

Leviticus

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[0 : 00] There we go.

And good morning, Sunday School. It's a privilege to be with you this morning, Trinity Baptist Church, and excited to be here both in person and online. I'm trying something a little technologically new for me, maybe for you as well.

Newish in the sense that we've got, for those online, I've got the screen up here so we can kind of see you and you can kind of see us. Well, me a little bit. I'm running. I'm out of devices. I've only got two on hand, but I got one on the dry erase board.

I got one on me. And we've got the TV up so everyone here can see you at least and try and be a little more interactive, make it feel a little more like we're all together, virtually, virtually together, pun intended, a little bit.

So we'll dive in here to Leviticus for Christians as our task for today and to look at how, what God has to say to us through the book of Leviticus as the church, as Christians.

[1 : 17] So we'll do that. But I wanted to start at the outset. And oh, I should say too. So if the TV screen gets a little dizzying and someone's like feeling a little, just raise a hand and we can maybe mix that if we need to.

So my apologies, but I thought I'd give it a try and see how it goes. So I'm Timothy Heine. And it's a privilege to be with you. So let's just jump right into it. And I want to start with a question to you to get our brains, our minds going there.

Last week, digging deep, we looked at Exodus. And can anybody tell me, does anybody remember, what was the reason God gave Moses and Aaron to tell Pharaoh, let my people go?

Does anybody remember? Online or in person, raise your hand. Why did God want his people let go? To make his name glorified?

Yeah, to make his name glorified. Excellent. All right. All right. To glorify his name? Yeah. What else?

[2 : 32] Well, he had promised. I noticed Jacob that they would go back to their land. Yeah. Yeah. I don't know. I wasn't here. Yeah. No, it's fine. No. Hey, you're on fire.

Sister, what was your name again? I'm sorry. I'm Elizabeth Lopez. Elizabeth Lopez. Thank you, Elizabeth. Yeah. So I'm just going to abbreviate that. The Abrahamic covenant, right? God made promises, right?

What else? There's. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Kind of a similar idea, right? To get them focused on, to get Israel, ancient Israel, focused on, maybe say it this way, focus on their God, the one true God, right?

On their, I'll just be, I'll just jump ahead of there. Our God. Ah, sorry, old habit. God. Good.

[3 : 28] There's a phrase that recurs several times in Exodus. He says, let my people go, dot, dot, dot.

Does that ring any bells for anybody? He says, let my people go. I'll tell you what, turn to Exodus 3.18, if you have your Bibles, Exodus 3.18.

Someone just said it. Yeah. To worship. To worship. I'm kind of paraphrasing, actually, a whole bunch of ideas, but in Exodus 3.18, open your Bibles there.

If someone has your Bible, go ahead and read that out for us. Exodus 3.18, super important verse here. Can everyone see it on the board?

I don't know. The lights are kind of bouncing back here. Let's see. Someone's got to go ahead and read it. Exodus 3.18.

[4 : 35] And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the city of Egypt and say to him, the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us.

And now, please let us go a three-day journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. That we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.

This is the initial reason God gives to Moses. And then it repeats in various ways in chapter 5, verse 1, chapter 7, verse 16, 8, verse 1, 9, verse 1, and verses 13.

And again, in Exodus 10, verse 3. Let them go so they can worship. Hold a feast. Or serve is the word that's used.

And interestingly enough, the word in the Greek, when the Greek Old Testament was written, the Septuagint, they used the word *letruo*, which is a word that has the idea of sacrifice, like making an altar sacrifice.

[5 : 37] It's the word that's also used in the New Testament when it says that the Son of Man must be sacrificed to pay the price for sin. So I'm already teasing here a little bit in saying that much, that Exodus leaves us with a huge question on our hands that Leviticus answers for ancient Israel and for us today.

And that is, if God is holy and righteous, if God is the God who redeems ancient Israel from slavery to Egypt for the purpose of worship and serving him, how do you do it?

What do you do? Where's the user manual for that? Where's the wiki how for that? You can't Google search this. That's what Leviticus does for us today.

And in many respects, because of that, it's a foundational, it's almost like a theological assumption for many places in the New Testament as well. And so that's what we want to dive into today.

