

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday October 19, 2022 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



HONORING GOD “The Proper Use of the Law” *1 Timothy 1:8-11*

“¹Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope, ²To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. ³As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, ⁴nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. ⁵Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, ⁶from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, ⁷desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.” -1 Timothy 1:1-7 (NKJV)

“⁸But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, ⁹knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.” – 1 Timothy 1:8-11 (NKJV)

We began our study through the book of 1 Timothy a couple of week ago now. 1 Timothy is a New Testament book that is actually a letter and a different type of letter. It's a personal letter, not written to a particular church or group of people like most of the New Testament letters, but to an individual, and it has a personal word and truth for us as well... for our lives. Sometimes when a book of the Bible is titled with a personal name it indicates that the book is written by that person. For example in the Old Testament we

have the book of Jeremiah written by the Prophet Jeremiah, or Isaiah written by Isaiah, or Daniel written by Daniel. In the New Testament we have the book of Matthew, written by Jesus' disciple Matthew, or John written by the beloved disciple John. But the book of Timothy is different. Timothy didn't write the book of Timothy. Rather the book is written to him, for him, and it's personal... for a reason. Here is a simple truth that we need to get our heads around even as we begin this study. **God's inspired Word is personal and sometimes the word is personally directed to us.** God inspired the writer of Timothy to write a personal letter to Timothy (2 of them to be exact), and it included in the canon of Holy Scripture, and Timothy is one of the only individuals (Titus the other), to get a book of Bible written personally to Him. That is an incredible thought, and an important thought. It reminds us of how personal God desires to be in our lives, in directing our lives, in speaking into our lives, in helping us with our troubles and struggles, how much He cares what we are facing. If he cared enough about Timothy to, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have one of His men write a personal letter to him, He (God) surely cares for us in the same way. And it says we need to study this great personal book and grab hold of the truths it has for us.

The book of Timothy is a letter. This is the first of two inspired letters Paul wrote to his beloved son in the faith. Since the title of the book/letter bears the recipients name it might be good for us to get to know the letter's namesake... Timothy. The following are some facts about Timothy that will be helpful in our study.

Getting to Know Timothy Facts:

- (1) **The name Timothy means “one who honors God”** – Hence the name of our study “Honoring God.” Timothy received his name, which means “one who honors God,” from his mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois), devout Jews who became believers in the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 1:5) and taught Timothy the Old Testament Scriptures from his childhood (2 Tim. 3:15). His father was a Greek (Acts 16:1) who may have died before Timothy met Paul
- (2) **Timothy was from the town of Lystra** - Timothy was from Lystra (Acts 16:1-3), a city in the Roman province of Galatia (part of modern day Turkey).



- (3) **Timothy came to know Jesus through Paul during his first missionary journey** - Paul led Timothy to Christ (1 Timothy 1:2; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 2 Timothy 1:2), undoubtedly during his ministry in Lystra on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6-23).
- (4) **Paul recruited Timothy to join his ministry team during Paul's second missionary journey** - When Paul revisited Lystra on his second missionary journey, Paul chose Timothy to accompany him (Acts 16:1-3).
- (5) **Timothy was likely a teenager when he first joined Paul's ministry team** - Although Timothy was very young (probably in his late teens or early twenties, since about 15 years later Paul referred to him as a young man, 1 Timothy 4:12), he had a reputation for godliness (Acts 16:2).
- (6) **Timothy was with Paul throughout the rest of Paul's life and ministry** - Timothy was to be Paul's disciple, friend, and co-laborer for the rest of the apostle's life, ministering with him in Berea (Acts 17:14), Athens (Acts 17:15), Corinth (Acts 18:5, 2 Corinthians 1:19), and accompanying him on his trip to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4). He was with Paul in his first Roman imprisonment and went to Philippi (Philippians 2:19-23) after Paul's release. In addition, Paul frequently mentions Timothy in his epistle (Romans 16:21; 2 Corinthians 1:1, Philippians 1:1, Colossians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; Philemon 1).
- (7) **Timothy became the pastor of the church at Ephesus** - Paul often sent Timothy to churches as his representative (1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 16:10; Philippians 2:19; 1 Thessalonians 3:2), and 1 Timothy finds him on another assignment, serving as pastor of the church at Ephesus (1 Thessalonians 1:3).

