

SUMMER 4 - A Delightful Law

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[0:00] Hello friends, good to be with you again and good to be working through the book of Exodus. And we're on, as I said the other night, we're spending three or four talks on the law.

And this is the one that has lots of the tricky things about it. And we're not going to be able to cover the whole lot, but I want to give you a framework for thinking about it at least. And then for thinking about law in general.

And you may have some questions, there'll be time for questions at a later point as well. Now, if you ask my wife, Heather, she will tell you that I love kids.

And one of the reasons I love kids is that they get so excited about life. I was just meeting with one of our children from the four o'clock congregation just before this. His name is Joshua, and he's a lovely little boy, but he loves life.

He loves being with his dad. He was going to help his dad count money, and he was so excited about it. You know, he loves everything. If you see him with our dogs, he just thinks our dogs are heaven on earth, you know.

[1:06] And that's what, I love that about children. We have four grandchildren, and our first two are another example of this. Sean and Jack are kids for whom life is just so, so, so exciting.

For them, nearly everything is filled with fun. Everything is exciting. Everything just brims over with delight. When they wake up in the morning and you can see that they think that this day is a new day full of potential for fun and delight.

There's some new experience to be had. Some new toy to play with. Some new person to get to know. Some new letter of the alphabet to toy with.

That's what they're doing at the moment. Some new adventure with their grandfather who loves to have adventures with them. And so life is just full of potential and full of the possibility of delight.

And now let me tell you that it's not just children who can be like this. Our grandchildren have inherited something from their grandmother who loves life as well.

[2:08] Heather is a person who delights in life. She loves to enjoy things. She delights in delight. It might be, you know, anything from snuggling up in bed on a cold Melbourne morning, or it might be a good novel, or it might be going for a walk with our two dogs or chatting online with her daughter-in-laws, or seeing another student expressing, seeing a university student expressing interest in the gospel.

She just loves life and she delights in things. And friends, I've painted that picture deliberately because I want to ask you how you view God's commands.

How do you view God's commands? When you think of God's commands, how do they make you feel? Do they seem to you to be a burden? Do you think that God is some sort of spoilsport who wants to take things off you systematically, just one after the other?

Perhaps you read his word with reluctance because you think that if I read it, I'm going to find that God wants to take things from me. He wants me to stop doing things that I really do quite like doing. I think many Christians do feel like this. God's commands for them are a burden. They are something they find hard to bear, hard to live with. But let me tell you, that is not, I think, the way of the godly person in the Bible.

[3:26] You see, the godly person in the Bible is full of delight with God's law. Let me show you what I mean. So open up your Bibles and turn with me to the book of Psalms. It's easy to find a book of Psalms, you know, just in the middle of your Bibles.

And one is easy to find. So find Psalm 1 with me and look at what it says about the godly person. For example, verse 2 says that the godly person is a person who delights in the law of the Lord.

That is, they don't grumble at it. They don't think it's harsh or forbidding, but they embrace it and delight in it. And the word delight here is used elsewhere to describe the way a lover feels about their beloved.

Or it's used to describe the preciousness of jewels. It's the attitude of the godly toward God's law and God's command. Now, if you're in Psalms, as I hope you are, then just flip to Psalm 19.

Psalm 19. In verse 7, the psalmist talks about God's law, God's Torah. And look at the language that he uses.

[4 : 35] Can you see it there? He talks about it being perfect, reviving the soul. He talks about the statutes of God being trustworthy, making wise the simple. Precepts are right, they give joy to those who hear them.

Commands are radiant, giving light to the eyes. God's laws, God's commands are more precious than gold. Even, you know, the purest of gold. They're sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.

And, you know, it's a delightful thing to have the sweet taste in your mouth, isn't it? Well, God's laws are like that. God's law is a thing of beauty. It's a thing of delight. It is not a burden, friends.

It's not a chore. Not a thing that symbolizes what God wants to take from you. No, it symbolizes all the good things of God that flow from a God who opens his hand and wants to fill the hands of his people with good things.

Now, you see, God's law symbolizes all the good things of God. Now, later on, we're going to have a look at Psalm 119. And you'll see there that it shows you the heart of a true believer.

