullify* means. "Law, then, do we nullify [do away with] through faith? Not let it be so, [Paul says] but law do we establish."

Remember, I told you that without the definite article before the word **law** (and it does not appear in the Greek), it indicates that Paul meant ***law in general***—any law. It does not mean THE law. If it said "the law" it would either mean a specific law or a specific body of laws, like the Ten Commandments; or it could mean the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible). But Paul simply says, "law."

He means that justification by faith does not do away with **any law at all!** Not man's law, church law, or God's law. None of them! That is pretty strong. Yet all of us know, without a doubt, that there is *an anti-law bias* regarding the New Covenant that will reveal itself in all attempts at teaching the New Covenant *except* when the truth is being taught.

Romans 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

The normal mind of man (the carnal mind) is at war, it is an enemy—against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, and it cannot be. The basic drive of the carnal mind also cannot be hidden; and the reason is because the enmity will break out and reveal itself in an **anti-law attitude**.

This does not necessarily mean that the person is unconverted. Please understand that. Paul said that those Corinthians, who were converted people (I Corinthians 3:3), were *yet carnal*. Still, they were converted. We will see more proof on this in a little bit. So, it does not mean that the person is necessarily unconverted. At the very least, it means that the person is weak in a given area. At its worst, it means that a person is totally unconverted and possibly willfully so.

So in this sermon, we are going to take a look at this anti-law attitude because it reveals the real source of their (you know who I mean) carnally-appealing but deceptive teaching—in regard to the Sabbath, tithing, holy days, and the food laws.

From the Garden of Eden, and before, government, law, and sin have been an issue in **relationships with God**. God very clearly shows this to us in Genesis 3. No sooner did Adam and Eve sin than they were put out of the Garden. The relationship was severed. So what can we learn from that? We can learn that refusal to submit to God's government *separates*. This separation teaches us that, from that point on, there is little or no relationship. I did not say that sin completely severs the relationship. I said that the relationship begins to degenerate, and it can get to the place where there is no relationship at all. And we know that is the way it is before a person is called.

Now, **government** is the word used to indicate the authoritative management of a political unit—such as a state, or a nation. In business, the word "manage" is usually used, but "govern" and "manage" can be used interchangeably. Government is charged with the responsibility of managing the direction and the activities of a state or a nation. The Kingdom of God is

a state. It is a nation. It is a family. It is a government. And it is being charged, is it not, with the operations of what is to come. So government (whether it is man's or God's) is charged with the responsibility of managing the direction and the activities of whatever it is governing.

We, in the Western world, have been given a very vivid picture of what a difficult process governing is. Radio, television, newspapers give us rapidly—almost minute by minute (at the very least, hour by hour)—accounts of how **divided** mankind is on any given issue. I mean so divided that it seems as though agreement on any given point is sometimes almost impossible.

Have you listened to "talk radio" lately? How many different opinions—how many different voices—come in on the subject that they happen to be talking about at that time? There are so many ideas and opinions being put forth that it is virtually impossible to do anything without somebody feeling as though they are being taken advantage of. And so, what do we do? We gripe. We refuse to go along. Or, a group will gang up—gather with others—and they will openly revolt. And the history of mankind, is it not a continuous record of disagreement?

God gave Moses an almost impossible situation. Can you imagine **governing** those Israelites? That was a hard job! It is a wonder that Moses did not go bananas before the forty years was over. I am sure that God only recorded a few of the instances in which they were either challenging Moses, or God, or each other, or whatever. Anyway, it gives us the picture that governing *opinionated* and *contentious* people is very difficult.

Governments exercise their responsibilities through **laws** made to regulate society. They also have the authority to enforce the laws enacted. If people refuse to submit, government really only has a few alternatives. It can change the laws. This is not really reasonable, because each law change is merely going to adversely affect another group—thus angering them.

But, do you know what? This is the way that democracy works. And so politics have been defined as "the art of compromise." Thus, on any given issue, the republican and parliamentary forms of government in most

Western nations ostensibly attempt to reach **a compromise** in which the most people are benefited (You see, rule by the majority.) and the least cursed. But in reality what happens in most cases is that the side that is strongest usually wins, and the weakest is taken advantage of.

