Gospel and Law

In this lesson, we will look at the Gospel and the Law. We will begin with a prayer from John Calvin, as we always do. Let us pray.

"Almighty God, Thou hast willed to show Thyself so intimately to us and also daily choose to confirm us in Thy truth. Grant we may turn aside neither to the right nor to the left but depend wholly on Thy Word and so cleave to Thee that no arrows of the world may lead us astray. May we stand firm in that faith which we have learned from Thy Law, from the Prophets and the Gospel, wherein Thou hast more clearly shown Thyself through Christ that we may finally enjoy Thy full and perfect glory, being transfigured into it, at last attaining that inheritance acquired for us by the blood of Thine only begotten Son. Amen."

We have looked at the first five chapters of Book II of Calvin's *Institutes*, which is the need for the Redeemer for sin and its results. We come with chapter 6 of Book II, throughout the rest of Book II to salvation through Christ. Remember the title of Book II is "Knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ." But Calvin has to first establish the need for the Redeemer in the first five chapters before he gets to salvation through Christ, the knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ. He gives us a review of Book I and Book II, chapters 1 through 5 as he begins chapter 6, the fact of the Fall. Book II, chapter 6, section 1 says, "The whole human race perished in the person of Adam." We can take that sentence as a capsule review of the first five chapters of Book II. We elaborated on that in some detail in the last lesson. Then Calvin looks back to all of Book I when he speaks of the impossibility of a natural theology. In Book II, chapter 6, section 1, he says, "Our eyes, wherever they turn, encounter God's curse." If man had not fallen, our eyes would have been able to observe God's presence in creation and providence as well as hear God's voice within us in the sense of divinity in the seed of religion. Now, because of the Fall, which we have looked at in the first five chapters of Book II, our eyes, wherever they turn, encounter God's curse. So the stage has been set for the need for the Redeemer. In the beginning of chapter 6, Calvin says, "Therefore since we have fallen from life into death, the whole knowledge of God the Creator that we have discussed in Book I would be useless unless faith also followed, setting forth for us God our Father in Christ." If we do not come to know Christ, any knowledge that we might presume that we have of God the Father is futile and useless. Another way to say it is that without Book II there is really no knowledge in Book I. The knowledge of God the Creator that we talked about in Book I is not available to us unless we have the knowledge of God the Creator through Christ. Without Book II, Book I is ineffective. We cannot know God the Creator unless we know Him in Christ.

With those comments, we are ready to look at Calvin's treatment of the Redeemer. It is one of his favorite expressions for Christ and the one he will use more often in the material we read for today. "Fallen man ought to seek redemption in Christ." You can see how everything he has done so far has pressed us to that point. Remember the title of Book II is "Knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ." It is first disclosed to the fathers under the Law and then to us in the Gospel. As soon as Calvin introduces the idea of Christ the Redeemer, he turns to survey the entire Bible. He does not start with the New Testament; he starts with the Old Testament, because in Calvin, Christ introduces soteriology. It is not introduced by Law but by Christ. When Christ says, "This is eternal life, to know the Father and Jesus Christ whom He has sent" speaks not of His own age, but as Calvin says, "He comprehends all ages." The message of the Bible is Christ, who comprehends all ages. Christ was present before Bethlehem, just as the Holy Spirit is present before Pentecost. A point that Calvin is going to make so fervently and eloquently in this section is that Christ comprehends all ages. For Calvin, the order is not Law then Gospel or Old Testament then New Testament. It is Gospel and Law, or perhaps a better way

to say it is Gospel, Law, Gospel. He completely surrounds the Law by the Gospel. Book II, chapter 6, section 1 is on Christ, then he talks about the Old Testament, and then he comes back to Christ. It is Christ, Old Testament, and the Gospel. A better way to diagram what Calvin is doing is to say that it is entirely Gospel, first disclosed to the fathers in the Law and then to us in the Gospel. But the disclosure that we receive in the Gospel is far fuller and more complete than the expression of the Gospel that was disclosed to the fathers in the Law. What was disclosed to them in the Law is the same Gospel that is disclosed to us now more completely after the earthly coming of Jesus Christ. Law, in this sense, is part of the Gospel. It is included in the Gospel, and it is part of the Gospel. Calvin begins with Gospel and surrounds Law with Gospel. Book II, chapter 6 is Christ, chapters 7 and 8 are Law, and chapter 9 is Christ.

