

Contents

PREFACE	ix
HOW TO USE THESE LESSONS	x
1. The Forgotten Key to Biblical Evangelism	1
2. Making Grace Amazing	8
3. The Problem with the Modern Gospel	15
4. How to Confront Sinners	22
5. The Ten Commandments, Part 1	29
6. The Ten Commandments, Part 2	35
7. The Ten Commandments, Part 3	42
8. The Ten Commandments, Part 4	49
9. The Ten Commandments, Part 5	55
10. The Ten Commandments, Part 6	60
11. The Ten Commandments, Part 7	66
12. The Ten Commandments, Part 8	74
13. The Ten Commandments, Part 9	80
14. The Ten Commandments, Part 10	86
15. Our Ally: The Conscience	93
16. The Necessity of Repentance	100
17. Personal Witnessing: How Jesus Did It	106
18. The Sinner's Prayer	113
19. True and False Conversions	119
20. Hypocrisy	124

21. The Certainty of Judgment	129
22. Judgment Day	136
23. The Reality of Hell	144
24. Man's Sinful Condition	151
25. Our Primary Task	158
26. The Fear of Man	163
27. The Empowering of the Holy Spirit	169
28. How to Capture the World's Attention	174
29. Gospel Tracts, Part 1	180
30. Gospel Tracts, Part 2	187
31. Personal Testimony	193
32. Creative Ways to Share Your Faith	199
33. How to Witness to Hurting People	205
34. Open-Air Preaching, Part 1	211
35. Open-Air Preaching, Part 2	218
36. Open-Air Preaching, Part 3	225
37. Faith, Part 1	232
38. Faith, Part 2	237
39. The Enemy, Part 1	243
40. The Enemy, Part 2	249
41. The Enemy, Part 3	255
42. The Enemy, Part 4	261
43. Prayer	268
44. The Survivor's Guide	275
45. Holiness	281
46. Water Baptism, Part 1	287
47. Water Baptism, Part 2	293
48. The Trinity	299
49. The Deity of Christ	307
50. The Holy Spirit	315
51. The Resurrection	322

CONTENTS

52. The Bible, Part 1	.329
53. The Bible, Part 2	.335
54. The Bible, Part 3	.342
55. The Bible, Part 4	.348
56. Contradictions in the Bible	.355
57. Prophecy	.362
58. Messianic Prophecies, Part 1	.368
59. Messianic Prophecies, Part 2	.375
60. Non-Messianic Prophecies	.382
61. Scientific Facts in the Bible, Part 1	.389
62. Scientific Facts in the Bible, Part 2	.395
63. Scientific Facts in the Bible, Part 3	.401
64. Evolution, Part 1	.408
65. Evolution, Part 2	.416
66. Evolution, Part 3	.423
67. Evolution, Part 4	.432
68. Evolution, Part 5	.440
69. Atheism	.448
70. How to Prove the Existence of God	.454
71. Atheist Obstacles	.461
72. Atheists' Questions, Part 1	.467
73. Atheists' Questions, Part 2	.475
74. Relativism, Part 1	.481
75. Relativism, Part 2	.488
76. Reincarnation	.500
77. Islam, Part 1	.506
78. Islam, Part 2	.516
79. Hinduism	.522
80. Buddhism, Part 1	.530
81. Buddhism, Part 2	.539
82. Judaism	.547

83. What Makes a Group Non-Christian?	557
84. Unitarianism	564
85. Mormonism, Part 1	571
86. Mormonism, Part 2	580
87. Jehovah’s Witnesses, Part 1	587
88. Jehovah’s Witnesses, Part 2	594
89. Roman Catholicism	602
90. Oneness Pentecostals	612
91. International Church of Christ	620
92. Seventh-Day Adventists	630
93. New Age Movement	638
94. The Will of God	647
95. Our Most Valuable Commodity	653
96. When You’ve Been Wronged	658
97. The Source of Revival	665
98. Hindrances to Revival	672
99. How to Maintain Zeal	678
100. Raising Laborers in Your Church	684
101. The Christian’s Prayer	693
ANSWERS	701
RECOMMENDED RESOURCES	751
MEMORIZING AND REMEMBERING SCRIPTURE	755

LESSON

1 The Forgotten Key to Biblical Evangelism

“I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived” (Romans 7:9). So it is with the work-righteous and the proud unbelievers. Because they do not know the Law of God, which is directed against them, it is impossible for them to know their sin. Therefore also they are not amenable to instruction. If they would know the Law, they would also know their sin; and sin to which they are now dead would become alive in them.”

