



19 Minutes with Luther

Law and Gospel

- ▶ The Knowledge of God
- Law and Gospel**
- Introduction to the Law
- 1st Commandment
- 2nd Commandment
- 3rd Commandment
- 4th Commandment
- 5th Commandment
- 6th Commandment
- 7th Commandment
- 8th Commandment
- 9th & 10th Commandments
- The Conclusion
- The Gospel & the Nature of God
- The Apostles' Creed (Faith)
- 1st Article (Creation)
- 1st Article (Preservation)
- 1st Article (Protection)
- 1st Article (The Fall into Sin)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Person)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Office)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Work)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Humiliation)
- 2nd Article (Christ's Exaltation)
- 2nd Article (Christian Life)
- 2nd Article (Saved by Faith)
- 3rd Article (The Holy Spirit)
- 3rd Article (Calls)
- 3rd Article (Enlightens)
- 3rd Article (Sanctifies)
- 3rd Article (Keeps in Faith)
- 3rd Article (Invisible Church)
- 3rd Article (Visible Church)
- 3rd Article (Forgiveness)
- 3rd Article (Eternal Life)
- Baptism (Part 1)
- Baptism (Part 2)
- Holy Communion (Part 1)
- Holy Communion (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 1)
- Keys & Confession (Part 2)
- Keys & Confession (Part 3)
- Introduction to the Lord's Prayer
- The Address
- 1st Petition
- 2nd Petition
- 3rd Petition
- 4th Petition
- 5th Petition
- 6th Petition
- 7th Petition
- The Doxology

"The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

John 1:17

1. The two main doctrines in the Bible are the law and the gospel. These two doctrines differ fundamentally from each other and, in some sense, might even be called opposites. According to the following sets of passages, how do law and gospel differ?

"If you want to enter life, obey the commandments. . . . 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matthew 19:17-19).

"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son" (John 3:16).

The law tells us _____.

The gospel tells us _____.

"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The law _____ righteousness.

The gospel _____ righteousness.

"Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin" (Romans 3:20).

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29).

The law shows us _____.

The gospel shows us _____.

"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

The law _____ us.

The gospel _____ us.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105).

"Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Corinthians 5:14,15).

After conversion, the law _____ us in thankful living.

After conversion, the gospel _____ thankful living.

2. Why will the message of the gospel seem of little value to us if we do not first hear the message of God's law?

3. What will happen when people hear the message of the law but not the message of the gospel?

4. Comment on the following:

I would rather attend a church that doesn't preach God's law; it just makes me sad and depressed.

The law afflicts the comfortable. The gospel comforts the afflicted.

A minister once said, "This is the order I use when I preach a sermon: law, gospel, and then law again."

Luther said:

"Before receiving the comfort of forgiveness, sin must be recognized and the fear of God's wrath must be experienced through the preaching or apprehension of the Law, that man may be driven to sigh for grace and may be prepared to receive the comfort of the Gospel. . . . On the other hand, where there are hearts in which the Law has performed its office, so that they are frightened by the knowledge of their sin, are timid and fugitive, no Law should be preached and proclaimed any more, but pure Gospel and comfort." (Plass, Vol. 2, page 738.)

Closing Prayer

Lord God, thank you for leading us to see clearly our damning sins, our hopelessness, and our need for a Savior. And thank you for comforting our hearts with the sweet, good news of salvation in Jesus Christ alone. May we live our lives to his glory and yours. Amen.

At home

- Memorize John 1:17.
- Read your favorite Bible passages. Determine whether they are law passages or gospel passages.

Helps

(1) The law tells us what to do and what not to do; the gospel tells us what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. The law demands righteousness; the gospel gives righteousness. The law shows us our sin and our need for a Savior; the gospel shows us our Savior. The law condemns us; the gospel saves us. The law guides us in thankful living; the gospel inspires thankful living. (2) If we do not understand that we are eternally condemned because of our sins, we will never fully appreciate a Savior from sin. (3) The message of the law without the message of salvation in Jesus Christ results only in despair and hopelessness. (4) It is true that the law is not a pleasant message to hear. However, it is entirely necessary. Before we can be as glad as God wants to make us through the preaching of the gospel, we must first be made sad through the preaching of the law. This, in fact, is the purpose of the law—to afflict the hearts of those who find spiritual security in themselves and their works, and to convince them that, by themselves, they are lost. The purpose of the gospel, on the other hand, is to comfort those whose hearts are despairing and afflicted by assuring them that Jesus has saved them. Ministers who rightly handle law and gospel will use God's law as a mirror, convicting people of their sin and leading them to despise their own righteousness. The gospel, then, will gladden hearts with the message of salvation in Jesus Christ. The law, finally, will be used again, not as a mirror but to guide Christian hearts, compelled by Christ's love for them, in thankful living.