

## 120. The Difference between the Law and the Gospel.

**The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.** 2 Cor. 3,6.

The contents of Holy Scripture are twofold: Law and Gospel. Both are necessary for us. The Law teaches what we are to do; the Gospel teaches what God has done, and still does, for our salvation. The Law teaches knowledge of sin; the Gospel shows us our Savior. The Law condemns us for our sins, terrifies and humbles us before the holy God, so that we learn to despair of being able to save ourselves; the Gospel promises, gives, and seals unto us, forgiveness, life, and salvation. The Law does not promise heaven to you; on the contrary, it tells you very plainly that you will go to hell; it works wrath and kills; it tells you that you must love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself; and you must acknowledge and confess that such a perfect love is not in your heart. What, then, does the Law teach but the wrath of God because you have not fulfilled its precepts? But what does the Gospel do? It invites and draws us to Christ, kindles faith in our hearts, and thus works spiritual life in us. It teaches righteousness. It tells us that we are righteous in the sight of God by faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that for the sake of His dear Son, who bled and died for us on the cross, God will not lay a single sin to our charge.

These two doctrines, Law and Gospel, faith and works, must not be confused or blended together; if that is done, the way of salvation is obscured. Whoever says that man must do his part, whereupon God will also do His, or that man is justified and saved by faith *and* works, obliterates the proper distinction between Law and Gospel, faith and works, grace and merit. The distinction between Law and Gospel therefore is of paramount importance

## Prayer.

Lord God, this twofold doctrine of Thy holy Word, Law and Gospel, affects our principles, sentiments, motives, aims, and all our works and doings. Let us well understand and rightly divide them in every situation of our lives. We entreat Thee of Thy fatherly goodness, let the curse of the Law make us despair of our own ability to merit Thy favor and eternal life, so that we shall gratefully accept the Gospel, the message of Thy grace through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, and thereupon willingly lead a Christian life, prepare for a blessed departure, and, finally, fall asleep and rest in peace and joy, until Thou wilt call us forth again unto life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
In these Thy precious gifts arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head.

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.

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