The weak are usually the mass of people who have no strong representation—called today "lobbyists," who go around twisting arms (politely, of course). So the mass of people, generally, do not have power with the brokers that are in government. And, incidentally, this is much of what the book of Amos is about—how the masses (the weak or the poor) are taken advantage of. And eventually what happens? Revolution occurs.

Another option for government is to strongly enforce the laws that are already on the books. This historically results in the enslavement of the masses. This option frequently begins with good intentions, but the government becomes so frustrated (because there is so much resistance to being governed) that its rule becomes more and more harsh, and restrictive.

What is needed is **a perfect blend** of three elements. First of all, there has to be *a loving and serving government*, managing the system. Second, there has to be *a set of perfect laws* that cover in broad principles every aspect of relationships in government, family life, business, agriculture, industry, education, art, and entertainment. And thirdly, there has to be *an intelligent, understanding, and willing submission* on the part of everybody involved. When any of those get out of whack, you can be sure there is going to be trouble.

Romans 5:12-13 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed [blamed, or accounted] when there is no law.)

In like manner as Adam and Eve, all of us have disqualified ourselves in the same basic way. That is, **disqualified** ourselves in our relationship with God. And we have done that through sin. Sin separates, and the relationship becomes weaker and weaker—and is eventually severed.

God had foreseen this. And because the law says, "the wages of sin is death," God put into operation what I will call "Plan B." This was His plan for bringing mankind back into alignment with His law. Not doing away with it! Not making any adjustments in His law. Rather, bringing man into alignment with His law. This *alignment* is called in the Bible *justification*. That "Plan B" existed from the very beginning is evident because Jesus is called "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (I Peter 1:19).

The result for those justified is **righteousness imputed**. Remember that when Adam and Eve sinned, God imputed sin to all of his progeny; and then God's judgment was proven in that everybody sinned after Adam and Eve. They did exactly what their parents (Adam and Eve) did. So in like manner (and even more so), when Christ lived the righteous life, then God was willing to impute the righteousness of Jesus Christ *to those who had met the conditions* in order that they might be brought into alignment once again with what they had broken.

Not do away with the laws—but through grace, through faith, people are justified and the righteousness of the One who kept the law perfectly is then **imputed**. Even as Adam's sin passed upon us, Christ's righteousness can also pass upon us. And what does that do? It balances the account. Yet, when we read further in the Bible, what Christ did more than "balances" the account! It does not just make up for. It goes abundantly over and above—so that we can be *aligned* with the law of God. Therefore, we can come before God with the perfect, sinless righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to us.

Christ's righteousness then is accounted as ours. We could then have access to God. The relationship would be established, and His purpose could continue. There is nothing hard about that. Is there? [And there is] not a word about doing away with any laws. Because of this:

Romans 8:1-4 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. [Pay particular attention to verses 3 and 4.] For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of

sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Now notice: What happened to mankind was **not** the law's fault. Please understand that. Those with an anti-law bias are going to tend to imply that it is the law's fault. That is, that there is something about **the law** that is bad. But, no, it was mankind. We are the ones who are weak. It is weak "through the flesh." Mankind is in this fix, then, because of *our own weaknesses*. And when Christ did what He did, He did not condemn law. He condemned sin!

According to this verse then, God has done what we have proved to ourselves we could never do. That is why you repent. That is why you do what you have to do, in order to meet the conditions. And when you come before God—asking for forgiveness by the stripes and by the blood of Jesus Christ—you are admitting to Him, in your surrender to Him, that you could never come to Him on the strength of your own righteousness. Each person's life is a testimony that we are too weak to accomplish access to God through righteousness of our own.

I am going to give you a translation for verse 4 from the Revised Standard Version. That first phrase where it says in the KJV "that the *righteousness* of the law might be fulfilled in us" the RSV translates it "that the *just requirements* of the law might be fulfilled in us." They made a change to one word ["righteousness" to "requirements"], and inserted the word "just."

