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Evangelism and the Law in the New Testament

Thesis:

Jesus and the disciples used two primary tools in witnessing which we should imitate:

1) Give Grace to the humble, Law to the Proud:

1. To the broken person who recognizes their utter sinfulness before a holy God they offered the gospel of grace. They shared Christ's death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins through repentance.
2. To the proud, self-righteous person, who thinks that they don't deserve condemnation, but instead has some hope that his own good deeds and lack of serious sin might get him into heaven and escape the penalty of hell, a different approach was used. The Law was used to convict the sinner of sin. When they came to a point of brokenness, the gospel, the pearl of great price (*Matt 13:46*), was shared.

2) They also used apologetics

This writing focuses on point 1b: the use of the Law for the proud. In talking with thousands of people on the streets of Indianapolis that aren't saved, we can make this safe statement: the vast majority of unbelievers depend on their own goodness to avoid hell and go to heaven (or to deny the reality of a judgment day). They fit the Bible's definition of a proud man "The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts...He has said in his heart, "[God] will not require an account." (*Psalms 10:4,13*) Through personal experience we have seen the Law do its' work of conviction leading to true repentance and salvation in many sinners who were prepared by the Law for the gospel of Grace.

Mallard Ducks

These last few weeks I've had some time to feed a large flock of "wild" mallard ducks in the pond behind my apartment. When it was cold and snowy, they were far more interested in my bread than when it was warm and the grass was exposed. I kind of felt like a god, playing favoritism as to which ducks I would bless! On the coldest, snowiest day some ducks boldly came up and took bread out of my hand- my fingers almost got chomped on by their beaks! The ducks fought each other, jostling for the best position and pecking each other on the back. The violent took the bread by force!

What is it that produces a driving, passionate hunger in sinners for the bread of righteousness that only can be obtained in Jesus Christ? As believers, we rely on His

righteousness. We “once were aliens and enemies” in our minds by our “wicked works”, but now through Christ we are “holy, blameless and above reproach in His sight.” (*Col. 1:21-22*) The more we read the word of God and see what perfection looks like, the more we see our own righteousness apart from Christ as filthy rags (*Isaiah 64:6*) and rejoice in the grace and mercy found in Christ on the cross. But unbelievers are numbed to this, aren’t they? Offering an unbeliever the gospel is often like offering ducks bread on a warm summer’s day- there’s often no hunger for it.

When the weather was cold and snowy, the ducks passionately fought for a piece of bread. In the same way the Law produces the necessary hunger for the Holy Spirit to speak to the conscience of a sinner of the need for the righteousness of God as he is stripped of his own righteousness by the Law and “laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” (*Heb 4:13*) The Law demonstrates that there is no bread of self-righteousness. Thus a person hungers and thirsts for the righteousness that can only be found in the blood of Christ shed in our place.

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Let’s survey passages about the Law and see how they relate to evangelism in the New Testament:

Matthew

5:17-20 Jesus came to fulfill the Law

- *The Law is eternal
- *The Law demands perfection

5:21-22 The 6th Commandment is expounded by Jesus:

- *Unrighteous anger is murder in the heart
- *Hatred is murder in the heart (*cf. 1 John 3:15*)
- *Evil words spoken against another (name calling, cursing, gossip and slander) are murderous words.
- *Jesus warned of the penalty for these: hell

5:27-28 The 7th Commandment is expounded by Jesus:

- *Lust is adultery of the heart (*cf. Job 31:1, Heb 13:4*)

5:31-32: The 7th Commandment: Divorce is adultery (except in the case of sexual immorality by the spouse)

5:33-37: The 9th Commandment is expounded: complete honesty requires fulfilling all our promises. Anything short of this is bearing false witness.

5:38-47 The 5th-10th Commandments are perfectly fulfilled by loving our neighbor, even

our enemies.

5:48 Only perfection meets God's standards of the Law. (*Cf. James 2:10*)

6:24 The 2nd Commandment: the love of money is an idol

6:25-34: 10th Commandment: Covetousness and idolatry- don't worry about material goods but rather trust God.

6:33 1st Commandment: seek God first.