For Calvin there is but one Word of God, not two. The Law is part of that one Word of God; it is part of the ongoing revelation of God. It is set in the context of the promise of the Gospel. In Book II, chapter 7, section 1, Calvin says, "The Law was not given to lead the chosen people away from Christ, but rather to hull their minds in readiness until His coming." The Law comes after Abraham with Moses, but it is not given in order to bring something else to the table. It is given to focus the minds and hearts of the chosen people on Christ. Calvin's fundamental premise is that the substance of the Law is gratuitous mercy.

Let us come to the Law itself, discussed in Book II, chapters 7 and 8. We have seen how Calvin surrounds the Law with the Gospel in the arrangement of the *Institutes*. Now let us see exactly what he says about the Law. "The form of the Law is accommodation." We have already talked about how Calvin loves this word and uses it so often. God accommodates Himself to the level of our understanding. Certainly Calvin sees, in the form of the Old Testament Scriptures, God's accommodation of Himself in His message to the elementary mentality of the Jews. That does not mean that these ancient people were not smart, but he means that they stand at the very beginning of the unfolding of God's revelation. God speaks to them in a form that is particularly right for them. It is accommodated to their understanding. Calvin describes them in Book II, chapter 7, section 2 as "like children."

Many years ago I had an experience that illustrates this. When Anne and I were first married, we went to the island of Grand Cayman just after our honeymoon. For that summer I was pastor of the Boatsmen Bay Presbyterian Church, which was a little church by a lighthouse on the northern coast of the island. It is the church that David Jones later served for a couple of years. That was before Grand Cayman was famous as a tourist spot and a place for banks. In those days it was full of mosquitoes and Presbyterians! Scotts had settled the island and planted Presbyterian churches in different parts of Grand Cayman. When we first got there, we decided that I would teach the adults upstairs and Anne would teach the children downstairs. Just before we left the United States, someone gave Anne a box full of flannel graph. I do not know if you have seen that kind of thing; it is old fashioned now. It used to be used in Sunday school quite often to show pictures of different people and illustrate Bible stories. It was flannel on the back, and you could put it up against a flannel graph board, and it would stick there. When my class found out that there were pictures downstairs, the next Sunday they all went downstairs! I had nobody left, and I moved downstairs. I was Anne's assistant for the rest of the summer, holding up the pictures and putting them up as she taught the class. That is what Calvin says here. It is the same Gospel taught upstairs and downstairs. I was doing it through words primarily, but Anne was doing it through images and pictures downstairs. Upstairs and downstairs is the same Gospel. Old Testament and New Testament is the same Gospel, but it is accommodated in the Old Testament period to the childlike mentality of the Jews. It is accommodated in the New Testament period, too, because all of God's revelation is accommodated to the level of our understanding. For Calvin, as you see it in the Old

Testament, there is more accommodation. This is because it is the beginning of the history of salvation. The form of the Law is accommodation.

There is also unity of the Law. Calvin is very concerned to stress that "there is but one everlasting and unchangeable rule." He typically distinguished three types of law: moral, ceremonial, and judicial. We will talk about those in a moment. But there is just one law. It is not so much different laws as different aspects of the same Law. Calvin did commentaries on the Pentateuch. It is very interesting that Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are arranged in the form of a harmony. Rather than just going verse by verse through those four books, he tries to set all of this out under the rubric of the Law as expressed in the Ten Commandments. You have material from the judicial law, ceremonial law, and moral law that illustrates different aspects of the Law and different laws of the Ten Commandments. He says, "The ceremonial and judicial also pertain to morals." We will see there is a difference between these laws. Calvin thinks that the unity and oneness of the Law allows him to arrange his commentary in this way. I am not sure it is altogether successful. You can look at what Calvin does there and see if he is able to accomplish his goal or not. At least his purpose is clear, that is to say there is but one everlasting and unchangeable rule given by God.