Sometimes we trip over something like the meaning of the word **righteousness**. It is a Bible word. It is a spiritual word. And we might have a little bit of trouble relating to what it is. But I think all of us understand what "just" is, or what "justice" is. The word **just** means fair. It is fair. It is right. It means that it is good. Thus, "that the good requirements of the law may be fulfilled in us." Or, "that the fair requirements of the law may be fulfilled in us." Or, "that the right requirements of the law may be fulfilled in us."

Is Paul saying that God's law is harsh, cruel, and overbearing? No, just the opposite! He is saying that it is fair. It is good. It is right. And this harmonizes perfectly with what this same Paul said earlier, as recorded in chapter 7.

Romans 7:12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

The just requirement of the law is (1) that we obey it, and (2) that we love God with all of our heart, all of our mind, all of our being, all of our soul—everything, and (3) that we love man like ourselves. That is the just requirement.

I want you to think again what this verse just said. Why did God give us justification through—by means of—the sacrifice of Jesus Christ? So that we could **love** Him! So that we could **love** our fellow man! So that we could keep the law! Is that not the definition of *love*? John says:

I John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.

Does John agree with Paul? Absolutely!

Now, let us make it even plainer. Why did he say that we have received justification? So that we could keep His commandments. Not just nine of them—the commandments, **the law!** Does this agree with what Paul said in I Corinthians 6? He said, "*Because you are justified, don't you sin!*" This same Paul said, "*Should we sin and let grace abound? God forbid! Don't sin—because you are under grace.*" So he is saying then that God, through justification (by means of faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ) and grace, gives us a crack at doing it right. Or, at least, doing it far better and with a much more complete and accurate understanding of attaining its purpose.

Brethren, the law's requirements are good. There is nothing to be feared. The law is our friend and guide; and it is given by a loving Father for the well-being of His children. Why do you give rules to your kids? To protect them,

to guide them so that they do not get hurt. You want to see them live, mature, grow up to bring you grandchildren. God does not feel any different from that! We get that kind of **concern** from Him. And He gives us His law so that His children will grow up, and mature, and prosper in everything. Not to hinder them, not to hurt them.

Certainly there is some restriction there, but it is to restrict them from evil and the evil one. What is wrong, brethren, with not committing adultery? What is wrong with not committing fornication? What is wrong with not stealing, or murdering? Nothing! But the enmity in the carnal mind will surface against what it considers the least important. (And it might vary, from person to person, as to what is considered "the least important.") But it will surface in what it considers the least important because that law is impinging on a desire to not have one's life controlled in that area. Do you see what I am saying about Romans 8:7? The carnal mind cannot be hidden. The carnality in *us* cannot be hidden.

Now, why are they [the just requirements of God's law] good? Because even as keeping them contributes to a stable society in the here and now, it also plays a major part in preparing us to be in God's image when God **restores** all things that have been taken away. We will go back to the Old Testament and fill in some of the background here.

Isaiah 14:12-14 How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How are you cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations! For you have said in your heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."

Without going into all the details, we know (from Ezekiel 28) that **pride** arose and grew in Helel's heart—leading him to consider that he was just as good, and just as great, as his Creator. And then he began believing that God's governance was unfair in His dealings with him. Pretty soon, he was "just as good as God" at determining what was good for him. And he infected other angels with the same attitude, until he was able to lead them

into a war against God. They were, of course, defeated and cast down. But they were present whenever Adam and Eve were created. I do not mean that they were right "Johnny on the spot," but they were certainly aware of what was going on.

Genesis 3:1-4 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, "Yea, has God said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" And the woman said unto the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" And the serpent said unto the woman, "You shall not surely die."

Now, pay close attention to episodes like this. God includes them in His Word because they establish **patterns** by which those who believe God are able to discern, "We've got a pattern here." Many of these patterns are established in the book of Genesis.

God draws our attention to Satan's subtlety. He is ingeniously clever—with evil intentions—unless you are equipped to discern them. To those of us who are living in this end time, we had better pay attention to this. Jesus warned us in Matthew 24 that if it is possible, *the very elect* are going to be deceived. It does not mean that we cannot be deceived. It means that it is possible for you to be deceived; and, if you do not **discern** what is going on, you are going to be deceived. Satan is that slick! And right now he is pulling off a masterpiece.