7:12 5th-10th Commandments summarized by the Golden Rule: do to others as you would have others do to you- a rule we've all violated.

7:21-23 Those practicing Lawlessness will be condemned by Jesus on Judgment Day, though they proclaim with their lips their allegiance to Jesus.

12:10,12 4th Commandment- man's traditions vs. the real meaning of the Sabbath. The Pharisees, by their twisting of the Law to make it a means to proclaim their own self-righteousness, hindered people from lawful use of the Law that brings conviction of sin, leading to a need for forgiveness in Christ. By doing so they shut the door to heaven, taking away the Key of knowledge (the Law) and making converts twice the sons of hell as they were- they were thus blind guides. (*cf. Matt 23:13,15,24*) We are to follow Christ's example here, clarifying to people the lawful use of the 10 Commandments and correcting those who would seek to add to or subtract from them in order to establish a system of self-righteousness based on man's traditions.

13:41-42 Those who practice lawlessness will be gathered as tares at the end of the age for burning in the fire of hell.

14:3-4 7th Commandment: John condemned Herod for adultery; divorcing to remarry- the result was persecution leading to John's martyrdom.

15:1-20 5th Commandment- Jesus rebuked the Pharisees as hypocrites for nullifying the 5th Commandment by their traditions.

*v. 19: From wicked thoughts the mouth speaks, breaking the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 3rd Commandments.

19:16-22 Jesus corrected the rich young ruler's understanding of righteousness- only God is good.

*The 5th-9th and 1st and 2nd Commandments were used by Jesus to convict him as a lawbreaker in need of salvation, exposing his love of money as an idol that was above his love for God. The gospel wasn't shared with him because of his lack of repentance, thus demonstrating that we shouldn't share the gospel to a heart until it is prepared (broken)

and ready to receive it. The rich young ruler, though unrepentant, may have come to faith later- we don't know. This witnessing encounter ought to encourage us that we are urged to plant the seed of the Law and if it isn't received, to hope and pray that in due time it will germinate into repentance unto salvation as the Spirit convicts the hearer of guilt in regard to sin, righteousness and judgment (*John 16:8*).

19:23-30 It is necessary to give up idols such as money and put God first to be saved. (Expounding on how the 1st and 2nd Commandments apply toward idolatry of money). The disciples demonstrated the fruit of their conversion by giving up all to follow Christ.

21:31-32 Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for their lack of repentance and unbelief, unlike the tax collectors and harlots, who had broken the 8th, 7th and 10th Commandments, repented and entered the kingdom of heaven.

22:6 6th Commandment: Jesus convicted the religious leaders of murder (in their hearts at that point, and prophesied to take place later in the flesh- fulfilled in Christ's crucifixion).

22:36-40 A lawyer asked what the greatest Commandment was and Jesus gave him 2 (loving God and loving neighbor as self) which summarized all 10 Commandments.

23:1-39: After the Pharisees sought to entangle Jesus in His words (*22:15-46*), Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for their nullifying the Commandments by their traditions and for being hypocrites and murderers, then warned them of condemnation in hell. What boldness Jesus used in this sermon! Imagine whom Jesus would preach such a sermon to today! Imagine how many "Christians" would be rebuking Him for not being "seeker sensitive!" Undoubtedly some of these scribes, priests and Pharisees were among those who believed at Pentecost, cut to the heart by conviction of sin at Jesus' powerful rebuke (*cf. Acts 6:7*). They found it very hard to continue to "kick against the goads" (*Acts 9:5*)- to fight against the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

23:34-35,37 Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees for persecution and murder of the prophets, scribes, wise men: 6th Commandment.

24:12 Lawlessness will abound in the last days (lawlessness always abounds when there's an absence of the Commandments that convict of sin).

Mark

6:18-19 7th Commandment: John said it wasn't lawful for Herod to have Herodias as a wife- adultery.

7:8-13 5th Commandment greater than man's traditions.

7:20-23 3rd,6th-10th Commandments: breaking of Commandments comes from within a man- this is what defiles a man, not the lack of handwashing.

