

The Divine Exchange of the Christian Life
Chapter 4: PREOCCUPATION with LAW
(Smith & George Interview, edited by Bob Clarkson)

Religion is a Failing Proposition

Jesus came into a religious world. He chose very specifically and intentionally, the time that He was born. His birth date was affected not only by the way the politics was set up, but also how religion was set up. The Pharisees had taken the original Word of God, the Law of Moses, and had turned it into the most complex of religions with its hours for prayer and for every form or act of devotion. That also coincided with the time when all religions of the world were at their apex. It was a time when all men were, at what you might say was, the foot of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The knowledge tree sets man on a course to build religion. He has to find a way to reach God. So every religion in the world is man's fingers stretched up into the dark reaching for God. Huge lists of things you should and should not do were embraced by every religion on earth.

Jesus came into a religious world specifically to confront the religion built on the Old Testament. And He was the scandal of that religion. Jesus never had a crusade against organized crime. Jesus never had a crusade against prostitutes. Jesus never had a crusade against drug addicts. He had a crusade against religion. And the crusade was against the very religion God had established for His chosen people, Israel. The only times in the New Testament that Jesus was violently angry was when He was confronting the leaders of the Jewish religion. That happened more than once. Jesus purposely confronted religion gone awry. He did not go out of His way, but every time the religious leaders tried to thwart

His message, He drew them out and, and made them feel foolish.

When Jesus stood in the synagogue and said that He had come to deliver the oppressed, we think in terms of deliverance from sin, from sickness, from the results of the fall, or from demonic power. But the truth is that Jesus' main confrontation was with religion. He came to deliver people from the bondage of religion. Jesus preached, "Come unto me, all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." That was not addressed to evil doers. That was addressed to people under the weariness and the burdensomeness of religion. And He said, "Come to me and I will give you rest." That can be also be expressed as, "I'll give you a vacation." He told them to abandon their religion in order to have God. Jesus came to desacralize the world. No more sacred days, no more sacred places, no more sacredness.

He had come to introduce something the world had never seen before. It was not a religion. It was a life. He came so that when He had risen from the dead, He could come and live inside of those who believed upon him. That was very new, very fresh, but also very unusual. Unfortunately, within 300 years, those who had experienced the 'new birth' had turned that beautiful new relationship into a religion. We are now practicing the Christian religion. We're back to sacred days, back to sacred places, back to sacred books, back to specific places and specific activities being sacred. This includes our 'quiet time.' We have to read our Bible and pray. We have brought all this back again. When asked, "What do you do? Who are you?" I say, "I am a minister, but I'm not religious."

Jesus came to do away with religion and replace it with divine life. That is a relationship with Himself

living inside of us. I do not embrace religion, in the dictionary meaning of that word. Christianity, as we see it today, is a total distortion of what Jesus came to give us. Christianity is little more than another religion. Actually it is like the reinstatement of the Law system. It is a list of rules. You can't do this. You can't do that. You can't go away. You can't go there. Then this Law system piles on the impossible requirement, to imitate Jesus. The Christian religion today says, "Imitate Jesus. Be like Jesus. Be the perfect acting imitation of Christ's lifestyle. Instead, what Jesus taught and brought to us was His very Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, living inside of us to express Himself and to be Himself.

You can't imitate life. Humans simply cannot imitate every expression of Jesus, or any other, perfectly. Jesus Himself must come **inside** of us and **live His life** as the only way that our life will perfectly resemble His. A disciple is **not** "One who does what his master did and conforms to what his master taught." A disciple is, "One who has the spirit of his master, loving what his master loves which produces the same motives and intentions as his master."

'Required' quiet times and devotional readings are religion. Scheduled hours of prayer are religion. Prayer is the spontaneous expression of one's soul to God and listening to God's response. My significant relationships with other people enable me to enjoy them even at a great distance. The same is true with God. Relationship is a spirit connection which transcends space and time. It is with Jesus as it is with my most significant others. Just the thought of Him triggers feelings of love, joy, peace and desire to be with Him.