Those 8 facts give us a little more information about the one to whom this letter is written. These are just some things we know from Scripture itself, but they do give us something of a picture of the young man we are talking about here.

I want you to consider a question this evening... now think about this before you answer and really think about it. Here is the question, “Is the Law important?” And by that I mean the Law of Moses, the Old Testament Law, the Law God gave to his people/his followers at Mt. Sinai that you find recorded in the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy? That Law? Is the Law important? And it is still important to us today? Are we to obey it, follow it, practice it? To what extent? These are some good questions? Let’s think about it? Here is the question is again, “Is the Law important?” And before you answer it let me share some

Some Passage that Clarify the Law:

- (1) **Matthew 5:17-20** - *“¹⁷ “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. ¹⁹ Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”*
- (2) **Romans 7:7-10** – *“⁷ What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.” ⁸ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. ⁹ I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. ¹⁰ And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. ¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. ¹² Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”*
- (3) **Romans 8:1-4** – *“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”*
- (4) **Galatians 3:21-25** – *“²¹ Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. ²² But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³ But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”*
- (5) **Hebrews 10:1-4** – *“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. ² For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. ³ But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. ⁴ For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.”*

So take away... (questions)

What is the purpose of the Law? To reveal to us that we are sinners in need of a Savior

What is not the purpose of the Law? The Law was never given as a means of salvation

What is dangerous about the Law? That some would make it a means of salvation

What is important to remember about the Law? That God gave the Law because of His love for us to reveal to us that we are lawbreakers/sinners in need of His salvation

Some Important Reminders Concerning the Law: *(these are based on the Scriptures we have just read)*

(1) The Law applies to everyone (*Romans 2:14-16*) – *“^{d4} For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves,¹⁵ who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)¹⁶ in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.”*

(2) The Law leads (or drives) one to Jesus (*Galatians 3:21-25 & Romans 8:1-4*)

(3) The Law shows us what sin is (*Romans 7:7-10*)

(4) No one is saved by the Law (*Hebrews 10:1-4*)

(5) Jesus fulfilled the Law (*Matthew 5:17*)

Listen as I share (read) this case study to you and then I want to get your thoughts...

CASE STUDY: “When I was trained to share my faith in Christ, I was taught that I should not mention to a potential convert anything about his particular sins, since that was not the main issue. Rather I should just tell the one I’m witnessing to that in general, everyone is a sinner. But, I was told not to confuse the issue by confronting his profanity, immorality, drunkenness, or greed. The only issue, I was told, is his need to believe in Christ, so I should put my focus there. Also, since judgment and hell are sensitive issues, I should downplay them and rather put my emphasis on the abundant life Christ offers here and now. So I was taught and so I practiced for many years.

But I never was completely at ease with this methodology. For one thing, it didn’t seem to square with a number of Scriptures. Also, it struck me as being a lot like good salesmanship, where you try not to say anything to turn off the potential customer. But in catering to the customer, it seemed to hold back a crucial part of the truth of the gospel. And, some of the people who “bought the product” didn’t seem much concerned with holy living. They were more caught up with having a happy life. For them, Jesus was not so much *essential* as He was *useful*, in terms of helping them to enjoy a better life.

I came to realize that a major missing ingredient in the most popular gospel presentations of our day is the proper use of God’s law to bring deep, lasting, life-transforming conviction of sin. People who are not convicted of their sin and who do not realize their

own utter inability to meet God's holy standard by their own efforts are not desperate for what God offers through the gospel."

What do you think about this case study?

Does this happen today? Why?

Why do you think some want go easy on the sin, hell and judgement issues (especially when sharing their faith)?

What is wrong with this?

Why is it so important that we don't exclude the issue of sin, hell and judgement? Is there a balance? How do we strike that?

And what does all of this have to do with the important of the Law?