Let us come to the types of Law; we will discuss the three different types in Calvin. We will see how he deals with the ceremonial, civil, and moral laws. The ceremonial law is the law concerning the sacrifices and various practices instituted by God for worship in the tabernacle and in the temple. Calvin says, "This part of the Law more effectively carries the Gospel although worthless and empty until Christ is revealed." All the Law carries the Gospel, but the most effective place in the Old Testament where you see the Gospel is in the ceremonies and sacrifices. These sacrifices and rituals have no inherent value in themselves. They are worthless and empty until Christ is revealed. But Calvin does not mean that they have to wait until the chronological appearance of Christ at Bethlehem. It is not that the sacrifices and practices of the Old Testament saints were worthless and empty until Christ was born at Bethlehem. They were worthless and empty until Christ was revealed. He is revealed in the Old Testament times to the Jews as well as later to us in the Gospel. These practices abstracted from Christ without the revelation of Christ as the substance of them are empty and worthless. In Book II, chapter 7, section 1 Calvin says, "For what is more vain or absurd than for men to offer a loathsome stench from the fat of cattle in order to reconcile themselves to God?" The pure event, the act itself, is worthless and senseless. When Christ is revealed as the content of that practice, then there is true Gospel and true life.

Let us talk about what happens to this law in the New Testament period. We can diagram it by saying ceremonial law is fulfilled in Christ. That means that it is abrogated; it does not hold for us now in the period of the Gospel. It is not abrogated in regard to the meaning of the ceremonial law but only in the use of the ceremonial law. Ceremonial law is fulfilled in Christ, but the meaning continues. By that Calvin means that we do not make sacrifices today. The use is abrogated. It would be wrong for us to make sacrifices because Christ has fulfilled the ceremonial law. It is all about Him, and it all pointed to His sacrifice on the cross. There is no need for further sacrifice. The meaning of that ceremonial law lives on. We do not make sacrifices, but we preach on the book of Leviticus. You can still read Leviticus, preach on it, and teach it as the living Word of God. As you understand, those sacrifices and the different parts of the ceremonial law it reveals teaches us, even today, more about who Jesus is and what He has done in His sacrifice for our sins. Calvin says, "Christ, by coming, terminated the ceremonial law, but in doing so He sealed their force and effect." We do not throw those books out of the Bible. We still have them in our Bibles, read them, and study them with profit and blessing. Calvin says the ceremonial law encouraged piety or holiness. You certainly can see that as you read those books of the Old Testament. But the ceremonial law was not piety. It was the means that God used to encourage righteousness, holiness, and piety in His Old Testament people, but it was not the same as

piety. The law ceased, but piety continues. Love for God, righteousness, and holiness continues. That is the ceremonial law.

We come next to the civil or judicial law. These are the laws that God gave to Moses for the regulation of the life of the nation of Israel. Every people group has to have laws to organize their lives. This was the law that God gave for Israel. We can say that law was abrogated too. With the end of the nation of Israel, the Old Testament people, the law was no longer required. In God's purpose and plan, the Church replaced the nation. There is not anything today like the Old Testament nation of Israel. There is a modern nation of Israel, but that is a different phenomenon. The Church has replaced the Old Testament nation of Israel, so those laws are no longer required. They are abrogated, but we do not just forget those either. We can study these laws of the Old Testament, and we can look for the principles that lay behind these laws. Those principles are still valid for modern states. In other words, if you look at the Old Testament judicial law, you find a lot of principles. They can be summed up under two headings: love and justice. These laws reflect those two principles. Calvin says that modern states have the right to make laws as they choose to govern their own people. They should not take the Old Testament laws given for the nation of Israel and apply those laws without discrimination to a modern state. Calvin was not a theonomist. But they should apply the principles of those Old Testament laws. Love, equity, and justice should be applied to modern states.

We will come to this in much more detail in Book IV, chapter 20. That is the last chapter of the *Institutes*, where Calvin treats civil government. It is important here to note what Calvin says at that point. In Book IV, chapter 20, section 14, Calvin explicitly rejects what he calls "the false and foolish notion that a modern state could be run under the political system of Moses rather than the common law of nations." He says in his commentary on Ephesians 6:5-9, "The Gospel is not brought in to change the common politics of the world and to make laws that belong to the temporal state. It is true that kings, princes, and magistrates ought always to take counsel at God's mouth and to conform themselves to His Word. But yet for all that, our Lord has given them liberty to make such laws as they shall perceive to be fitting and suitable for the rule committed to them. They must call upon God to give them the spirit of wisdom and discretion, and because they are insufficient for this in and of themselves, they must take counsel from God's Word." Calvin cannot be clearer on this. Principles apply, but the actual laws do not. Calvin says that law is abrogated, which was never enacted for us. It was not a law that was given for us. Luther held the same thing. He said it a little more colorfully, as he usually does. When someone asked him if the civil law was for us, Luther said, "Are you a Jew that lived back in the Old Testament times in the nation of Israel? If you are, then it fits; if you are not, then it does not."