The implication of Satan's question to Eve was that God is not fair. He did not say it directly, but that is the implication. The implication is that God is withholding something good from them. He said nothing about the fact that there were other choices that they needed to have for a fuller, freer, and more exciting life. But the implication of his question to Eve put the spin on everything; and he twisted God's statement into a negative. When God talked to Adam and Eve, He started out by saying, "You can eat of every tree of the Garden, except one." Satan turned it around—into a negative.

Understand what Satan was trying to get her to do. He was attempting to get her to question God's Word about what they could and could not do. Let me put it another way. He was getting them to question God's law. And he put enough of a negative twist on it that it was making the law look harsh, restrictive, cruel, and binding. And, of course, the Giver of the law (the Giver of the word) was then the same way as the law appeared to be.

Of course, the fruit looked good to Eve. That is simple enough. But Satan succeeded immediately, because in verse 3 she **added** to what God said! What God actually said is recorded in Genesis 2:17, and when Eve said what God said, she added to what He said. You know what the Bible says about adding to what God says! That is just as bad as taking away from what God says. So, you see, Satan had her mind rolling in the direction that he wanted it to go.

And then he sweetened the pot by stating unequivocally that she would have much greater liberty doing what he suggested, because she would not die. Death is the greatest robber of liberty that we face, and it is the last enemy to be destroyed. So he hit her with this *lie* that she is immortal already; and he succeeded, then, in producing an enmity against God's law and His governance. That is evidenced by the fact that she sinned (and Adam, right along with her).

I want you to compare that with what we have been shown in the last several months. All along there have been subtle implications that the Sabbath, holy days, tithing, and food laws are "restrictive," that they are keeping things from you that you would otherwise enjoy. The Sabbath is keeping you from working and enjoying the benefits of a greater income, and perhaps contact with your family. And if you are just willing to work a little while on the Sabbath, maybe you will not even lose your job; and your income will continue on unimpeded.

And, if you do not have to tithe, just think of how much more that you will have in the way of material goods. And, if you do not have to set aside second tithe, would you not have all that much more money to spend? Besides that, a great deal more additional time that you could spend at home, or at work, or at school? Do you see the drift?

God's law is "restrictive." God's law is "impinging" on what you could otherwise do. God's law is "harsh." The words are not said, but it is following the same **pattern** as the master Deceiver did back in Genesis 3. Just think of how many delicious meals you have missed out on because you cannot eat those things that are designated in the Bible as "unclean."

Added to that are all the negative references to these laws, that they are in the framework of the *Old* Testament. They are in the *Old* Covenant—as though there is something inherently restrictive and unfair about associations with the Old Testament and the Old Covenant. Sometimes I have even read the word "Jew" or "Jewish" in association with these things. They have been directly tied to "bondage" under the Old Covenant—and it is working! It is working exactly as it did with Adam and Eve. Many, many people are now saying, "Now we have a choice."

But, brethren, have you thought about how this *reflects on God* ? I mean the God who proposed the Old Covenant. I mean the God who made those laws. I mean the God who inspired the Old Testament. How does that reflect on Him? In the same way that Satan's urging upon Adam and Eve reflected on God. You reflect on God's law in this way, and you are also reflecting on the Lawgiver in that way as well.

Is it not saying that God imposed an inhibiting bondage upon the Israelites? I thought the Bible said just the opposite—that God took the Israelites out of bondage and gave them liberty. But now they are saying that the law James calls "the law of liberty" has parts to it that are in reality *bondage*. But they are going to keep them anyway, out of the goodness of their hearts. Brethren, that is diabolically clever **double-talk**. History shows that it will end up destroying the keeping of all of them.

That is exactly what the Protestants say. Again, I want you to reflect on the fruits of Protestantism in this Western world; and consider how this reflects on God, if God is the God of Protestantism. How many denominations has Protestantism split into? Is God the author of confusion?

Protestantism is so confused that they will go to war against one another, killing one another. Lutherans in the United States will kill Lutherans in

Germany. Is that not weird? Yes, it is weird! That is what I mean when I say that this will lead to the breaking of all of them. And it is showing who the source of this kind of approach is. It is **not** the God who is ordering this change. It is the ruler of this world, and the pattern is following what he has established there in Genesis 3.