By not preaching God's holy Law, we've given self-righteous, contented people the false impression that they can be casual shoppers toward the gospel when, in fact, their condition is desperate. In 1 Timothy 1:7, Paul wrote to Timothy about some false teachers troubling the church at Ephesus who wanted to be teachers of the Law, but who didn't understand its proper use. In verses 8-11, Paul shows that ...

The proper use of God's Law is to bring conviction of sin so that people are driven to the gospel for salvation.

When sinful men and women learn the righteous demands of God's Law, they should be driven to conviction and convinced of their need for a Savior because of their guilt before God. In this desperate state, the good news that Jesus Christ bore the curse of the Law on our behalf and offers pardon and eternal life freely to any who will believe in Him should impel them to flee to Christ that they might be saved. So we who have been entrusted with this great news need to know how to use God's Law properly. We must never fall into the error of marketing Jesus as the way to a happier life... that may be true, but it is really a by-product of the greater truth that we are lost and hell bound sinner in need of a Savior.

THE PROPER AND IMPROPER USE OF THE LAW (1 Timothy 1:8-10)

"⁸ But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰ for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine." -1 Timothy 1:8-10

Key Statement: The proper use of the Law is not as a means of salvation, but to bring conviction of sin

We aren't sure exactly what these false teachers were saying, but if they were Jews with a pharisaical bent, they probably were teaching that keeping the Old Testament Law is the means of salvation, while at the same time they were living in a licentious manner. That sounds contradictory, but really it is not. Jesus condemned the Pharisees because on the one hand they were promoting a works sort of righteousness, urging the keeping of the Law (both the Law of Moses and their various traditions); but at the same time they were inwardly licentious or lawless... look at **Matthew 23:25-28 (READ)**

“²⁵ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. ²⁷ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.” -Matthew 23:25-28 (NKJV)

It is commonly taught that legalism is on one extreme and licentiousness (immorality or immoral behavior, depravity, another word for sin) is on the other and that grace is the balance between the two. But that is not what Scripture teaches. Legalism and licentiousness/immoral behavior are actually two sides of the same coin.

**Note: Licentiousness is defined as a disregard of accepted moral rules and standards, lack of moral restraint, dissoluteness, lasciviousness. When Paul uses the word, he usually has in mind sexual unrestraint.*

The Common Link Between Legalism and Licentiousness (Immorality):

- (1) The operating principle for both is the flesh -**
- (2) The legalist takes fleshly pride in his observance (keeping) of certain rules -** Of course he always picks rules he can keep! But since he operates in the flesh, he has no power over indwelling sin
- (3) When sin is not being dealt with inwardly it leads to licentiousness (all sorts of unrestrained sin and moral laxity) -** Sooner or later, the legalist will fall into outwardly lawless behavior
- (4) Grace, on the other hand, operates in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit who enables the believer's victory over the flesh and sin –** The indwelling Spirit equips the believer to judge sin at the thought level and to be transformed in the inner person through the renewing of the mind through God's powerful Word.

So, here it is... it is important that we be clear on both the improper and the proper use of God's Law...

The Proper and Improper Use of God's Law:

- (1) **The improper use of God's Law is to try to be saved by keeping it** - Paul doesn't specifically address this improper use here, but this was the entire thrust of his life before he was converted. As he explains in Philippians 3:4-6 (also Gal. 1:13-14), he was zealous for the Law, thinking that keeping the Law and the Jewish traditions was the way to salvation. But in actuality, he was a violent persecutor of the church, far in his heart from the inner righteousness required by God's Law. As Paul explains in Romans 3:20, *"²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin."*

God's Law can be compared to a mirror. The purpose of a mirror is not to wash your face, but rather to show you the dirt on your face and drive you to soap and water.

The purpose of the Law is to convict you of your sin and drive you to Christ for cleansing. Keeping the Law can't save you because, as we shall see, no one is able to keep it perfectly. Only Christ can save. If the Law can't save us and if we can't keep it, we are prone to say that the problem is with the Law. But Paul affirms in verse 8, *"⁸ But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully."* There is nothing wrong with the law. The problem is our sinful nature. It is only the delusion of our sinful pride that makes us think that we can commend ourselves to God by keeping His Law. When we look more carefully at the Law, we discover that ...