[5 : 37] And, friends, the person who has come to know God knows that God is good. And so God's person waits for every word to fall from the lips of the God who is good.

From every word. For every word, whether it's command or blessing, comes from the hand of the good God who gives good things to his children.

And I want you to remember this as we come to these chapters today. You see, the true Israelite, the true believer, loves the law. He or she delights in it. For the law is the expression of the God who stands behind that law and who has graciously redeemed them and given them the good gift of relationship with him.

The law is an expression of that. It's the word of God, of the God that they worship. And they worship him for good reason. He is good. It is the way of responding to the God who has loved them.

You see, it's not a source of death. But as Deuteronomy chapter 32 verse 47 says, it's the ground of life. Not of death, but of life. In fact, it is life itself.

[6 : 49] Now, let's start by remembering what we've learned as you've been coming along to these studies. First thing we learned that the law is a reflection of relationship. That is, God has acted in grace. By grace, he has formed a relationship with his people.

He brought them up out of Egypt. That relationship is the background for law. Grace is the precursor to law. Law flows from grace, not the reverse.

Second, we learned that the law has two foci. It is focused on relationship with God, loving God. And it is focused on relationship with other humans, loving other people.

And it can be summarized in loving God, loving your neighbor, if you like. Third thing we learned is that the term law or Torah means instruction or teaching or guidance. That means, I think, that we should not expect Old Testament law to cover every circumstance in every culture and so on. It should, in principle, but its detail won't. It shouldn't be comprehensive in that sense or is not intended to be. Old Testament law are illustrations of how to love God and how to love your neighbor and how to express that in various situations.

[8 : 00] There are many other contexts and ways in which it may be expressed. Some of which we, you know, we even these days grapple with Old Testament law and its application to the ethics of our society now.

Now, what I'd like to do now is to tell you about the different types of law, just so that we can get a feel for what happens in these three chapters. The first type of law we might call, and people tend to call, apodictic law.

It's another way of saying absolute law. It's when the law has no conditions to it. Okay? Ten Commandments are apodictic law in the sense that they are absolute. Look at Commandment 1, Exodus 20, verse 3.

It's absolute, isn't it? You shall have no other gods before me. Clear? Absolute. And it can be positive or negative in its absolute nature.

First Commandment is negative. You shall not have any other gods but me. But have a look at the Fifth Commandment, the one about parents.

[9 : 03] Honour your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. See, that's positive, isn't it? Honour them. It's not don't do something. It is do this.

So that's apodictic law or absolute law. Now, case law is a little bit different. Case law is generally when you have a law that addresses a certain case. That is, it's conditional.

And therefore, it's often introduced by words such as if or when. Look at Exodus 21. There's lots of examples of this in 21 to 23.

But look at chapter 21, verses 2 to 6. Listen to the various cases that are talked about. First case is if a Hebrew person buys a Hebrew slave.

And let's have a look at it. And as we look at it, I want you to look for the word or listen for the word if. Verse 2. If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve you for six years.

[10 : 00] But in the seventh year, he shall go free without paying anything. If he comes alone, he is to go free alone. But if he has a wife when he comes, she is to go with him. If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the woman and her children shall belong to her master.

Only the man shall go free. But if the servant declares, I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free, then his master must take him before the judges.

He shall pierce him to the door or the doorpost, take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he'll be a servant for life. Can you hear all the ifs? If this happens, then that.

So it's conditional. It imagines a certain scenario or case. Tells you what should it do if this case comes up. So there are some of the major sorts of laws we see in these three chapters.

Now let's look at the areas covered by these laws. Quick look. Chapter 21, 2 to 11. I think it's focused on human rights. There are rights, you see, of certain people within society.

[11 : 04] Rights of slaves and rights of daughters. Now look at verses 12 to 36, a big slab there that we read. These verses talk about various situations relating to injuries to people and to animals and injuries that you might have caused by doing certain actions and that have caused things to happen where people are hurt.

In verses 18 to 25, they're about kidnapping and cursing and quarrels and how harsh you might be to a slave. You might beat a slave or even what happens to if a pregnant woman is hurt in such a way that she gives birth prematurely and so on.

Look at chapter 22 now. Verses 7 to 15 of that chapter talk about what to do in the case of various sorts of theft or injuries to animals that have been lent out to others.