Further, as Christians, God desires that we talk about Him prolifically and proudly. He wants us to share

the 'good news' of God's transformation of ourselves in Christ! God, in Christ, reconciled us to Himself. God spared us from the awful penalty of sin and by faith placed His Spirit within us. But instead of testifying of our own redemption, we are trying to moralize the dead. Even Jesus did not try to moralize anyone, not even you. He came to pay the penalty for your relationship crimes so that you could be reconciled to God. Unfortunately, we Christians fight about every moral, ethical or legal issue. We're trying to get morality back into a bunch of corpses. That did not work for us. It won't work for others. And how could you possibly moralize the dead when the 'alive' aren't even living morally pure lives.

This might be shocking to you, "There is no such thing as Christian morality." You can have Buddhist, Confucius, Muslim, Shinto morality. You cannot have a Christian morality. The life that is described in the New Testament assumes that the giver of life and breath (God) lives inside of the Christian. You see, it is not the fruit of my struggling to be like Jesus. It's the fruit of the Spirit. So the truth is, this life that is full of love, joy and peace is **not me trying** to be like Jesus. It is the expression of the very Spirit of Christ living inside me. My **job is entrusting** my life to Him. He will live it for me. So, it is inappropriate to say, "Christian morality is this." You cannot legislate Christian morality. The only sense in which Christian morality exists is that Jesus lives inside of the Christian. Since Christ never has and never would do anything immoral, His life happens **in** you! And it happens perfectly! Sin occurs only when you push Him aside.

Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you." Jesus usurped the Law of Moses in that one statement. The Law of Moses said, "Love God

wholeheartedly and love your neighbor as yourself.” We couldn’t even do that. Jesus came. He loved His neighbor more than himself. He went far beyond the 10 Commandments. So a person who says, “I’m living by the 10 Commandments, is **not** a Christian. Jesus came to not only fulfill the Law of Moses on our behalf, but also to take us far beyond the 10 Commandments. The 10 Commandments were given, not so that we could live according to them, but to show us that we would fail miserably in any attempt to do so. Jesus’ command to “love like He loves, without condemnation or conditions of behavior,” is also impossible for us to live. That is why God’s paradigm is that “Christ **is** our life.” You cannot strive to **become** holy. Holiness is a state of **being** in right relationship with God and others. Jesus living in and through us **is holiness**.

Surrender in Love Is a Winning Proposition

Jesus loves us more than anyone else ever has or ever will. He proved that when He died for us. So, I am faced with this impossible command. How can you imitate that? It's impossible. The only way that can happen is that Christ Himself, risen from the dead (that's the whole issue of Christianity, He's alive), and because He's alive and has come to live inside me His love, not mine, is expressed to even my enemies. As Paul wrote, “I live, yet not I, it **is** Christ who lives in me.” No government can ever declare, “This is the way it's going to be, you will be loving toward others,” and loving others more than self just happens. Only “Christ in me,” and by my invitation alone, can that happen. Instead of inviting others to receive their own reconciliation to God, we're trying to moralize the dead. We're trying to get them to come to our church.

But Christ came to replace religion with a personal relationship with the living Christ. Christ Himself **is** living His life in and through you today, the way He lived in His own body 2000 years ago. This only fails to occur if you do not know that He will do so or if you refuse to let Him do so. When Christ came to the earth, He did not get involved in all of the ills of the world. He identified all relationship ills as sin and then gave Himself as a solution to it. And we're all trying to identify all of the ills of the world and get involved fixing them. And we have forgotten the mission of taking the message of Christ to everyone in the world. His life in them is the only solution to those ills.

