

The Purpose of the Law

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[0:00] Exodus chapter 20, I'll read the first 17 verses as we prepare to hear God's word preached from 1 Timothy.

! Here is a passage that we'll figure into our sermon tonight that we'll hear. Exodus 20 and verse 1, And God spoke all these words, I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.

You shall not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.

But showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

[1:10] Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.

On it you shall not do any work, neither you nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates.

For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them. But he rested on the seventh day.

Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Honor your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

[2:10] You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Please turn with me in your Bibles to 1 Timothy in chapter 1. Paul's first letter to Timothy in the first chapter.

Something is being misused or misunderstood. It's not a reason to get rid of that thing altogether. We live in northern Indiana.

And for someone like me who has lived all of his life until moving here in the south or in southern California, it seems to me like we get a lot of snow.

Maybe it doesn't seem to you like a lot of snow because you're used to it. But it seems to me that we get quite a bit of snow in the winter. And at my house and at many of yours I'm sure that means that there's some driveway shoveling to be done.

[3:13] And I have a relatively short driveway so it's not that big of a deal for me. Well, let's say I've got a regular old dirt shovel. Shovel that was meant for shoveling dirt. You know, it's rounded and it comes to a point, a bit of a scoop.

Just a good old dirt shovel. And we get a good six inches of snow one day and I take my dirt shovel. And I go out to the driveway to do some shoveling. It's not going to work real well.

If you've ever tried to use a dirt shovel, you know that. And I haven't. I do know that much. But if you tried to, it wouldn't work very well. Maybe the top layer of snow. But when you got down to actually scraping the driveway, that shovel curves up at the side.

And it's going to leave snow underneath. And that thing's not very wide to clear a driveway. And so it's going to take forever to clear your driveway using a dirt shovel. So what should I do if I try that?

Should I throw the shovel out? Should I get rid of it? It's not doing me any good, right? So we dispose of it. Well, no. Well, what's going to happen when spring rolls around? And I need to dig a hole so I can plant some flowers or something else that needs to be done in the yard.

[4:20] I'm going to wish I had that dirt shovel. It's not that there was something wrong with the shovel. There was something wrong with the way I was using the shovel. There was something wrong with the user.

Or the way the user was using it. Here in 1 Timothy, there's not a problem with a shovel, but there was a problem with the way the law was being used. The Ephesians were misusing it.

And so Paul's answer isn't to get rid of the law altogether. Throw it out the window. We don't think the law is important anymore. No, rather it's to correct their improper use of the law.

You'll remember that there were false teachers there. Teachers in the church there that had begun to go astray. And they were spitting out meaningless talk. Remember verses 6 and 7.

Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about. Or what they so confidently affirm.

[5:19] So Timothy, avoid the subject of the law altogether. Don't even talk about it. Don't even use the law there in Ephesus. Is that Paul's answer? Well, of course it's not.

Instead, he reminds Timothy of the proper use of the law. What is the way we should be using the law? It shouldn't be used to promote controversies and myths and things that are contrary to God's work and meaningless talk.

No, that's not the right use of the law. But there is a way to use the law. There is a purpose for the law, Timothy, that's appropriate. And he reminds of them that in verses 8 through 11.

Notice them with me tonight. As Paul seeks to correct their improper use of the law, he says in verse 8, we know that the law is good if one uses it properly.

We also know that the law is not made for the righteous, but for lawbreakers and rebels. The ungodly and sinful. The unholy and irreligious. For those who kill their fathers or mothers.

[6:21] For murderers. For adulterers and perverts. For slave traders and liars and perjurers. And for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

And so it's our aim tonight to be reminded of one of the proper uses of the law. Well, and we'll do that as we consider the nature of the law as Paul presents it here.

And the content of the law that Paul presents here. The nature and content of the law. And we begin with the nature of the law. Now, before we dig into it tonight, know that tonight we aren't going to say everything there is to say about the law.

We're not going to touch on every debate that has been had or is being had in the church these days on the law. We don't have time to do that. We're not even going to discuss all of the proper uses of the law.

Just what Paul has to say to us here in 1 Timothy. And it wasn't his purpose there to talk about all of those things. But his purpose is very specific. And so will ours be tonight.

[7:26] And so the nature of the law. The first thing that we notice about the law is that it is good when it is used lawfully. When it is used properly. And that's the word there.

It's the word for lawful. The law is good when it is used lawfully. It's not something to be avoided. The reason Paul is concerned about these so-called law teachers isn't that the law is their subject matter.