- (2) **The proper use of God's Law is to bring conviction of sin** - Notice **verses 9-10** of our passage. Paul says, *"⁹ Knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰ for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine."* Did you notice it? The Law is not made for a righteous man (1:9). I understand "law" (1:9) to refer to the Law of Moses.
- Paul has just twice referred to it (1:7-8) and his list of sins (1:9-10) is parallel to the Ten Commandments.
 - When Paul refers to "a righteous man," I take him to mean one who has been justified by faith in Jesus Christ.
 - Such persons are the only ones who are truly righteous, because they have God's righteousness imputed them.
 - A merely good man (by human standards) or a self-righteous man (some take it this way) is still under God's condemnation and thus needs the Law to reveal his sinfulness.
 - Thus Paul is referring to those who have been declared righteous by faith in Christ.
 - Such persons are not under the Law, but are under grace (Rom. 6:14; Gal. 5:23).
 - This does not mean that they are lawless; they are under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2), also called the law of Christ (1 Cor. 9:21).

- Nor does Paul mean that the Law has no benefit for believers. It reveals God's righteous character and how we must live to please Him.
- But since "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Rom. 10:4), we who are in Christ are not subject to the Law's condemnation.
- ***The primary function of the Law is to bring conviction of sin to those who are still in rebellion against God.***

Thus Paul says that the Law is for the lawless. God's Law speaks to the sinner to reveal his sin and convict him of sin. Paul gives a catalogue of sins that roughly parallels (in order) the Ten Commandments; first, offenses against God; then, crimes against fellow men. Note the parallels:

| THE TEN COMMANDMENTS | 1 TIMOTHY 1:9-10 |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. No other gods | lawless and insubordinate |
| 2. No other gods | ungodly and sinners |
| 3. Not take the Lord's name in vain | unholy and profane |
| 4. Keep the Sabbath | |
| 5. Honor parents | murders of mothers and fathers |
| 6. No murder | manslayers |
| 7. No adultery | fornicators and sodomites |
| 8. No stealing | kidnappers |
| 9. No false witness | Liars and perjurers |
| 10.No coveting | whatever is contrary |

In each case except the last (a catch all term), Paul takes a flagrant violation of the Ten Commandments, perhaps to make the contrast between the righteous (for whom the Law is not intended) and the unrighteous (for whom it is intended) more vivid. At first glance, the person of average morals might look at Paul's list and think, "He's not talking about me. I've never done these things."

- But a more careful look will convict even the most moral person.
- Who has never been lawless or rebellious against God?
- Who has not been ungodly and missed the mark of God's righteousness (a sinner)?
- Who has not been unholy and profane (to tread on that which is sacred)?
- Who has not been disrespectful in striking out at his parents, if not physically, in word or thought?
- Who has not been angry enough to kill someone else, except for the restraint of the law?
- Who has not entertained immoral thoughts or never acted immorally in some way?
- Who has not taken that which is not rightfully his?
- Who has not bent the truth?
- Who has not wrongfully desired that which is another's?

- On all ten counts we all stand guilty before God!

But it only takes one count to convict us! The Law is like a chain--one bad link means it's broken. Listen to what James says in James 2:10, *"¹⁰ For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all."*

If you are in a boat in a swift river, 25 feet from a high waterfall, and I throw you a chain secured to a tree on the shore, you are saved. But if there is just one bad link in the whole chain, you're lost. One violation of God's Law brings condemnation. Thus the Law is aimed at those who have not been justified by faith in Christ to bring them to a point of despair so they will sense their condemnation before a holy God.

In my opinion, this proper use of the Law is greatly lacking in our day...

- Many people think they're doing God a favor to put their trust in Christ as Savior.
- Others come to Christ with the attitude, "I'll try Jesus and see if He can make me happy."
- What they need to realize is that they're heading toward the falls!
- You don't need to sell a man about to plunge to his death the idea of grabbing hold of the life line.
- We need to know God's Law so that we can use it to reveal God's holiness to a generation of men and women who have flagrantly violated that law.
- The proper use of the law is to bring conviction of sin.
- The law convinces us of our sin and our inability to keep, and therefore our need for a Savior to... well, save us!
- That is the proper use of the law

But God does not leave us in despair. The Law is not revealed apart from the gospel of Jesus Christ.

