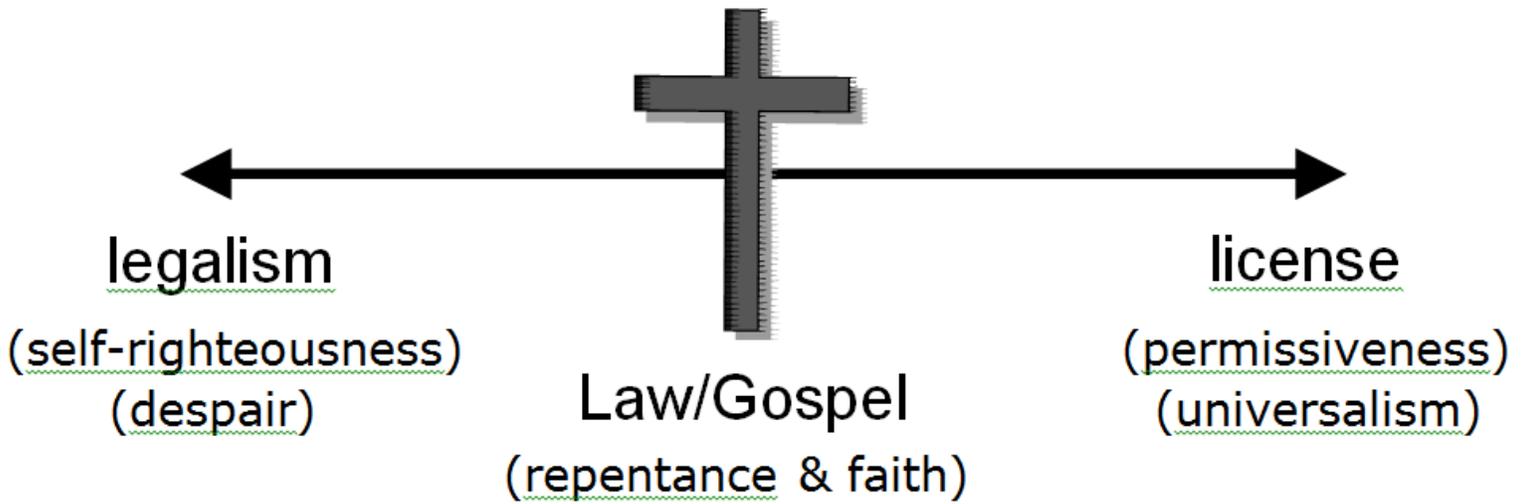


# Balancing Law & Gospel

*in the Word of God*



## LAW to the Proud; GRACE to the Humble

When someone is weighed down, freaked out and convicted of their sin, they need more Law like they need a hole in their head! Furthermore, a person who is secure in their sin and confident in their own piety surely does not need Gospel for that would be like throwing pearls to swine.

Giving Law to the Broken and Gospel to the Proud is a terrible application of Law and Gospel! The Law is to be delivered to those who are secure in their sin and the Gospel is to be delivered to those who are bruised and contrite in their sin. Law for the proud; Gospel to the humble. To invert this is to cause serious spiritual damage to an individual.

More specifically, it is a grievous sin for any preacher to give Law to a person already miserable and contrite, this is spiritual abuse! A contrite individual needs the pure unconditional promise of the Gospel to comfort, heal and absolve. On the other hand, the person who is secure in their sin should not have a drop of Gospel! Not a drop. What the secure sinner needs is the full force of the Law to crush them, bring them down and gift them contrition so that they might be receptive to the Gospel. What does this result in? Typically the wounded will be healed and the self-righteous will get angry. Regardless of the responses of the individual it is the faithful task of the preacher of the Word to rightly divide Law and Gospel. from *Thesis VIII Of Walther's Law and Gospel In Laymen's Terms* - by Pastor Matt Richard

The *goal* of the LAW is to lead us to Christ (*GOSPEL*).

