

Texts Fellowship

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[0 : 00] Okay, well tonight we've decided, or I've decided, for you to have a texts evening, when we can actually have some texts from the Bible, taken up if there are texts that you have any questions about, and I also asked if anyone wanted to text me a text to do so, and some have actually done that.

So I'm going to first of all deal with those that were sent through that way by text, and we'll deal with these first. I'm not sure if we'll actually get even to the end of those ones, because there's quite a few, and they all have, or most of them have, some difficulty in understanding just what exactly is meant.

The first one, I'm just going to take them actually in the order in which they came in. Some of them came in last night. The first one is from, this is coming, where is she?

There we are. Matthew chapter 7. So let me just read the verse first of all, and then we can think about what it means. Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your perils before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

Now what did Jesus mean by that statement? Who was he referring to? What did he mean by the perils, first of all? And what did he mean that we were not?

[1 : 18] He was talking to the disciples, of course, there's still part of the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew chapter 7. And do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your perils before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

Well, obviously, that's significant too. It's so that they would not trample the perils underfoot, that they were told not to cast them before swines.

Of course, dogs and pigs were regarded as unclean by the Jews. Not just unclean in terms of physical uncleanness, but actually ceremonially unclean, so that you kept clear of them unless you wanted to contract ceremonial defilement.

So that's why they were regarded in that way. And the dogs there were dogs that roamed loosely around the streets, and were scavenging around the streets, mostly these kind of dogs.

What he's talking of here, I think, is the perils, referred to the matters that belong to the kingdom of God.

[2 : 29] A lot of Matthew's gospel is about the kingdom of God, and some of the features of that kingdom, which, of course, contains God's salvation, and Christ himself as the king of that kingdom.

So the perils, and you remember, he actually described in a parable at one time someone who found the pearl of great price, the pearl that was more valuable than any other pearl that he'd ever come across.

He was a merchant dealing in perils. And when he found this one that he knew was the most valuable of all, he sold everything he had in order to get this one, to buy this one.

And Jesus, by that, was indicating that the value of the kingdom of God to us is really like that merchant finding the most precious pearl of all. And you don't give what is that precious out indiscriminately.

And to actually throw it out without thinking of what you're doing, the things of the gospel, of the kingdom, would be a bit like taking, let's say, some meat that you had been taking for sacrifice, or an animal for sacrifice to the temple in those days.

[3 : 40] And instead of using it for a sacrifice, you just throw it to the dogs. That would have been such a bad thing to do. And what Jesus is saying is that in a similar way, it's like that spiritually for us as well.

And I think what this is saying to us is when you're dealing with people who are opponents of the gospel, we were talking about that, thinking about tonight in the sermon of opponents of the gospel

in Philippi.

When you come, for example, to people who are avowed atheists, it's important to present the gospel to them, of course. And this is difficult to do, and what I'm going to say is difficult, to draw the line at where you stop doing that.

It's difficult to just know when to stop presenting the gospel to them. Because the gospel antagonizes these kinds of people, unless God changes them, and blesses the gospel to them. But if they keep on being antagonistic, and especially if they keep really, if you like, multiplying their ridiculing of God or their blasphemy of God, there comes a time when you have to say, I can't really let this go on any further.

[4 : 51] It's dishonoring to God to have his name so much denigrated. So there's a point at which you draw back and say, well, I've gone so far, and all it's doing is just aggravating further dishonor for God.

So I'm going to leave it at that. Now, when you do that, it's not very easy to see. Where do you draw that line when you come to that point? But I think in recent times when we have debates with atheists publicized more than ever before, you do find that reaction.

And increasingly, when you deal with, for example, online, not that I've got a personal involvement with it, but when you deal with a humanist society person online, you have an absolutely vile amount of criticism coming your way.

and it is vile. It's absolutely bad language, the worst sort of descriptions of God. And there comes a point when that really gets to you and you say, well, I'm not going to actually be the cause of more of that.

I've given them the gospel. They've refused it. all they're doing is piling up more abuse on the name of God. So that's as far as I'm going. What the Lord was saying there is, cast not, do not throw what is holy or throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them under food.

[6 : 21] I think that's the key to it. They're not going to eat them. They're not going to benefit from it. All they're going to do is just trample the pearls into the mud. They're going to dishonor them. And that's what people do sometimes with the gospel as well.