10:2-12 7th Commandment- Divorce is not lawful and indicates hardness of heart (cf. Matt 5:31-32)

10:17-22 5th-9th, 1st, 2nd Commandments: Rich young ruler (see notes from *Matt 19:16-22*)

10:23-31 1st and 2nd Commandments- (see notes *Matt 19:23-30*).

11:17 8th Commandment: extortion and thievery in the temple courts

12:28-34 Summary of Commandments- the two greatest commandments.

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Luke

3:12-13 John to tax collectors: 8th Commandment: don't steal (extort).

3:14 John to soldiers: 8th Commandment (don't extort), don't falsely accuse (9th), be content (don't covet- (10th)

3:19-20 7th Commandment broken by Herod/Herodias and the resulting persecution of John the Baptist.

6:2,7,11 4th Commandment: Sabbath

10:25-37 Lawyer asks about eternal life- Jesus points him to a summary of the 10 Commandments. The lawyer tries to justify himself by asking who his neighbor is and receives the parable of the Samaritan who did his duty in loving his neighbor, thus the Samaritan fulfilled the Law (the 5th-10th Commandments).

11:47-51 6th Commandment: Jesus accused Pharisees of murder like their ancestors- prophecies that they would kill and persecute prophets and apostles as their ancestors did.

11:52 The Pharisees took away the Key of knowledge (the 10 Commandments)- by adding and subtracting from them until they became the traditions of men.

12:15-21 Covetousness: 10th Commandment: Divide the inheritance

12:22-34 1st and 10th Commandments: Covetousness and idolatry- don't worry but trust God. Seek first His kingdom. Sell what you have and give alms.

13:14-17 4th Commandment: Sabbath hypocrisy

15:29 The prodigal son's elder brother boasted that he had kept God's Commandments.

16:13-14 2nd and 10th Commandment: one can't serve both God and money

16:17 The Law will never fail

16:18 7th Commandment: Divorce is adultery (cf. *Matt 5:31*)

18:18-23 5th-9th, 1st and 2nd- Rich Young Ruler (see notes for *Matt 19:16-22*).

18:24-30 2nd Commandment: it is difficult for the rich, due to idolatry of money, to enter the kingdom of heaven.

19:46 8th- Jesus convicted the money exchangers of thievery.

20:10-19 6th- Jesus knew their murderous hearts and prophesied that they would murder the Son of God.

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John

1:17 The Law given through Moses, but grace and truth through Jesus Christ. The Law prepares the heart for grace.

4:16-18 7th Commandment- the woman at the well was convicted of adultery and came to faith in Christ.

5:10 4th Commandment- Sabbath “traditions of men”

5:45-47 Moses shall accuse you on Judgment Day- if you had believed in him (the 10 Commandments), you would believe in Me. The Pharisees failed to see the conviction of sin that the Commandments were meant to bring, for they twisted the meaning of them.

7:19 6th Commandment- Jesus accused them of not keeping the Law since they sought to kill Him.

7:22-24 4th Commandment- Sabbath.

8:1-12 7th Commandment- the religious leaders convicted the woman of adultery. Jesus wrote the Law in the sand with His own finger (just as the Lord wrote the 10 Commandments with His finger on Mt. Sinai). Their consciences were convicted of being lawbreakers (v.9, cf. *Rom 2:22*) and they departed. Seeing the woman’s brokenness before the Law, and her faith, calling Jesus “Lord” (v. 11), Jesus acquitted her and told her to sin no more (repentance).

8:37 6th Commandment: Jesus called them murderers for they sought to kill Him.

8:44 6th, 9th Commandments: Like their father, the devil, the religious leaders were murderers and liars.

12:6 8th Commandment: Judas a thief

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Acts

2:23,36, 3:15, 4:10-11, 7:52-53 6th Commandment: Peter and Stephen accused the crowd of murdering Jesus the Christ and commanded them to repent and believe. Thousands were convicted. Many were among the crowd that day Jesus was crucified that shouted, "Crucify Him!" and/or mocked Him. Others (including the disciples) betrayed Him by not defending Him. Could we say that we commit murder as well if we are ashamed to proclaim Jesus Christ to a lost world that mocks Him? (*Mark 8:38, Ezek 3:16-21*)

5:3,9,13 9th Commandment: Ananias and Sapphira killed for lying. Their deaths put fear even into unbelievers.