MARTIN LUTHER

Kirk’s Comment This teaching is critically important. To be properly instructed in how to effectively reach the lost with the gospel, you must begin with the biblical foundation for evangelism. Read this lesson very thoughtfully. Don’t let anything distract you as you discover what Charles Spurgeon called “our ablest auxiliary”—that is, our most powerful weapon.

QUESTIONS & OBJECTIONS

“I’m as good as any Christian!”

A Christian, by himself, isn’t good. Jesus said that God alone is good. The only “goodness,” or righteousness, that the believer has comes from Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9). The Bible tells us that, with-

out Christ, man is corrupt and filthy; “there is none that does good, no, not one” (Psalm 14:3).

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Have you ever thought, “There must be a key to reaching the lost”? There is—and it’s rusty through lack of use. The Bible does actually call it “the key,” and its purpose is to bring us to Christ, to unlock the Door of the Savior (John 10:9). Not only is it biblical, but it was used throughout church history to unlock the doors of revival. Much of the church today doesn’t even know it exists. The problem is that it was lost around the turn of the twentieth century. Keys have a way of getting lost.

Jesus used it. So did Paul (Romans 3:19,20) and James (James 2:10). Stephen used it when he preached (Acts 7:53). Peter found that it had been used to open the door to release 3,000 imprisoned souls on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus said that the lawyers had “taken away” the key, and had even refused to use it to let people enter into the kingdom of God (Luke 11:52). The Pharisees didn’t take it away; instead, they bent it out of shape so that it wouldn’t do its work (Mark 7:8). Jesus returned it to its true shape, just as the Scriptures prophesied that He would do (Isaiah 42:21). Satan has tried to prejudice the modern church against the key. He has maligned it, misused it, twisted it, and, of course, hidden it—he hates it because of what it does. Perhaps you are wondering what this key is. I will tell you. All I ask is that you set aside your traditions and prejudices and look at what God’s Word says on the subject.

In Acts 28:23 the Bible tells us that Paul sought to persuade his hearers “concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets.” Here are two effective means of persuading the unsaved “concerning Jesus.”

Let’s first look at how the prophets can help persuade sinners concerning Jesus. Fulfilled prophecy *proves* the inspiration of Scripture. The predictions of the prophets present a powerful case for the inspiration of the Bible. Any skeptic who reads the prophetic words of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel, etc., or the words of Jesus in Matthew 24 cannot help but be challenged that this is no ordinary book.

The other means by which Paul persuaded sinners concerning Jesus was from “the Law of Moses.” The Bible tells us that the Law of Moses is

good if it is used lawfully (1 Timothy 1:8). For what purpose was God's Law designed? The following verses tell us: "The Law is not made for a righteous person, but . . . for sinners" (1 Timothy 1:9,10). It even lists the sinners for us: the disobedient, the ungodly, murderers, fornicators, homosexuals, kidnappers, liars, etc. The Law was designed primarily as an evangelistic tool. Paul wrote that he "would not have known sin except through the law" (Romans 7:7). The Law of God (the Ten Commandments) is evidently the "key of knowledge" that Jesus mentioned in Luke 11:52. He was speaking to lawyers—those who should have been teaching God's Law so that sinners would receive the "knowledge of sin," and thus recognize their need of the Savior.

Prophecy speaks to the *intellect* of the sinner, while the Law speaks to the *conscience*. One produces *faith* in the Word of God; the other brings *knowledge* of sin in the heart of the sinner. The Law is the God-given "key" to unlock the Door of salvation.

The Bible says in Psalm 19:7, "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul." Scripture makes it very clear that it is the Law that actually converts the soul. To illustrate the function of God's Law, let's look for a moment at civil law. Imagine if I said to you, "I've got some good news for you: someone has just paid a \$25,000 speeding fine on your behalf." You'd probably react by saying, "What are you talking about? That's not good news—it doesn't make sense. I don't have a \$25,000 speeding fine." My good news wouldn't be good news to you; it would seem foolishness. But more than that, it would be offensive to you, because I'm insinuating you've broken the law when you don't think you have.