It's up to a person, I think, personally, to just know when to draw the line. Some people will go further than others, but there is a time that you do realize this is really actually only going to dishonor God more.

So I'm going to stop at that point. Okay, the next one is from Luke chapter 10 and verse 4. In Luke chapter 10, this is Jesus sending out the 72 disciples.

Or the 70, some translations of 70, but let's say just it's the 72 here or 70. And he said to them, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest. And then in verse 4, he says, carry no money bag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. And the question was, and this was from Kirsten, Kirsten really was sorry not to be here tonight.

[7 : 26] She's actually away, but she was really keen to take part in the discussion. So she sent in quite a few of the next questions are actually from her and they're great questions as well.

So this is what she's saying. Why were they told not to greet anyone on the road? She's then saying, would that not have been a way of witnessing to people?

Why did Jesus prohibit them from greeting someone on the road as they were going to these towns where he was sending them as his disciples with the message of the gospel?

And there are at least two reasons, I think, that you could say in answer to that. First of all, travel actually in those days was quite dangerous. In a lot of ways, you didn't really travel on your own much in those days because there were lots of people around who just made a point of attacking travelers, robbing travelers, and of course, Jesus himself in that famous Good Samaritan account that he gave of the Good Samaritan, that's exactly what happened.

He was accosted, laid upon, robbed, and left for dead. And that wasn't at all uncommon. So that people were actually always asked to be very wary of being attacked on the road.

[8 : 52] So to stop, really, for any length of time was in some ways quite dangerous. I think especially here, where Jesus was giving them a message to proclaim about himself, about his claims, which really contradicted the general Jewish understanding of God and of salvation at the time, where Jesus, of course, was himself vilified for what he was saying about himself.

To actually present that to people could really result in a very violent backlash, if you like, some nasty things happening to you. So the danger certainly was there.

The other point is that greeting people then was a much longer affair than perhaps what we think of nowadays. When you go to the Cope or to Tesco, which I don't often do, and one of the reasons is that it takes an age to get in and out of the place because you meet with people, and there's no wrong with, I like meeting with people, but you do spend such a lot of time speaking to them, and yet when you think about it, you're only speaking to these people for a very short compass of time. In Jesus' day, to greet people on the road was really a formality. There was a formality about it where certain things were expected of you, and for one thing, you would not rush that greeting. You would spend a long time in greeting, in really welcoming, in talking to the person that you had stopped to talk to. So if you were going to stop and greet everyone with the formality and the length of time that was needed in those days, and follow the protocol, if you like, for what was expected in those days of being involved in a greeting, you would spend a huge amount of time getting to your destination.

[10:47] And when you think of what Jesus was saying here to the disciples, to these people that he sent out, there was an urgency about their ministry. He sent them away, and he wanted them to be aware of the fact that what he was giving them to do had an urgency about it.

They weren't to waste their time. They weren't to spend more time doing other things like greeting people on the way than they would in presenting their message. So again, that itself reminds us of how there's an urgency about the work of the gospel too.

And he was reminding them or teaching them at that time that greeting people as would be the custom in those days was really to hamper their progress quite seriously in going with the message that he had given them and the work that he had given them to do.

So they weren't to actually do that for that reason primarily. And then she's obviously reading through Luke's gospel at the moment.

In fact, one of the texts she said was, guess which book of the Bible I'm reading just now. The next question was from Luke chapter 10. Luke chapter 10, again, is the same chapter, but verses 1 to 12, she says, if it's not wrong to think of a passage, what can we learn from the approach they were told to take, especially for our witnessing in these days?

[12:16] What a great question that is. What can we learn from the way the Lord sent these disciples out? And how do we apply that to the way we are to be witnessing to Christ today?

First thing I would say in answer to that is that we have to realize that not every aspect of that passage is applicable to us. This was a special mission that Jesus sent these disciples on, and in fact he had given them the ability and the order to heal the sick for one thing.

That was one of the things that he mentioned when they were going into these towns, they were to speak in a certain way in the house where he went in, whenever you enter a town, they receive eat what's set before you, heal the sick and say to them the kingdom of God has come near to you. Obviously that's not required of us. We don't go about healing the sick in the way that would have been possible for these disciples as Christ gave them that ability.

So it's always important just to say well there are things there that aren't relevant for every generation of the church. Having said that there's still an awful lot and I enjoyed myself thinking this afternoon about an answer to try and answer Kirsten's question about the passage.