14:15 2nd Commandment: turn from idolatry

15:20 2nd, 7th Gentiles told to keep these (sexual immorality is idolatry)

17:16, 24-26, 29-30 2nd Commandment: Athens- they're commanded to repent of idolatry.

23:3 6th Commandment: the High Priest ordering Paul to be struck. Paul accuses him of breaking the Law.

28:23 Paul persuaded them through the Law of Moses (the 10 Commandments) and the Prophets of their need to believe in Christ.

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Romans

1:16-17 This passage summarizes the book of Romans- the gospel is righteousness by faith instead of by Law. The unbeliever doesn't yet receive the gospel, so he's not yet under Grace but Law.

1:18-3:21 This section lays out that the whole world is guilty of violating God's Law and are all under God's wrath.

2:6 God's judgment (not God's salvation) is according to deeds (*Rev 20:12*). The deeds of the redeemed are fruits of salvation. The deeds of the unbeliever (sin) will be judged and condemned.

2:12-13 It is only the doers of the Law that will be justified- and since we've all disobeyed the Law, none will be justified apart from Christ.

2:14-15 God's Law is written on every man's conscience- thus the Law is valid and profitable to use in evangelism for the person who has never read the Bible or heard of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2:21 Paul used the 8th Commandment to convict of sin: Do you steal?

2:21 Paul used the 7th Commandment: Do you commit adultery?

2:22 Paul used the 2nd Commandment: Do you commit idolatry?

2:23 Do you break the Law? These four questions are powerful examples of how to use the Law with questions to a sinner's heart to convict them of sin.

3:10-18 We've all broken the Law and are unrighteous

3:19 The Law stops every mouth

*All are guilty of breaking God's Law

3:20 No one is justified by God's Law before God

*The Law brings knowledge of sin (cf. Gal 3:24)

3:21-31 Justification by faith in Christ

*God's righteousness credited to our account

*God's wrath against sin (transgression of the Law) is satisfied (propitiation)

*Justification apart from the Law (v. 28)

4:15 The purpose of the Law:

*it reveals God's wrath against us.

*It reveals our transgression

5:12-13 The Law imputes sin- it takes it into account as a debt. It makes sin sinful. (cf. 1 John 3:4)

5:16 One sin of Adam resulted in judgment by the Law (in this case, not the 10 Commandments, but the only law that Adam was given by God- not to eat of the tree, which, by breaking it, Adam was in essence breaking the 1st Commandment) and condemnation.

*Adam and Eve didn't deny the Law, but tried to justify their transgression of it

*In Gen 3:11, God reminded Adam of the Law

*In Gen 3:14-19, Judgment was given as a result of breaking the Law

5:20 The Law entered that sin would become exceedingly sinful (the offense might abound)

6:14 Believers are under Grace, not Law. However, unbelievers are under Law, not Grace.

6:17-18 Believers are slaves to righteousness; however, unbelievers are slaves to sin.

*Does a self-righteous unbeliever recognize he's a slave to sin? No. The Law reveals it to him.

6:23 The judgment of sin is condemnation

7:1-4 Believers died to the Law and have become married to Christ. Unbelievers are still alive to the Law and under its' dominion/marriage.

7:7-12 The Law reveals sin.

*For example, Paul says he wouldn't have known covetousness unless the Law said, "Do not covet" (10th Commandment)

*The Law (the Commandment) brings out the sin and reveals my death (my condemnation).

*Without the Law, sin is dead- thus the Law reveals the sinner to be utterly sinful, dead, condemned and in need of life and forgiveness.

*The Law is holy, just and good.

7:13 The Law makes sin exceedingly sinful

7:14-24 The Law produces a deep thirst for deliverance and righteousness as we see the standard of its' perfection.

7:25-8:4 Glorious freedom from the Law is only found in Christ Jesus, giving us the ability to walk in the Spirit.

8:7-8 The carnal mind cannot be subject to the Law- those in the flesh cannot please God

9:31-32 Israel pursued the law of righteousness by works of the Law, not by faith and thus was unable to attain it.

