



The Gospel Gets the Last Word - Chapter 13

Thesis XXIII of Walther States The use of the Law to change human behavior has limitations. It has been said of government, "You can't legislate morality". Walther says that "The attempt to make men God-fearing by means of the Law and to encourage even those who already believe in Christ to do good by holding up the Law and issuing commands to them obviously mingles Law and Gospel." Modern spiritual leaders including Charles Stanley, Rick Warren, and others overuse the Law and use Gospel to little effect. The stress of their message is what can we do instead of what can God do for you including bring you to faith in Baptism. Being an educator or parent, our stress is often to change behavior and moral instruction. But rather than following the world of educational philosophy, we should make sure that our children are exposed to the Gospel. From the time we introduce our children to God's word or bring them to Sunday School, the Gospel is what will bring about the change we want, not the Law. This is to say that you can't use the law to raise your children, but Walther is saying the most effective tool you have as a Christian parent is the Gospel. Is it any wonder that the government has little success in outlawing hatred, bullying and murder?

Thesis XXV is similar to the above as it states that the Gospel must predominate in the church's (Christian home) teaching. Literally, time it out in the next sermon you hear; If the Gospel isn't a longer portion of the sermon than the Law, something is wrong. Likewise if you are not using more Gospel in your home devotions you are denying your children the food of life and God's own presence.

1. Why is it tempting to rely on the Law rather than the Gospel in living the Christian life?
2. See p138 #3; What happens when we try to use the Law to accomplish what the Gospel alone can do?
3. What do lawlessness and self- righteousness have in common?
4. Read Jeremiah 31:-31-34. Where is the Law written? Also read Psalm 119:32 What are the implications of this verse for the Christian life?
5. How is Luke 2:10-11 a good example of Gospel proclamation? How may you share those words of God to the lost and the weak of faith?
6. How is the Law subordinate to the Gospel in Mark 16:15-16?

7. How would you answer the accusation that the preaching of the Gospel creates moral laxity and spiritual laziness?
8. Read Ephesians chapter 3. How does Paul describe the power of the Gospel: What is the nature of this power, and what does it accomplish?
9. Discuss the statement: "Preachers may not preach enough Law but they can never preach too much Gospel."
10. See question 12 on page 138 Read Romans 12:1-2.

"We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, Our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen"

If time permits, what are some themes or ideas that have circled through the lessons?

