

Chronology, Ethnicity and Transition, Part 6

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[0 : 00] Well, this morning's service is going to be a little different. I want to preface Gary's reading of the scriptures with a few propositions, and we're going to be talking in regard to law and grace. And the question is, where does the greater confusion lie? Is it in law or in grace?

Both qualify for being grossly misunderstood, not only by non-Christians, but by Christians as well. It's a wonderful thing that we need not be fully familiar with the grace of God in order to be saved by it. Who then could be saved?

It is the grace of God that we need not know all about grace in order to be saved by it. The law does exactly what it is supposed to do, that is, to reveal our sin.

It does not do what it is not supposed to do, that is, to save us or to justify us. Theoretically versus practically.

[1 : 20] Yes, it is true. In theory, you can be saved by keeping the law. That is true. But it is true only in theory for the simple reason that none of us in our fallen nature are capable of keeping the law of God.

We move into it with failure from the outset. That's because, contrary to what a lot of people think, even what some Christians may think, God did not give the law so that those who keep it will be rewarded by going to heaven.

You'd be surprised how many people out in the world think that. That if you observe the Ten Commandments, if you keep them, well, most of them. All the time. Well, most of the time.

And if you do a pretty good job at it, and you're pretty sorry for those that you didn't keep, that's good enough. God will let you in. That's the world's way of thinking about this. Completely foreign to what God has revealed in his word.

Heaven is not the reward that God gives you for being a nice person while you were here on earth. Completely contrary to that. In theory, one need only obey and comply with the 633 commandments, and you will stand justified before God.

[2 : 45] But whoever did that? Just one person. Only our Lord Jesus Christ kept the law, and he kept it perfectly. And, by the way, that is part and parcel of what made him an acceptable sacrifice for those of us who didn't.

Jesus was impeccable, and he was, by his very nature, incapable of sin. And so, he kept the law of God perfectly, and as he said, he did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill the law.

But for the rest of us, we don't even come close. The righteousness that God accepts is clearly qualitative, not quantitative.

And yet, this is another thing that the world is into very deeply and in great error. Then, the question is, how righteous do I have to be in order to be accepted by God?

It's a completely wrong question. Because when you say, how righteous, or how much righteousness do I have to have, you are talking qualitatively.

[3 : 57] But the Bible doesn't. You're talking quantitatively, not qualitatively. And the Bible speaks of righteousness as a quality, not a quantity. It isn't how much righteousness you need.

It's what kind of righteousness you need. And the answer is simple. You need a perfect righteousness. Well, who can provide that?

Nobody. That's the whole point. That's why God has concluded all under sin that we might be justified by faith. Because none of us meets the qualifications. And for any who would object and say, well, I don't think it is right or fair for God to require something from us that we can't provide, and then condemn us for not having it.

What's fair about that? That isn't fair. Is it? Is it?

Well, what if God turns right around and provides for you a righteousness you do not have and do not deserve, and he gives it to you as a free gift?

[5 : 16] That's called grace. That's exactly what God has done in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. So, we're going to ask Gary to come now and read a passage from Romans that explains that.

And then I want to brief you regarding something that I said a couple of weeks ago about this little tract. This is the gospel written by William R. Newell.

I told you how impressed I was with it, with its brevity and its clarity. And I am. And I've encouraged you to distribute them. And I've said I want to blanket Springfield with this tract.

Well, I've changed my mind. I don't want to do that. And I want you to tell me why we're not going to do that.

After I read a portion of it to you, I want you to think about this. I shared this with our prayer meeting group Wednesday night. And they were in complete agreement. I want you to hear for yourself.

[6 : 23] Understand what the objection is to this. And then we'll talk about correcting it. So, Gary, come and read a portion of Scripture from Romans, if you would. Good morning.

Good morning. Please turn to Romans chapter 3. And in Romans chapter 3, we will start with verse 19.

And go through chapter 4, verse 5. Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law.

So that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God. Because by the works of the law, no flesh will be justified in his sight.

For through the law comes the knowledge of sin. But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.

[7 : 51] Even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe. For there is no distinction.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. For all have sinned and fall short of the law. Being justified as a gift by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in his blood through faith. This was to demonstrate his righteousness.

Because in the forbearance of God, he passed over the sins previously committed. For the demonstration, I say, of his righteousness at the present time.