10:3-4 Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

10:5 To be righteous before the Law requires living it perfectly (cf. Jas 2:10, Gal 3:10, 5:3)

13:9-10 6th-10th Commandments summed up by loving one's neighbor as oneself.

1 Cor 6:9-11 7th, 2nd, 8th and 10th Commandments alluded to- those who practice Lawlessness won't inherit the kingdom of God, but forgiveness is found by those who repent and are justified by the Lord Jesus and the Spirit of God.

15:56 Sin's strength is in the Law, which leads to death. Death is overcome only by the Lord Jesus Christ who conquered it.

2 Cor 3:6-11 The Law (the letter) kills- it is the ministry of condemnation, which leads us to thirst for forgiveness in Christ.

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Galatians

2:16 No one is justified by the Law.

2:19 The Law brought Paul to death and then life to God in Christ.

2:21 We can't be made righteous through the Law

3:2,5 We receive the Spirit through faith, not the Law

3:10 Everyone under the Law is cursed if they don't obey all of it- and all unbelievers are under the Law.

3:11 No one is justified by obeying the Law.

3:12 The Law requires us to live up to its' standard perfectly to be obedient to it.

3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law.

3:19 The Law reveals transgressions.

3:22 The Law traps, imprisons and confines all sinners under sin.

3:23 The Law guards the unbeliever like a jailer, imprisoning the sinner.

3:24 The Law is a tutor leading us to Christ

4:4-5 Christ perfectly lived the Law and redeemed those who were under the Law.

4:9 The Law is weak and leads to bondage- it can't save, but rather reveals our need of a Savior.

5:3 One who looks to the Law for salvation must keep the whole Law.

5:18 One who is led by the Spirit cannot be under the Law.

5:19-21 7th, 7th, 2nd, 6th Commandments- those who practice lawlessness will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Eph 2:8-9 The Works of the Law don't save us, but rather Grace alone.

Eph 5:5 7th, 2nd, 10th Commandments: Those who practice lawlessness won't inherit the kingdom of God.

Eph 6:2 5th Commandment: used here to convict children of sin to lead them to Christ.

Col 2:14 The Law is the "handwriting of requirements that was against us."

Heb 7:18-19 The Law makes nothing perfect- it is weak and unprofitable (it can't save, but rather its' purpose is to lead us to Christ that He would save us).

Heb 8:7-13 The Old Covenant based on the Law is obsolete- it points the unbeliever to the New Covenant.

Heb 12:18-24 Believers aren't part of the Old Covenant- the Law, which was a terrible fire, quaking, trumpet and terror which caused people to tremble in fear. Those who disobeyed were stoned. Even Moses trembled and was exceedingly afraid- that's the purpose of God's Law- His holiness and justice should make us tremble in fear and lead us to a New Covenant- one with a Mediator who is our only Savior.

Jas 2:8-11 The Law requires 100% compliance to fulfill it.

1 John 3:4 Sin is by definition transgression of the Law.

1 John 3:12-15, 4:8, 20 Hatred is murder, 6th Commandment. The one who hates and says he loves God is a liar, 9th Commandment.

Rev 9:20-21 In the end times, many people won't repent. They will be known as lawbreakers who practice lawlessness, breaking the 2nd, 6th, 7th, 8th and 1st Commandments (where there is no Law, lawlessness abounds).

Rev 16:9-11, 21 Instead of repenting, they blasphemed (3rd Commandment)

Rev 21:8,27 Those who are lawbreakers will have their part in the lake of fire- examples are lawbreakers who break the 6th, 7th, 2nd and 9th Commandments.

Rev 21:27 Nothing impure will enter heaven- only those written in the Book of Life- saved by Grace.

Rev 22:15 2nd, 7th, 6th, 9th Commandments- those who practice these are outside of the New Jerusalem.

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Conclusions:

The thesis is true- clearly we see the Law used in evangelism throughout the New Testament to bring about conviction of sin to prepare people for the gospel. The Law is like John the Baptist, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord.’” (*Matt 3:3*) This being the case, why has the church in the West largely abandoned the use of the 10 Commandments this last century in preparing people for the gospel? Satan has sold a bill of goods to the church that when we preach the gospel, we shouldn’t offend the sinner. Instead we are to be “seeker friendly”, which is a coded way of saying that they should feel comfortable and not guilty when they hear the gospel, which is completely contrary to New Testament teaching.