That's not his concern. His concern is that they don't know what they're talking about. That they're misusing that law. That they are abusing it. They use it to promote myths and controversy and speculation and foolish talk.

And they're adding to the law. And that's bad. But the law itself is good. If you use it properly. The next thing he tells us about the law is that it is not for the righteous.

In verse 9, we also know that the law is made or is laid down not for the righteous. Now many people will take that and say, well that means the law is not for the justified.

[8:26] It's not for those who have been declared righteous by God. It's not for God's people. And there are people that will say that. We call that antinomianism. Where they don't believe the law has abiding significance for God's people.

That is the moral law. As summarized in the Ten Commandments that we've read. But they're going to have to look somewhere else in this verse to make that point. Here in the context, the word

righteous does not refer to the justified.

Not to mention that Paul everywhere else teaches that the law is for God's people. For the justified. The righteous here are those who are morally upright. Those who are in least outward conformity to the law.

Ethically right. The righteous here are immediately contrasted with the lawless. With rebels. Those who are not morally upright. Those who are not in conformity with the laws.

You've got true groups. People that are righteous, they do what's good. And people that are not righteous, they do what's bad. They're lawless. They're rebellious. The law is for those that are not righteous.

[9:26] It's their sin that needs to be corrected by the law. And Jesus uses the word righteous this way. When he said, I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners. He's talking about Pharisees there.

He's not talking about justified people. He's talking about people that were in outward conformity with the law. Peter uses it that way. I'm quoting the Old Testament. 1 Peter 4:18 And if it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?

Righteous people. Upstanding people that are in outward conformity to the law still need to be saved. And so it doesn't have to refer to the justified. The righteous are not of necessity.

In this context, those who have been saved. Those who would seek to say that the law doesn't apply to Christians, again, must look elsewhere. Think of it this way.

As a child who is nicely sharing his toys, doesn't need to be told, don't be selfish. So too, a righteous person doesn't need the law to restrain their sin.

[10:33] They're not sinning in the first place. But the child who is screaming, mine! And snatching toys away from other children, does need the law to be laid down.

He does need to hear, don't be selfish. Be willing to share your toys. Just as those who are lawless and rebellious need to have the law laid down to restrain their sin. A righteous person, considered in this way, could be a Christian or a non-Christian.

There are non-Christians, like the Pharisees, that live according to the law. And there are Christians, and we must be living according to the law, living a righteous life. And this is not to say that the law has no use for such a righteous person.

But the use that Paul has in view here, restraining, correcting sin, is not needed for the one who is not sinning. So the morally upright Ephesians, the righteous Ephesians, didn't need the law to be pursuing their speculation, their vain talk, their debating this and that regarding the law.

They needed to apply that law to those in their midst who are living in sin. And so the law isn't laid down for the righteous, Paul says, but here's the next thing we learn. It is laid down for the lawless, for the rebels, for the undisciplined.

[11:51] The law is for those who are breaking the law, those living contrary to it. The law corrects their sinful behavior. It restrains their sin. And this too could be a believer or an unbeliever.

An unbeliever who doesn't care what the law says and doesn't want anything to do with it and wants to continue in his sin. Or a believer who has fallen back into some sin. Something that he's struggled with in the past.

He needs the law pressed home to him to show him again his sin. To correct him in his sin. To restrain his sin. We as believers need that use of the law because we do stumble.

We're not always righteous. We don't always live according to that law. And so it's for us who are lawbreakers and who have been rebellious. So the law is good.

It is not for the righteous, but for the rebels. Skip down to verse 10. The law also is laid down for whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine.

[12:49] Sound doctrine is talked about frequently in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. And the word is a medical word. It's healthy. Sound. Physically strong doctrine.

It means that one who has it as well, the one who embraces this teaching, will have a healthy spiritual life. But if you're living contrary to sound doctrine, then you're going to be spiritually sick, not well, and you need the law as a remedy.

And so the law is laid down for whatever is contrary to sound doctrine. It's what Timothy had been teaching to the Ephesians. It's what Paul had originally taught them.

And what the church there is in danger of abandoning if they continue in their foolish talk. So the law is in accord with sound doctrine. And it's to correct those who are not in accord with sound

doctrine.

But it's also, we see, conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God. The sound teaching, therefore the law that comes with it, are according to the gospel.

[13:50] They're not mutually exclusive, but they're compatible. The heart of the sound teaching that had been taught there was the gospel. That sinners who have broken the law can be saved by grace and then live according to that law.