So that he would be justified in the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting?

[9 : 04] It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law. Or is God the God of Jews only?

Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also. Since indeed, God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

Do we then nullify the law through faith? May it never be. On the contrary, we establish the law. What then shall we say? That Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?

[10 : 14] For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about. But not before God.

For what does the scripture say? Abraham believed God. And it was credited to him as righteousness.

For now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.

Absolutely amazing truths are recorded in that brief passage in Romans.

And it is just stunning. I've been dealing with this and preaching this for 62 years.

[11 : 27] And I've never gotten used to it. Never gotten over it. What I want you to consider now is something that Marie and I began talking about maybe a week or 10 days ago as we were having our morning reading out in the breezeway and having coffee and watching the birds come in for breakfast.

And Marie has for some time been seriously concerned about some family members who were almost certain they possibly do not know the Lord.

And it looks very much like they do not. And they're not very open to the truth or to discuss the gospel. And was thinking about sending them this little tract, thinking that they might read it because it's so brief and so succinct.

And it didn't occur to me, but it occurred to her as she tried to put herself and her own mind in the position that she thought these relatives of hers would be in when they read this.

And I want to see if you are able to come up with the same kind of conclusion that she did. So please listen carefully and see if this would be appropriate for the population as a whole, just to distribute in mass, like I earlier suggested.

[13:06] This is the gospel. The failure or refusal to discern the Pauline gospel as a separate and new revelation and not a development from Judaism accounts for most of the confusion in many people's minds today as regards just what the gospel is.

Paul's gospel will suffer no admixture for works on the one hand or religious pretensions and performances on the other. It is as simple and clear as the sunlight from heaven.

The end of man is where God begins in Romans 3 at what might be called the opening of the Pauline revelation. Pauline revelation. What's wrong with that?

Okay. My darling daughter. Lynette, why don't we have a mic? Have we got a mic back here? Okay. Get that pair of young legs on that microphone. I must confess, as I read this, I was just so excited. And I thought, boy, this is the answer for Springfield. We just need to get this thing out there. Need to get it out there by the thousands. Okay. The microphone is coming.

[14:37] And I hope the rest of you will be prepared and willing to share any insight that you have as well. Go ahead, honey. It's just not basic enough for the average person out there today. Nobody knows who the Pauline, what all about the Pauline epistles.

And they have no clue for that. And I'm so glad you're rethinking this because I wanted to talk to you about this. And I thought, if you have printed up 10,000 of these, I can't say anything about it now. But it really needs to be on the average person's level. Yeah. Yeah. Unfortunately, you are absolutely right. And, you know, it never occurred to me.

And I don't think it would occur to anybody who is really familiar with the gospel thinking in terms of who's going to be reading that. And there's another comment or question over in the back.

You are so right. That is exactly. Hey, it's a great article. It's good. Every word of it's true. I appreciate it. But, yeah.

[15:41] Roger? I think this is more suited to somebody that maybe is a believer or very familiar with the Bible and wants to know more, wants to know the right way.

But they've got to have some background. And the average person out there that you might meet in just ordinary daily living, most of them just have absolutely no clue.

And you know what? Unfortunately, this is also true of a lot of people who are in church every Sunday. They just don't have it. Back there, you.

Okay. Joanne? I took a handful of those home. Was it last Sunday they were out?

I don't remember. But I took them home and I read one. And I thought, because I have family that needs to know the Lord.

[16:42] And I brought them back. And put them back on the table because this is not something that I feel like they'll ingest and understand.

Unfortunately, I could not agree more. I just stand corrected, you know. I just, all I, I guess I was thinking that everybody else was thinking with the way I was thinking.

But they're not thinking that way. Okay. Okay. Let's say we have a little baby. We don't try to feed him steak. We feed him the soft milk.

That's right. That's right. And frankly, you know when this was written? Mr. Newell passed away, I think, in the 1970s.

This was probably written in the 1920s. And let me, let me share this with you. And then I want to hear Roger's comment. Years ago, when Francis Schaeffer, Dr. Francis Schaeffer, who's been with the Lord now for a number of years, was conducting a seminar in Indianapolis.

[17:50] A group of, a group of elders from Grace Bible Church, I'm quite sure is probably 75, 76, something like that, 1975, went over to Indianapolis to hear him.

