

## 109. Why Must the Law be Preached in All Its Severity?

**I had not known sin but by the Law; for I had not known lust except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet. Rom. 7, 7.**

Do we always appreciate and estimate at its correct value what we are permitted to hear in our dear Lutheran Church; even this, that in our Church the Law is proclaimed in its fulness and severity? Many wish to hear fine, pretty sermons. Some of our members leave us to join congregations in which they can hear that for which their ears are itching; or they demand that their own minister tread softly in reproofing sin. But how foolish they are! For no true conversion can be effected unless the Law is preached in all its severity; nor can Christians learn as they should how to lead a life pleasing to God if it is not pointed out to them by the proper preaching of the Law.

Many ministers preach against murder, drunkenness, coarse forms of unchastity, and the like, but pay little attention to the sinful thoughts leading to these sins. They vehemently condemn the sins which public opinion condemns; but those which it cherishes are overlooked. Such preaching of the Law will never lead to true conversion.

However, if the Law is preached in all its severity, if the pastor makes clear that also hatred of the heart is murder in the sight of God, that malicious judging and condemning makes a man just as liable to be eternally damned as wilful murder, who then can avoid seeing the true condition of his sinful heart, the utter corruption which sin has wrought in him? If these sins damn, who can escape damnation? In whom can he who has come to see his true self in the mirror of the Law find hope except in Jesus, who alone has suffered all the punishment to be inflicted on the damned, suffered it for him, as his Substitute?

With such preaching of the Law a superficial, sham contrition and conversion is out of the question. If, however, the Law is not preached in all its severity, this not only prevents true conversion, but it is also harmful to the new life of a Christian. He will gradually be led to look more to his outward than to his inner life. The result is hypocrisy. The pure heart will be supplanted by a polite outward bearing.

## Prayer.

We thank Thee, O Lord, that both Law and Gospel are preached aright to us and in the proper manner. The Law without the Gospel brings despair; the Gospel without the Law would be non-effective and make us indifferent. Let these two chief doctrines together work in us a wholesome fruit of repentance and faith. Let Thy holy Law be preached among us in all its severity; for nothing is more fit to induce us utterly to despair of ourselves and to seek Thy forgiveness through the redemption wrought by Thy dear Son, our Savior. Bless the preaching and reading of Thy Word upon our souls that it may accomplish what pleaseth Thee and prosper in the thing whereto Thou hast sent it, that we who worship here may meet together in the blessed abodes of heaven. Amen.

Just as I am, and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

This devotion is one of 318 taken from *Daily Bread* by F. E. Pasche, published by CPH in 1926, but now in the public domain. They have been copied and reformatted by Rev. Bruce G. Ley and made available for distribution by pastors and missionaries.

You may contact Rev. Ley at: [pastorley@leychalet.com](mailto:pastorley@leychalet.com).

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