[13:37] And that's one of the things that I've come up with as well. I think I mentioned it a minute ago. The need to see an urgency in what we're doing in serving Christ. The gospel and the salvation it presents is so important that we cannot spend more time on idle talk or that sort of conversation by the roadside.

They would involve more time on that than we do in presenting the gospel or witnessing to Christ itself. Of course you can do that in conversation I'm not suggesting you can't.

But the urgency of course also takes account of the fact that people without Christ are lost. And because they are lost they need to have the message of the gospel as clearly and as urgently delivered to them as possible.

So that's the second point. First one was not everything is applicable to us. Second one is there's an urgency. Thirdly Jesus sent them in pairs two by two into every town and place where he himself was about to go.

And that too is significant because we are not to actually engage though there's an individual aspect to witness and to worship. When we come to thinking we were in a sense thinking of it

tonight too that the work of the gospel is a team ministry.

[14 : 55] It's a team of Christians together whether it's twos or threes or whatever. But there's a lot of wisdom of course in the Lord's words because one of the things requirement because one of the things he said is I am sending you as lambs in the midst of wolves.

You don't want to go into a wolf pack on your own. But if you've somebody with you, even one other person that's going to support you and encourage you and strengthen you and you do it together, that makes a huge difference.

It backs you up and it gives you further encouragement. There's mutual support. So there's all of that packed into that point that he sent them out two by two. We share in mission work rather than have to go it alone.

And the next point is they were to travel lightly. Carry no money bag, no knapsack, no sandals. Greet no one on the way. Well, that was really because traveling lightly wasn't just to enable them to go as quickly as possible, but I think there was a message in that as well to the people that they were seeing that these disciples of Jesus were not as a priority.

They were not actually thinking about material things. That wasn't the great business of their life. How much they had of the world's goods, how much they were able to show.

[16 : 21] And you see, if they were packed up and had all of these things that they could themselves have taken with them, and changes of clothes and all the rest of it, people would say, this is just all about really material things.

And that would be the thing that people would probably notice most of all. But Jesus sent them out with as little as possible to carry and to live on. So that the message that they had about the kingdom included how they themselves showed this is our priority, not material things, but this kingdom and its values and these spiritual riches.

That's what we are actually here for. Then there's another point. peace be to this house.

And if they weren't received, if that wasn't reciprocated, if there was no peace in return to them, well fair enough, but they had done their bid, and they were then to, if they weren't responding with peace, then, if it wasn't then, as it puts it there, if not, this peace will return to you.

It's not at any effect, it just comes back to you. But it's important that that was the first thing that he said they were to pronounce. And we have to be genuinely concerned with and emphasize peace in our dealings with people.

[18 : 22] We're not going to get very far in representing Christ and speaking for Christ, unless people see first and foremost that we're peaceable people, that our concern is peace, that they will have peace, that there's a peaceableness about us, that we're not threatening by emphasizing things which will, to begin with, scare them out of their woods, because many of them don't really know the gospel anyway.

So the first thing is peace. You emphasize, that's why I'm here. I'm here because I'm burdened for your peace and my peace and the peace of the world.

The final point is the one that Ian mentioned, wiping the dust off their feet after being rejected. This is what Jesus said to them. Whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off against you.

But, nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you. I tell you it will be more tolerable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

You have to take the whole of that with you. It wasn't just the action of wiping the dust off their feet in the sight of the people of the town. They were to add these words, that the kingdom of God had come near them, and that's what they were rejecting, and that it would be more tolerable or bearable for Sodom than for this town that was rejecting Christ and his kingdom.

[20 : 02] In other words, I think, just the kicking the dust off their feet was itself a sign to these people who were rejecting them.

It was a sign that was saying to them, what you're doing is so, so serious. You're actually refusing what has come near you, the kingdom of God.

God, and what we're doing in wiping the dust of our feet as we leave your town is really saying to you, maybe God will have nothing more to do with you.

It's that serious. And of course, that emphasis carries into the gospel as well. Okay. I'm just going to go through these.

We can come back to any of them if you want to have further discussion of them if we have time. Okay, there's another one. There's two more from Kirsten.

[21 : 01] This time Luke 14. Luke 14, verse 26 it is. If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

And the question was, what does this mean, especially in relation to God's command to honour our father and mother? Good question again, isn't it? Where he says here, if anyone does not come, who comes to me does not hate his own father and mother.