I'll never forget it because that's when I had that Chevy station wagon with a carload of elders and got pulled over for speeding by the highway patrol. And no, they never let me forget it either.

Anyway, Dr. Schaeffer was going over the need to communicate the gospel to people today. And he said, there was a time, he said, when I was a younger man, Dr. Schaeffer was probably in his 60s then.

He said, when you could begin talking to somebody about the gospel, and you could use John 3, 16. And they were familiar with that, but not anymore. You get people, John 3, 16 now, and they haven't a clue what you're talking about.

You want to talk to people about the gospel now, you have to start in Genesis. Because the whole culture is different. And the lack of biblical education and understanding in the culture today is pathetic.

[19 : 02] I mean, it is, and you know whose fault this is? It's the fault of the churches that have not communicated the word of God. So, just beginning with John 3, 16 and assume that they know what you're talking about.

They don't. About the only thing people know about John 3, 16 is, yeah, I remember seeing something about that at a football game. That guy was holding up this thing.

It said John 3, 16 on it. And I wondered what that was all about. I thought maybe it was his location, you know, he was in the 16th seat in the third row or something, whatever. People have no clue at all.

And we are remiss, and I'm guilty of that, of assuming that people know more than they know. And they don't. Roger? Well, you hit the bullseye there because the last few, I don't know, probably a couple years, I've been catching Ken Ham off and on.

And he always says you've got to start at the beginning. That's true. And he's right. Yeah, yeah. And that always sends me back to the Bill Faye thing. Do you have any spiritual beliefs?

[20 : 09] That's his first question, you know, once you get the conversation going. Yeah, yeah. And you have to start there because they just don't know it. Yeah, yeah. And that is a good way to open the conversation, too, because there's something, there is something disengaging and disarming about asking people a question whereby you are surveying them and you are asking for their opinion on something rather than just be telling them something.

You're asking them something. Do you have any spiritual beliefs? And it's amazing what might be revealed in an answer to a question like that. And a follow-up kind of question that I think is very, very powerful.

And that is this. If what you believe now is not true, would you want to know it? That's a pretty penetrating question.

That's a serious question. Because probably most people assume that whatever it is they believe, yeah, yeah, that's true. But just to consider the possibility, if what you believe now is not true, would you want to know it?

I think a person would be really hard-pressed to say, no, no, I wouldn't want, I would rather continue believing what isn't true than I would to know that it isn't.

[21 : 37] Not very many people would be that arrogant. Maybe we ought to try trying to finding them, you know? And you'll get some real hits before you get a miss.

And that's something to think about. Anybody else comment or question? Okay, well, what we're talking about here today and what was fashioned in our scripture portion has to do with the law. And I put this insert in your bulletin two or three weeks ago. And I hope that you kept it or read it. And I consider this particular segment so important that I photocopied it again and put it in this bulletin. And if you appreciate these articles as much as I do, and this is just dynamite grace stuff. You won't find this stuff in most publications. And it was contributed by Cornelius Stamm years ago, and he's with the Lord now. And I have been so impressed with this content and his explanation, the simplicity and the clarity of it, that we've ordered several books.

[22 : 48] And they did come in. And there's a stack of them back there now by him. And it's called Two Minutes with the Bible. And it includes these articles that are in today's handout as well as the others.

And actually, it's a devotional designed to go from January through December. And I would recommend that you go through it every year. And the fact that this is already October, don't let that dissuade you for a moment.

If you want to get one and just pick up where it is, and then when you finish the rest of the year, start back in January and go through it again. And I'm telling you, the enlightenment, the

enlightenment in that book, in these articles that takes about two minutes to read, is absolutely stunning.

And what you will find is spiritual meat that will stick to your spiritual bones. And this one article here is so good and so succinct.

I'm talking about September 15. You would be surprised. I'm not going to read the article to you.

But, well, I am going to jump in halfway down where Paul gives this exhortation where he says in verses 38 and 39 here.

[24 : 11] I'm halfway down the page now on this column that is September 15, Can the Law Save? And Paul is preaching and he says, Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man, of course he's talking about Jesus of Nazareth, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.