No Place for Political Activism

The Roman Empire had many things wrong with it. Yet the New Testament does not promote activism against the government's wrong doing. We think that slavery itself is one of the greatest ills of humanity. Yet Paul never once spoke against slavery, never once. Neither did he speak out against any other political issues. Paul said these incredibly outlandish things. He addressed slaves with these words, "Because Christ is **in you**, serve your master as if he were Christ." If you choose Me, you will choose to serve your master as you serve me, Christ." And here's an interesting truth. **Once a man chooses to be a slave, he's no longer a slave. He's a free man.** Once a man volunteers to be a slave of another there is no more angst or misery in service! Paul also said to the masters, "...You must treat your slave as if he **is** Christ. This perspective takes 'awful' out of slavery and every other negative experience of life.

When we "have godliness with contentment in every situation in which we find ourselves, we

experience complete freedom.” Paul could have led marches on Rome or sought the assistance of powerful men for redress. Jesus came to set us free from the misery of our own unrealistic expectations. But that freedom comes from Christ within us, not from any external happening. If we avidly pursue the love of Christ and concentrate on our own personal, intimate relationship with Him, we are set free! We are freedom fighters. We are freedom lovers. Love your way to freedom. All of your emotional (spiritual) misery comes from unmet expectations. That’s why the resurrection of Jesus is so therapeutic. When we live with only Christ’s expectations, which are always realistic, we are never disillusioned or disappointed. Now, that’s healing by the stripes of punishment of Jesus spoken by Isaiah! When our soul is healed, even our physical miseries are reduced. When we see that they are fulfilling the will of God and the purposes of God in us, that satisfies us! Surrender all of your expectations to God. Jesus’ peace also comes from fulfilling the will of His Father!

The Purpose and Power of Love

Much of what we are taught about prayer is taken from the Old Testament. And under the old covenant, it was purely religion. The religion of Sinai, the Law of Moses, was the highest and best religion the world ever had. I am not suggesting that I only believe in half of the Bible. But the Bible is divided into old and new. There is an old covenant, and there is a new covenant, thank God. And Jesus came to fulfill the Law on our behalf. This was essential so that we could live under an entirely new covenant with God. Under the old we were slaves or soldiers. Under the new, we are

friends and family and heirs with Jesus. Christ has taken us from Law to Love.

This life is something far grander and greater than any religion, ever. I find it very difficult to understand how someone, who has received Christ and is living under the new covenant of direct immediate access to God with Christ living inside of him, would return to the rules and the rituals of the Old Testament. There might as well have never been a new covenant at all. Jesus came to do away with religion, to fulfill the covenant of Law on our behalf. Jesus paid the penalty for all of our offenses of the Law by death on a criminal's cross. The Law condemned us. Jesus took our condemnation on Himself. But, we have taken the Law and made its condemnation our way of life instead of letting the risen Christ live **in us** and **for us**. How tragic! Ordering our lives by the Law of Moses is a gross misapplication of the Law and abuse of the Gospel. The Law is good and holy, but its purpose was, and still is, to show us how abusively we treat each other. Actually, the Bible does say that we are all criminals. We can't obey the Law. Yet Christians want to live under the Law and say, "I'm trying to obey it!"

But **trying** isn't good enough. Jesus said, "If you violate the least of these my commandments, you have violated all of them." You cannot separate the Laws from one another. So the law is a message of condemnation to death. And that would be terrible if there were not this 'new' covenant which provides us a Savior. Jesus came on the scene to break the bondage of religion and give us life. **Trusting** Jesus to live your life is the final answer. Jesus' death did not forgive our sins in the sense that no one had to pay the penalty of sin. Jesus' let us "pay our sins forward to Him" so that He

could, as an innocent man, pay the penalty of our sins. That way not only the forgiven person gets justice, but also the victims. The crimes have been given their appropriate and commensurate penalty and have been paid in full by Jesus Christ personally and voluntarily! Beware of receiving grace with gladness, but then asking God to withhold it from others!