Well, I think the answer to that is along the lines of where hate in that context doesn't actually mean a positive hatred, but in fact means to love less than something else that you love or someone else that you love.

And you can actually prove that from scripture itself because if you go back to Deuteronomy, I'll just read the verses for you. Deuteronomy chapter 21 verses 15 to 17.

If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other unloved, and both the loved and the unloved have born them children, and if the firstborn son belongs to the unloved, then on the day when he assigns his possessions as an inheritance, he may not treat the son of the loved as the firstborn in preference to the son of the unloved.

[22 : 31] And unloved there does not mean completely unloved, but obviously there's a preference. One wife is loved more than the other one, and it's not that he positively hates the other one, but she's not the favorite, she's not the one that he loves most.

And then if you actually look at the equivalent passage to Luke's in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 10 and verse 37, whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

And whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. So what Jesus is saying really is a question of giving priority in love to himself above all others.

And in a sense the way some commentators put it, although it's really difficult and challenging to think about this, but this is at least how one commentator put it, Jesus is to be loved so dearly that love for others seems like hatred or being unloved in comparison.

That's a great challenge to every one of us, isn't it? That our love for Jesus be so dear and so deep that every other love and every other one loved, however much we love them, will seem as if it was hatred or unloved in comparison to this one.

[23 : 59] And personally I would find it difficult to go that far, that that's the quality of my love for the Lord. But I wouldn't find it difficult to say that in my life that's what I seek to do to actually have my love for him above love for everyone else.

And that doesn't mean that you love other people in a small measure. What it does mean is that however great your love is for others, even for your most dearly beloved, it can never reach the height of love that we owe to Christ and that we should have for him.

So it's not positive hatred, these other passages show that in fact it's to love less, to have the love for God and for Jesus at a level above the love that you have for everyone else.

Whenever we love people dearly, it's very different to idolize them. We always think of our own families, of our own relatives, of our spouses, whatever, that they're simply the best there is, most of the time.

But we can never ever give anyone or any person or any group the place that belongs to God. Every time we actually bring even an element of idolatry into a view of other people, we're taken away from God.

[25 : 34] what actually belongs to him. He alone must be worshipped. He alone must be given that place that belongs to him properly.

And our love for him must reflect that, I think, in answer to what people were saying there too. I don't think any of us would really necessarily disagree with that, I hope.

but it's sometimes difficult to just distinguish between the love we have for the Lord and the love we have for our fellow Christians or for other people.

I mean, after all, Jesus said we have to love our enemies. And that's hugely challenging as well. Right, next one from Kirsten is Luke chapter 13 and verse 1.

I think this one's fairly easy to answer fairly quickly. Chapter 13 verse 1 says, there were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

[26 : 39] And then, of course, he answered them, do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans? But what Kirsten is asking about what does that indicate?

What does this refer to? These Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And she said, do we know anything more about it?

Well, actually, not in the scriptures, we don't. There's nothing else in the Bible that gives us any light on that incident that Jesus mentioned. It was obviously an event, a proper event.

But there is in some historical records. And historical records actually tell us, although you, of course, also probably have to be aware of some prejudice against Pilate anyway on the part of the Jews.

But Pilate in historical records is very often presented as a man of great cruelty, a man who wouldn't hesitate for a moment in doing this sort of thing.

[27 : 39] And what seems to have happened here, whatever occasion it was, these Galileans had gone up to offer sacrifices to God. Pilate, for whatever reason, actually had them killed.

And there's this very graphic description there that the blood of their sacrifices mingled itself with their own blood as Pilate slew them. So it's a scene of carnage, a scene of great cruelty.

And it gives us a glimpse really there into Pilate's cruelty. Pilate, of course, was the governor at the time of Christ's trial and arrest.

And it does help you to get a glimpse into the kind of man he was and the kind of person Jesus was. When you read all that's in the Gospels, and there is a lot about this trial under Pilate's jurisdiction, and Pilate asking him questions, and Pilate saying this and saying that, and going back and forward to the Jews, as John's Gospel shows us, it shows you the caliber of Jesus, that he knew his man, that he absolutely knew this man for what he was, and mastered him all the way through.

And Jesus, although Pilate thought he was the judge, who sentenced Jesus to death, of course, spiritually, it's Jesus who's in charge, and it's Pilate who's being judged for his sin, for his compliance in the death of Christ.