And by him, all that believe are justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Wow. Now, we read that and we say, well, you know, that's nice. That's a wonderful truth. But who doesn't know that? Listen, if we had any idea how that statement impacted those people who heard it for the first time, you talk about a bombshell, this was a bombshell, that in the first place you're saying that we cannot be justified from all things by keeping the law of Moses.

And do you know that's exactly what many Jews thought that they were supposed to do and could do? But why was the law given? It was never given so that you could keep it, please God, and then go to heaven.

The law was given to show you what you're made of. You can't cut it. You don't make it. You don't measure up. You are not acceptable.

[25 : 47] You are a sinner. The law was given to reveal sin, not to be kept so as to earn our salvation.

This was a bombshell in that first century because the Jew labored under that assumption. And you know, the built-in idea that it was never given for the purpose of keeping it completely, perfectly, etc. And I mentioned theoretically before, but nobody ever did that. And this is why was woven in to Judaism the whole sacrificial system.

The need for the sacrifice of these animals that went on year after year, decade after decade, century after century, all those animals being sacrificed was screaming loud and clear that we are unjustified, that the Jews who were keeping them and sacrificing the animals were unjustified.

They were not making it. That's the whole point of the sacrifice. You don't measure up. You don't measure up. So the innocent animal has its life taken from it as a substitute for you.

[26 : 58] And all of that was designed to pave the way for the ultimate sacrificial substitute that would eventually be made in the person of Christ.

Wow. The law was never intended to save. And the law is misunderstood.

Look at that on September 16. Three misconceptions that most people entertain about the law of God and its Ten Commandments. Most people have a vague notion that the law always was, that it must have been given to Adam or soon after.

Actually, it was given by Moses about 1500 BC. That is, after 2,500 years of human history had elapsed.

So mankind lived on earth for about 2,500 years without the law or the Ten Commandments. Well, how was the righteousness of God displayed before that?

[28 : 03] If this codifies it, if this spells it out word for word in detail, what God required, etc. What were the requirements before? And how did man know what he was supposed to?

So with that, I want to close. We've only got a few moments, but I want you to go to Romans chapter 2. We were just there in the neighborhood with what was being read in chapter 3.

And I want you to come to Romans chapter 2. And here Paul is making the case that despite the fact that Jews and Gentiles have a great many differences between them as regards a whole lot of things, there are no differences between them as their relationship to God.

So let's just begin reading, if we may, with verse 14, because it just spells out, goes right to the issue.

For when Gentiles, and Gentiles are not Jews. For when Gentiles who do not have the law. That's the law of Moses, the Ten Commandments and everything that went with it.

[29 : 16] And why was it that Gentiles didn't have it? Well, they weren't supposed to have it. It was never given to them. It was never intended for them. It was given to the Jew. So when Gentiles who do not have the law do instinctively the things of the law.

Now, why do they do that? What's instinctive? What does instinctive mean? When you do something instinctively, what is it that you were thinking about when you do it? And I think the answer is nothing. You aren't thinking about anything. You just do it instinctively. You do it automatically.

You do it in the sense that when you touch a hot stove and you don't know it's hot. Do you leave your hand on the stove while you tell yourself, hmm, my hand is on a hot stove. I probably should remove it. No. What you do is just like that. Instinctively. The impulse and the pain and the nerve coordination flashes a signal to the brain in split second time.

[30 : 34] And you do it instinctively. You do it automatically without even thinking about it. And what Paul is saying here, that the Jews, that the Gentiles who are not Jews, do instinctively the things of the law.

And what would that consist of? What does that mean? What are the things of the law? It just means this. Right things and wrong things. Good things and bad things. The law is filled with thou shalt and thou shalt not. And the law is just saturated with those things. And what this text is saying is that every human being has implanted within their psyche, within their human spirit, within their constitutional makeup, the essential knowledge and understanding of right and wrong.

You just know. You know that you are doing something wrong. And you have a conscience that helps the process along. That convicts you. That you have a conscience that tells on you.

[31 : 58] It will rat you out that what you did was wrong. So in every culture all over the world, however far back you want to go, men have always known it was wrong to take someone else's property.

It was wrong to take someone else's wife. It was wrong to take someone else's life. They just, how did they know that? Who taught them? It was bred in them. Instinctively, they have that in them. God put that in. Matter of fact, if it had not been for that, I'm not sure the human race would have even been able to survive. But it is there.