Most Christians understand that when Jesus came, He dealt with sin in terms of ‘the blood of Jesus cleansing us from sin,’ that is paying the consequences of our sin on our behalf. What we miss, however, is that He went the second mile! He rose again so that He could posit His Spirit in us, to live **in** us. This carries us far beyond what the Law required. Justice was satisfied completely by Christ. The Law said, “Thou shall not kill.” Now that Christ lives in us, He said, “Now love even your enemy. Feed him. Give him to drink. Or if someone hurts you, forgive them even as Christ has forgiven you.”

We have difficulty just loving our neighbors and friends. We cannot possibly love as Jesus commanded. But the Spirit of Christ living **in us** and **for us** can and does **love like Jesus loves** because **He is** the one loving others, not us. We have been so preoccupied with sin that we've lost most of the benefits of our ‘new creation’ lives. We have placed ourselves back under bondage and relinquished the very freedom Christ gave us. As Paul said, “Christians are dead to sin and alive to God.” But we keep living like we are alive to sin and dead to God. We have perverted the message of the life of Christ **in** us.

Resorting to our Own Ways (like sheep!)

It is sadly true that the church today has resorted to practicing the Christian religion. I look back at the early church, not that it was perfect, but they had an understanding of what the gospel is. The Gospel is the 'good glad merry news' that makes a man leap for joy. They jumped for joy because they felt the burden of guilt lifted and the unconditional love of God flowing constantly to them. They understood that: "Jesus is **alive**. He **lives** in me. He **lives** for me. And that was it!

Unfortunately, over the centuries Christians made the church a pagan temple of sorts by declaring that one must be in church, a building, in order to worship. We have holy places again. But Christianity as a relationship is everywhere and considers everything to be spiritual. In our day Christianity by-and-large has been boiled down to this: *How much 'religious' currency do I lay on the counter of heaven. It is measured by how long I've prayed, how long I've read my Bible, how many hours I've taught the Bible, how many times I've gone to church this week, and so forth. All of that is based on the Law. **This is not Christianity.** And there's never any end to it. You'll never know if you've done enough. You are forever trying to count out enough currency and you'll never make it.*

So we need to get back to Jesus' message, the Gospel as He preaches it. The message is this: *Jesus steps into my space, offers me His hand in marriage (the deepest relationship possible), I accept His proposal, and He not only comes into marital union with me, He actually posits His own Spirit inside of me, and He lives **as me**.* And now, everything I was doing while **trying** to climb up to God is insignificant. Suddenly I'm there the instant I begin **trusting** His Gospel and embrace it. In Christ and Christ-In, I'm there. I've arrived!

Now I pick up my Bible for a distinctly different reason. I read it to find more of His Spirit, more of His Love, more of His mercy, forgiveness and grace, and to be in dialog with my lover! Now, when I pray it's an interaction of life. Prayer is the language of relationship with God. It is a dialog between lovers. It is pillow talk between mates. Prayer is no longer a ladder to God. Yet I hear people say, "I'm **trying** to get closer to God." I used to say that myself. But, how can you get closer to God when He lives inside of you. Jesus will never be a copilot or assistant. He **is** the vehicle, the seat, the seat belt and in reality, He is everything. And He **IS** you! That is the essence of "in Christ we are a new creature!"

For many Christians, instead of walking by faith in what Christ has already done and living in that resurrected life that lives **in** them and enjoying it, they are **still trying** to get there. That's how all other religions work. That is also why our cutesy phrases, acronyms and other devices come between us and a genuine, deeply affectionate relationship with God. God is not a computer and cannot be accessed by the mind or even comprehended by the mind. God can only be known by our emotions (in spirit). That is the only way He offers Himself to us. And it could not be any other way.

Relationship is ever, only and always about emotions. Affection, love, lust, hurt, pleasure, pain and so forth, the entire gambit of emotions prevails in every relationship. When we reduce God to a mechanical or electronic device, we eliminate all possibility for relationship. And, quite frankly, humanity with all of its evils and snares makes no sense at all if there is no possible redemption. (Redemption is best defined as restoring anything or anyone to their original purpose.) Jesus called God, Daddy! Jesus calls us, lover! Many

more people would come to be 'saved' if the Gospel was preached as a the most romantic love story ever written!