So we can see the pattern that began all the way back when he rebelled and mounted a war against God. Then, when God created Adam and Eve, he mounted a war against Adam and Eve; and he succeeded then in getting them to rebel against the government of God—by breaking the law of God. They had different opinions than the One who created them; and so they rejected the Word—the law—of God.

That brings us back to the very beginning of the sermon again. Last week's sermon dealt with **justification**. In the course of the sermon, we found that neither grace, nor justification, nor faith (of and by themselves), has anything to do with *doing away with* law. And yet these three, in combination, are central to preparing a person for entering into a covenant with God.

The New Covenant does not stand alone as a device merely designed to save people. God's purpose from the beginning has been to **restore all things**. God is reproducing Himself. God is creating children in His image. And He is working to restore His government to this earth. I said that right near the beginning of this sermon, and I have gone all through this in order to bring us around to begin to see *why* the New Covenant.

Matthew 15:1-3 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, "Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread." But He answered and said unto them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?"

That sets the stage. We are not going to go through the whole thing. They asked a question, and Jesus asked a question back. "Why aren't you keeping the commandments of God?" The discussion developed, and we are going to pick it up after the discussion was over.

Matthew 15:15-18 Then answered Peter and said unto Him, "Declare unto us this parable." [Explain it to us.] And Jesus said, "Are you also yet without understanding? Do not you yet understand, that whatsoever enters in at the mouth goes into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

Now He takes it one step further. Not just what we speak, but....

Matthew 15:19-20 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defiles not a man.

It is very plain to see that the weakness of man (Romans 8:3) Jesus associates with what He calls "the heart"—the mind. It is in the mind, in the heart, that sin is generated. I think we all agree with that, and we can all understand it. Now, hold that in your mind; and let us go back to Romans 7.

Romans 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: [Notice the contrast.] but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Who wrote this, brethren? The apostle Paul. The law is spiritual. And when Paul says, "I am carnal." he did not mean that he was in an unconverted state, but rather that he was "fleshly." It is *flesh* that is contrasted to that which is *spirit*. So we are dealing with *a spiritual law* that is eternal, that is pure, that is good, that is fair, that is righteous. Everything about it is the epitome of **perfect law**. On the other hand, we are fleshly; and we are surrounded by sin, by weakness. And so Paul says, "I am fleshly. I am weak. I am mortal." That is the contrast. What we are going to see is how being fleshly impacts upon his life, as contrasted to a perfect spiritual law.

Romans 7:15-17 For that which I do I allow not [It is not something that I want to do.]: for what I would [what I want to do] that do I not; but what I hate, that I do. If then I do that which I would not [if I do what I do not want to do], I consent unto the law

that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me.

What Paul does here is that he personifies sin, as though it was a living entity within him. In reality what it is, is habit. It is patterns of thinking. It is patterns of conduct—things that he established in his life long before he was ever converted. What am I leading to here? Please be thinking about that.

Romans 7:18-19 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells no good thing: for to will is present with me [that is, the desire to do the right thing]; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.

Please understand that Paul is NOT saying that he was always sinning. He is graphically and vividly describing *a struggle* that went on within him.

Romans 7:20-25 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man [that is, in his mind]: But I see another law in my members [in the flesh], warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Romans was written by one of the most mature Christians that has ever lived. I read one man's opinion this week—that Paul was more sanctified at the end of his first week of conversion than most of us are at the end of a lifetime.

Now, understand this: Just as surely as **justification** does away with no law, neither does it do away with human nature; and you all know it. You have been converted. You have been baptized. You have received God's Holy Spirit, and yet human nature (just like it was in Paul) still resides there.

Justification does not do away with human nature. Justification does away with the death penalty; and, because of the righteousness of Christ, it allows us access into the presence of God in order that **sanctification unto holiness** can take place. Remember that!

Let us go to I John 3. What we are leading to here, brethren, is why it is necessary to have law under the New Covenant. We just saw that justification does not take away human nature.