So let's pray and let's ask God for help. And let's dive in. Heavenly Father, merciful God, thank you for your word, the Bible, and that Christian and that you've faithfully wrote down what you want us to know about yourself, about how you dealt with us, humanity, the human race and creation.

[7 : 00] And God, thank you for the good news here in Leviticus that you have a way for us to rightly relate with you. And thank you for the even better news that we find fulfillment in Christ in these things.

Help us to understand there's a lot to cover here, Lord. And we know that you have much more than even we can understand to put this into action in our lives today.

Help us, we pray in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. All right. So turn with me now to Leviticus chapter 10, Leviticus chapter 10. And we have a fun, little fun, scary, bizarre story to us, at least perhaps, and how God manages this relationship, how God orchestrates this relationship.

Leviticus 10. And we're just going to read the first seven verses together here. Leviticus 10. Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective fire pans and after putting them, putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them.

And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them and they died before the Lord. Whoa. Verse three.

[8 : 32] Then Moses said to Aaron, it is what the Lord spoke saying by those who come near me, I will be treated as holy.

And before all the people, I will be honored. So Aaron kept silent. Smart choice. Verse four.

So Moses called, also called Mishael and El-Zephan, the sons of Aaron's uncle Uziel, and said to them, come forward, carry your relatives away from the front of the sanctuary to the outside of the camp.

So they came forward and carried them still in their tunics to the outside of the camp, as Moses had said. Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes so that you will not die and that he will not become wrathful against all the congregation.

But your kinsmen, the whole house of Israel, shall bewail the burning which the Lord has brought about. You shall not even go out from the doorway of the tent of meeting or you will die.

[9 : 44] For the Lord's anointing oil is upon you. So they did, according to the word of Moses. This is a weird kind of thing going on here.

We don't see this happen on a Sunday morning in church where someone, you know, trips up with a scripture reading and they just drop dead. I hope that's not happened before, Trini.

Pastor Matt, has that happened? That hasn't happened as far as I know, right? Okay. Okay. A sacrifice is offered. And I don't know about you, but to me, the kind of the word picture I get is like a barbecue pit, right?

Only this is like an act of worship and an animal sacrifice, but it's not done the way God said. It's a strange fire. He's a holy God.

That's the message of Leviticus. He is a holy God and a holy God requires a holy people. You don't mess around with that. Period. And that's what Leviticus is trying to help us see.

[10 : 50] Is that if he's holy and righteous, excuse me, if he's infinitely holy and righteous and just, then you can't just go to him.

You can't just do things the way you want to, or the way that's comfortable and convenient. He's God. You're not. And there's very real and tangible consequences.

And in the case of our story here of Nadia, I'm going to buy who immediate consequences for those who dare to cross him. Not in a sadistic, mean kind of way, but in a, this is for your good kind of way.

This is for his glory kind of way. So, excuse me, a little frog in my throat there. So again, echoing from what we said last week, we come to this text written by Moses sometime in the 15th century BC.

God's inspired him to write this. So this isn't just Moses talk, shooting off his mouth. This is real. This is divine revelation. And so when we come to it now, thousands of years removed, just by way of reminder, review from last week, we want to be mindful of the text context, right?

[12 : 06] Of the first audience and the situation in which Leviticus is first written. We want to be mindful of God's context. Where are we in redemptive history? You have that in your handout on page two here, or I'm sorry, on page three.

Where are we in the redemptive plan of history? Is God, has Jesus come yet or not? That's it. It changes the game, as we'll see. Well, game, that's a bad word, but you know what I mean. I trust I'm with friends here, right?

The dynamic changes. We also want to be mindful that this isn't just God being arbitrary. He's revealing himself as well as revealing acts of history, things that have happened, things that he's done, things that his people have done.

And then lastly, thirdly, we want to be mindful of our own context. What baggage are we bringing to the text? What's our historical moment that we find ourselves in?

We're going to read things a little differently when God's harsh to non-Jews in light of the racial tensions we face today here in America, right? We're going to see that a little differently.

[13 : 11] That's okay. We just need to own that and admit that as we come to the text. We don't sacrifice animals on our worship service anymore. We need to own that and recognize that as we come to the text.

The idea of being in a wilderness in the 15th century BCE, that's a different life. So we just need to own the fact that we're in the 21st century and be mindful of that as we read through our text.