And so the gospel in some ways doesn't make sense without that law. It's not explicitly Paul's point here, but the law shows us our need of the gospel. We fall short. And so we need forgiveness. We need a Savior who has kept the law. And having believed in the gospel, seek to live according to that law. Remarkably, God takes this gospel, Paul says, and we'll see this more next time, but He entrusts it to men.

He entrusted it to Paul. Paul faithfully proclaimed that sound teaching. He proclaimed that gospel wherever he went. And Paul is amazed at this, and this launches him into a discussion of the gospel, and it makes me want to run ahead to the rest of the chapter, but we'll save it for next time. He's amazed that God would take a sinner like him and not just save him, but use him in his kingdom. Use him for great good. And so he says, faithful is the saying.

[14:59] And we amen this. And it's worthy of all acceptance that Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus, came into the world to save sinners. There's a faithful saying. What a remarkable thing, Paul says, that me, who is a lawbreaker by nature, was entrusted with this glorious gospel.

And so what a blessing that we have the law and the gospel given to us, not isolated from one another, but joined together, all part of the sound doctrine, the teaching that we make clear.

And what a blessing that we have the law for this use, for correcting and restraining sin. Parents, you know you can use the law to show your children what's wrong with the world around us.

When they see things in movies and on television and hear it in the music and read it and see it all around, wherever you look, you can use the law to show them that it's wrong.

It's not just mom and dad's opinion that says you need to stay away from this sort of thing. God's law forbids this. And you can use it to correct and restrain sin in your own children who are showing tendencies toward lawlessness and rebellion.

[16:09] And the law is for them. And so you take it and you press it home to them and you show why these things are wrong because God's law forbids them. And you can use it to show your children where they've disobeyed not just mom and dad's rules, but God's rules.

And dear believer, you can take that law and apply it to yourself when you find that you've strayed from a way of life that's holy and upright and just. And you're reading through your Bible and you come across another command and you go, oh, I've been living contrary to that.

That's not the way I've been living. And the law stops us in our tracks and corrects us. And as a church, we're blessed to have a law by which we can hold one another accountable and press it home on a member who's straying, blind to their sin.

The law is good. It's been laid down for the lawless, for the rebellious, and so let us use it as such. And let us also be careful not to be involved in vain disputes or speculation about the law, misusing it, adding to the law.

The law is good if we use it properly. It's not for the righteous, for the upright, but for the lawless, for the rebellious. And it is to be used to restrain or correct sinful behavior.

[17:23] Part of that sound doctrine that we have received. That's the nature of the law. And now the content of the law. Paul is going to get into particulars. The law identifies and restrains sin.

Apparently some folks in Ephesus were living contrary to the law. Paul says, Timothy, take the law and use it for these kinds of people. Apply it. And since the law is for the restraint of sin, that's how we want to use it and apply it tonight.

To correct ourselves, to restrain ourselves in areas of sin in our life. You might have thought, well, he's going to be generic. Good. When we see a command in the law, then we know that we shouldn't do that anymore.

And he's just going to leave it wide open. Well, Paul doesn't do that. And neither will we tonight. Paul gets very specific. Very precise. In pressing home the law to their consciences. And so it must be with us.

Now, he does this in a fascinating way. Paul is identifying those for whom the law was laid down. Not for the righteous. It was laid down for the lawless, for the wicked. And so he's identifying the

sinner. He's not identifying the command.

[18 : 29] He says the law was, for example, laid down for murderers. He doesn't say, thou shalt not murder. But we can deduce from what he says about the sinner, the murderer, that the command is, thou shalt not murder.

And so if you hear something tonight that describes you, if you are a lawless, rebellious, ungodly, sinful, unholy, irreligious person who kills father, mother, murderer, adulterer, pervert, slave trader. Hope there are no slave traders here tonight. But we'll see what that means. Liar, perjurer. Which of these touches you tonight? Which of these comes home to your conscience tonight?

Which of these are you living contrary to tonight? May God open our eyes to our sin and send us running back to Christ, our Savior, the glory of the Gospel tonight.

Well, Paul begins with lawless and rebellious. That's who the law was laid down for. And it seems that he's using these as sort of a general category for everything that follows. People that live contrary to the law, that rebel against it.

[19 : 32] And maybe you immediately recognize yourself even before Paul gets down to some of those nitty gritty. I don't like the law. I don't like any sort of law. I don't like mom and dad's rules. I don't like the government's rules.

