

# Jesus (Parables) Using the Law in Evangelism

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## Examples of Law to the Proud

### Luke 18:18-25 (Rich Young Ruler)

(You can also read this story in Matthew 19:17-22 ; Mark 10:17-25)

Here I think you should be able to see how Jesus (the Master Evangelist) is showing us how to deal with a proud, self-righteous person- a typical sinner you could say. Jesus teaching here is a much different from the approach of the modern evangelism of today! He is **not** asking for a "decision." He is looking for **repentance!** However, there can be no repentance without a God-given knowledge of sin –and that, according to Scripture, can come only by the law (Romans 7:7).

We see in this story that this man came running and fell to his knees before Jesus (vs Mark 10:17 17As *Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"* [same story different gospel])

His earnest and humble heart would seem to make him a prime candidate as a potential convert. Yet, instead of giving him God's grace, Jesus used the Law to expose the man's hidden sin. This man was a transgressor of the First of the Ten Commandments. His money was his god.

*18A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"*

When the man asked how he could obtain eternal life, Jesus did not ask, "Would you like to have the assurance that if you died tonight that you would go straight to heaven? You can have confidence right now simply by acknowledging that you have sinned against God, and by trusting in the finished work of Calvary's cross. Would you like me to lead you in prayer right now so that you can have that assurance?"

*19"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. 20You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.'"*

Instead, Jesus pointed him to the Law so that he could recognize his sin. Here is where the teaching of Jesus is most evident!!! Law to the proud and Grace to the Humble.

*21"All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said.*

Here the man shows us his self-righteousness. He does not see how he has sinned yet. This young man is a prime example of an unregenerate person. He has no understanding of the word "good." Jesus reproved him, then gently gave him five horizontal Commandments- those dealing with his fellow man. This verse reveals that it was love that motivated the Savior to speak in this way to this rich young man.

*22When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."*

When the man finally revealed his self-righteousness in vs. 21, Jesus showed him that in his vertical relationship with God he had transgressed the First of the Ten Commandments. God wasn't foremost in his life. The rich young man loved his money, and the Scriptures make it clear that we cannot serve God and money (mammon). I don't know a better example of Jesus using the Law than this parable! Here Jesus, is definitely using the law to bring knowledge of sin (Romans 7:7).

### Luke 10:25-37 (Good Samaritan)

This parable requires a little more care in its interpretation. It must neither be over-analogized, nor reduced to a simplistic meaning hardly worthy of Jesus' teaching.

I think in here you will see how Jesus uses what the Good Samaritan knows best (the Law) to bring conviction in his heart. If you study the New Testament you will see that God's love is almost always given in direct correlation to the cross: herein is love, for God so loved, God commended His love, etc. (*See John 3:16; Romans 5:5,6,8; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 2:4,5; 5:2,25; 1 John 3:16; 4:10; and Revelation 1:5, among others.*) The cross is the focal point of God's love for the world. How can we point to the cross without making reference to sin? How can we refer to sin without the Law (Romans 7:7)? The biblical way to express God's love to a sinner is to show him how great his sin is (using the Law—see Romans 7:13; Galatians 3:24), and then give him the incredible grace of God in Christ. This was the key to reaching so many on the Day of Pentecost. They were "devout" Jews who knew the Law and its holy demands, and therefore readily accepted the mercy of God in Christ to escape its fearful wrath. We need to use the Law to show the world their true state. For the first time in our lives, we can see the Christian message as an expression of love and concern for their eternal welfare, rather than of merely proselytizing for a better lifestyle while on this earth.

*25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"*

Here we find a man who is an expert in the law. We see that he wanted to "test" Jesus. He addresses Jesus as "teacher" and asked him about eternal life. If you look through customs of the day questions about achieving eternal life and about the essence of the law were common in Judaism. First we need to see his self-righteousness in the fact that he is asking what he must do to inherit eternal life. Note of his assumption of human responsibility in the attainment of eternal life. "

*26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"*

Jesus here counter-questions the man. He directs the question back to the commandments of the OT, which are only his special field!!!

*27 He answered: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"<sup>[a]</sup>; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself."*

Here the expert on the law answer's Jesus' question by quoting a commandment (Mtt 22:37-40). The answer is satisfactory so far as it goes, for it is based on the OT (Dt 6:5; Lev 19:18).

*28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."*

Jesus affirms that the man has answered correctly. This does not mean that the inquirer has grasped the full meaning of the law; nor does it endorse the idea held by the Pharisees of the day that by keeping the law a person can earn eternal life.

*29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"*

This man clearly shows himself to be self-righteous in the verse above.