Laws for modern states, such as Geneva, were not meant to be based on Old Testament legislation. Calvin did not encourage those laws to be based on Old Testament legislation. Yet it is remarkable how many treatments of Calvin and Geneva, at least from a popular and secular standpoint, will talk about Geneva being a theocracy and Calvin being a dictator. They say Calvin put into practice the Old Testament legislation. That is far from true; in fact, it is just the opposite. Calvin said that civil law of Moses encouraged love and justice, and this should be something that modern states would express in their own laws. It was not necessary to bring in the specific legislation of the Old Testament. Calvin was not a dictator or even a ruler of Geneva. He was the chief minister in the church of Geneva, but he was not a citizen of Geneva until the 1550s. He lived in a city where laws were made by some very strong groups of men. These were the Council of Sixty and the Council of Two Hundred. Calvin had influence in these, but he could not dictate. He was a member of the 1541 commission to review the civil and political laws of the city. He was invited to sit on that commission. Calvin was trained in law; he was a lawyer. He studied at two of the best law schools in France. When he came to Geneva as minister, he had a great deal of expertise in legal matters as well. The councils recognized Calvin's ability in this

area and listened to him. They appreciated his work. As remuneration for his work in this commission, he was given a barrel of fine, old wine. That must have been worth something, as the city fathers wanted to reward Calvin for his assistance. Apparently Calvin favored using as the pattern for law the contemporary French models rather than Roman law and canon law. His greatest contribution, although he made some specific suggestions, was to be sure that the laws of the state of Geneva set forth the principles of justice and equity. For instance, Calvin thought criminal cases should be expedited as quickly as possible so that a person is not detained for a long period of time, languishing in prison. That would violate the law of love. There are many other examples of how Calvin urged that laws be humane and just. You could say that comes from natural law, but it also comes from the civil law of the Old Testament.

There is one other type of law, which is the one that we need to spend most of our time on. It is the moral law. Calvin calls it the true and eternal rule of righteousness. He says in Book IV, "This is prescribed for people of all nations and all times." There is no chronological limitation or national limitation as there is in ceremonial and civil laws. The moral law is not abrogated. The full content of the moral law continues; it does not end. There are various ways that you could think of the moral law. You could think of it as natural law, what God plants in us. It is the seed of religion, or our conscience. It would have borne good fruit if we had not sinned. It takes the form of the written law of the Old Testament, which restates, fills out, and elaborates what is already there in natural law. It is summarized in the Ten Commandments and summarized further by Christ in His word that we are to love God and love our neighbors as ourselves. It is explained in the Sermon on the Mount, which is not a new law but the old law properly interpreted. It is freed from the pharisaic misinterpretations of the Law as Jesus gives a faithful interpretation of the Law. You can see it, both in the Old Testament and in the teachings of Jesus and the rest of the New Testament. You can also find vestiges of it in natural revelation in conscience. This law, the true and eternal rule of righteousness, is abrogated, not in content but only in the sense that it may no longer bind the conscience of believers with a curse. That is the only difference. We will have to wait until we come to the chapter on Christian freedom, which is in Book III, chapter 19, to see what Calvin means by that. The law is still there and is for us; however, it does not bind our conscience with a curse.

