

Sermon #7

Commandments, Governments and Rules

God is loving and kind.

He wants what is best for us.

He doesn't enjoy seeing us suffer.

God knows everything.

All that man has discovered so far,
and all that is not yet discovered.

His knowledge and wisdom are perfect; His truth is eternal.

God rules.

God is just and fair.

God knows what is best.

He gives us the ultimate King, the Messiah,
the King of righteousness, justice and truth.

He gives us the ultimate Pastor, Jesus Christ,
who leads and cares for us perfectly.

He gives us the ultimate law—love—which fulfills all other laws.

Yet if you or I reject the perfect King and Pastor and law,
we fall subject to the next best thing: human governments,
institutions, authorities, leaders, pastors, churches, laws and rules.

Governments

Each and every human being is governed, whether we like it or not.

That is the way things are.

It is sheer fantasy to imagine that man can create, sustain, govern
and rule himself with no help from a higher authority.

Ignorant and/or rebellious hearts are governed by external rules
and human authority systems.

They are bound and oppressed, restrained and controlled,
for the good of themselves and others.

If you say you believe in Christ, but do not go forward in obeying
His teachings, you will still be ruled and oppressed by human
authorities and organizations, no matter how often you claim
that you are free in Christ.

But when you love and obey Christ,
the government is on His shoulders,
and His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

He and the Father come and live in you,
sitting on the throne of your heart.

They rule, train and nurture you in righteousness, peace and joy.

As you follow the teachings of Christ, you become free and whole,
fulfilled in God's love and truth.

God works through human governments
to keep the world under control;
to teach a standard of basic right and wrong;
to protect His people from all sorts of peril and chaos.
and to motivate believers to turn to Him for perfect justice
and protection.

But human systems are rife with evil, and none of them are pure.

No religious system or human government is perfect.

No believer should put his trust in man or any system.

Put your trust and faith in God.

Obey the teachings of Christ and follow the guidance of the inner
Counselor, the Spirit of Truth, and you will no longer be governed
and oppressed by human institutions, systems and authorities.

Good and pure hearts are ruled by love and truth.

Peace is their governor and righteousness is their ruler.

The authority of Christ resides in them.

They are free and fulfilled.

Only God is true and pure.

Let Him govern and rule your heart, and He will bring you the peace that no human system or leader can give.

Commandments

God's commandments are for our good,
to show us the way to eternal life.

They are like a road map that shows us exactly which routes to take
to arrive at our desired destination.

If you wanted to drive to Augusta, Maine but had lived your
entire life in Las Vegas, Nevada, would you just start driving
and go whichever way seemed the right direction?

Of course not!

You would obtain a detailed road map, plot your course and follow it.

God knows the way to lasting peace, joy and fulfillment,
and He gives the map out, free of charge, to anyone who asks.
Those who follow God's map will arrive there.

God does not give commandments to make us mad or spoil our fun;
He gives us commandments so that we will know how to fully
enjoy the life He has given.

Listen to the first commandments God spoke to Man:

²⁸Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."
Genesis 1:28

Does that sound so bad? Does that sound mean or hateful or vengeful?

¹⁵Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "¹⁷Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷but of the

tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Genesis 2:15

Now why did they have to go eat from that tree? They had a beautiful, pre-planted garden and the entire earth to fill, subdue and rule. The one thing God advised them not to do, they did.

All of us do this same thing.

We hear God's word, but don't trust Him or His motives.

We think He is holding back something good from us,

so we defy His commands thinking that we know a better way.

We draw our own map and follow it,

even though we have no idea what we're really doing.

Then we are punished and condemned by our own words and actions.

People who have gotten themselves into a maze of sin often need a lot of directions on how to get through it and back on the right path. God provides as many laws, commandments and instructions that a person needs to help him see the way back.

But God's commands cannot be fulfilled by legalistic observation; our human nature will always eventually want to break the law.

We fulfill God's commands when we love Him and follow His Son, Jesus Christ, for love and truth overcome the compulsion to disbelieve and disobey.

The Ten Commandments are prophecies which foretell the character Christ will form in you as you follow Him. You will come to the place that you no longer idolize people and things, you no longer take or covet what isn't yours, you no longer are unfaithful, you no longer pass on false stories, you no longer dishonor God or others.

The Ten Commandments are God's vision of His people.

This is how those who love Him will live:

in the high life of love and goodness.

Jesus said, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’³⁸This is *the* first and great commandment.³⁹And *the* second *is* like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”
Matthew 22:37-40

Thus, He summarized the spirit of all law and prophecy as love of God and others.

Rules

Rules are detailed instructions that flow from commandments and law.

Outside of God the rules are helpful and even necessary. But in Christ the rule is love, and it fulfills all other rules, even though it may sometimes appear to break them.

The rules can lead you to love,
but the rules are **not** love and cannot make you love.
The rules work to keep peace and order until love comes.
Love is the Spirit of God; love gives;
love completes and makes whole.
The rules do none of this.

Rules attempt to control an evil heart, and don't always succeed.
Love cleans the heart and makes it pure, and love never fails.

Regardless of how many commandments and rules I break,
God never stops doing good to me or stops calling me to walk in His ways.

When I humble myself and turn to Him, He always puts me back on track and leads me back home to Him, to my true identity and eternal inheritance of truth, love, goodness and dominion.

“I the Lord love truth and justice.

I alone can give this.

I establish governments and rules for those who don’t believe or follow Me.

**My people submit to Me and are ruled by Me;
this is for their good.**

**They have no fear of human governments, authorities and leaders,
for they know that I rule over all.**

**The world rebels and resists; My people love and give.
This is what sets them apart.**

Be ruled by Me and you will be free.

O My people, listen to Me. My commands are for your good!

I love you and want the best for you!

**Believe that My way is best, and follow Me in faith,
regardless of how you feel or what others think.**

Give your heart to Me, and I will make it whole.

Let Me chart your path, and you will enjoy your life.

Come to Me and listen to Me.

Learn from Me and get to know Me.

I AM good.

**Let Me fill your heart with love, your soul with life,
and your mind with truth.**

This is abundant life in Me!”