

Growth Group Questions

15th Sunday after Pentecost ~ September 1, 2024

Introduction

Some in church history have said that preachers should not preach the law to Christians for motivation. As converted people, after all we are moved to good works by the gospel of Christ. Others maintain that Christians need both law and gospel to move us to more sanctified living. Discuss what you think and why.

Into the Word – Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

1. According to verse one, what would have been the result if Israel had obeyed the laws and decrees of God? What does this show us about the reason for God's command in general?
2. Think of some ways that people have added or subtracted to God's commands. Identify at least one from Biblical history and one from current religion.
3. Describe how blessed Israel was according to verse 6-8.
4. Using worship attendance as an example, explain how failing to follow God's commands carries down to a generation's children and grandchildren.

Into the Word – Romans 9:30-10:4

5. Romans 9-11 form an important unit as Paul talks about the blessings of Old Testament Israel, their sin and judgment as a nation, the addition of Gentiles to the "tree of faith" and a hoped-for conversion of Israel in the future. What is "Israel" today?

6. In verses 30-32, what does Paul say about why the Gentiles have found righteousness but the people of Israel did not?
7. Can you think of people today that "are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge"? What is our responsibility to these souls?
8. In 10:4 Christ is called the "culmination" of the law. Other translations say "end" of the law. All are good translations, but what does this mean?

Into the Word – Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

9. Ceremonial washing was commanded by God in the Mosaic law, but the Pharisees of course added many rules and regulations. Explain how the Pharisees were keeping the letter of the law but missing the spirit of it.
10. The word for washing here is "baptismos", the same word for the sacrament of baptism. Verse four has an important footnote that shows us these washings weren't always by immersion. What is washed in the footnote that shows the broader usage of "baptismos" in Greek?
11. What man-made traditions or rules are you fond of that have become a little too important to you? Discuss.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, you give me your law for my protection and blessing. Turn me away from pride in works, and instead let me rejoice in Christ's obedience. Let gratitude for him move me to obey your will freely and fully from the heart. Amen.