So a little bit of overview about Exodus. I'm on page three in the handout. There's a few you have on page two for those who weren't here last week. Page one's just got some introductory comments. Page two, a nice little handy Bible outline of the Old Testament with some historical events inside and outside of the world, of the ancient world, as well as just kind of where the different books of the Bible of the Old Testament fit in.

That's for your blessing and your good. I hope that helps you. And you see we're in Leviticus today. The purpose of Leviticus very simply is to outline how an unholy people can be rightly related to the infinitely and perfectly righteous and holy God who dwells among them.

We left off in Exodus with the tabernacle. We're going to come back to that today here. But a holy and righteous God is going to dwell with a specific people, his people. And this is accomplished via a matrix of sacrifices and ceremonial cleansings prescribed by God himself.

[14 : 39] And that's the substance of Leviticus today. You see there an outline of how the book of Exodus outlines itself.

And it's really pretty straightforward. The first 16 chapters are about the tabernacle laws and how to worship this God. And then the second half is, well, how do you live together so that when it comes time to worship, we are on the right footing to make that move to worship together.

And so you've got numerous sacrifices. We have the story of Nadab and Abihu in chapter 10. And 9 and 10 is particularly interesting because it's also got, it's not just that there's community laws for the people of Israel, but even the priests themselves have something even more intense that they have to do because they're the ones administrating these sacrifices.

They're the ones cutting up the bull or the goat. They're the ones lighting the fires. They're the ones that have to keep things ceremonially clean. And so they have to do extra so that they themselves are ceremonially clean to lead the community, which is a part of why God's so harsh here in chapter 10, Leviticus 10 on Nadab and Abihu.

And you notice chapter 16 in our outline, the day of atonement, I highlighted that with italics because that's really the linchpin, a linchpin chapter in the book of Exodus or in the book of Leviticus, sorry, in the book of Leviticus, because it's the, it's the Yom Kippur.

[16 : 13] Or I'll talk about it in a moment, but it really is the apex of Leviticus because it's, this is the one sacrifice that you can't mess up because this is how we're atoning for sin.

The one thing that keeps us from God, but we'll get more to that in just a moment. So let's move on to page four of your handout here. And I want to just spend the bulk of our time going through some key ideas and gospel connections.

That's the main focus for this morning, key ideas and gospel connections. And number one, right off the bat, and this might, and I think this really helps orientate us to some of the nuts and bolts here.

Number one, the holiness and purity of God and his people is the central, a central idea running throughout the book of Leviticus.

The holiness and purity of God and then in his people. If he's holy and pure, you have to be holy and pure. And there's a network of things going on here.

[17 : 16] On the one hand, there's these cleanliness laws. You have to be ceremonially clean to perform, to do X, Y, and Z. And then there's also the sacrifices that are meant to mediate the relationship between you and God.

So there's like preparatory sacrifices. And then there's like the actual sacrifice that you need to make. The whole system of clean and unclean was equally as important as holy and unholy because they're interrelated.

Something unclean is by definition not holy. But that also means that something unclean could be made clean and therefore be made holy.

It's the whole point of the sacrifices. We're doing the sacrifices. We're being done to make something unholy, unclean, clean and holy.

So, for example, a tangible example would be the laws about the leprosy and the leper. The leper was unclean. They couldn't be a part of the community. They had to separate themselves and get cleaned, which also included kind of the medical task.

[18 : 23] We would say it this way, the medical task of being cured. And then they can, but there was a way, but if they felt like there was a way for them to enter the tabernacle and say, hey, I'm clean. Check me and let's do the sacrifices to make me, bring me back into the community.

And that's the problem that, our related problem to this is the holiness and unholiness. Again, we see in our story here with Nadab and Abihu, they did something unholy. An uncommissioned, unauthorized sacrifice.

And that was problematic. As we see, and then if you look at, I won't read it here, but in Leviticus chapters 4 and 5, we see both sins of omission and sins of commission.

You can accidentally not do something. You can accidentally do something. And there's a way to be made holy again in spite of it.

There's a way to atone for that in spite of it. Both knowingly doing something God deems a sin and not doing something you should are still a sin in God's sight.

[19 : 30] That's a little controversial today, isn't it? Right? I mean, today's society, if you didn't know, oh, bless their heart, they made a mistake.