However, if I put it this way, it may make more sense: "While you were out today, the law clocked you going 55 miles an hour through an area set aside for a blind children's convention. There were ten clear warning signs stating that fifteen miles an hour was the maximum speed, but you went straight through at 55 miles an hour. What you did was extremely dangerous; there's a \$25,000 fine. The law was about to take its course, when someone you don't even know stepped in and paid the fine for you. You are very fortunate."

Can you see that telling you precisely what you've done wrong first actually enables the good news to make sense? If I don't clearly bring

understanding that you've violated the law, then the good news will seem foolishness and offensive. But once you understand that you've broken the law, then that good news will become good news indeed.

In the same way, if I approach an impenitent sinner and say, "Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins," it will be foolishness and offensive to him. It will be foolishness because it won't make sense. The Bible says that "the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing" (1 Corinthians 1:18). And it will be offensive because I'm insinuating he's a sinner when he doesn't think he is. As far as he's concerned, there are a lot of people far worse than him. But if I take the time to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, it may make more sense. If I open up the divine Law, the Ten Commandments, and show the sinner precisely what he's done wrong—that he has offended God by violating His Law—then when he becomes "convicted by the law as a transgressor" (James 2:9), the good news of the fine being paid will not be foolishness. It will not be offensive. It will be "the power of God to salvation" (Romans 1:16).

With that in mind, let's look at some of the functions of God's Law for humanity. Romans 3:19 says, "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." So one function of God's Law is to stop the mouth, to keep sinners from justifying themselves by saying, "There are plenty of people worse than me. I'm not a bad person, really." No, the law stops the mouth of justification and leaves, not just the Jews, but the whole world guilty before God.

In Romans 3:20 we read, "Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin." So God's Law tells us what sin is. First John 3:4 says, "Sin is the transgression of the law" (KJV). In Galatians 3:24 we learn that God's Law acts as a schoolmaster, or tutor, to bring us to Jesus Christ that we might be justified through faith in His blood. The Law doesn't help us; it just leaves us helpless. It doesn't justify us; it just leaves us guilty before the judgment bar of a holy God.

Charles Spurgeon, called the Prince of Preachers, stated, "I do not believe that any man can preach the gospel who does not preach the Law. The Law is the needle, and you cannot draw the silken thread of the gos-

pel through a man's heart unless you first send the needle of the Law to make way for it.”

QUESTIONS

1. How did Paul seek to persuade his hearers concerning Jesus? Why did he do this?
2. What is it that actually converts the soul? (See Psalm 19:7.)
3. Why do you think the preaching of the cross seems foolish and offensive to an unregenerate sinner?
4. Therefore, what should someone be told first, before he hears the good news of his fine being paid?
5. What does it mean that the Law “stops every mouth”? (See Romans 3:19.)

6. What are four functions of the Law? (See Romans 3:19,20; 7:7; Galatians 3:24.)

7. What is the biblical definition of sin? (See 1 John 3:4.)

PREACHER'S PROGRESS

I, Christian, am waiting at the bus stop when *Stan Doffish* approaches; apparently he too is waiting for the bus to arrive. My heart begins to pound, as I know this is my opportunity to witness to him. The bus is in sight; I have about two minutes until it picks him up. The dialogue begins with me starting in the natural and quickly swinging over to the spiritual.

Christian: "How's it going?"

Stan Doffish: "Okay."

Christian: "Nice day."

Stan Doffish: "It's all right."

Christian: "Do you live around here?"

Stan Doffish: "No."

Christian: "Did you get one of these?"

Stan Doffish: "No. What is it?"

Christian: "It's a gospel tract. Do you have a Christian background?"

Stan Doffish: "Sort of. I went to church when I was a kid, but drifted away from it."

Christian: "Do you know what it was that got me thinking seriously about the things of God?"

Stan Doffish: “No. What?”

Christian: “It was the Ten Commandments. Jesus said that if you as much as look at a woman with lust, you have committed adultery with her already in your heart.”

Stan Doffish: “Wow . . .”

Christian: “And that’s just one Commandment. It leaves us all guilty, huh?”

Stan Doffish: “Yeah.”

Christian: “So you’ve broken that Commandment too?”

Stan Doffish: “*Many* times.”

Christian: “God doesn’t want you to go to hell. That’s why you must repent and trust Jesus. He took the punishment for your sins on the cross. Do you have a Bible at home?”

Stan Doffish: “Yes, I do actually.”

Christian: “I encourage you to read it. Here comes your bus. Thanks for listening to me.”

Stan Doffish: “Thank you.”