I don't like my teacher's rules. I don't like my coach's rules. I don't like my boss's rules. I don't like any kind of authority. Lawless. I'm rebellious. I just chafe under authority. Maybe you see yourself right away in the list.

And you should know that God's law is not a burdensome thing. It's a delight to walk in His ways. Only in this path can true joy and contentment be found in keeping His law.

So don't go your own way thinking that you'll find happiness there. There's a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. And if you persist in rebellion against God's law, you'll land where all rebels against God land.

And that is an eternal punishment and torment and hell. So there's that general, lawless and rebellious, but he's going to press it home so that we can't say, well, I'm not lawless.

[20 : 33] I'm not rebellious. I've kept most of the law. Now he's going to get into those particulars. And as he does, it seems that Paul, at least generally, if not specifically and precisely, is reflecting the content and the order of the Ten Commandments here.

The Ten Commandments that we heard read earlier from Exodus 20. Very clearly, Commandments 5 through 9 are definitely reflected. And in the order in which we have them in the Ten Commandments.

Honoring father and mother. Not murdering. Not committing adultery. Not stealing. Not lying. And there are clues that Paul may be doing the same thing with the rest of these words. Describing the Ten Commandments.

And we'll work under that assumption tonight. It's not absolutely necessary. It's clear that Paul is addressing the moral law here. And violators of it. So he begins after the general heading of lawless, or lawbreaker, and rebels, the rebellious.

The first is the ungodly. The ungodly. When this word is used in the New Testament in its positive form, it talks about God-fearers. It's used to refer to God-fearers.

[21 : 40] And that's how it's translated. Gentiles that had abandoned their paganism, their polytheism, and were worshiping the one true God. Cornelius was a God-fearer.

And he called for Peter to come. And Peter came and more clearly proclaimed the Gospel to him. But Cornelius had abandoned his pagan ways and was worshiping one God. And so it seems that this would be a reference to the first commandment.

You shall have no other gods besides me. The ungodly don't care about God. They don't worship Him. They would rather worship something else, have something else in the place of God.

And since we recently heard Jesus' words, worship the Lord your God and serve Him only. and touched on this, we're not going to spend a lot of time repeating it tonight, but surely there are yet some ungodly here tonight who worship something or someone besides God.

The law was laid down for you so that you might see your ungodliness. You are making sports or your appearance or whatever it is that you've placed as the most important thing in your life.

[22 : 51] You are making that the object of your worship and attention and focus. In doing that, you've broken God's law. You are ungodly. And feel the weight of the law and see your sin.

Worship the Lord your God. Serve Him only. You shall have no other gods besides me. There is only one who is worthy of worship and that is God alone. And so come. Come tonight. Abandon all your other gods and worship the one true and living God who made you, who sustains you, who protects you, who keeps you, who provides for you. Come and worship the one who is able to save you from your sins this night.

The next violator that he speaks of are the sinful that could be very broad but it may also be very specific. This word was often applied to Gentiles, those outside of Israel.

He eats with tax collectors and sinners, pagans. And it's used in the second commandment that we read earlier about not making an idol for yourself. And then it goes on and it fleshes it out and it says, punishing the children for the sin.

[23 : 55] That's the same word here of the fathers. And so, very possibly a reference to the second commandment. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything. Maybe there were folks in Ephesus that were worshiping their way and not God's way.

Worshiping using something He had not instructed them to worship. It's why we worship the way we do here. We take the things God says to do in worship and we do those and nothing else by His grace. That's what we aim to do.

And so, should we ever start worshiping according to whatever we think or whatever we feel is best, then this command comes to us and says, you shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything. You shall not worship God in a way He has not ordained.

And it restrains us. It guards us. It keeps us. It brings us back. And then Paul says, the law was laid down for the unholy. For the unholy. And when we remember that the Lord's Prayer begins, hallowed, be your name.

We're praying holy or consecrated or set apart as your name. And so the unholy, maybe those who take God's name in vain, violating that third commandment, misusing the name of God.

[24 : 58] When God's name rolls off the tongues of people, perhaps the Ephesians were guilty of this. Maybe they were blaspheming. Maybe they were using God's name as a curse. Or maybe they were just being careless with it.

Maybe some here have a problem with using God's name in an unholy, violent, cursing, swearing sort of way.

As an exclamation using His name or some derivative of it so it doesn't sound quite as bad. But I think our tendency as Christians is to violate this command by using His name carelessly.

