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Tillamook, Oregon

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Train Up a Child – Raising Our Children as the Lord Raises His

04 – The Law is Our Tutor to Lead us to Christ

August 22, 2021

Sermon Text: Romans 3:19-20

Scripture Reading: Romans 3:9-20

Pro 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

We left off last time having seen that every human being enters this world born in sin, a slave to it by nature, alienated from God, dead to God, under just condemnation, and even hostile to God's Law and unable to please God. The child is "in Adam" and under the curse that expelled Adam and Eve from Eden. We really are "east of Eden" as Steinbeck's novel is titled (it's multiple parallel stories of life lived in a fallen and sinful world).

Gen 3:24 He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

If "cursed" sounds like an exaggeration of the sinner's condition, listen to it here:

Gal 3:10-13 For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." (11) Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." (12) But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them." (13) Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—

Therefore, all human beings who are not in Christ, all who have not been born again and been made a new creation in Him, are pronounced cursed by God, just as the curse came upon

Adam when he was expelled from Eden. The great reminder of this cursed condition is *death*.

Now, what then is all this talk of saying that the Law of God still has a role in raising up our children? Isn't the Law a bad thing – something to be rejected by us. Doesn't the Bible say things like:

Gal 2:16 yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

And so, you have many professing Christians who believe that the Law is a bad thing that has no place in our lives and certainly no place in raising our children. This is a grievous and damaging error. The Law of God is a very good thing:

Rom 7:7-13 What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." (8) But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. (9) I was once

alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. (10) The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. (11) For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. (12) So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. (13) Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

God's Law is holy and righteous and good. The problem lies in man, in his sin, and *it is the Law that exposes that sin*. God's Law in fact:

1Co 15:56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

Sin is *energized* by the Law. You see it in children who are still in Adam. You give them Law – you shall not, and then they do! Or "you shall," and then they don't.

Rom 3:19-20 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

(20) For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

See it? We enter this world “under the law.” In Adam we broke God’s Law and came under the curse. The operative covenant for everyone outside of Christ, that is to say – the document that defines the sinner’s relationship with God – is the Law. And what is to be found in that covenant? The curse. Guilt. Death. Hostility. Hopelessness.

Eph 2:12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Listen then again:

(Romans 3:20) For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Understand? *The Law of God* (just think of it as the 10 commandments)... *energizes sin, it thereby shows the sinner his sin. It shows him, well, listen to Paul again:*

Gal 3:21-25 Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. (22) But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. (23) Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. **(24) So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.** (25) But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,

The Law of God functions as a parent, you might say, with the purpose of preparing the child for Christ. In what way? Specifically, by showing that child his or her need of Christ. Showing them their sin. Listen to Paul again:

Gal 4:1-7 I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, (2) but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father.

(3) In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. (4) But when the fullness of time had come,

God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, (5) to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (6) And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” (7) So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

The good news of the gospel of Christ, you see, is only good news to people who have seen the bad news – that they are enslaved to sin, that they are only slaves and not sons or heirs of God’s promise. Only then when they see their misery and sin will they understand their need of Christ.

Col 2:13-14 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, (14) **by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.**

Wait? What was that? It was *Christ* who was nailed to the cross, not some legal document? What is Paul talking about?

Christ was made to be sin for us, He became cursed by God in our place,

His name was inserted into the accusatory instrument of the Law which found us guilty and condemned us to death, so that when Christ was nailed to the cross and died, the demands of the Law for our death were satisfied. Perfectly. The record of our debt of death and the document that pronounced God’s curse upon us, was fulfilled by the blood of Christ.

We Have it Backwards

But what is happening in most churches today? What is it that people are being taught? What is the “gospel” that children are hearing in Sunday School and which is embraced in their homes? It is this:

God loves everyone. He loves you. Jesus died on the cross to show us this. The cross is God’s announcement to everyone of how much He loves them.

That is a false gospel. That is not the doctrine of the cross that the Bible teaches us. *And yet it is what parents are being told by their churches and by the big-name authors and celebrity church leaders that they are to tell their children. The cross doesn’t really accomplish anything, they claim. It is just a picture of God’s love for you which is meant to motivate you to love Him back.*

“Johnny, see Jesus on the cross? See how much He loves you? Don’t you love Him too?”

“Oh yes, mommy/daddy, I do love Jesus.”

Johnny is then pronounced a Christian, saved and forgiven, and on his way to heaven. No one is to ever question his salvation no matter how Johnny chooses to live in his life.

But Johnny is not saved. Johnny does not love God or God’s Law. Because Johnny is not born again. He is still in Adam, condemned and under the curse of the Law.