THE RESULTS OF A PROPER USE OF THE LAW (1 Timothy 1:11)

"¹¹ According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust."
– 1 Timothy 1:11 (NKJV)

Key Statement: The result of using the Law properly is to drive people to the gospel for salvation

Did you notice it in verse 11? The fact that the Law is not for the righteous but for sinners is *"According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God..."* that Christ bore the curse of the Law for us.

- **The law proclaims...** *"We ought to obey God, but we haven't; furthermore, we can't!"* - It's not in our will power to do it. And so we're condemned.

- **The gospel proclaims...** *“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us” (Galatians 3:13)* – He did everything necessary for us to be saved and took our sin/lawlessness upon Himself and paid the price for our salvation.

There are three points to note concerning the gospel...

“⁸ But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰ for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.” – 1 Timothy 1:8-11 (NKJV)

3 Important Truths Concerning the Gospel:

- (1) **The gospel brings spiritual healing** – Verse 10 speaks of *“sound doctrine.”* *“For fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.”* The word *“sound”* modifying *“doctrine”* means healthy or whole. It is a predominant theme in the Pastoral epistles... this word occurs in its metaphorical sense (“spiritual health”) eight times in these letters, and no where else (in that sense) in the New Testament. *The good news is that no matter how spiritually diseased a person may be, no matter how far gone in sin, there is healing in the gospel and in the teaching of God’s Word.* The late Malcolm Muggeridge told of an incident while he was in India. While swimming in a river he noticed an Indian woman who was bathing in the same river. She was naked. Muggeridge dived and swam under water to surprise her. As his head rose above the water, the woman turned toward him. Muggeridge froze. The woman was a leper! He retreated with shame, stung by the realization that it was his heart that was leprous. *Religion can clean up the outward person, but only Jesus Christ and the sound teaching of His Word can heal a leprous heart.* I don’t mean to imply that believing the gospel brings instant, permanent deliverance from lust and other inward sins. We who live in this body struggle against such sins every day...

- Hebrews 12:4 – *“⁴ You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.”*
- 1 Peter 2:11 – *“¹¹ Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, ¹¹ Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.”*

But when we believe the gospel, we are delivered from sin’s penalty; as we learn sound teaching, we can experience daily deliverance from sin’s power.

- (2) **The gospel reveals the glory of the blessed God** – Paul writes in verse 11, *“¹¹ According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.”* Verse 11 literally reads, *“According to the glorious gospel of the glory of the blessed God, ...”* *God’s glory is the splendor of His attributes.* The gospel reveals

God's glory... His love, righteousness, mercy, grace, wisdom, and power. God is described as "the blessed God" (1 Timothy 6:15 is the only other time this phrase occurs in all of the Bible). This does not refer to men blessing God, but rather to the fact that God is in and of Himself blessed (or truly happy). He is perfect in Himself. The source of all true happiness and joy is found in God through the gospel.

- (3) **The gospel is entrusted to redeemed sinners to proclaim to lost sinners** – Again, Paul writes in verse 11, *"¹¹ According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust."* The NKJV says we have been, as believers, "committed" with a "trust." The NIV translates verse 11 this way, *"¹¹ that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me."* Notice the word "entrusted." Christians, in other words redeemed sinner, have been entrusted with the gospel for a purpose. As Paul goes on to show, he was the chief of sinners, and yet God saved him and entrusted him with the awesome responsibility of proclaiming the gospel to others. The solemn truth is that God does not save us so that we might live happily for ourselves and go to heaven. He has left us on this earth to proclaim His message of reconciliation to others. Listen to how Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, *"¹⁸ Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*

He could have shouted it from the sky or used angels, but He didn't. He uses redeemed sinners to take the message to lost sinners. **Sharing the gospel is like one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.** God has entrusted every believer with the gospel to take to a lost world!

