

The Purpose of the Law

(Rom 5:20-21)

- Remember the context is the assurance we have because of justification by faith
- I. Rom 5:20-21- This is a summary statement by Paul of what has gone from 1:16-5:19
 - A) It is also a perfect segue into ch 6-7 (exposition of this statement)
 - B) “What about the Law?”
 - 1. “Moreover”- something additional, postscript
 - i. Paul is about to close his comparison of the headship of Adam -vs- Christ, but turns now to address a “loose end”
 - a) He had mentioned the Law in v.13, and now wants to address its relation to what he has just taught:
 - 1) We are not justified in God’s sight by the Law
 - 2) We are in fact not even condemned in God’s sight by the Law
 - (a) Can’t we imagine the problem this would cause the Jewish Christian?
 - (b) “We are condemned by Adam, justified by Christ; why Moses then?”
 - 3) Preaching the gospel seems to be saying that the Law is useless
 - (a) Compare Rom 6:1-2- Being accused of Antinomianism is a sure way to be certain you have presented gospel clearly
- II. “The Law entered”
 - A) “Entered”- The same word is used of sin “entering” in v.12
 - 1. But here Paul adds a prefix (para) meaning to come along side of, an addition to something already there
 - i. Gal 3:19- The Law was added because of transgressions”
 - ii. Sin “entered” and then later, the Law came in along side the sin
 - a) Law wasn’t to primary thing, it came in in addition, in order to serve a purpose, to help/aid sin in its work
 - B) “That (in order that) the offense might abound”
 - 1. This tells us the purpose of the Law
 - i. Law entered in order that the offense of Adam (and all subsequent offenses) might abound:
 - a) Sin-“Abound”- *plenazo*- increase, exist in growing abundance, multiply, is reference to numerical increase
 - 1) Grace- “much more abounded”- *hyperperisseuo*- super exceed, beyond measure, overflowing abundance, innumerable

(a) This is yet another amplification of the point Paul is making, the “much more” of Christ (and His work) over Adam (an his work)

(1) Rom 5:9, 10, 15, 17

(b) Grace doesn’t just counteract or balance Adam’s sin, it overflows it

(1) 1 Cor 15:54- Death “swallowed up” in victory

(2) Compare this to the hymns of the church before and after the reformation and the preaching again of justification by faith

I. From monks chanting with heads down to open air preaching and rejoicing and evangelizing

III. How the Law increases sin

A) Increases knowledge of sin (Rom 3:20, 7:7)

1. It defines sin for me, thus removing all doubt, ignorance or ambiguity (Rom 4:15)

i. It gives sin the added character of transgression

a) Transgression is sin defined by the Law as sin/rebellion against God

b) Not just a negative act, but a broken law (Rom 5:13)

c) Little children are sinful, but only come to see this when rules are added

ii. Law tells me what I should do, but it doesn’t give me the power to do it

2. It reveals the nature/true character of sin (Rom 2:15, 7:13)

i. Show the depth of sin, and its vileness and harmful intentions

ii. Rom 7:5- “The motions of sin”

iii. It shows the power of sin

a) Law makes clear the requirement, and then we feel the struggle

3. It reveals the reign of sin over human heart

i. It expounds upon and examines the result of Adam’s sin over every member of the human race

ii. The Law shows me who is really reigning over the heart of man

a) Example of smoker who says “I can stop anytime I want, I have before.” But then is told by a doctor he must stop or die

1) Now this man finds that he cannot stop, he needs help

4. It reveals deceitfulness of sin (Rom 7:11)

i. The very Law meant to help me causes me to rebel all the more

ii. The lost have no idea sin is reigning over them

B) Increases conviction of sin (Rom 3:19)

1. Ignorance is replaced with guilt

2. When we see sin as rebellion against God, we begin to see ourselves worthy of His wrath
 - i. It convicts us more deeply on points already known and felt by making them rebellion against the Holy God (Psa 51)
 - ii. We are pitting our will against God's will
- C) Increases desire to sin (Rom 7:5-11)
1. Sin has so defiled us, that that which is good for us repulses us
 - i. Knowledge of sin has not prevented anyone from sinning, it does the exact opposite
 - a) Prohibition- increased drinking in our country enormously
 - 1) Vice President John Garner would offer his visitors a drink and say, "Let's strike a blow for liberty"
 - b) Sex education- only arouses interests and had opposite affect
 - c) No Hunting sign- I've never seen 1 that wasn't shot
- D) Increases desperate need of Savior (Rom 3:20, Gal 3:22-24)
1. It is our awareness and understanding and belief of the bad news that makes the gospel the good news
 - i. You cannot appreciate the 2nd half of Rom 5:20 if you do not appreciate the teaching of the 1st half
 - a) To truly know grace, we must truly know sin
 - 1) "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners" - John Bunyan
 - 2) "Amazing Grace"- John Newton
 - 3) 1 Tim 1:13-15- Paul the "chief of sinners"
 2. We must not stop at the bad news, but go on to look at the grace of God in Christ
 - i. We must look beyond our dark hearts to Christ's abounding grace
 - a) This is the horror of Catholicism, it can only convict
 - ii. Even the revealing and increasing knowledge of sin is by the grace of God to us
 - a) And even the Law had the gospel foreshadowed in the ceremonies
 - 1) God gave both Moses and Aaron
 - iii. Eph 2:4-7- The exceeding riches of His grace
 - iv. Eph 3:8- The unsearchable riches of Christ