And then 16 to 17 deal with areas of social responsibility in terms of seduction of a virgin. Verses 18 and 19 are not case law. They're apodictic or absolute laws about sorcerers and sex with animals. So they're clear things. They're saying this is what happens. This is what you ought to do. Now look at chapter 23. Verses 6 to 9 talk about justice issues. Justice to the poor.

[12 : 25] Not engaging in bribery. Not oppressing aliens. And then 10 to 12 are all about the Sabbath. And Sabbath observance, interestingly enough, even extends to how you look after the land.

You know, it's to have a Sabbath rest as it were as well. Just like people rest one in seven, so should the land be given a one in seven rest. And the rest period can be of advantage to the poor. So you accomplish a number of things with the one law. That's just a brief overview of some of the areas covered to give you a big picture of them. They extend from issues of justice to social justice to religious matters to sexual ethics to personal injury cases.

Because you can see, can't you, that God is concerned with so many different areas of life. And how you relate within life. And some of the things we might think are rather mundane.

Things falling into pits and so on. But God cares about them all. But let's move on from this to talk about some of the motivations that are given for these laws. And again, I can't be comprehensive and cover everything.

[13 : 30] But let's have a look at a few. Look back at the Ten Commandments. So chapter 20, flip back to chapter 20 and look at verses 8 to 11. It's the Sabbath.

I want you to think just for a moment. What motivation is given for Sabbath observance? Well, I think if you look deeply, you'll see it's the basis or the motivation is God's character or actions.

He's a God who rests. So should you rest. He's a God who's creator and so on. There's what about Commandment 5? Look at verse 12. That's the one about honoring parents. What motivation is mentioned for honoring your parents?

Can you see it there? That you might live long in the land. In other words, there's a reward involved. And you're even motivated, one presumed, by that reward. Now look at chapter 21, verse 8.

So flip over the page or whatever and read it with me. It's one about the case of a man who sells his daughter as a servant or a slave. Look at verse 8. If she does not please the master who has selected her for himself, he must let her be redeemed.

[14 : 41] He has no right to sell her to foreigners because he has broken faith with her. What sits at the root of all of this? It's a breach of faithfulness, isn't it? I think that probably goes back to the faithfulness of God himself.

But it's certainly something that's viewed as wrong to break faith with someone. Faith is a valued commodity. So don't break it. Faith must not be broken.

Look at chapter 22, verse 21. It says, Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you are foreigners in Egypt. Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you are foreigners in Egypt.

Can you see the grounds for this law? The ground for not mistreating or oppressing foreigners is the personal experience of the Israelites themselves, who had been foreigners.

They knew what it was like to be a foreigner. They knew what it was like to be oppressed as an outsider. And so you could say to them, Don't be like you were treated. Don't treat people as you were treated.

[15 : 42] You know how harshly those Egyptians treated you. Don't you go treating foreigners that way. Now look at 23, verse 8. It's talking about bribes.

And it grounds the law about bribes in the fact that bribery corrupts. And therefore, because bribery corrupts, it promotes injustice, doesn't it?

Can you see what we learn from this? The motivational grounds for God's law, I've just given you some examples, can be incredibly diverse. The motivation might be a justice or personal experience or reward or the character of God or just plain human decency.

It could be a variety of things. And when you put it all together with the other things that I noticed earlier on, what do you get? You get this wonderful picture. Here is God going through every area of life just about.

You know, he's saying to his people, I care about the way that you live. And I care about the people that you live with. And I care about the environment. And I have an opinion on even how animals and people and fields and all sorts of things ought to be treated.

[16 : 54] You get little glimpses of this elsewhere in scripture, don't you? Where in the book of Jonah, God's even concerned about the cattle that are there in Nineveh. You know, God has an opinion on how you treat people in every area of life.

From gossips to lawsuits, he's got an opinion on it. From care of your neighbor's property to simply helping out your neighbor. From religion to social justice.

From money lending to blasphemy to routine good health. From sexual ethics to carelessness. God has an opinion. So, you know, remember a bit about the hole and so on.

And, you know, not looking after your bull that's been goring people and letting it do repetitive gorings of people. You know, you're not really looking. It's careless, isn't it? And God's concerned about such carelessness.