Memory Verse

“Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”

GALATIANS 3:24

Last Words

Martin Luther, the monk God used to shake the world, was spared the agony of a torturous death. When he came to die, his lips were laden with Scripture. As he breathed his last, Luther repeated John 3:16 and this verse from Psalm 68:

“Our God is the God of whom cometh salvation. God is the Lord by whom we escape death.”

With his hands clasped together, and without a finger or a feature being disturbed, this mighty man of God ended his pilgrimage.

LESSON

2

Making Grace Amazing

“All heaven is interested in the cross of Christ, all hell terribly afraid of it, while men are the only beings who more or less ignore its meaning.”

OSWALD CHAMBERS

Kirk’s Comment

Grace never made more sense to me, or became so beautiful, as when I saw it in the light of God’s Holy Law. The Law illuminates a sinner’s understanding and shows that God’s grace is amazing.

QUESTIONS & OBJECTIONS

“Mother Nature sure blew it...”

Hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, droughts, and earthquakes kill tens of thousands of people each year. Multitudes endure crippling diseases, endless suffering, and unspeakable pain. Many non-Christians credit a heartless Mother Nature for giving us all this grief. They fail to consider that “Mother Nature” has a Senior Partner—Father God.

However, if God is responsible for all this heartache, that presents an interesting dilemma. If God is an “all-loving” Father figure, as we are told, we seem to have three choices: 1) God blew it when He made everything (He’s creative but incompetent); 2) God is a tyrant, who gets His kicks from seeing kids die of leukemia; 3) something between God and man is

radically wrong. These are our choices... and those who take time to consider the evidence will lean toward number three. Something between man and God is radically wrong, and the Bible tells us what it is.

There is a war going on. We are told that mankind is an enemy of God in his mind through wicked works (Colossians 1:21). That's not too hard to see. Man is continually committing violent acts such as murder and rape, lying, stealing, etc., as the daily news confirms. He uses God's name as a curse word, while Mother Nature gets the glory for His creation—unless there's a horrible disaster; then man calls that “an act of God.”

An applicable acronym for WAR is We Are Right. Any country going to war does so because it has the conviction that it is in the right. However, a quick look at God's Law shows us who is right and who is wrong. We, not God, are the guilty party. If we want His blessing back on our nation and in our lives, we must make peace with Him, and that is possible only through faith in Jesus Christ.

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The good news of the gospel is that, in the cross of Calvary, God extended grace toward humanity. Words cannot express the wonders of His grace so graphically illustrated in that bloody cross. Grace can be defined as “unmerited favor to the infinitely ill-deserving,” or, in other words, “God's Riches At Christ's Expense.”

The question that should be on the heart of every Christian is how we may best show God's amazing grace to this lost world. We tell sinners God loved them so much that He gave His only Son to die in their place, and yet it seems to have less relevance than the day's weather forecast. To them, the forecast is at least applicable to them here and now.

The solution to this dilemma can be found in Romans 5:20. Here we are informed why God gave His Law to us: “Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.”

When sin abounds, grace “much more” abounds, and according to Scripture, the thing that makes sin abound is the Law.

We can see the work of God's Law illustrated in civil law. For example, when there is no visible sign of the law on a freeway, motorists often transgress the speed limit. Apparently each speedster says to himself that the law has forgotten to patrol his part of the freeway. He is transgressing the law by only 15 mph, and besides, he isn't the only one doing it.

Notice what happens when the law enters the fast lane, with red lights flashing. The speedster's heart misses a beat. He is no longer secure in the fact that other motorists are also speeding. He knows that he is *personally* as guilty as the next guy, and *he* could be the one the law pulls over. The fact that there are other people doing it is irrelevant. Suddenly, his "mere" 15 mph transgression doesn't seem such a small thing after all; it seems to abound.

Look at the freeway of sin. The whole world naturally goes with the flow. Who hasn't had an "affair" (or desired to) at one time or another? Who in today's society doesn't tell the occasional "white" lie? Who doesn't take something that belongs to someone else, even if it's just a little "white-collar" crime? Sinners know they are doing wrong, but their security is in the fact that so many others are just as guilty, if not more so. It seems God has forgotten all about sin and the Ten Commandments; the sinner says in his heart, "God has forgotten; He hides His face; He will never see" (Psalm 10:11).

