

Gracious Father, you have established your law so that we might know your will for us; but you also show your love when we fall short through your gospel of love and grace. Put to death in us those things that separate us from you and give us life anew through the gift of Jesus Christ on the cross. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

In this lesson, we'll look at how we understand Scripture: how we break it down and how God's Holy Word works on us.

Part 1 The 2 Uses of the Law - Watch First Video Segment Before Answering Part 1

1. Read Romans 7:7-25

a. In verse 7 what does Paul say was the benefit of the law to him?

b. In verses 14-20, now that Paul knows what God expects, why doesn't he just go and be a better person?

2. Read Luke 18:9-14

a. What was the Pharisee's prayer?

b. What was the tax collector's prayer?

c. What was wrong with the Pharisee's prayer and what was right with the tax collector's?

d. What did Jesus say about the two men?

Part 2 Law and Gospel - Watch Second Video Segment Before Answering Part 2

3. Read Romans 6:1-14

a. In verses 3 and 4 how does Paul describe what the law does and what the gospel does?

b. Considering the role of law and gospel, how have we been “united with Christ” in a death and resurrection like his (this might be a challenging question, so don’t sweat it)?

4. Read John 4:1-42 – This is our chance to look at a scripture and try to see law and gospel playing itself out. Remember, sin and the “breaking of the law” is not just our peccadillos, but may also be what we are in bondage to in the world. Read the story and then answer the following questions.

a. What is the law/sinful condition/human condition that is crushing this woman (there may be several things)?

b. What is the gospel (the good news, the mercy/love/grace of Jesus) that frees her?

*** The work you just did on this story was using a “hermeneutic”/”lens” to understand a story of scripture. Congratulations!!!!

Part 3 What Does This Have to Do With My Life?

5. In this lesson and in the video, we’ve been looking at how we understand our faith and scripture through the lens of law and gospel. One of the ways our denomination deals with issues in our lives is to put out social statements and many of them are written with law and gospel in mind. For example, when the Lutheran Church issued its social statement on divorce many decades ago, the document and advice given could be summarized this way: *We as a Church believe that marriage is a holy and blessed union between two people and that couples should seek every resource available to work hard to preserve that bond. However, we also recognize that many circumstances lead to the difficult decision to seek divorce. Both partners in that case should be cared for and loved by the community of faith so that they are upheld, supported, and cared for.*

a. Describe how the Church articulated law and gospel in that statement.

6. Can you think of things in the world or in your life where being able to look at these situations through the lens of law and gospel would help us live more like Christ would have us live as people of the resurrection.