In God's economy, no, he's always, ever, infinitely holy, righteous, and perfect. So whether you know it or not, Leviticus teaches us, he's always holy whether you know it or not.

And it doesn't matter if you make an honest mistake. It's an honest mistake, and that's fair. And there's an exception clause, so to speak. There's accommodation for that, but there's still a price to pay. Because the chasm still exists, even accidentally, right?

If you accidentally put your hand in a pot of boiling water, I mean, it's an accident. It was a mistake, but I mean, the doctor's going to tell you, you've got some ongoing issues that you're going to have to resolve with your hand.

Not least to which the crying and the pain, right? In a similar kind of way. So there's several different kinds of sacrifices. We don't have the time to go through each one of these.

[20 : 36] There's a burnt offering. There's a grain offering. Sorry, burnt offering in Leviticus 1 and Leviticus chapter 6. We've got a grain offering in Leviticus 2 and chapter 6.

A fellowship offering in Leviticus 3 and Leviticus 7. There's the sin offering in Leviticus 4, Leviticus 6. And again, mentioned in Leviticus 12.

The guilt offering in Leviticus chapter 5, chapter 7, and also mentioned in chapter 14. And I'm just thinking about this.

I have a little handy chart here. Maybe there's a way we can email that out for everybody afterwards. I just realized I should have put that in the handout. I'm so sorry. It's really cool right there. Isn't that great?

Oh, man, that's amazing. I know. It'll be great. It'll be excellent. It'll be amazing. Okay. I'm sorry. I just did that. I'm sorry. Okay. So holiness and the purity of God and his people.

[21 : 32] Leviticus is trying to outline how to manage that and what God expects. And the tabernacle, number two, the tabernacle is the place of God's presence and ancient Israel's sacrifices.

This is why the tabernacle becomes a big deal. It's where he dwells. Let me be good. The tabernacle is the place of God's presence and the place of ancient Israel's sacrifices.

Why are you saying ancient Israel, Tim? Well, remember, we're acknowledging the text context by saying it that way.

Not modern Israel doesn't have an altar to do sacrifices. They haven't done sacrifices since the fall of Jerusalem. So we just want to be mindful of where we are historically here and saying it that way.

Okay. And the nation state of Israel is what? Oh, shoot. 1940. 48. Thank you. Thank you. Forgive me for forgetting that. So we're talking about ancient Israel's place of sacrifices.

[22 : 37] Because, again, we're talking about the tabernacle here. And there's a temple in Jerusalem now. Anyhow. And the tabernacle is great. It's like God's sanctified RV. Right? Right? It picks up and it goes whenever the people need to go as God calls them to.

But what's interesting about it is that there's even the architecture of it. I mean, sit and read. It's back in Exodus chapters. Where was it?

Exodus 40 is the dedication. Chapters 26 through 27 are the regulations for how to build it. I mean, like, it's a network of curtains on poles, draping down, creating all these different kinds of tents.

Right? You have a diagram in your handout that kind of shows kind of the outline of the tabernacle itself. It's a fascinating read to read chapter 26 and 27 of Exodus.

And to see just how, I mean, the gold rings for the curtains are to be made of this, this diameter, the curtain material. It's so detailed. You're like, Mike, for a designer, for a manufacturer, I'm sure it's super handy.

[23 : 42] But you say, why so particular? You're like, he's holy. That's why. This is his place. As far as a tent can hold God's presence, right? God's kind of acknowledging that.

And in the minutiae of the detail, God's acknowledging, yeah, I'm bigger than this. But if we're going to do a tent for me to be in your presence with, this is how we're going to do it.

And this is how I'm going to be with you for better or worse. And what's interesting is that the tabernacle itself has kind of this idea of holiness access, right? I'm just going to rough cut it here.

All right? You see the layout there in your handout. And you've got the outer court area, right?

A little cut out there, right? And then within the tent, there's actually a little, on the front cover, you can kind of see some cross sections there of what it might have looked like in real life there, right?

[24 : 42] And then inside the inner tent, if you will, there's two chambers. And you've got the holy of holies. And then you've got, like, just the holy place, right?

And then if we get into numbers a little bit, maybe we'll talk about this. But then the camp of Israel was all the camps, the different tribes.

I'm doing terrible squares here. But they were all arranged in the camp. Like, something kind of like this. So that the tabernacle, I'll put a few over here just for, I'm not counting.