You know, you could have broken this commandment tonight even as we sang and took God's name on our lips when we sing of our God and we don't think about what we're singing and we think about other things and here we are singing the name of the Lord over and over.

We're misusing His name. We're not treating it as holy. We're not hallowing His name. I think we have a tendency to do this in our prayers as well.

[25 : 58] to whenever we're trying to think of the next thing to say to use the Lord's name as filler almost like a punctuation mark, a comma. And as we try to think of the next thing to say it's unconscious.

You ask somebody and you point it out to them and they probably won't even know that they're doing it. But that's a careless use of the name of God. It's misusing His name. And so when we read that the law is laid down for the unholy, we remember the holy name of God and seek to treat it as such.

The law is also laid down for the irreligious. Probably better, the profane. This perhaps more clearly even than the first three are referenced to profaning the Sabbath day.

Violations of the Sabbath in the Old Testament are frequently referred to as profaning God's holy day. Desecrating His day. I'll just give you one example and I can give you others if you're interested.

Isaiah 56 and verse 2. Blessed is the man who does this, the man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating, that's our word, without profaning it, and keeps His hand from doing any evil.

[27 : 05] Also, interestingly, it's used of profaning God's name. Maybe Paul had both in mind when he chose this word. Is anyone here guilty of profaning the Sabbath? Here it is right here in the New Testament.

Anyone here guilty of trampling God's holy day underfoot? That's what the word means. That's what the word means. Trampling it underfoot. Treating as common what should be treated as special and holy.

Sanctified. Set apart. Do you take what is to be a special day and treat it like every other day? Or do you rest from your labor and treat it as holy as God would have us? In the commandment, the law is laid down for the profane to correct our improper use of the Sabbath.

May God help us to honor, to keep His holy day. And then, He very clearly delves into the second table of the law. The fifth commandment.

For those who kill their father and mothers. Probably better, those who strike, those who hit their fathers and their mothers. Which is clearly a reference to honor your father and mother.

[28:11] Somebody that hits their parents. Somebody who kills their parents obviously is not honoring them. And so, you kids say, well good. I wouldn't ever, I never have hit my mom and dad.

I'm not going to go that far. I wouldn't do that. Maybe, I hope. I hope you wouldn't. Maybe some would. But the command comes to you anyway. It's more than just your outward behavior that these commands get at.

It's the heart as Jesus shows us in the Ten Commandments. It's not that you've never hit your parents, but what is your attitude under your outward obedience to them?

Just as though, just like with murder, which is also forbidden here, it's next in the list. The law is laid down for murderers, those who would kill. He said, well that's not me, I've never killed.

That hateful thought in your heart. That's as good as murder. It shows that what's in your heart is the same thing that what's in the murderer's heart. And yet, for the restraining hand of God, you would be a murderer too.

[29:09] And so, with honoring your father and mother, outward obedience is not enough when you're thinking to yourself, I can't stand their rules, I can't wait to get out from under their roof, from their authority.

That is dishonoring to your father and your mother. The roll of the eyes, dishonoring to father and to mother. the disrespectful tone in your voice is dishonoring to your parents.

The sigh that says you can't believe how unfair and difficult your life is. Disrespectful to your parents. Talking evil about your parents behind their back to your friends.

All of these just as bad as striking mom and dad in the face. And so, the law is given for strikers of mother and father. For dishonors of mothers and fathers.

And if it's you tonight, feel the weight of that law. Let it correct you. Let it restrain your sin. Don't let these things roll off your back tonight.

[30:20] The law was given that we might see our sin and turn away from it. We've already mentioned murder. So we move on to adulterers and perverts or sexually immoral and homosexuals.

Clearly a reference to the seventh commandment. You shall not commit adultery. The sexually immoral, the homosexual are both perversions of the law that God has laid down for sexual relationship that is to take place only within the bonds of marriage between one man and one woman.

And so, any perversion of that standard is included here. The law is laid down for anyone who would twist that standard. Whatever it is. That means any sexual activity that is prior to marriage with a person outside of your marriage with a person of the same sex alone by yourself with some sort of material to stimulate you or any other perversion.

The law is laid down for these things. And if you are guilty of them, turn and flee from your sin. Feel the weight of that command. You shall not commit adultery tonight. We see these things again abounding in society all around us.

Apply the law and see that they're not just living a little bit differently than the rest of us. They're violating God's law. Living contrary to it. And know that we are to have no part of it.