Let us look at Calvin's discussion of the uses of the moral law. This is the famous discussion of the three uses of the law. This is a straightforward and clear approach that he takes. The first use is condemnation. That was not the reason the Law was given in the first place in the form that it would have taken in the Garden of Eden. We know there was law there: "Do not eat of this tree." The Law is an expression of God's love and kindness. Someone left an issue of Covenant magazine up here, and it has Dr. Williams' sermon that he gave last semester when we did the series on the Ten Commandments. Dr. Williams was first with "Where the Commandments Begin." It really sets forth very nicely what Calvin talks about. Dr. Williams concludes his sermon with a quotation from Calvin that the Law is love. It is not destructive of personal relationships. It is not something that comes in between God and us. It does not come in there to bring in something impersonal or mechanical. The Law is given as an expression God's eternal kindness. Even though the nature of the Law is not changed, this first function of the Law changes because of sin. Now it condemns. It points out our sin as we look at the moral law, and it leaves us inexcusable. Nobody can say that he or she has measured up. We cannot look at the Law and excuse ourselves. Paul makes an effort to do that, looking at the commandments and checking them off. He says he has not killed or committed adultery. He does not really understand the full meaning of the Law, as we will see later. He finally realizes that he is inexcusable even of the outward form of the Ten Commandments. He comes to the tenth commandment, which deals with the inner attitude of coveting. Paul cannot justify himself at that point. We stand condemned as sinners before the Law. Calvin uses both Romans 3:20 and Romans 5:20 as proof texts here. Romans 3:20 says, "Through the law comes the

knowledge of sin." His illustration is the mirror. You look in the mirror, and you see what you look like. You kind of know what you look like before you look in the mirror, but when you look there you really see what you look like. Paul looks at the Ten Commandments and says he has failed because he did not keep the tenth commandment. He looks in the mirror of God's Law. The first use of the moral law is to expose the exceeding sinfulness of sin, not just to make us miserable that we are sinners, but that we might be moved to seek and await help from another quarter. It condemns us in order to move us to seek salvation through Christ.

The second use of the Law is restraint. Sometimes this is called the social or political use of the Law. It means that by fear of punishment, people are restrained in their sin and so human life is possible in community on this earth. The laws of nations reflect the second table of the Ten Commandments. God's law, "Thou shall not kill," is usually expressed in the laws of nations in one way or another. The person who is tempted to kill is probably restrained by that law. Not everyone is restrained by it, but a lot of people are, because people know that if they kill they are going to suffer the consequences. The Law is there to restrain. The text that Calvin uses is 1 Timothy 1:9-10, "The law is not laid down for the just but for the unjust." As the Law stands there, expressed today through the laws of states but based on the laws of God, there is a restraining influence that makes possible human life in community. Without any law, it would not be possible for people to live together. Laws restrain human sinfulness. The illustration is the halter. It could be placed on an animal to hold an animal back and keep it from running away. This use of the Law, too, is an expression of God's loving kindness. Calvin sees it not only as restraining sinners to keep them from creating havoc so that community is no longer possible, but it also protects the unregenerate until the time of their regeneration. It protects the elect until the time of their regeneration so that people do not destroy themselves before salvation. The Law restrains them; it is a holding action whereby God preserves from utter ruin those whom He has decided to bring to faith. It restrains society in general so that communal life is possible, and it protects the elect so that they do not destroy themselves before the time when they come to faith. That is the second use of the moral law.

The third use of the moral law is guidance for believers in their Christian lives. Calvin says this is the principle use of the Law. Guidance happens through teaching and exhortation. Teaching leads us to a greater understanding of God's will. Book II, chapter 7, section 12 says, "Believers never move beyond needing the Law. They must learn more thoroughly each day the nature of the Lord's will to which they aspire and be confirmed in their understanding of it. It is as if some servant already prepared with all earnestness of heart to commend himself to his master must search out and observe his master's ways more carefully in order to conform and accommodate himself to them." What Calvin says is very important. The Law is not there for the Christian in order to require something of us. It is there for the Christian in order to explain to us how to do what we want to do as Christians. It tells us how to love God. A servant is eager to obey, but we do not know what to do. Love is not just an emotion; it is expression in word, thought, and deed. The Law does not come to get between God and us but to expose to us how God wants to be served, loved, and obeyed. In that sense we see that the Law is something very wonderful. Otherwise we are at loose ends, fearful because we do not know what to do to express our love for God. The Law comes to enable us to observe our master's ways more carefully so that we can conform and accommodate ourselves to them. The third use of the law is guidance. It teaches, and it also exhorts. When we ask how we can love God, it tells us what to do. But at times when we do not really feel like loving God, it exhorts us to love God. It is both teaching and exhortation. The text is Psalm 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet." The Law shows me where to go. The lamp is one of the figures that Calvin uses. He also uses the illustration of a whip, which is one that we do not like as much. We like the idea of the lamp, but Calvin says, "It is like a whip to an idle and bulky ass." That is us! It is not very flattering, but he gets his point across. For the Christian, the Law shows us how to love God and encourages us and exhorts us to love God. Calvin does not end that negatively because he