CONCLUSION

One of the greatest evangelists of the 19th century was the British preacher, Charles Spurgeon. I quote him often. Both his father and grandfather were preachers, so he grew up in a home with strict Christian standards. He grew up in an age without the pervasive corruption, sensuality, and violence that bombards us through TV, movies, pornography, and other modern social media outlets. Listen to his account of the deep conviction of sin that he went through before he was converted at age 15... this is the words of Charles Haddon Spurgeon himself (this is a lengthy quote, but I want you to just listen and take this in)... Spurgeon writes, *"When but young in years, I felt with much sorrow the evil of sin. My bones waxed old with my roaring all the day long. Day and night God's hand was heavy upon me. I feared lest the very skies should fall upon me, and crush my guilty soul. God's law had laid hold upon me, and was showing me my sins. If I slept at night, I dreamed of the bottomless pit, and when I awoke, I seemed to feel the misery I had*

dreamed. Up to God's house I went; my song was but a sigh. To my chamber I retired, and there, with tears and groans, I offered up my prayer, without a hope and without a refuge, for God's law was flogging me with its ten-thonged whip, and then rubbing me with brine afterwards, so that I did shake and quiver with pain and anguish, and my soul chose strangling rather than life, for I was exceeding sorrowful... For five years, as a child, there was nothing before my eyes but my guilt, and though I do not hesitate to say that those who observed my life would not have seen any extraordinary sin, yet as I looked upon myself, there was not a day in which I did not commit such gross, such outrageous sins against God, that often and often have I wished I had never been born.... Before I thought upon my soul's salvation, I dreamed that my sins were very few. All my sins were dead, as I imagined, and buried in the graveyard of forgetfulness. But that trumpet of conviction, which aroused my soul to think of eternal things, sounded a resurrection note to all my sins; and, oh, how they rose up in multitudes more countless than the sands of the sea! Now, I saw that my very thoughts were enough to damn me, that my words would sink me lower than the lowest hell, so that I could not bear them. I thought I had rather have been a frog or a toad than have been made a man. I reckoned that the most defiled creature, the most loathsome and contemptible, was a better thing than myself, for I had so grossly and grievously sinned against Almighty God.... A spiritual experience which is thoroughly flavored with a deep and bitter sense of sin is of great value to him [who has] had it. It is terrible in the drinking, but it is most wholesome in the bowels, and in the whole of the afterlife. Possibly, much of the flimsy piety of the present day arises from the ease with which men attain to peace and joy in these evangelistic days.... Too many think lightly of sin, and therefore think lightly of the Saviour. He who has stood before his God, convicted and condemned, with the rope about his neck, is the man to weep for joy when he is pardoned, to hate the evil which has been forgiven him, and to live to the honour of the Redeemer by whose blood he has been cleansed.” (C. H. Spurgeon *Autobiography: 1 The Early Years* [Banner of Truth], pp. 58-59; last paragraph, p. 54)

Today most Christians would think that a boy who thought like that must be from a severely dysfunctional home and that his parents had seriously failed to build his self-esteem. But that's how God used His Law to convict and drive to the cross one of the greatest evangelists in his generation.

Two final thoughts:

- (1) **Do you know personally anything of what Spurgeon experienced? Or could it be that you mistakenly think that you're a basically good person?** - Thus, “forgiven little, you love little.” Knowing God's holy Law should make us cling thankfully to the cross and walk daily by the Spirit who works God's righteousness in us.
- (2) **Do you recognize that if you've believed the good news, you're under obligation to take it to others?** - Make sure you don't try to “sell” Jesus as the way to a happy life. He came into this world to save sinners (1:15)! Use God's Law to bring His conviction to sinners, so they will flee to Christ to be saved.

Discussion Questions

1. Are we too quick to alleviate the guilt of a person under conviction of sin? Give biblical support.
2. Have we watered down the sinfulness of sin and the just condemnation of God in an attempt to make the gospel more acceptable in our age? What are some results of this?
3. How (practically) can we share God's Law without sounding like we're condemning the person?
4. Does the Law have any benefits for the believer? What?