[29 : 23] So it's an indication of Pilate's ruthless streak and his cruelty, which at times broke out against people that he didn't like, or people that he himself saw standing in his way.

So I think these are all the ones Kirsten sent through, so they were great questions. Right, next, Mr. Cumming, this time, where's Andy? Right, John 14 and verse 12.

There's one from himself, there's one from Ian Duncan, and true to form, the two questions from the two elders are impossible to answer. Okay, Andy says this, it's a good question as well.

John 14 and verse 12, let me just read it to you first of all. Jesus there, of course, is talking to the disciples in the upper room before he went out to face the cross.

But this is what he says in verse 12, truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do, and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.

[30 : 36] Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it.

And Andy's question was, how is it that we can do greater works than Jesus? Does anybody here think that they can do greater works than Jesus?

If you don't stick your hands up, then you don't believe the Bible. Because that's what Jesus said. He was saying it there to the disciples, of course. So again, there may be features of that, given what they were going to be as apostles, that don't necessarily apply to us as ordinary Christians. But you have to again, I think, take the whole of these verses together, so that you just don't stop. Greater works than these will he do, because I'm going to the Father.

And that itself is a clue. He then goes on to say, whatever you ask in my name, this will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. So you see, the context is where Jesus is thinking of his going to the Father, going back to be glorified, to be at the Father's side.

[31 : 49] And that's going to be a whole new situation for these disciples and for the church. so it's not greater in the sense of greater ability, or greater in number, but greater in the sense that only after Christ is risen from the dead and glorified will they be able to pray in his name and have an answer to their prayers as they were not able to before then, and indeed have the Spirit of God to help them.

As John says in himself in chapter 7, I think it is, that the Spirit was not yet given because Christ was not yet glorified. So, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

That's what he's saying is the greater works. They're greater in the sense that they belong to a time of greater privileges. They belong to a time of when there's a greater effect than before his resurrection and ascension because they are now going to glorify the Father as was not possible before Christ died and rose again.

So, I think it's greater in that sense of greater. Just like he himself said, of course, in John 10, my Father is greater than I.

And again, people ask the question, how could he say, as the second person of the Trinity, as the Son of God, how could he say, my Father is greater than I? Obviously, it didn't mean greater in the sense of being God.

[33 : 27] You couldn't have that as far as Jesus is concerned, because he's fully God, as we saw this morning. So, it has to be greater in another way, greater in the sense of, in that context, my Father is greater than I.

Christ was speaking there as the servant of God, wasn't he? and he was answerable in that way to the Father. So, the Father, in that sense, had that authority to which he, as a servant, was answerable, because in that context in John 10, he's talking about laying down his life in obedience to the Father's will for his people.

The final one was from Ian Duncan, and this one is actually Romans chapter 7 and verse 6. But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

Well, the question is this, how do we know which parts of the law apply to us as Christians? The Ten Commandments do apply, but not those which required things like stoning people to death. Now, it's a good question. It's a very important question. In terms of the law of God, how does it apply to Christians and which parts of the law do apply or do not apply?

[34 : 57] And of course, the first way I think to answer that is to ask, well, what law are we talking about? There is the moral law of the Old Testament and God's law given to us as human beings and that moral law is summarized for us or contained in that sense of being summarized in the Ten Commandments.

That is the essence of the moral law, the things God is saying, you shall do this or you shall not do this. And that law applies to every human being.

that law does not just apply to the people of Israel in the Old Testament or Christians or the church in the New Testament. And it was given at Sinai to the people of Israel through Moses.

But nevertheless, there are laws which were ingrained on the human consciousness since human beings were created. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal. You shall honor your father and your mother. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it. And so on. And that moral law, these Ten Commandments, they really apply as the moral code for every human being if we were to acknowledge that's what God actually requires of us as his creatures.

[36 : 30] Now, the moral law, let me just say, while we're on the topic, it's interesting to know the three functions of that moral law, of these Ten Commandments as the summary of the moral law.

I know the time is going on, but just let me say, these three functions, if you like, of the law. First of all, it's to reflect the holiness of God and our sinfulness in relation to that.

In other words, it's to show us, Romans 7 indeed speaks about it, to show up our sinfulness and our need of God's righteousness in Christ.

And it does that by emphasizing not just our sin, but our sin in relation to God and to the holiness of God as well. That's the first function of the law, that moral law.