Is that more than 12? I hope not. Okay. The idea being that God's at the center. His presence is with us at the center.

And more than that, you're not just going to walk up to him. Even the tabernacle itself reveals that. You had to be ceremonially, you come in here, for example, like, say, the leper. Or this is where the leper would come, say, hey, I think I'm clean.

[25 : 43] Can you check me? Right? You might get checked. You know, the priest at the door, the gatekeepers might check him there first as well. But there's a certain level. Everyone got access to the outer court at some point.

Because it's where the big sacrifices were made on that altar of burnt offering. Right? But then, interestingly enough, right, you have the altar. And then you have that lever where there's a place for ceremonial cleansing. You see the trajectory.

You see where this is going, right? You have that lever in there. So you can be ceremonially cleansed. And then you have the holy place. And you've got the table of showbread, the menorah, the altar of incense.

It's a place of increasing sanctification. There's a sense in which the holiness intensifies. Right? And then inside, you've got the Ark of the Covenant. Let's do A for Ark.

You've got the Ark of the Covenant in there. The object where God's presence is with them. Remember, they'll take the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant is going to lead them across the Jordan River. The Ark of the Covenant is going to lead them out into battle as a symbolic representation of God's presence with them, even as the armies march.

[26 : 50] Right? And so even with the architecture of the tabernacle, the temple will do the same thing. But there's a sense in which there's concentric circles of holiness access.

Right? It's as if, right, here there's a general level that gets a little more intense. And then it's just like, well, the Holy of Holies, the high priest, can only go in there once a year.

So for 364 days out of the year, no one even, not a soul, goes into that innermost chamber. Why? He's holy. You can't just go to God.

If you're a Christian in the room, you're probably like me thinking to myself, man, this is a big deal. When all of a sudden in Matthew 26, when Christ says it is finished and the temple tears from top to bottom.

You see the weight of that glory now? You couldn't, for thousands of years, if you wanted to be in the presence of God, it was a tent and then a building that you only got to go to occasionally.

[28 : 04] And now Christian, I'm jumping ahead of myself a little bit, but now Christian, I mean, he even dwells us. Are you kidding me? That's great news.

Leviticus, Leviticus helps us to appreciate a little bit more the meat on those bones. Just how good we have it in Christ.

So the tabernacle, God's in the midst of his people. The tabernacle is located at the center of the camp. And the epicenter of the camp is the Holy of Holies itself.

The Ark of the Covenant, God's divine presence. And so you can see again why clean and unclean, holy and unholy is such an important architecture for the way life is ordered, for the way God's economy is ordered with his people.

Because you can't just come to him. And that's why number three, the Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement is central to God's covenant with ancient Israel.

[29 : 11] So the 10th day, the Day of Atonement is the sacrifice where it's the forgiveness for all sins. It's the only time the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies.

One commentator, I think, summarizes it really well. So forgive me, I'm going to read just a little bit here because I think this succinctly gets at the point here. The 10th day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar, roughly September to October on our calendars.

On which the high priest entered the inner sanctuary of the temple to make reconciling sacrifices for the sins of the entire nation. You find this in Leviticus 16.

The high priest was prohibited from entering this most holy place at any other time on pain of death. Nor was any other priest permitted to perform duties within the temple proper during the ritual for the Day of Atonement.

The day's rituals required the high priest to bathe and be dressed in pure linen garments as a symbol of purity. The ceremony began with the sacrifice of a young bull as a sin offering for the priest and his family.

[30 : 20] After the burning incense before the mercy seat in the inner sanctuary, the high priest sprinkled the blood from the bull on it and in front of the mercy seat.

The priest cast lots over two goats. One was offered as a sin offering. The other goat was presented alive as a scapegoat.

Everyone knew where that term scapegoat came from. Here it is. It's in Leviticus. The scapegoat, the blood of the goat, I'm sorry, the blood of the sacrifice goat was used as the sin offering, was sprinkled like that of a bull to make atonement for the sanctuary.

They would drizzle a stone pit, so to speak, a stone altar with blood. It's a very brutal experience. Think of your butcher at the butcher shop, not the nice clean presentation of the butcher and he's at the counter, but when he's in the back with the carcasses hacking them, I don't mean to be too gruesome here, but it is gruesome.