Paul wrote that the preaching of the gospel would have two unavoidable results: “We are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life.” (*2 Cor 2:15-16*) As a person comes to grips with their sinfulness, it is death to them- “Sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good [the Law], so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.” (*Rom 7:13*)

Until a person comes to grips with their spiritual death and impending judgment, they cannot possibly come to grips with what it means to be forgiven of sin. As an analogy, the doctor doesn’t give you the cure to a terminal illness until he has convinced you of the illness in the first place by reviewing the symptoms. The 10 Commandments are ten clear symptoms to the sinner that he has the illness of sin and that the consequences are eternal death and condemnation. In coming to grips with this realization, the patient eagerly receives the cure- the gospel.

Besides not using the Law to prepare for the gospel, the modern church has grossly failed in other attitudes towards evangelism that again relate to this idea of not offending people. Instead of everyone in the congregation sharing the gospel with every creature, stranger, friend, co-worker, family member or neighbor, we’ve conditioned saints to only share after they’ve developed a person’s trust after months of friendship- and then often we don’t share the gospel, but drop little hints, and hope that they will ask us how to get saved. If not, we urge them to come to church with us- we pass on the discomfort of sharing the gospel and convicting of sin to the pastor- but the pastor’s primary role in the church is not to share the gospel, but to equip the saints for works of service (*Eph 4:11-12*). Unfortunately, many pastors also shy away from conviction of specific sins, leaving it to a general, “All have sinned” and mentioning sin only briefly in the “sinner’s prayer.” Imagine you catch your little boy stealing from a neighbor and generalize it to: “Son, all have sinned” instead of bringing him the 8th Commandment, “Son, it’s not right to steal- you’ve done wrong to our neighbor and God says it’s wrong.” Which approach would be more convicting? A proud sinner can easily gloss over the sinner’s prayer, continue in his sin and be assured that he has his fire insurance, but he’s never repented of his sin. His sin to him is not “exceedingly sinful” and he’s not very concerned about

it.

In the book of *Acts*, 32 times the gospel was shared- and each time it was with strangers. When the church was scattered by Paul's persecution, they "went everywhere preaching the word." (*Acts 8:4*) How long is a "stranger" a stranger? In one minute a person can approach a stranger and bring the conversation around to spiritual matters!

Paul reminded Timothy, "Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God." (*2 Tim 1:8*) Shame, fear and avoidance of persecution are the primary reasons that Christians today don't share the gospel, along with lack of training in how to use their most effective weapons in sharing the gospel- the 10 cannons of the Commandments to strip proud sinners of self-righteousness.

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The Law and Apologetics

The Law speaks to the conscience; apologetics speaks to the mind. Without conviction of sin, proud sinners scoff at the gospel and will not be converted by apologetics alone; "for the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing" (*1 Cor. 1:18*) The Law bypasses the mind, which is the place of argument in a self-righteous person. The Law addresses the conscience, acting as a tutor (*Gal 3:24*) and making sin exceedingly sinful (*Rom 7:13*). The Holy Spirit uses the Law to convict the conscience of guilt in regard to sin, God's righteousness and the Judgment to come (*John 16:8*). Once convicted, the broken sinner will thirst for the only way out of condemnation, gladly receiving the Savior who died for their sins- the only Name given under heaven by which men must be saved (*Acts 4:12*).

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The Folly of Modern Evangelistic Methods

One method of evangelism has become prevalent in the Western church this last century: it can be summarized in this statement: "You've got a God-shaped vacuum in your heart. You've searched for happiness, peace and fulfillment everywhere except in Christ. Receive Jesus Christ and you will be happy, peaceful and content and will find your true purpose in life. Repeat this prayer after me and receive eternal life." Such draw cards that focus on the fulfillment of the individual rather than conviction of sin provide the wrong motive for the sinner to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (*Rom 13:14*). This results in many false converts who experiment with Christianity experientially to see if the claims of a fulfilling life are true. As soon as severe temptation and tribulation strike (*Matt 13:21-22*), the happy experience they longed for ends in disillusionment and a return to their old compromising, self-centered lifestyle- but their last state is worse than their first (*Luke 11:26*)- in hardness of heart, these "backsliders" are very difficult to evangelize- they've been inoculated against the gospel.