*30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two silver coins<sup>[c]</sup> and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'*

Here is where you will see Jesus using the Law. He gave him the Law because he was a proud, arrogant, self-righteous man that was not seeking the truth but was in essence saying "And what do you think I must do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus gave him the Law and when he was willing to justify himself by asking who was his "neighbor". Jesus told him the parable of the "good" Samaritan who simply obeyed the most basic of the Commandments, loving his neighbor as himself. If we love anything more than God (our mother,

father, brother, sister, spouse, children, job, sports, or even our own life), we are loving the gift more than the Giver. To love anything more than we love God is to transgress the First Commandment. This is where Jesus is using the Law to this proud man.

*36"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" 37The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."*

Notice how the “expert” cannot avoid the thrust of the parable, though he apparently finds it impossible to say the word “Samaritan” in his reply. To a Jew there was no such person as a “good” Samaritan. Jesus refers back to the original question, “What must I do?” by saying, “Go and do likewise.” God does not bestow the life of the kingdom on people who reject the command to love. Such rejection shows that they have not truly recognized how much they need the love of God themselves. It shows their self-righteous state in the breaking of the First Commandment to put God First!

## **John 4:1-27 (Samaritan Woman at Well)**

**First: Jesus began in the natural realm (v. 7).**

*7When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" 8(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)*

This woman was unregenerate, and the Bible tells us “the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:14). Jesus therefore spoke of something she could relate to—water. I do also believe as you do that Jesus was also talking of Living Water. Most of us can strike up a conversation with a stranger in the natural realm. It may be a friendly “How are you doing?” or a warm “Good morning!” If the person responds with a sense of warmth, we may then ask, “Do you live around here?” and from there we develop a conversation.

**Second: Jesus swung the conversation to the spiritual realm (v. 10).**

*10Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."*

He simply mentioned the things of God. This will take courage. We may say something like, “Did you go to church on Sunday?” or “Did you see that Christian TV program last week?” If the person responds positively, the question “Do you have a Christian background?” will probe his background. He may answer, “I went to church when I was a child, but I drifted away from it.” Another simple way to swing to the spiritual is to offer the person a gospel tract and ask, “Did you get one of these?” When he takes it, simply say, “It’s a gospel tract. Do you come from a Christian background?”

**Third: Jesus brought conviction using the Law of God (vv. 16–18).**

*16He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."*

*17"I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. 18The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."*

Here is where Jesus begins to use the Law. Jesus doesn't start right from the beginning with the Law (he starts with the water) but nor does he bring grace at this point. Why? Because she is self-righteous! Jesus then gently speaks to her conscience by alluding to the fact that she had transgressed the Seventh of the Ten Commandments. He used the Law to bring “the knowledge of sin” (see Romans 3:19,20). We can do the same, “Do you consider yourself to be a good person? Do you think that you have kept the Ten Commandments?” Most people think they have, so quickly follow with, “Have you ever told a lie?” This is confrontational, but if it’s asked in a spirit of love and gentleness, there won’t be any offense. Remember that the “work of the Law [is] written in their hearts” and that the conscience will bear “witness” (Romans 2:15).

#### **Fourth: Jesus revealed Himself to her (v. 25-26).**

*<sup>25</sup>The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."*

*<sup>26</sup>Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."*

Once the Law has humbled the person, he is ready for grace. Remember, the Bible says that God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). The gospel is for the humble (see Luke 4:18). Only the sick need a physician, and only those who will admit that they have the disease of sin will truly embrace the cure of the gospel.

This teaching that we are learning shows how to present the work of the cross —that God sent His Son to suffer and die in our place. Before we can tell him of Christ he has to know what his standing is before God. Most presentation of the gospel don't even talk about sin, hell and judgement. Only when sin is revealed and the heart is humbled can we tell the sinner of the love of God in Christ; that Jesus rose from the dead and defeated death. We need to take him back to civil law and say, "It's as simple as this: We broke God's Law, and Jesus paid our fine. If you will repent and trust in the Savior, God will forgive your sins and dismiss your case." Ask him if he understands what you have told him. If he is willing to confess and forsake his sins, and trust the Savior with his eternal salvation, have him pray and ask God to forgive him. Then pray for him. Get him a Bible. Instruct him to read it daily and obey what he reads, and encourage him to get into a Bible-believing, Christ-preaching church.

### **Examples of Grace to the Humble**

#### **John 3:1-21 Nicodemus**

Nicodemus humbly came to Jesus recognizing the deity of Christ.

#### **Acts 2 Jews on the day of Pentecost**

These were "devout Jews" who were humble of heart there to celebrate the giving of God's law on Mount Sinai.

### **Key to Note: Jesus is the Fulfillment of the Law**

*<sup>17</sup> "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup>For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.*

*<sup>19</sup> Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup>For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."*

– Matthew 5:17-20

*<sup>52</sup>Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering." – Luke 11:52*