Right? Bloody animal parts and blood sprinkled everywhere. The high priest confessed all the people's sins over the head of the live goat. I'm sorry.

[31 : 33] The mixed blood of the bull and goat were applied to the horns of the altar to make atonement for it. The altar was kind of a square shape with these little hooks on it. And if you're offering a live, you could use the hooks to tie down the sacrifice if that's what was necessary.

So imagine a square with little hooks on it. Right? So that's the horns of the altar. So the high priest would confess all the people's sins over the head of the...

I'm sorry. So the high priest confessed all the people's sins over the head of the live goat, turning to the live animal. Now he laid his hand on it, confessed all the sins.

And then the live goat was led away and released into the wilderness. Following the ceremony, the priest again bathed and put on his regular garments.

The priest then offered burnt offering for the priest and the people. The bodies of the bull and goat used in the day's ritual were burnt outside the camp.

[32 : 34] The day of atonement was solemn, requiring the only fast designated in the Mosaic law. All work was strictly prohibited. Why?

Because we're atoning for sin. We're getting rid of the one thing that separates us from God. And what's amazing, making by way of transition to some gospel connections here, what's amazing is that the author of Hebrews uses this imagery of the day of atonement, of a sacrifice for sin, of a scapegoat, to point Christians to how Christ saves us.

Hebrews chapter 8, basically 8 through 10. Hebrews chapter 8 through 10, essentially. But in chapter 13, and as well in chapter 13, Hebrews uses the picture of the bull and the goat burned outside the camp as an illustration of Christ's sufferings outside Jerusalem's city walls.

According to one interpretation even, Paul alluded to the day's ritual by speaking of Christ as a sin offering in 2 Corinthians 5.21. So we see, we can see not just for ancient Israel, but for Christians today, this day of atonement, it really becomes the model for Christ's atonement.

A little bit ahead of myself here. One last point here under key themes. The other key theme, I don't think, oh, I don't think it's a number, a fourth one.

[34 : 10] You'll just have to handwrite this in a fourth one. Blessings for obedience, consequences for disobedience. Number four, it's not in the handout there. I apologize for that. Number four, blessings for obedience, consequences for disobedience.

And we see this in Leviticus 26. You obey, things will go well. You disobey, not so good. In fact, God will reverse course and treat you like an enemy.

Read Leviticus 26. Exciting and scary all at the same time. Let me close, I've already intimated a little bit already. Let me close with a handful of gospel connections about the law and Christ's living.

Sorry, there's a lot here today. I apologize. Not as much Q&A; as last week. Forgive me for that. Couple things to add here.

So, the importance of the Levitical law in the mind of Christ can be seen from Jesus' own remarks in Matthew 22, verse 39, concerning the golden rule.

[35 : 10] Love your neighbor as yourself. That's actually the last part of Leviticus 19, verse 18. Leviticus 19, verse 18.

So, Jesus himself is in favor of Leviticus at some level. Indeed, Jesus uses this command to clarify other laws, as we see in Matthew chapter 5, the whole Sermon on the Mount, really.

And to summarize the laws demands the rich young ruler in Matthew 19. And it's also Mark 12 and Luke 10. And he even illustrates this principle from Leviticus 19, verse 18, in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

We can also see allusion to Leviticus in James 2.8, when James calls it the royal law. And Paul tells both the Roman church and the church at Galatia that the golden rule is the summary of the law in Romans 13.9 and Galatians 5.14.

So, clearly then, point number one, gospel connections. The law is good and it's useful, but we need to use it wisely.

[36 : 19] It's what Paul advises us in 1 Timothy 1, verse 8. See, it's not there to micromanage our relationship with God anymore. Christ mediates our relationship with God now, not the law.

But we learn something about God's character, don't we? We learn something about ourselves, don't we? We learn some, there's some principles we can learn from Leviticus.

So, Paul advises us, advises us to use the law wisely. One, in Paul's day, for example, the law was used to bully Gentile Christians to act like Jews.

Hence, that need for circumcision, strict adherence to the law as a way to practice being a good Christian. Jesus was a Jew. He was a good Christian.

He was a good Jewish boy. You go do the same likewise, Christian. Paul reminds us, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. We live by the law of Christ. And it's perhaps, I think, best articulated in places like Romans 13 and 14.