wants to balance it somewhat. He does not want us to see the Law as something harsh and difficult. He says, "The Law is not a rigorous enforcement officer who is not satisfied until the requirements are met." The Law does not stand there saying, "You did not do that quite right. You took a step too far that way." It is not like that. It exhorts and can be viewed as a whip, but it is not like a rigorous enforcement officer who is never satisfied. This is Calvin's third use of the Law. Calvin is rather famous for this.

Some people have seen a fundamental difference here between Calvin and Luther. Luther does not talk about the third use of the Law. He predominately talks about the first use of the Law. It is Law and Gospel for Luther. Law condemns; Gospel saves. For Luther, the two are in competition and are opposites. Luther came out of the monastery where law meant salvation by works. He wants to keep that before us so that the Law is condemnation. Law and love are in competition, but for Calvin law and love say the same thing. For Calvin, the Law is positive. After the Fall, there is the condemning work of the Law, but for Calvin that is the "accidental" though now inseparable function. The principle use of law is guidance and exhortation. Calvin came from the study of law, and he valued it. But his understanding of the third use of the Law is not based on his appreciation for law. It is based on his understanding of the role of the Law in the life of the Christian. It is true to say there is a difference between Luther and Calvin, but the difference is sometimes exaggerated. You can find "Calvin-like" statements in Luther, places where Luther speaks about loving the Law. The Bible speaks about loving the Law, so Luther is forced to do so at points. You can find places in Calvin where he sounds much more like Luther.

Luther's basic thrust is that, out of hearts full of gratitude for what God has done for us, we spontaneously love and serve Him. Calvin does not deny that. In Book III, chapter 2, section 41, he says, "How can the mind be aroused to taste the divine goodness without at the same time being wholly kindled to love God in return?" We taste the divine goodness, and that fires us up to love God. In a sermon on Deuteronomy 5:21, Calvin said, "By the Law, God requires of us what is due to Him, but that is not so in the Gospel. For there God bears with us. He not only forgives us our faults, but He writes His will in our hearts." There are "Luther-like" quotations from Calvin, and you can find places in Luther where he speaks of the necessity of the Law. Luther's small catechism has a large section on the Ten Commandments. He is concerned about obedience and love, but he never organizes his thought the way Calvin does. He does not have a third use of the Law, although Philip Melanchthon did and the Augsburg Confession does. Perhaps the difference is a bit exaggerated. It is probably true in the two traditions that we have reflected different emphases.

There is an article I saw the other day that was titled "Why do the Lutherans Shout Justification and Whisper Sanctification?" As the two traditions developed, there were other differences between Lutheranism and Calvinism, but there is some difference of emphasis here. Calvinists feared that the Lutherans would become antinomians and not respect and value the Law. Lutherans feared that the Calvinists would become legalists and make the Law into something it should not be. We can say that both were right. Lutherans became antinomians, and Calvinists became legalists at various times in the Calvinist tradition. It is not necessary for a Calvinist to be a legalist, but the temptation may be in that direction. Likewise it is not necessary for a Lutheran to be an antinomian, but that is what a Lutheran has to guard against. Every Presbyterian church should have at least two or three Lutherans in it, and every Lutheran church should have two or three Presbyterians in it just to keep reminding each other of the fact that legalism and antinomianism are misuses of the Law.

Here is a quotation from Calvin's commentary on Deuteronomy 7:9, "The promise stands first because God chooses rather to invite His people by kindness than to compel them to obedience from terror." By this he means that the Law itself is the promise. The promise stands first in the sense that even before

the first of the Ten Commandments, there is the promise, "I am Jehovah your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt." That is grace, promise, and Gospel. Then the commandments instruct us as to how we should live in the presence of this loving God. God's deliverance of the people from Egypt and His covenant relationship to them has the force of a preface to the commandments very much like Dr. Williams set forth in his sermon. The first word of the Law is not "thou shall" but "I am." That is where you begin with the study of the Law: "I am Jehovah" and all that that means. The law is gracious, and the motivation is because of what God has done for us we respond with gratitude, as Luther said. Then Calvin adds that we respond in terms of the Law because it was gracious of God to give us instruction as to how to respond. It is not just "love me" but love me according to these ten ways or other expressions of the Law that occur in the rest of the Old Testament.