The true convert breathes a sigh of relief when he sees his utter sinfulness, repents and receives forgiveness through Christ and continues in the faith in the midst of tribulations and temptations, eagerly looking forward to the day of Christ's return (*2 Tim 3:12-13, Acts 14:22*).

To ignore this vital Biblical teaching of using the Law to convict proud sinners of sin has resulted in the devastating results in evangelism we've seen in the West this last century- the great falling away- churches teeming with false converts who try Christianity on like they try on a new leather jacket or sports car to see if they like it, and people outside the church mocking the hypocrisy of it all. The Gallup poll recently claimed that 75% of Americans claim to be Christians- how many of those do you think really understand their need of repentance? Why would they repent if they're not convinced of the utter sinfulness of their wicked works? They are tares among the wheat (*Matt 13:24-30*) who are in danger of hearing these words from the Lord Jesus Christ on Judgment Day: "I never knew you; depart from Me you who practice lawlessness!" (*Matt 7:23*).

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Example: Evangelism Using the Law as a Tutor

I. Feeler Questions

1. Are you a good person?
2. Have you kept the 10 Commandments?

II. The Law- a Tutor

1. Review several commandments: have you ever lied? Stolen anything (value is irrelevant)? Lusted (*Matt 5:28*)? Hated (*1 Jn 3:15*), gossiped or slandered (*Matt 5:22*)? Jesus said lust was adultery of the heart and hatred and evil words were murder of the heart or the lips. By your own admission, you're a lying, thieving, adulterous murderer at heart.
2. If you were judged on Judgment Day according to the 10 Commandments, would you be innocent or guilty?
3. Would you deserve heaven or hell?
4. Does that concern you?
5. If the person recognizes their condemnation and is concerned about it, then they're ready for the gospel.
6. Ask them, "Why did Jesus Christ die on the cross?" I've found that virtually all people in America that aren't of a different world religion or cult will give the right answer, "He died for our sins."

III. Call to Salvation

Ask if they've ever repented (explain repentance, for many think repentance is merely

confession) and placed their trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord (Master). If “no”, ask if they’d like to do that.

IV. Responses to the Call to Salvation

1. True Conversion: Review the promises of God: *Rom 6:23, 8:1, 10:9-13, Eph 1:13-14, Jn 3:16*
2. Procrastination- warn him:
 1. No man knows the day of his death (9/11)
 2. Review hell: *Mk 9:44-48, 2 Thess 1:7-9*
3. Intellectual Belief but no repentance- review what repentance is:
 1. Necessary for salvation: *Lu 13:3,24:47, Acts 26:20, 17:30, 2:38, 3:19,5:31.*
 2. Repentance of specific sins if specific sins are revealed: *1 Jn 2:3-6, 1:6, 1 Cor 6:9-11, Gal 5:19-21, Rev 21:8*
4. Deception into believing there are other ways to get to heaven
 1. Review commandments
 2. Review God’s justice and holiness
 3. Review how other religions have no Savior who paid the price for their sin- Jesus did through His sacrificial death- the innocent One slain for us, the guilty ones (*2 Cor 5:21*).

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The Law Used by Famous Preachers

Before 1900, it would be difficult to find a famous preacher that didn’t use the Law to convict sinners of sin. Charles Spurgeon, called the “Prince of Preachers”, stated, “I do not believe that any man can preach the gospel who does not preach the Law. The Law is the needle, and you cannot draw the silken thread of the gospel through a man’s heart unless you first send the needle of the Law to make way for it.” John Wesley wrote, “The very first end of the Law is, namely, convicting men of sin; awakening those who are still asleep on the brink of hell...The ordinary method of God is to convict sinners by the Law, and that only. The gospel is not the means which God hath ordained, or which our Lord Himself used, for this end.” John MacArthur wrote, “God’s grace cannot be faithfully preached to unbelievers until His Law is preached and man’s corrupt nature is exposed. It is impossible for a person to fully realize his need for God’s grace until he sees how terribly he has failed the standards of God’s Law. It is impossible for him to realize his need for mercy until he realizes the magnitude of his guilt.” John Bunyan stated, “The man who does not know the nature of the Law cannot know the nature of sin.”