[37 : 20] Or if you have your Bibles, join me in Galatians 2, verse 20. A familiar verse. You might even be able to quote that verse. But Galatians 2, 20.

Because the aim, really, is posture of heart. A heart posture of holiness and purity that reflects Christ-like character. Galatians 2, 20.

Galatians 2, 20. Galatians 2, 20. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.

And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me. Verse 21. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ has died needlessly.

We see the tension there, right? Paul, Christ had to, why did Christ have to die? Because there were demands of a holy God. What were those demands?

[38 : 24] Leviticus. I mean, Paul's not citing Leviticus here, right, necessarily. But you see the balance Paul's holding here. A righteous and holy God. We are unrighteous and unholy.

But just like the Levitical law trains our heart and our minds to think in this way, there's a way to be made holy. And it's transformative. So, the law, number two then, the law points out our sin.

The law points out sin in humanity for what it really is. It's rebellion and disobedience before infinitely and perfectly holy and righteous God. It's not just that we sin, oh, he did something naughty.

Oh, she didn't do what she was supposed to do. Yeah, that's true as far as it goes. But Leviticus reminds us it's a holy God, a righteous God. And when you offend that, when you offend him, everything, the significance of the sin goes up, the consequences go up.

So, I experienced this firsthand a little bit in a manner of speaking. When I first got to Edinburgh to do my PhD work, my supervisor was an English woman.

[39 : 43] And being a good young man, you know, she's a little older than me. Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am. And she politely reminded me in almost like a Mary Poppins-esque kind of way.

She's like, Tim, I'm not the queen. Just call me Helen. Helen. Yes, ma'am. I mean, Helen, right? I was trying to treat her with it.

And she reminded me, no, no, no. That's a queen's respect. I'm just a professor. And she was actually very humble on her part to do that. But in the same kind of way, Christian, this is our God.

This is why it's such a big deal that we're saved by grace through faith. Because this holy God sacrificed himself for us. I'm getting at myself again.

Let me keep moving on here. Our time is quickly expiring, too quickly. Number three, the law. So yeah, the law exposes. No, the law exposes the human need for divine redemption.

[40 : 47] Again, we've already mentioned before, but the day of atonement is no longer a sacrifice for us.

Because the better and ultimate atonement sacrifice was made on our day of atonement at the cross. This is why John 3.16 is such a big deal.

But notice John 3.15. Go back and check that out. And again, Hebrews, basically Hebrews chapter 7 and then 9 through 10.

The author of Hebrews, in a very compact way that we don't have time to get into today, outlines how it's not just that there was a sacrifice made.

It was a better sacrifice. And it fulfills all of God's requirements. I want to read two more passages for us. Turn with me to Ephesians chapter 2. Ephesians chapter 2.

[41 : 49] I trust we're all familiar with 1 through 10. Verses, the beautiful section of scripture here where Paul talks about how we were formerly dead in our sins and transgressions, but by grace through faith we're made alive in Christ.

There's no, I'm tripping my words up here. It's by grace you've been saved through faith and not of yourselves as the gift of God. So that no one can boast.

Christ made the sacrifice. But notice what happens in verses 11 through 16. Therefore, remember that formerly you Gentiles in the flesh who are called the uncircumcision by the so-called circumcision, which is performed in the flesh by human hands.

Paul's alluding to the law here. He's alluding to clean and unclean laws, holy and unholy laws. And to us Gentiles who are not Jewish, who are not ancient Israel, therefore we don't perform and practice those laws.

Verse 11. Verse 12. Remember, you were at that time separate from Christ. Wait, I thought I was separate from the law. Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Excluded from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

[43 : 12] But now in Christ Jesus, you who were formerly far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. See, Paul's using sacrifice language that we see in Leviticus.

We see in the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16 and throughout the book of Leviticus. Verse 15. By abolishing in his flesh the enmity, which is the law of commandments contained in the ordinances, so that in himself he might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

A gospel implication of how Jesus fulfills the Torah. People who are alien and hostile to each other are brought together in Christ.

Jew and Gentile. Let's put it in Levitical language. The ceremony, God's holy people and unholy people are brought together in Christ.

The law, the law we have in Christ, we see a picture of racial reconciliation, that horizontal relationship, and we see that vertical relationship of reconciliation between God and man.