The second one is in the way in which it's put to a civil use. It is put to a civil use when it is set by any society of people to be their moral code.

[37 : 34] In other words, the Ten Commandments really form the way that it threatens punishment if we break them is itself a restraining influence, especially when the judiciary in any particular society builds its rules and regulations on these Ten Commandments.

And that's one of the things that is alarming in our age. The, if you like, the legal framework of Western civilization is historically based upon the Ten Commandments.

And one of the anxieties we have is that as our society becomes more and more secular, more and more human based in its thinking.

So, you're going to find that the law of God, as it's set aside, is being replaced by human values. And therefore, there isn't the same restraint on what the Bible itself calls sin or behavior of a certain kind.

And it's no accident at all that you get people even who say they are Christians and indeed they may well be people whose lives have been changed by God and need yet to be taught properly in things of God's word.

[39 : 00] It's no accident that you find when such an emphasis on putting the law of God aside and really not looking at the Bible as literally the word of God, it's no accident that you find relationships such as same-sex marriage come to be legalized.

It doesn't matter that defines, that redefines the whole meaning of the word marriage. It really doesn't matter if you don't have the Ten Commandments and the Word of God as the basis of your moral code.

If you do, then you're obliged to honor it and to keep to it as God requires of you. It has that civil function and when it's applied properly in a society so as to restrain sin and to actually have that as a pattern of life that we must seek to keep to.

Thirdly, it has its use in guiding Christians as to the good works, if you like, that God requires of us. Now, some people will say, and they're very genuine Christians, that Christians are free from the law of God in every sense, and that when you read this passage, now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit.

Some people will say, the law of God has no place whatsoever in your life as a Christian anymore. It's a legal framework, it was alright in the Old Testament till the coming of Christ, and now it's no longer relevant at all.

[40 : 44] Now we dispute that because, in fact, the way in which it has no relevance anymore in the Christian's life is in regard to how we come to be accepted with God.

That's what's obvious from Paul's writings. We are not justified by the works of the law, by our keeping the law, but by faith in Christ, through faith in Christ.

And, of course, that means that we are free from the law as a means to salvation. But once you're in Christ, the law doesn't disappear.

You still come up against the law that says you shall not kill. It's still there in black and white for you and ingrained on your mind. You shall not commit adultery. It's the guideline for the pattern of life that a Christian must live.

It's not there as a means of salvation. That's Christ. He's done everything. But it's there as a reflection of what God requires, the kind of life.

[41 : 56] After all, what Paul says in Romans 8 is that when we come to have the righteousness that God gives us in Christ, not just judicially, but practically too, it's the righteousness of the law that's fulfilled in us, who walk not by the flesh, but after the spirit.

So that's what I would say about the moral law itself. It has these three functions in the way that it functions. The second type of law in the Old Testament is the ceremonial law.

And there's the Old Testament civic law, thirdly as well, which applied to Israel as a theocracy or a people with the civil laws that they had.

But as a ceremonial law, that includes the rituals, the ceremonies, the various festivals and holy days that were kept in the Old Testament, apart from the Sabbath day, which continues.

But all of these others have disappeared in the practice of the church because they are fulfilled in Christ. Christ has fulfilled the sacrifices, the rituals in the Old Testament that anticipated his coming.

[43 : 11] And therefore the ceremonial law has in fact been displaced under the new covenant, which is particularly characteristic of the New Testament, the new covenant age, where in fact mercy and forgiveness and loving one's enemies are emphasized.

Not that there's no mercy in the Old Testament by any means, but John chapter 9, remember the woman caught in adultery and the Pharisees took her to Jesus and said that the law of Moses commanded that this woman be stoned to death.

And of course Jesus famously almost ignored what he said. He didn't ignore it, but he didn't reply to it. And he just stooped down and wrote on the ground.

And of course there's been a lot of speculation as to what did he write. What was it he wrote on the ground? We don't know for sure. But we know the effect it had when he then said, whoever among you is without sin, let him cast the first stone.

And you just then have a pause and you just picture the scene, the silence. And they all just gradually disappear from the scene. Nobody's qualified to lift that stone.
[44 : 42] And Jesus says to the woman, I don't condemn you either. Go and sin no more. He didn't say, I'm excusing you for what you did.
but he did say, I don't condemn you. There's salvation for you.