And we have that essential understanding. And this, by the way, provides the whole basis for guilt and the conscience and everything. Remember when Adam and Eve disobeyed God. The first evidence of that was guilt. Because guilt, guilt is an awareness that you have committed something wrong.

[33 : 01] It is an emotional pain that reminds you you did something wrong. And guilt tends to produce fear. Fear of being punished for what you did wrong.

Fear of being embarrassed about what you did wrong. Fear of some kind of repercussions from it. And this is why Adam and Eve, I'm convinced, logical thing to do was, they heard the voice of the Lord coming in the cooler garden.

Hey, we've got to hide. What are you hiding for? You always before went out to meet him in the cool of the day and you walked with him. Why are you hiding? Adam, where art thou?

Oh, there you are. What are you doing there? What are you hiding behind this bush? And what is this? What are these fig leaves you've got on? What's all of this about? Well, we heard your voice and we hid.

We were afraid because we were naked. Really? Well, who told you you were naked? I created you naked.

[34 : 06] And it didn't bother you before. What happened? The guilt factor and an awareness, something settled in on them that had not been there before. And you know what they did? They transmitted that to Cain and to Abel.

Cain and Abel murdered by Cain, but Cain passed it on. And others who were born, Cain's wife, whoever that was, probably a sister.

Someone has said, I can't believe that Cain married his sister. That's a relative. But as Ken Ham has pointed out, you married a relative too. Did you know that?

Did you know that you married a relative? Because if they're not a relative, they're not a human being. Who is that you married? It was a relative. It just wasn't a close relative.

That would be incest, but that's a whole different thing. So all of this guilt comes in here. And this is exactly what the gospel is designed to address.

[35 : 05] So it's a beautiful thing, and it's just absolutely amazing. Gentiles do not have the law, do instinctively the things of the law. These not having the law are a law to themselves.

They have a law in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.

Wow, what an amazing truth. This is humanity exposed. And it is an ugly picture.

But God has moved to correct it. And he did this through our Lord Jesus Christ. And there is no other corrective. Would you pray with me, please? Our Father, we recognize there is still so very much about this grand gospel that we cannot communicate because we lack adequate understanding in it and of it ourselves.

But we do know this. We know and understand enough to appropriate it and to believe it and to benefit from it. And our prayer right now for anyone who may be here who has never entered into the joy, the absolute joy and the assurance of a knowledge of sins forgiven and a right relationship with you and complete acceptance by you.

[36 : 34] Our prayer is that they may come to terms with that even now. We cannot fathom the kind of love that prompted Jesus to do what he did, but we're so grateful for it.

We cannot fathom the kind of love that made you willing to send him to this earth, knowing what would be before him. But we thank you for doing it.

And even though there is so much about your grace that we do not understand, we can understand enough for it to be applied to us. And for anyone who may be here this morning, boy or girl, man or woman, maybe you've never entered into the peace and joy of forgiveness that comes through Christ.

You can do that right now. You don't have to join anything. You don't have to give anything. You don't have to promise anything. You just have to receive a gift from one who paid an incomparable price to be able to give it to you.

Would you receive that gift even now and pray with me? Lord Jesus, it's much about this that I don't understand, but I understand that as I am, I am not acceptable to you and I want that.

[37 : 57] And I right now, as best as I know how, want to look to Jesus as my Savior. I want that gift of eternal life that he died to provide for me.

So here is my heart. Take and seal it. Seal it for your courts above. Lord Jesus, I want you to come into my life and do in me and for me whatever is good in your sight.

I just want to be willing and available to you. Thank you for paying the price that you did in order to become my Savior. I know how unworthy I am and I thank you that you saved me despite my unworthiness.

Lord Jesus, here am I. Take me and do with me as you will. Dear friend, if you will confer that prayer upon yourself, your own heart and mind, God will hear you.

God will save you. God will accept you. He will forgive you. And you'll start with a brand new life that only he can give.

[39 : 05] Seal to our hearts, Father, those who have heard these words. May they take them seriously. May they take your words seriously and seek to have promise of eternal life applied to their own case.

We bless you and thank you in Christ's name. Amen. If you want to speak to me about this or to anyone else, if you've made that decision, we'd be happy to help you and we want to provide some literature items that will be helpful to you.