[44 : 42] One, when we come together in Christ, Paul's saying here, we see that there's no need for distinctions of peoples. Not that we don't acknowledge, I mean, Paul's still acknowledging there's a Jew and a Gentile.

We don't ignore the fact that we're different from each other, but it just means it doesn't matter so much anymore. We're brothers and sisters in Christ. There's more we could say there, of course, but suffice to say, the cross fulfills the Old Testament law, satisfies all these commandments, and it not only brings us to God, it also brings us together as the body of Christ.

Number four, the law was intended to tutor and prepare for the revelation of Jesus Christ.

I'm speaking for Christians now, right? We were never intended to make sacrifices at the altar, and that's the point. It was intended to tune our heart to understand the gravity of our sin, the need for a Savior, and the mechanics of how God's working that out on the cross.

That's the good news. There's much more to say about my time has run short. I don't want to delay us for worship anymore, so let me just close by reading for us from Hebrews chapter 10.

[46 : 19] If you have your Bible, turn to Hebrews 10. And really, as a shorthand, a couple of key passages, as I've mentioned before, Hebrews chapter 7, and then 9 through 10, 7 through 10, essentially, Hebrews 7 through 10, and then also the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5 through 7, and the Sermon on the Plain and Luke as well.

Well, these are helpful for us as Christians to think through how to appropriate the law, what we can appropriate from the law, and how to think through the lens of Christ, to think of it in terms of revealing God's character, revealing our character, and where we can find gospel change.

because Jesus' goal, the goal all along, was to grow our faith in Christ, grow our faith in God through Jesus Christ, the side of the cross, and to walk worthy of his gospel.

Oh, I forgot. My goodness, my notes are missing here. Hebrews 10. I'm sorry, I'm losing my place here for a second.

I apologize. Number five. Did I give blanks for number five? I didn't. Oh, forgive me. I'm sorry. Let me do that, and then Hebrews 10, and we'll close in prayer. Ultimately, the demands of the law, ultimately, the demands of the Old Testament law foreshadow justification, foreshadow justification by faith in Jesus Christ, and cultivate Christ-like character, and cultivate Christ-like character.

[48 : 02] And you see the scriptures there. Would that we had time, I want to go through and read them all together. But let me close us with Hebrews 10, and arguably the best news to come out of Leviticus.

I'll start at verse 11, and close us in prayer. Every priest stands daily, ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins, but he, that is Christ, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until his enemies be made a footstool for his feet.

For by one offering, Christ has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us. After, for after saying, quote, this is the covenant that I will make with them.

After those days, says the Lord, I will put my laws upon their heart, and on their mind, I will write them. He then says, and their sins and their lawless deeds, I will remember no more.

Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any need, there's no longer any offering for sin. Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he inaugurated for us through the veil, that is his flesh.

[49 : 48] And since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with sincere heart and full assurance of faith. Having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water, let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.

For he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and to good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another.

And all the more, as you see the day drawing near. The good news is that Christ paid the price once for all.

Let's pray. Gracious heavenly father, merciful God, thank you for the, thank you for the good news that though human, the human race is unholy and unrighteous and unperfect.

You revealed yourself to us. Anyway, you showed us a way forward, a way to be reconciled to you. And you tuned our heart to sing your praises, as it were, through a sacrificial system that was recorded down and practiced for generation upon generation.

[51 : 19] Of animals being chopped up on an altar and burnt blood sprinkled, a mess everywhere. On an altar to remind us just how costly sin is.

And then you went and paid the price. Not with a bull, not with an angel, not with a really great prophet, but with your own son.

He was sacrificed on an altar called the cross. His sin or his blood was poured out for our sin.

So that we could be made holy. And brought close to you so that we could be rightly related to you. And thus you rightly related to each other and everyone else who puts their faith in Christ Jesus as Lord and savior.

Thank you for the good news from the lake that tunes our heart and our minds to see the significance and the glory of the cross, the significance and the glory of who you are and what you've done for us.

[52 : 24] Teach us now as we go into the worship service, help us to sing your praises all the more. It's in Christ's name that we pray and ask. Amen. Thank you.

If you want, I'll be, I'll stick around for a few minutes for a question and answer. But you'll forgive me. We've only got a few minutes to service time. I apologize for that. That's.