Martin Luther wrote, “The first duty of the gospel preacher is to declare God’s Law and show the nature of sin.” George Whitefield wrote, “Secure sinners must hear the thundering of Mount Sinai before we bring them to Mount Zion.” Martin Lloyd-Jones wrote, “The trouble with people who are not seeking for a Savior, and for salvation, is that they do not understand the nature of sin. It is the peculiar function of the Law to bring such an understanding to a man’s mind and conscience. That is why great evangelical preachers 300 years ago in the time of the Puritans, and 200 years ago in the time of Whitefield and others, always engaged in what they called a preliminary Law work.” Jonathan Edwards wrote, “The only way we can know we are sinning is by knowing His moral Law.” Billy Graham stated, “The Holy Spirit convicts us...He shows us the Ten Commandments; the Law is the schoolmaster that leads us to Christ. We look in the mirror of the Ten Commandments, and we see ourselves in that mirror.”

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But Do People Really Come to Christ Through the Law?

I’ll assume that there was a time in your life that you repented of all sin and placed your trust in Christ as Lord and Savior. If not, then you need to now! “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” (*Heb 3:7-8,13,15,4:7*). What did you repent of when you got saved? What convinced you that you were a sinner? Why did you come to Christ? Even though the Law wasn’t directly used on me, I became convicted of the essence of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Commandment as God’s word eventually got through to my hardened heart- I was an atheist and over a period of time realized that God was real and that I had rejected, scoffed and blasphemed my Creator and His Son- as I heard the parable of the Sower and the Seed preached, I became convicted as a sinner who had never allowed God’s word into my heart- I had rebelled against my Creator all of my life and scoffed at His word. That was enough of the Law to convict me of my utter sinfulness and bring me to a realization of my need for forgiveness in Christ.

Looking back on the first couple of years of my Christian walk at a “seeker sensitive” church, I sure had wished that things were made clearer- the church’s plan of evangelism was a stumbling block to my spiritual growth because of lack of emphasis of repentance with salvation, and lack of emphasis on conviction of sin using the Law. My initial repentance was a general, overall repentance that was greatly lacking in depth and insight as to what it meant to be a sinner. As a result, my concept of evangelism was messed up and resulted in frustration. True repentance came two years later one night when I was sick as a dog from smoking pot and drinking and God “gave me over” to my sin, bringing me to a yearning for His righteousness in my life. I know personally of people that have continued going to that seeker-sensitive church for many years without ever repenting and placing their trust in Christ, and being deceived into thinking they are all right with God.

During our time sharing with strangers on the streets of Indianapolis we run into many people who faithfully attend Bible believing churches that have never repented and received Christ- who were never convicted of their sin- could it be that there was little to no teaching in their church on the function of the Law? It was a joy to be able to use the

Law with them, observe their mouths being stopped by the law (*Rom 3:19*) and trusting Christ for their salvation.

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Evangelism Prayer

Jesus said the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few (*Matt 9:37*). I'm praying for us- that with boldness and clarity (*Eph 6:19-20*) we would obey the Great Commission to preach the gospel to every creature (*Mark 16:15*) and colabor with Christ to seek and save that which is lost (*Luke 19:10*). May we share with strangers and those we know well at the street corners (*Matt 22:9*), the highways and byways- anywhere and everywhere, compelling them to come to Christ with the love and compassion of Jesus Christ that dwells in us (*2 Cor 5:14*) as we overcome fear (*2 Tim 1:7*) with faith, using the tools God has given us to convict sinners of sin- the 10 Commandments (*Gal 3:24*).

Analogy borrowed from Ray Comfort Ministries. This teaching is presented wonderfully by Ray Comfort- see www.livingwaters.com for further teaching.

Quotes from "The Evidence Bible", Ray Comfort.