Self Imposed Exhaustion

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.”

— Matthew 11:28-30 The Message (MSG)

I think of the years of manipulation that I put upon people. I badgered them with guilt trips and everything else I could use to get them to witness or do some other work for God. I watched most of my fellow Christians do the same thing. One of the reasons for this was that I was immediately elevated to the status of godly person. And human nature thrives on respect, admiration, applause and emulation. I was watching to see who was watching me! I am now sensitized to my own desire to share in the glory which belongs only to God. And He is not happy when I steal His thunder!

When I learned the fullness of the grace of God that is mine through Christ Jesus, and that 'Christ **is** me,' preaching the Gospel was no longer an obligation. I don't have to do it. But I desperately desire to share it. I can't shut up. When other Christians come to believe that “Christ **is** my life,” they don't have to be manipulated or coerced into sharing their faith in Jesus. It's like speaking prolifically and proudly about any one with whom we have a great admiration and affection. The more deeply I love Jesus, the more natural and delightful it becomes to brag on Christ and what He has done in

me. Every soul desires to be free from guilt, shame, blame, anxiety and every other negative emotion! And Jesus is the only fulfillment of that desire.

I have no intention of being controversial. Truth is controversial enough. That's what Christ said, "I didn't come to bring peace. I came to bring a sword. And so you have truth and error. So if you are teaching on the side of truth, you will be controversial without ever trying. And to be sure, Jesus' teaching was controversial. It was the purest truth ever taught, but created so much controversy it resulted in Jesus' own crucifixion. Preaching a false gospel cannot result in evangelism. When we try convert people to our particular religion, it falls on deaf ears. This is because it has no more appeal than any other religion. Only the true gospel of Jesus' unconditional love can affect the 'new birth.' The great deception among Christians today is that *'the gospel helps us to sin less or not at all.'*

Jesus taught mercy, forgiveness and love. We teach adherence to moral standards. We say, just come to Jesus in faith and your sins will be forgiven. But then we 'add to' the gospel this false teaching that now you must '... go and sin no more.' Salvation is about birth and relationship. Sin no longer has any effect on the Christian, because its consequences have been fully paid. Granted, until I realized that in salvation Christ became my life, I continued to be silenced by the trite and false phrase, "If you don't walk the walk, you can't talk the talk." That statement is completely and utterly false. The word of the Gospel is its own authority and never authenticated by any person.

Over the years, hundreds, maybe even thousands of missionaries and pastors have either left the ministry entirely or became exhausted to the point of failing to

accomplish their ministry work. On the other hand, scores of missionaries and pastors after many years in the ministry were revitalized in ministry when they stopped **trying** in their own power and initiative and began **trusting** that Christ **is** their life. Christ is never weary, let alone exhausted. It is highly likely that 90% of your fellow Christians don't know that Christ **is** their life and that Christ does not expect them to do the work. That is why Jesus said, "Come to me all who are tired and I will give you rest. My yoke will not put any strain on you. I will carry the entire burden so that you don't even have to help. That is why it is easy to be in the yoke with Me."

We have totally missed the point of the New Testament, which is resulting now in this mass epidemic of burnout. As Christians we know that Christ is alive and that he lives in us. And when we are fully evangelized to know that Christ **is** my life, it's impossible to burnout since Christ expends all of the energy necessary to do the ministry. The whole idea of redemption is for God to acquire human bodies which give Him full control so the Christ can be alive and well in each body, not limited to the single body He possessed on earth before His death, burial and resurrection! If your Christian life has begun to feel like drudgery, then something is terribly wrong. What you believe about the gospel is what is wrong. "The hope of glory" is not your sinless life. "The hope of glory" is letting Christ use your body without your interference or insistence that He use your own talents!