Let us talk about the explanation of the moral law and Calvin's treatment of the Ten Commandments. There is significant material here, but I will make five points on it. Calvin lays down general principles, and his basic concern is that "a sober interpretation goes beyond the words." This is not something allegorical. If you are going to understand the Ten Commandments, you must go beyond the words.

First, the Law is inward. It is not as concerned with outward appearances as with purity of heart. The Ten Commandments sound very external, but it is really talking about purity of heart. It says that we should not kill, but we should also not hate, despise, or do anything else that would break the spirit of that commandment in our hearts. Calvin reflects on the Lord's treatment of the commandments in the Sermon on the Mount. He says that Christ is the Law's best interpreter. Christ does not add to the Law when he says, "You have heard it said of old time, but I say unto you." It is not that Moses said one thing and Christ says another. Pharisees interpret the Law in one way, but He says that the Law really means something else. Christ rescues the Law from the misinterpretation of the Pharisees and restores it to integrity. Calvin says in his commentary on Psalm 40 that it is not pseudo law keeping, which involves feet, hands, and eyes, but our response comes from the heart. In other words, it is not mechanical strictness to the external words of the Law.

The second principle is that the purpose of the Law determines its meaning. You can look at each commandment and determine the purpose of that commandment. For example, the fifth commandment expresses itself in the words "Thou shall honor thy father and thy mother," but Calvin says the purpose to that is that honor is to be paid to those to whom God has assigned it. That commandment has a specific application, but it also has a broader application.

Third, the opposite is included in the command or prohibition. "You shall not kill" is a prohibition. It means that you should not kill, and it means that we must give our neighbor's life all the help we can. Just by refraining from killing does not keep the command unless you are helping your neighbor. You might not immediately think that "thou shall not kill" means I should promote and sustain life and assist others in their lives. The opposite of stealing is not just to not steal, but it is to give to those in need.

Fourth, there are two tables or themes of the Law. One is love for God, and the other is love for people. Those two are connected. In Book II, chapter 8, section 11, Calvin says, "It is vain to cry up righteousness without religion." It is vain to emphasize the moral duties of the second table without the God-directed duties of the first table. You cannot just have a social gospel without a love for God. Apart from the fear of God, which is the first table, men do not preserve equity and love among themselves. Without the first table, the second table is going to fail.

The final principle is that the Law is complete. Book II, chapter 8, section 5 says, "We must not add

good works upon good works." This shows that Calvin is not a legalist. We do not have an eleventh commandment. There are only ten. We do not make up laws, as the Roman Catholic Church did in Calvin's time. Different forms of fundamentalism have done the same in our time. We do not add laws to laws; the Law is complete. We must not add good works upon good works.

Let me make a closing comment or a footnote to this. Calvin is concerned with the traditional way of dividing the ten words. We know there are Ten Commandments, but there are different ways to divide it. Calvin is concerned with the Catholic tradition of putting the second commandment under the first. "Thou shall have no other gods before me, and thou shall not make any graven image." The Catholics make that one commandment. To get ten it is necessary to divide the tenth into two commands, both related to coveting. That is one traditional way that the commands have been understood. But Calvin says in doing it that way they erase the commandment concerning images from the number or at least hide it under the first. He wants that to be understood as a definite separate command in order to emphasize his concern about the use of images. "God does not will that His lawful worship be profaned by superstitious rights." Calvin's division is quite different. It is not three plus seven for the two tables, but it is four plus six for the two tables. That is small, but it is interesting nonetheless to see Calvin's concern about that.

There are a few articles that might be of help when and if you want to go further into this topic. We will continue with something very similar when we meet again. We will come to the study of the Old and New Testaments, looking at their similarities and their differences. How does Calvin put together the testaments? How does he view the unity of the Bible? We will see that next time.