I John 3:1-3 Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: But we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man [including the apostle Paul, there in Romans 7] that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure.

What this scripture is saying is what *must* occur after justification.

Purification must take place! We must be purified so that the Word of God is so lodged in our minds that it is the basis of our thinking in every area of life, so that it is in our heart; and then only good will come out of us! Is that plain? Jesus put it this way: He said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Become you perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Are you perfect at baptism? Paul said:

Hebrews 6:1 ...Let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works.

That same Paul also said that we are to grow to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and that this is a formidable task no one can doubt. How far we can actually develop towards the "end"—in this case, in this sermon—is not the issue. But this is the reason why *justification is not salvation*. It gives us access. And, *if* things continue as they were at the point of justification, *then* we will be saved. But I made it very clear in the last sermon that we can fall away.

Five or six verses after Paul said that in Hebrews 6:1, he also said that if people fall away, it is impossible to get them to repent again. Is Paul lying? Is God lying? We read Hebrews 10, beginning in verse 26, that people who do not obey God after they are baptized (he was talking to members) are trampling under foot the Son of God and putting Him to open shame. They are abusing the justification that they received as a result of God's grace and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

So how far we develop is not the point in this sermon. But I want us all to clearly understand that there is more to God's purpose following justification. Romans 7, all by itself, ought to testify to us of human nature's persistent grip on the heart.

Let us look at our Model—Jesus Christ—and what was in His heart:

John 14:24 He that loves Me not keeps not My sayings. And the word [Genesis 3—the Word of God, the law of God] which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me.

What did Jesus act on? He acted on the Word of God. That is what was on His heart.

John 15:15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knows not what his lord does. But I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.

Hang on to that last thought. "All things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." Now imagine, brethren. This is just in a couple chapters in the book of John.

John 17:8 For I have given unto them the words which You have Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from You, and they have believed that You did send Me.

John 17:14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

John 8:26 I have many things to say and to judge of you. But He that sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him.

That was what was in Christ's heart. In the broadest sense, God's Word is God's law—just as surely as it was in Eden, to Adam and Eve. And, in fact, the word *torah* actually more accurately means "instruction." However, its popular usage has come to mean (1) the first five books or (2) the Ten Commandments. But what was in Jesus' heart was *all of God's Word*. This is the same One who said, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." and "What defiles the man is what comes out of the heart." So what Jesus *said* and how He *acted* came from God's Word. He did it perfectly.

Now, the argument that the Sabbath, holy days, tithing, and food laws do not appear as a direct commandment in the New Testament is hollow—because Jesus heard directly from the Father which day to keep, and it is very clear that He kept it and them; and He passed them on to the apostles in His instruction to them. Right out of the horse's mouth! From the Father to the Son, He said, "Keep the Sabbath." And Jesus did.

In addition to that, when the church began, the only part of the Bible available was the Old Testament—which is God's inspired Word. And the only days commanded to be kept are in it (the Sabbath and the holy days); and so is tithing; and so are the food laws. So these are the Scriptures that Paul told Timothy were able to make him "wise to salvation" (II Timothy 3: 15-17).

That the apostles kept the Sabbath and the holy days is without argument, even from the liberal Protestant commentators. Even they say that the apostles kept them—in a new spirit. And Paul said to "follow me as I follow Christ." And to say that one does not have to keep them because they are not commanded in the New Testament is a superficial dodge.

The Old Covenant was designed by God to give to those who made it with Him, and mankind, a historical record that in order to have salvation—and all that salvation implies—mankind must have a relationship with God **before** salvation is given. From that *relationship* will grow a person who is

fit to live in the Kingdom of God and to inherit all things with Jesus Christ. The New Covenant is designed to achieve that, with the willing **cooperation** of those who make it with God.

So let us review some verses at the close of this sermon.

John 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, "This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent."

What that means is that the purpose of the manifestation of the works of God in Christ (everything He said, everything He did—all the way up to and including the crucifixion, and the resurrection) is to produce **faith**. You see, "belief." This is *the work of God*. Everything God did through Jesus Christ was to produce faith! Why is that so important?