### The **LAW** key and the **GOSPEL** key



"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." - Lk 16:19 (also Mt 18:18)

"If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." - Jn 20:23

God's Word does what Jesus did for all on the cross - binding sin, Satan, death and hell, loosing sinners from their guilt and shame, freeing them to be the children of God, swinging wide the gates of salvation. Opening heaven to faith, shutting it to unbelief. (Cwirla)

### **What's *THE* problem with us human beings?**

The heart. How has God graciously addressed our biggest problem? Through His Word of Law and His Word of Gospel, the Holy Spirit creates and sustains faith. He justifies and sanctifies us, bringing love towards God and our neighbor.

### **Sanctification**

"True sanctification does not consist of self-evaluation of one's own progress in living a holy life, but rather an increasing awareness of one's need for Christ and a corresponding increase of faith that trusts Him to be sufficient for that ever growing awareness of one's need. The man who is being sanctified by the Spirit has his gaze fixed firmly upon the cross of Jesus. The man seeking to sanctify himself looks only at his own navel. The former has freedom in Christ and a heart filled with thanksgiving, joy and divine love. The latter has only bondage, accusation and a pain in the neck!"

## **Law & Gospel in Preaching**

*The goal of preaching:* To preach sin (LAW) and grace (GOSPEL)  
... which brings about repentance and faith/spiritual transformation/a  
changed heart toward God.

### **Faith Defined**

"Faith is not what some people think it is. Their human dream is a delusion. Because they observe that faith is not followed by good works or a better life, they fall into error, even though they speak and hear much about faith. "Faith is not enough," they say, "You must do good works, you must be pious to be saved." They think that, when you hear the gospel, you start working, creating by your own strength a thankful heart which says, "I believe." That is what they think true faith is. But, because this is a human idea, a dream, the heart never learns anything from it, so it does nothing and reform doesn't come from this 'faith,' either.

Instead, faith is God's work in us, that changes us and gives new birth from God. (John 1:13). It kills the Old Adam and makes us completely different people. It changes our hearts, our spirits, our thoughts and all our powers. It brings the Holy Spirit with it. Yes, it is a living, creative, active and powerful thing, this faith. Faith cannot help doing good works constantly. It doesn't stop to ask if good works ought to be done, but before anyone asks, it already has done them and continues to do them without ceasing. Anyone who does not do good works in this manner is an unbeliever. He stumbles around and looks for faith and good works, even though he does not know what faith or good works are. Yet he gossips and chatters about faith and good works with many words.

Faith is a living, bold trust in God's grace, so certain of God's favor that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it. Such confidence and knowledge of God's grace makes you happy, joyful and bold in your relationship to God and all creatures. The Holy Spirit makes this happen through faith. Because of it, you freely, willingly and joyfully do good to everyone, serve everyone, suffer all kinds of things, love and praise the God who has shown you such grace. Thus, it is just as impossible to separate faith and works as it is to separate heat and light from fire! Therefore, watch out for your own false ideas and guard against good-for-nothing gossips, who think they're smart enough to define faith and works, but really are the greatest of fools. Ask God to work faith in you, or you will remain forever without faith, no matter what you wish, say or can do."

*from "An Introduction to St. Paul's Letter to the Romans" - by Martin Luther*

*And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. (Luke 7:37-38)*

How this pleased Jesus! As He sat there in the house of the Pharisee, He missed the manifestation of love. From what He says later to Simon we gather that He had carefully observed everything that had been done – or had not been done – for Him from the time He entered the house: no water had been set before Him, He had no kiss of welcome, and no oil. What was clearly lacking in Simon was the disposition of the heart. Everything was formal and stiff; but there was no love behind the formality. The little “extra” which reveals a heart overflowing with love was missing.

With the woman, however, it was different. And this is what delighted Jesus. It warmed His heart in the cold room where He sat. Her tears, her hair, her kiss, her devotion and sincerity, the fragrance of the ointments, her distress, her need – all this was to His tender heart like a child's embrace of its father. And the fact that she was a sinner who needed salvation made His love even more tender.

I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou art still the same. Even a sinner's tears are dear to Thee. Therefore I dare to come to Thee. Help me that I may never be formal and cold toward thee, but devoted, warm, and sincere. (from *Rest a While* - Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> - by Fredrik Wisloff)

*... 41 "A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?" ...*