Consider the basic message of the gospel. "If you believe upon Jesus, you receive eternal life." There are two words used in the New Testament in the language Greek for life. One is *bio* from which we get

our English word biography. This includes my heritage and accomplishments. It would include my personal and vocational activities and achievements. It might also include my idiosyncrasies and habits. It's my whole life defined in terms of doing life according to my bias. Jesus came with another word. He did not come to give us eternal bias. That is, He didn't come to give us a life that would just simply go on and on and on and on and on and on. That's not eternal life.

The word Jesus used was zoe. Zoe is defined as, 'life as in a vine.' Jesus said, "I am the vine ..." Zoe means life within the life of God. It is God life. Zoe describe the essence of life of all creation. Jesus said, "I am the zoe." He is that quality of life that came to be with us in human flesh and in us in Spirit. It is a quality of life as for the grape on the vine. It is life obtained by only abiding in the vine. It is remaining attached to the source of life.

Typically, once someone becomes a Christian we lay it on them. Now, on Sunday we go to church. And now you can't have those friends you had before. You must have a new set of friends who believe the same way as you do. And now you can't do this. You must do this. You can't go there. You can go here. We change our bias about nearly everything to live by a new set of rules. And that **is** religion. It may be the Baptist religion or Pentecostal religion or charismatic religion. It is as though evangelism is supposed to convert people to our particular denomination or church culture.

We stress dedication. That's a key word of religion. Come and dedicate your life to Christ. Come in, give yourself all over again. And being afraid that we are not measuring up, every Sunday we trot down the aisle to give ourselves again to try harder (re-dedication).

How many times must I dedicate myself before a trickle of **zoe** happens? Over and over again I promise you I'll read my Bible more. I'll pray more. I'll witness more. I will more, more, more. It's all returning to my previous bias with new rules. It is **not** zoe. Refusing to surrender all control to Christ **in** me eventually leads to spiritual burnout. Christians should be the most relaxed and comfortable and joyous people. Yet, we are the most miserable.

Under the Law (Old Testament ways and means) we become obsessed with sin or obsessed with temptation. We are constantly trying to learn how to overcome temptation. Instead, under grace (the New Testament ways and means) we become obsessed with life. We become obsessed with love. Christ has come, paid for all sin and there is no more condemnation. So I don't think of my past that's gone or even my future sins because they have also been paid for by Christ. I **am** the righteousness of God in Christ. Now I can expend all of my energy loving instead of managing behavior, my own or that of others.

Am I present? Yes, I live! Yet, it is no longer me! It is the resurrected Christ who lives as me. I live by His faith which never falters, whose love for me changes me, forever. The operative word for salvation is surrender, and not a tacit surrender, but an absolute abandon of self and self attempts to continue to live my own pursuits and biases. So if you are still struggling in your faith and getting tired in service to Jesus, sit down, shut up, stop trying to do anything and release all actions and attitudes to the Son of God within you! Jesus says, "When you come to Me and step into my 'new' yoke, you will always feel rested. As you simply remain aware

that Christ **is living for you**, you get to enjoy the fruit of His life and love!

So, where did all this confusion come from? The Bible is very clear about the effects of grace, “Where sin abounds, Grace abounds even more.” For fear of losing their jobs by losing control of their people, many pastors recoil when somebody comes along and starts teaching the fullness of the grace of God. Living under grace eliminates manipulation of people. Freedom in Christ, in many pastor’s opinions is a threat to the success of the church. They think, if their people keep listening to this grace message, “I’m going to lose my job and I’m going to lose my status in the denomination.” If you don’t think that’s possibly true, simply remember that the Pharisees were afraid of the same thing. That fear was strong enough then to incite them to riot against and actually crucify God, Who was standing right in front of them.

I Don’t Want to be Needed

When Jesus told His disciples to go and make other disciples, it was not to get many people to follow them. It was to mentor people well enough that they too became as much a disciple as their mentor. The success of a disciple is measured in the number of independent disciples who move out in faith in the direction of their own calling, depending on God alone for everything. A good mentor produces other mentors, not a bunch of mentees who can’t operate apart from their mentor. Whatever your ministry is, work yourself out of the job. One day a woman came up to me at the end of our Bible study and she said, “Bob, I don’t need you anymore.” And I said, “Praise God. That is exactly what we’re talking about.” We need to be able to teach people to the

point that they say, “I don't need you anymore. I have everything I need in my Jesus.”