Hebrews 4:1-2 Let us [Christians] therefore fear [be concerned] lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

There is why Israel failed: Their faith broke down! Did Adam and Eve's faith break down? They saw God. They talked to Him. They heard Him command what they should do. And yet their belief, their trust in Him, dissolved under the deception of Satan the Devil. The Israelites who left Egypt saw multitudes of plagues. They saw multitudes of miracles. They saw a nation devastated. They saw water split through an ocean [or, sea]. They saw God feed them for forty years. And yet, as Paul says in another place, their carcasses were strewn from one end to the other. Now we know why. *Their faith dissolved*. It disappeared. They stopped believing what God *said* and what God *did*.

Now, connect that with John 6. Jesus said, "Everything of God that has been manifested through Me—all of the works (meaning, "everything I have said, everything that I did—up to and including the crucifixion and resurrection"),

everything has been done by God **to produce faith!** This is the way God is working. This is the work of God—that you **believe!** And not fail like Adam and Eve did. And not fail, like the Israelites did."

God does not want our faith to dissolve—where we disbelieve what He says. This is the God who gave those Ten Commandments. In each case, those people believed that they knew better than God.

And we can relate to that. It sounds just like teenagers in their relationship with their parents. They believe that their parents exist, but they do not believe what their parents say. [They think] that their parents are trying to restrict them, that the parents are harsh, the parents do not understand. "They are old fuddy-duddies. They do not get it. They are not modern. They are stuck back in the '50s, or '40s, or '30s." It is the same principle.

Ephesians 2:8 [Paul says:] For by grace are you saved through faith.

And that **faith** is also *a gift*. That gift of faith comes through God's grace and justification.

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ [Paul says]: Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith *of* . . .

This gift *of* faith! Your Bible may say "in." Again, look in an interlinear. It says, "*of*"—just as clear and plain as anything.

Galatians 2:20 . . . by the faith *of* the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

I am not expounding on these scriptures a lot. I am just trying to connect them together so that you will see a process at work here.

James 2:17-22 Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my

faith by my works. [The faith of Jesus Christ works, directed by the Word of God.] You believe that there is one God; you do well. The demons also believe, and tremble. But will you know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? See you how faith works with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

It is very clear. Brethren, the New Covenant does not do away with laws. Rather, it creates the circumstances by which faith is enhanced so that salvation is achieved. Understand that, please.

So Romans 8:7 gives us discernment that *carnality cannot be hidden*. It will reveal itself in a resistance to submitting to the Word of God. It will reveal itself in a desire to do as little as possible to be saved. It will reveal itself in demanding a direct "*Thus saith the Lord...*" [statement], rather than seeing the intent of the law, or an example of a godly life lived. It will reveal itself in adding to or taking away from the Word of God—thus providing excuses, or rationalizations, for going one's own way.

Let us conclude with Galatians 5:16. Reflect, if you will, upon Romans 7 and the things that Paul said there. But here he said:

Galatians 5:16-17 This I say then, "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. And these are contrary the one to the other; so that you cannot do the things that you would [or, like it is an order—"You can't do the things that you would carnally like to do."]

As I said earlier, seeing carnality in ourselves does not mean that we are unconverted. But it does clearly mean that there is **a war** going on within us for control of our heart, and thus the direction of our life. Is it going to be "on to perfection" or to *Gehenna*? "See, I have set before you this day—life on the one hand and death on the other. Choose life!" Do you see what justification does? So is it going to be *on to perfection* or to *Gehenna*?

God, under the New Covenant, will work with us mightily. He will give us the faith of Jesus Christ, but it has to be used. He says that He will never leave us nor forsake us. By His grace, He provides every help for us. But He, too, must see which side wins.

The reason for the New Covenant is not to do away with laws, but to bring God's purpose to perfection. No government will work successfully for long—even God's government—unless all three factors are in place. Two of them are (1) the loving and serving government and (2) perfect laws that cover in broad principles every aspect of relationships. And the third is (3) being prepared, through the New Covenant.

All of our works will not earn justification; but justification does put us in obligation to obey, lest we fall into the same condemnation we were in before. And then, along the way, the works provide development towards perfection and the Kingdom of God.