[31:37] Slave traders is the next. The word is kidnapper. Literally, a people stealer. Reference to the command you shall not steal. I hope again that no one is guilty of kidnapping here tonight.

But we do steal in other ways. Less obvious. More subtle. When we remember that we're to work diligently to provide for our families and instead we're robbing our employers by wasting our time we're stealing from them.

When you're taking answers from a classmate or giving answers you're stealing or helping them to. When you plagiarize you're stealing. Command is given to restrain our sinful behavior here. And then there's liars and perjurers. A reference to the command you shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. The lies you tell to avoid getting in trouble with mom and dad. The lies you tell to avoid getting in trouble with your boss. Calling in sick when you're not sick. The exaggeration. The incomplete truth. The command is given for liars. Now nobody here is going to say I'm a liar.

[32 : 45] So the command is for me but aren't we all liars? Haven't we all spoken falsely? Then the command is given for those that are living contrary to this command.

And then the tenth commandment is missing. There's no mention of coveting in Paul's list here. It's taken up later in 1 Timothy 6 and verse 9 and it's included in the way he sums up. And for whatever else is contrary to this sound doctrine. Maybe you're thinking I dodged all nine. I'm not living in sin because he hasn't mentioned my particular problem yet. Well, Paul puts a blanket out here and it covers everything. Anything that is contrary to sound doctrine. If you want a nice concise, sort of concise summary of sound doctrine here it is. And so if you are living contrary to what's contained in this word then the law is for you. And you need to repent of your sin and turn from it and flee from it.

[33 : 48] Whether or not we've named it specifically here tonight or not. The law is given for you that you might be restrained, corrected in your sinful way. And so if the law is good then let us meditate on it.

Let us learn to apply it to our lives. The psalmist's practice should be ours. Oh, how I love your law. I meditate on it all day long. Day and night meditating on God's law.

Seeing how it applies to us where it needs to correct us. And since we're not going to get into the verses on the gospel tonight that follow this section we do need to stop and note that it's a good thing that there is a gospel.

It's a good thing that there's not just a law that condemns us all. The law is good but it can't save us. That wasn't the purpose of the law. We know that all of our best efforts at keeping the law fall short. And that's why Paul is about to launch into this description of what Jesus did for him. We're lawbreakers and we need a Savior. We need the Savior who came to die in our place, who kept that law in our place, who died that we might be forgiven for all of the times we've broken the law.

[35 : 05] How blessed we are that we find forgiveness for our sin through Him. And you, if you have never trusted in Christ, can come tonight. maybe you've seen yourself in all of these violations of the law tonight.

And you have to, if you're honest with yourself, say, that's me. And I know that those who violate the law are going to hell. You don't have to go to hell. You can come to Christ tonight and find that it is a trustworthy statement, worthy of full acceptance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

Sinners like you. And I feel something of the weight of what Paul says. Every minister, I think, at some point, has, how could God take a sinner like me and not just save me, but use me to preach the gospel?

He can take a sinner like you. He can save me. He can save somebody like you. Break your heart. Draw you to Himself. And you can find forgiveness for all of the times you've broken God's law. And He'll enable you to walk in newness of life and seek to live a life of righteousness, obeying Him, honoring Him in your thoughts and words and deeds. You come to the Savior tonight. You find forgiveness for your sins.

[36 : 13] And for the believers tonight, may God make us faithful to meditate on His law, to use it in a way that is good and right, to use it to correct and restrain our sin, even as Paul makes so clear here in 1 Timothy.

Let's conclude by singing hymn 450 that speaks of this use of God's law. And then, we confess that we love God's law and meditate on it day and night.

And if this is not true, pray that God would make it true, that you would love His law, that you would meditate on it, and that God would use it to restrain you, to correct you in your sins. Our Father, we pray that You would indeed instill in our hearts a greater love for Your law.

We pray that You would help us to meditate on it. And we pray that You would use it in our lives for this very purpose, to correct us where we've gone astray, to restrain us in our sin. We pray that You

would open our eyes to areas in our life where we are not living according to Your law, and stop us in our tracks, and send us back to the cross with repentance anew, and with seeking forgiveness. And we thank You that when we come to You, we will find forgiveness because of what Jesus has done. We pray that You would draw even this night lost sinners unto Yourself, that they might see the glory of Christ, and the forgiveness that can be found in Him.

[37 : 31] We thank You for Your Word, for Your truth, for the sound doctrine, that You have taught us. Make us to be faithful stewards of it, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.