
Sermon Notes

January 24, 2021

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

In the Name of the Law 1 Timothy 1:8-11

Staying On Track

- ❖ Paul's deep love for the church at Ephesus causes him to be deeply concerned about those who are taking the church down the wrong track
 - losing sight of the gospel while majoring on the minors
 - a continual state of not understanding what they're talking about
- ❖ If the church takes its eyes off of Christ and the authority of God's living, infallible, inerrant Word, it will inevitably head down the wrong track (1 Timothy 1:19, 4:1, 5:15, 6:10, 6:21)

Using the Law Lawfully

- ❖ What is the relationship between God's law and the gospel?
 - some see obedience to the law as part of the pathway to salvation
 - some see law and gospel as being opposed to each other: "I'm under grace, not the law."
- ❖ Law and gospel complement each other
 - rest on the same moral base

- salvation has always been by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone
- ❖ Three lawful uses of God's law
 - a **condemning** use
 - reveals sin, awakens us to our spiritual guilt
 - Luther: "The law is a mighty hammer to crush the self-righteousness of human beings."
 - a **restraining** use
 - the role of civil law in restraining wrongdoers
 - law is necessary for a well-ordered society
 - a **sanctifying** use
 - teaches us God's will for our lives
 - reading, studying, meditating on God's Law arouses our desires, passion, and affections so that we are inclined and willing to pursue obedience
- ❖ Understanding God's law alongside our total inability to fulfill it perfectly inclines us to depend fully on God's grace
 - left by itself, the law is not good news
 - the law leaves us hungry and thirsty for the good news that God loves us enough to do something about our sin

Who is the Law For?

- ❖ The sins Paul lists in vv. 9-10 line up with the 10 commandments

- **ungodly and sinners** (those who fail to honor God as God and have no regard for anything sacred) [1 & 2]
 - **unholy and profane** (those who don't keep the Sabbath holy and who profane God's name by abusing it and trampling it underfoot) [4 & 3]
 - **those who strike their fathers and mothers** (those who dishonor father and mother) [5]
 - **murderers** (those who kill) [6]
 - **the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality** (those who commit adultery) [7]
 - **enslavers** (those who steal by kidnapping others and trafficking them as slaves) [8]
 - **liars and perjurers** (those who bear false witness against others) [9]
 - **whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine** (could include the sinful attitude of coveting) [10]
- ❖ **Sound** = a medical word (hygiene)
 - sound doctrine is healthy doctrine that leads to "clean living"
 - unsound doctrine leads to an unsound life
 - ❖ All the heinous sins listed in vv. 9-10 stand in opposition to **the gospel of the glory of the blessed God** (v.11)
 - the gospel calls us to the same conduct and behavior as the law
 - the gospel does not make the law obsolete but it does underscore that the law has no power to save (Gal 2:16)
 - ❖ The gospel does not lower God's legal standards
 - ❖ Anything that moves away from the gospel or dethrones it as the centerpiece of the church is diseased and dangerous

- ❖ 2020 survey of self-professed evangelicals: thestateoftheology.com

Safeguarding the Gospel

- ❖ All who follow Christ have the responsibility to be on the alert for false teaching and for the teachers who promote it
 - look at the understanding of Scripture being presented
 - examine the goals of the one who is teaching
 - look at motives
 - examine the effect/fruit that comes from the teaching
- ❖ Given Paul's experience, the repeated record of church history, the massive decline and defection from gospel truth among the evangelical church of our day, it is essential for us to remain vigilant about these matters

Personal Application

1. How would you explain the relationship that exists between God's law and the gospel in your own words? Do you see law and gospel as working together or in opposition to one another? Why?
2. Read again Paul's list of those for whom the law is for in vv. 9-10. As you consider all the ways in which you break the 10 commandments, praise God for the way in which the Lord's law continues to drive you to Christ and show you God's will for your life.

What issues of false teaching are you aware of as being most prevalent in and dangerous to the church of our time? What are you doing to safeguard yourself from falling prey to any of these traps of Satan?