My understanding of ministry is that there is only one calling. That calling is to all people everywhere. “Come unto me. I am Jesus. And I want to live in and for you!” “I will give you peace.” “I will take you where I want to go.” This is a mind boggling to people who have heard nothing in their life except religious manipulation. Galatians chapter 2 proclaims that you were justified, through faith in Christ, you can never be held accountable for, punished for, made to be ashamed of, penalized or experience the disappointment of God for any sin that you have or will commit or for any sinful posture of your heart. While the Christian may experience the loving correction of God, he or she will never experience the wrath of God or any of the penalties that he or she so deeply deserves.

Why have we settled for a Gospel that does not proclaim that? Jesus died on the Cross so that we could know that. Paul says in Romans 8, “There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus!” Yet Christians, **trying** to obey the Law, consistently condemn each other for wrongful behavior. If Jesus paid it all, that is, paid for every sin a Christian has ever or will ever commit, why do we resort to the Old Testament Law of Moses instead of the New Testament Love of Jesus? Jesus did not abolish the Law. The Law is perfect and will never be abolished. No sin goes unpunished. Jesus fulfilled the Law for us by suffering the full punishment for all those who receive His Loving Gospel and let Him exchange His life with theirs.

The sooner we stop wallowing in guilt, shame and fear of our present sin and stop casting aspersions on other Christians' sins, the sooner we can be useful to

God in proclaiming the Gospel of the 'Love of Jesus Christ' and not the requirements of the Christian religion! Only the former can redeem the soul and soothe the aching heart! If you will forsake your preoccupation with the Law and become fully occupied with the Love and Spirit of Christ, you will find a freedom like you never knew it! It is this same freedom from guilt, shame and fear that the whole human race craves, even if they can't put that in words.

There Is No Such Thing As Cheap Grace

Grace cannot be cheapened by my sin or yours. But the Gospel of Jesus is completely annulled by Christian moralism. Even going all the way back to the Garden of Eden, we are told that everyone became fully knowledgeable of both good and evil, in Adam. Even before God's Law was given to Moses, everyone knew good and evil and tried to do the good. But when the Law of Moses was delivered in writing, it pointed out the symptoms of evil in every person. The Law was not given so that we would try to obey it fully. Actually, no one can or ever will. You can see all around you that every religion of the world is trying to appease God by doing the good and avoiding the evil.

Consider then, that the Law was given so that we would realize that we need a power greater than ourselves to fulfill it. Then Jesus came and instead of eliminating the Law He fulfilled it on our behalf. And justification occurs for you or for me when and only when we receive salvation **by faith**, not of ourselves, but the faith of Jesus Christ, the gift of God, **without works** so that none can boast. It is God's grace that justifies. A complete life of perfect obedience to God's Law, that only God Himself could accomplish, was accomplished

in Jesus Christ. Then God, imputes (applies) the full, perfect life of Jesus to us. When we realize that 'Christ **is** our life' Galatians 2:20, His expressions will convey the Gospel to those who observe Him in action, in us.

When Christians stop **trying** to live the Christian life and begin **trusting** Jesus to live it Himself, they become the manifestation of Jesus Christ, right here, right now. They become grace personified! And I might add, Jesus can and does live life perfectly through those who are **in** Christ Jesus and abandoned to His life in them. Neither Law abiding nor your violation have any bearing on your testimony. The only testimony of Jesus is that which He told His disciples at the last Passover supper they had, "... by this will all me know that you are my disciples, if you love each other as much as I have loved you!" Only the love of Christ gives meaning and impact to your expressions of the Gospel. Christ **is** your life! Just **let Him live** it!