What IS the cross? We have already seen it in these many scriptures this morning. *The cross of Christ is the bloody, awful place where the Father executed the Son in our stead. It is the place where the Son of God, who knew no sin at all, was made to be sin for us, was condemned and cursed by the Father, so that by His death our infinite debt demanded by the Law for our sin, was paid in full.*

(Romans 3:20) For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

And this is the point to which every child must be brought if he or she is ever going to come to genuine faith in Christ and be born again. *Through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.*

Do YOU know your sin? Has God’s Law by His Spirit ever brought you to the end of yourself so that you...well, so that you know what Paul meant by this:

Rom 7:23-24 but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. (24) Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Do YOU know your sin? Has your notion of your supposed worth in God’s sight ever been smashed by the Law so that you have come to see the perfect, perfect, perfect holiness of the God who cannot look upon evil – upon you?

Because THIS is what must happen to your children...to everyone...if they are going to see their need of Christ. Most people who claim to be Christians actually do not believe that they need Christ. Surely *they* do not need Him to be cursed by God for them...after all, God loves everyone, right? This is

another gospel, another Jesus, another spirit-

2Co 11:4 For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.

This is all backwards. Little Johnny does not need to be told that God loves him and that Jesus always forgives him if he is sorry when he is bad. No, Johnny needs to look at himself in the mirror of God's Law and see what God sees in every human being apart from Christ.

Raise up Your Children

How then is the Law of God to be used in the lives of our children? Well, it is to be used just as God uses it. We must tell our children God's commandments:

Exo 20:3-20 "You shall have no other gods before me.

(4) "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. (5) You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I

the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, (6) but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

(7) "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

(8) "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. (9) Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, (10) but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. (11) For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

(12) "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

(13) "You shall not murder.

(14) "You shall not commit adultery.

(15) “You shall not steal.

(16) “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

(17) “You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.”

(18) Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off (19) and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.” (20) Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.”

Let me ask you this: *Do you think that before God gave Israel these laws that He told Moses to have all the children go off to children's church because what He was about to say was too terrible for them to hear?*

Of course not. They all were there, and all heard that terrifying trumpet and voice. They were “seeing” God apart from Christ. And it is only by Christ, by Him saying to us “come forth” from the

tomb with Me after dying with Me,” that this great change takes place:

Heb 12:18-26 For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest (19) and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. (20) For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” (21) Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.”

(22) But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, (23) and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, (24) and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

(25) See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. (26) At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake

not only the earth but also the heavens.”

If anyone is not born again by faith in Christ and if they depart this world in that condition, if they are then under the Law when Christ comes again to render the final judgment, then it will not be Mount Zion that they come to. It will be Mount Sinai, in their sin, condemned justly by God’s Law.

I hope that we all are seeing then even more clearly the dangerous condition our children are in when they enter this present world. And how vital it is that they each one come to know and feel their peril and their need of a Savior. This is the role that God’s Law plays, and as parents we must be certain that we do not neutralize its effectiveness in our children by bypassing it and assuring our children that God loves them, all is just fine with them, no worries. After all, you know, “Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world.....”.

But here is the reality we see in Scripture. Surely this is not the Jesus most people claim to know:

2Th 1:5-10 This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— (6) since indeed God

considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, (7) and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels (8) in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. (9) They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, (10) when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

Warning Against Deception

When real Christians have their eyes opened to God’s truth, they realize just how deceived they used to be – deceived by the devil, by their own sin, by the lies of false preachers and the perversions of the Bible spread by fake Christians. And increasingly they resolve – “I never want to be deceived again!”

Let me warn all of us about this business of *deception*. So that, among other benefits, *we never again pass on the enemy’s lies to our children. So that we never again present to our children a false Jesus, a false gospel, a false god.*

Consider this carefully –

Isa 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

Many, many, many people who claim to be Christians today are calling the real Jesus – *bad* – and a fake Jesus – *good*. They are rejecting the Light of Christ and calling darkness, light. The sweetness of Christ is bitter to them.

What does God think about all this? What is His commentary on people who call evil good, and good evil? WOE! He pronounces His woe of judgment upon them.

Luk 11:33-35 “No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. (34) Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. (35) Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness.

Be careful. Be very, very careful. We are surrounded by a culture of lies and the realm of religion is in the lead when it comes to deception. No parent who really loves their children wants to even think of their children ending up in hell. Therefore, real love will love God’s truth and present that truth faithfully to

our kids. That love brings the chastisement of God’s Law to them so that they might be led to salvation in Christ.

Heb 12:6-7 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” (7) It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?