So, you see, God has an opinion about every corner of our existence. And as God recounts his law elsewhere, you'll see that grow. He's concerned with every area of life.

[17 : 54] Not just concerned with salvation and redemption. Though, of course, he is very, very concerned with that. But, and let me say that you can see these same sort of concerns from the same God in the New Testament.

And so the letters of the New Testament address all sorts of issues. Let me just give you some examples. You see, we find in the New Testament that God has an opinion on things such as what to do when people have a strong conscience and others have a weak conscience.

How do you treat each other when that's the case? How do you approach keeping religious festivals when some people think you ought not to and others think you should? How should a slave treat a master or how should a master treat a slave?

He's concerned about what you do when you find a person in grief or in happiness. Someone weeping, someone rejoicing. What should you do when you find people like that? Rejoice with them, weep with them.

What do you do when a slave has become a Christian? What should you do when you're going shopping? And, you know, there's problems about, you know, where the meat's been and what it's been done with before you get to the shops.

[19 : 04] Should you eat meat that has been offered to idols? What should you do when you come into the marketplace and find that meat there and someone's watching you? What should you do then? How should you have a conversation with people?

What attitude should govern the way you meet together in Christian meetings? How should men and women relate to each other in marriage or in ministry? You see, God knows that we need advice about what to do when we're sad or happy or being persecuted or being duped by false teachers.

He knows that we're worried about what to do with our money and how to treat our pastors. And so he gives us advice as to what to do. He knows that pastors need advice as to how to treat people under their care. So he gives them some advice in that.

He thinks there's a right and a wrong way to relate to government. And he tells, gets his apostles to tell his people this. He knows there's a right and a wrong way to evangelize and a right and a wrong way to use the gifts God has given us.

God has advice for every corner of our existence and for what we do with our brains as we think about those things. He wants us to be people who take captive every thought and action to the obedience of Jesus Christ.

[20 : 20] God wants us to be people, you see, who are distinctly his people. And so he offers us advice as to how to be his people in his world. And his advice, let me say, cannot possibly cover every circumstance.

For example, let me give you just a case in point. God offers no advice as to what to do in the internet world. He gives advice as to how to live properly in the world.

I think there are very good principles as to how you might take from scripture as to what to do if you do live in the internet world. But it's not actually there in one sense.

Okay? Because the internet didn't exist at this particular point. But what I want to say is, what advice is in scripture is sufficient for us so that we might approach all of these other issues?

Friends, if I can just observe, isn't our God overwhelmingly kind in his care for us? He's not only given us life in Christ, that magnificent, overwhelming gift.

[21 : 31] But through his wonderful promises and his great advice in them, he has given us everything we need for life and godliness. Isn't our God wonderful that he has so equipped us?

I've worked hard, and I've worked you hard as we've looked at 19 to 23. And, you know, there are things I haven't touched on here, but just because we can't cover possibly every law, I've tried to give you an overall perspective.

I want to finish, though, where I began the talk. You see, I think we Christians are not as much like as God pictures that we should be. And I want to talk about this by sort of taking a little circumlocution, by introducing you to a person who has probably had too much influence on our thinking.

And some of them, some of you won't know his name, others will. I want to introduce you to a man called Immanuel Kant. Now, Immanuel Kant lived from 1724 to 1804, and he was a philosopher. And many philosophers class him as one of the greatest philosophers of modern time. He was famous for his simple, regular life. He enjoyed books on travel, but never travelled.

[22 : 45] He enjoyed company, but he never married. His neighbours set their clocks by his punctuality in his afternoon walks. You know, you could watch him go by and say, oh, it's got to be three or whatever it was.

Kant's philosophy is captured in a number of his works. And he wrote three very important works. The Critique of Pure Reason, The Critique of Practical Reason, and The Critique of Judgment. Immanuel Kant also had strong opinions on Christianity.

And his thoughts on Christianity are captured in a work that was called Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone. And Kant maintained it was impossible to think coherently about God.

And Kant's argumentifies to greatly oversimplify it. It goes something like this. We all have a sense of moral duty. That idea of moral duty only makes sense if there is a God who can reward our moral duty with a reward of happiness, of judgment in the afterlife.