Now watch the Law enter with red lights flashing. The sinner's heart skips a beat. He lays his hand upon his mouth. He examines the speedometer of his conscience. Suddenly, it shows him the measure of his guilt in a new light—the light of the Law. His sense of security in the fact that there are multitudes doing the same thing becomes irrelevant, because every man will give an account of *himself* to God. Sin not only becomes personal, it seems to "abound." His mere lust becomes *adultery of the heart* (Matthew 5:27,28); his white lie, *false witness* (Revelation 21:8); his own way becomes *rebellion*; his hatred, *murder* (1 John 3:15); his "sticky" fingers make him a thief—"Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound." Without the Law entering, sin is neither personal, nor is it evident: "For without the Law, sin is dead [the sense of it is inactive...]" (Romans 7:8, Amplified).

It was the “Commandment” that showed Paul sin in its true light—that it is “exceedingly sinful” (Romans 7:13). Paul spoke from his own experience because he had sat at the feet of Gamaliel, the great “teacher of the law,” and therefore saw sin in its vivid colors.

According to the Scriptures, “[the real function of] the law is to make men recognize and be conscious of sin [not mere perception, but an acquaintance with sin which works toward repentance . . .]” (Romans 3:20, Amplified).

Charles Spurgeon said that “the Law serves a most necessary purpose.” How true are his words regarding sinners: “They will *never* accept grace, until they tremble before a just and holy Law.” Those who see the role of the Law will be Sons of Thunder *before* they are the Sons of Consolation. They know that the shoes of human pride must be removed before sinners can approach the burning bush of the gospel.

It is important to realize that we *can* evoke a tearful response from sinners by saying that God loves them. The message is more appealing to both the Christian and the sinner. It certainly is easier to speak of love than of sin. Many years ago, before I understood the function of God’s Law, I told a prostitute of God’s love and was delighted that she immediately began weeping. Unbeknown to me, her tears were not tears of godly sorrow for sin, but merely an emotional response to the need of a father’s love. In my ignorance, I joyfully led her in a sinner’s prayer. However, I was disappointed sometime later when she fell away, and her tender heart became very callous toward the things of God.

Paradoxically, the Law makes grace abound, in the same way that darkness makes light shine. It was John Newton, the writer of “Amazing Grace,” who said that a wrong understanding of the harmony between Law and grace would produce “error on the left and the right hand.” I don’t know if any of us could claim to have a better understanding of grace than the one who penned such a hymn.

To help sinners understand that grace is truly amazing, use the Moral Law of God. As John Wesley advised a young evangelist, for effective evangelism, preach 90 percent Law and 10 percent grace.

QUESTIONS

1. What is a definition of grace?
2. Why should the Christian be concerned about how to make grace amazing to the world?
3. What is it that makes grace abound?
4. What caused the speedster to see the seriousness of his transgression?
5. What did Charles Spurgeon say about the Law?
6. Why did the prostitute weep at the mention of God's love?

7. What did John Newton say about the harmony between Law and grace?

FEATHERS FOR ARROWS

Imagine going back in time two hundred years and trying to describe a jumbo jet. You say, “Where I come from, we have these huge tin cans, weighing hundreds of thousands of tons, that float across the sky filled with hundreds of people.” Someone says, “Do you think we are stupid? That’s impossible. There is such a thing as the law of gravity. Not even a feather can float across the sky unaided, without descending.”

However, we now have discovered that when an object of a particular shape travels at a certain speed, it moves out of the law of gravity into another law, the law of aerodynamics. The law of gravity remains, but the object supercedes it.

We have also discovered that when a person becomes a Christian, he moves out of one law into another. The law of life in Christ Jesus supercedes the law of sin and death. The Christian lives in a higher plane: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:2).

WORDS OF COMFORT

As I stood at the checkout counter in a well-known hardware chain, a woman gasped and pointed to the floor. There was a pile of white sand pouring from a 50-pound bag I had placed into my shopping cart. I had accidentally made a hole in it when I lifted it a few minutes earlier. I looked behind me and saw a 180-foot trail of white sand going back to where I had begun my journey. The sand was thin when I had sped up and thick when I had slowed down. Its trail not only revealed when I had

turned to the left and to the right, but it also led directly to the guilty party.

Last Words

Tony Hancock (British comedian):

“Nobody will ever know I existed. Nothing to leave behind me. Nothing to pass on. Nobody to mourn me. That’s the bitterest blow of all.”

Memory Verse

“Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.”

ROMANS 5:20