I want you to notice what he's saying. It's quite important. He's saying something like this. The highest good in life is to act morally, to do your moral duty.

[24 : 00] That good is the sort of good that God rewards. Now, let me say that Kant's talk of duty has had some far-reaching effect on Christian thought. And let me show you, just give you a hint of it, by asking yourself in your brains to answer these questions.

Let's just stop for a moment and answer these questions. Why should you obey the Ten Commandments? Why should you not worship false gods?

Why should you not commit adultery? Why should you not lie? Why should you go to church each week? Why should you be a disciple of Jesus? Why should you take up your cross and follow Jesus?

Why should you be involved in Christian ministry? And my guess is that many of us will answer in the depths of our heart that we should do these things because they are right.

Okay? Nothing wrong with answering that way, let me tell you. But I think in the depths of our hearts we'll say it's because they're right. And then we might progress even further and say because they're our duty.

[25 : 07] Because we must. Or we shouldn't do these things because they are wrong. We have a duty not to do them. We should act in such and such a way because there are, we think, inherent rights and wrongs and there is a God who's going to reward or punish us.

Do you think if we really checked ourselves that might be the case? We might be thinking that way? And we want to flee from, we want to be rewarded or flee from punishment. And there's nothing wrong with that in one sense.

There's nothing inaccurate about it. But I want you to think just a little more deeply. See, in the end, I'm not sure just how Christian that thinking is.

I think it has elements of Christian thought in it. But I'm not sure just how Christian it is. I think there is a place for the notion of duty.

Don't mistake me. I think there is a place. However, I am not sure that our primary motivation for Christian activity is duty. Do you hear what I'm saying? There's a place for duty.

[26 : 08] But I'm not sure that our primary motivation for Christian action is duty. And I think we have been significantly influenced by Kant and his predecessors, a group of Greek philosophers called the Stoics.

And I think there's often more Kant in our ethics than there is in the teaching of the Bible, than there is the teaching of the Bible. I think, if I could put it this way, there's more Kant than Christianity in us often. Our motivation for Christian action often owes more to Kant, though we wouldn't know his name, than it does to Christ.

Our motivation for Christian ministry and discipleship often, I think, owes more to Emmanuel Kant than it does to the real Emmanuel, Jesus. Let me give you just one example to think upon.

I want you to think back to the last time you were threatened by a Bible passage or a sermon that talked about the demands that Jesus makes of us. I'll just give you a moment to reflect on that.

You know, some place where you heard something, there was a demand put on you that pushed some buttons in you. You know, and you're thinking about how Jesus demands our whole life, how he demands some of the things we value the most, our comfort, security, our wealth, our resources, whatever it might have been that God used this sermon or whatever to threaten you with.

[27 : 26] Think back to that commandment that you read that demanded some sort of change in you. I'm sure you all remember them, the occasion perhaps. Now I want you to remember the feelings associated with your reaction.

See if you can do that. My bet is that you felt guilty. That is, you felt a certain, you know, you just felt wrong, guilty.

And what I want to say tonight is, I want to ask you why you had those feelings. Why did you feel guilty? Did you feel guilty because you heard that God had some big ought that you should do?

And that ought demanded a response. And the response was costly and that response was going to hurt. Now in one sense there's nothing wrong with that. That's entirely appropriate in one sense. But you knew it was an ought from God because it was in the Bible and therefore you ought to do it.

And it was your duty to give of yourself like this. Now I'm speaking from personal experience because I am a person really, really, really committed to duty. I have to break myself free of it every now and then.

[28 : 33] I'll explain to you this in a moment. But you thought underneath it was your duty to give yourself like this. Can you see what I mean? I think often our Christian lives are determined by oughts and duty.

And we think in a particular way because it's the right thing to do. And that may even be formed by Scripture and motivated by Scripture. And our motivation for Christian activity is often duty.

Do you think that that's the primary motivation that the psalmist had in Psalm 1 that we read earlier on and Psalm 19 and Psalm 119 that we read earlier on?

I don't. See, the motivation as they present it is quite different from the motivation that I often find in myself. It doesn't seem to be a motivation springing from a sense of duty.

No, in fact, it seems to come from the joy of delight in God and in his word. You see, the psalmist has come to know God in his grace.

[29 : 36] And he knows that God is good and gracious and kind. He knows that because he has experienced it. He has seen it. He's been taught it. And it's overwhelmed him.

And he knows that God only wants good for his people. Read Psalm 145. He opens his hand with good things. Gives good things to those who stretch out their hand to him.

You see, the psalmist knows this. He knows God only wants good. And so when he reads God's word, do you know? When he comes to God's law, he's not expecting to find bad things.

He's expecting to find a God who is good and who has good things for his children. He's expecting that God will give him great advice as to how to live in a world filled with the grace and love of God. A God who is so wonderful that he rescued him out of Egypt. Us, or the Israelites out of Egypt. And he knows that God is good and filled with grace and love.

[30 : 42] And so when we read Psalm 119, I think we read it often as Bible-believing Christians, evangelical Christians. And we read it as an exaltation of the word of God. About scripture in general.

And there is again an element of truth to that. Because that is what it's about. But I'm not sure it's the whole truth. I think it is a rejoicing in God's law and commandment.

Listen to him. Just listen to it. How can a young man keep his way pure? Because he wants to be godly. By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart.

Don't let me stray from your commands. I've hidden your word in my heart. That I might not sit against you. Praise be to you, O Lord. Teach me your decrees. With my lips I recount all the laws that have come from your mouth.

I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches. I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. And I delight in your decrees.

[31 : 42] I will not neglect your word. Friends, when you come to God's commands in the Old or the New Testament. Do you come like this? Do you come like this?

Do you rejoice in them? As a display of the character and love of God. And do you say, praise you, O Lord. Teach me your decrees.

I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches. I delight in your decrees. I'm not going to neglect your word. Direct me in the path of your statutes. For there I find delight.

I delight in your commands because I love them. At midnight I rise to give you thanks for your righteous laws. Friends, when did you last do that? Reflecting on the law of God.

And his commands. And say, wow God, thank you for this. And then to go on. You are good and what you do is good. Teach me your decrees. Can you hear that? You are good.

[32 : 44] And what you do is good. Therefore your word must be good. So therefore teach me it. The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.

Friends, our God has given us the greatest gift. He has given us salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. He only wants good for us.

You can see that because of the value of the gift he has given. He only wants good for us. And his word tells the story of that salvation.

What's more, it tells us how to respond to this wonderful, great salvation. This story. And so I urge you, when you approach God's word, come to it like my grandchildren expect when they come, when they see their grandfather walk through the door.

They know it's going to be a time filled with good things. How much, if a physical, frail, sinful man can draw that expectation out of a child, how much more so the God who gives all good things. [34 : 05] How much more can we expect from his hand when he comes? You see, God's word is a source of great delight and joy.

His commands are not burdensome. They are not a place where you find duty and burden. That in mind, I want to close with reflections, these reflections on those few chapters, with these words taken from 1 John chapter 5.

And in your Bibles, I'd like you to look it up. So flip right to the back of your Bibles. You know, you can start at Revelation and work your way back and you'll get to 1 John. And have a look at 1 John 5, 1 to 3.

You might like to write down this reference and look it up later and reflect on it. And it reads like this. 1 John 5, verses 1 to 3.

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves his child as well.

[35 : 08] This is how we know that we love the children of God, by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love of God, to obey his commands. And look at the last line, the last part of the sentence.

And his commands are not burdensome. And his commands are not burdensome. That reflects the psalmist, doesn't it? That reflects this sense of, to have a good God who gives good gifts to his children.

And he then gives his word as an outpouring of those good gifts. And gives his commands as an outpouring of his goodness. Since his hand is always filled with good things, is it going to be a burden?

No. For it comes from the hands of this wonderful God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So let us pray. Father, we admit that sometimes we regard you in a way that we ought not to regard you. That is, not as an open-handed father. Who wants to give good gifts to his children. But, we fear to say it.

[36 : 32] But sometimes we regard you as a stingy father who wants to take things. Father, we repent of this. For we have met you in the gospel of your son. In the person and work of the Lord Jesus.

We know you to be good. So, Father, help us to come to your word and to your commands and to your law. As children, ready to embrace the word from a father who is good and generous and kind. And who wants only good for us. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.