

Law and Gospel

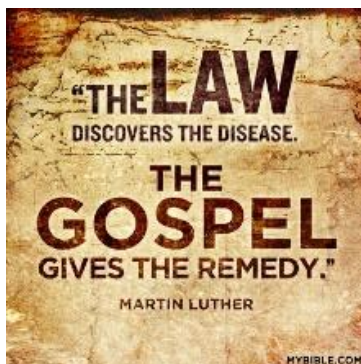
Services: Sunday, 2/11 at 8:00 & 10:45

Church Year: The Transfiguration of Our Lord – 2018

Ash Wednesday is February 14 ♥; Join Us at 11 AM or 7 PM

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Try to imagine being physically blind, *unable to see anything*, thus ↘uncertain about every step, ↘unable to do many basic things, and ↘very dependent upon others! Physical blindness is certainly bad, *but it is even worse when people are spiritually blind to the truth of God's Law and the truth of God's Gospel!*

As we go through today's epistle reading from 2 Corinthians, may the Holy Spirit bless us with ➔**the truth about God's Law** and ➔**the truth about God's Gospel!**



1. **God's Law:** As we get into the text, Paul and Timothy are writing to the Christians in Corinth.
 - a. A wrong view: ¹² **Since we** [Paul and Timothy] **have such a hope** [that is, a certainty of God's forgiveness through the finished work of Jesus], **we are very bold,** ¹³ **not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end** [that is, the glory on his face from being in the presence of God, which was fading away]. ¹⁴ **But their minds** [those of the Israelites] **were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old**

covenant [*“...the Law and the promises of God expressed throughout the Books of Moses” (TLSB, 1984)*], **that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ** [*whom they are rejecting*] **is it taken away.** ¹⁵ **Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts.** // Tough stuff, *but here is a key question: What was their wrong view of God’s Law? “They do not learn from the Law to see their sins correctly. They either become bold hypocrites <who swell with the opinion of their own righteousness> like the Pharisees [Matthew 23], or they despair like Judas [Matthew 27:3–5]” (FC Ep V 8) (TLSB, 1984). The Pharisees wrongly thought *they were good enough*, while Judas wrongly thought *he was so bad he could never be forgiven*. For all who have those same views today, *may the Holy Spirit impress God’s truth upon them!**

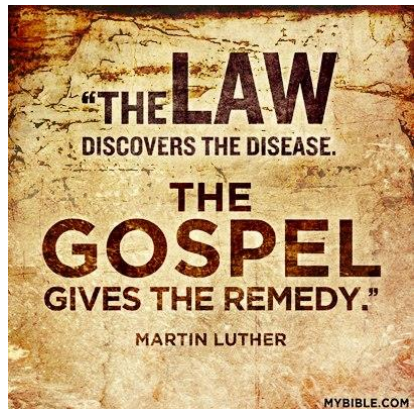
- b. **A right view:** ¹⁶ **But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.** ¹⁷ **Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is** [*“The mystery and unity of the Trinity” (TLSB, 1985)*], **there is freedom.** ¹⁸ **And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.** // Another tough section, *but here is a key question: Why do some turn to the Lord?* (1) They hear or read God’s Word; (2) the Holy Spirit works through that Word to ✓ show them their sins, ✓ show them their helplessness to save themselves, ✓ make them sorry for their sins, and ✓ give them faith to trust in the Lord! So the **Holy Spirit** has moved them **from the death of sin to being alive in Jesus to living for God’s glory!**

2. **God's Gospel:** *God's Law cannot save, but it certainly prepares people to be saved through God's Gospel!*
- a. A right view brings changes: ^{4:1} **Therefore, having this [gospel] ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart** *[in other words, God has blessed us with this ministry and will sustain us in it, so we are not worried].* ² **But we have renounced** *[disowned]* **disgraceful** *[hidden], underhanded* *[shameful]* **ways. We refuse to practice cunning** *[trickery]* **or to tamper with** *[thus falsify]* **God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.** // When Paul (or Saul) thought Jesus was opposing the things of God, *he zealously arrested Christians so that they would be punished (Acts 22:5); HOWEVER, after God's work of conversion, Paul tried to* ➤ *put away all sin, ➤be completely honest with the Word of God, and ➤proceed through his life with a clear conscience! Wherever we have fallen short, let us ➡be sorry, ➡trust in the Lord for forgiveness, and ➡go forward to glorify God!*
- b. A wrong view continues the blindness: ³ **And even if our gospel is veiled** *[covered, concealed, hidden], it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ **In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.** // *God's Gospel, the good news of Jesus' finished work, is the power of God for salvation. God wants everyone to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4)! However, "the god of this world," that is, Satan, has blinded the minds of those who do not believe. Jesus said, "the truth shall**

make you free” (John 8:32 NAS), yet many are *blind to that truth in one or more of the following ways:*

- i. Regarding the truth of God’s Law: they think they are **(a)** *so good that they don’t need Jesus* or **(b)** *so bad they cannot be helped by Jesus.*
- ii. Regarding the truth of God’s Gospel: they **(a)** *refuse to believe that Jesus is God – so they completely reject Him* or **(b)** *refuse to believe that eternal life is God’s free gift – so they try in part or in full to earn their way into heaven.*
- c. God’s Gospel – It is Jesus Christ: ⁵ **For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.** ⁶ **For God, who said [on the first day of creation], “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.** // As God’s powerful word created physical light, so God’s powerful word has also shown us that Jesus is **the One promised by the Father** and **sent from the Father** to save us from our sins!

Conclusion: Let us pray: Father in heaven, Your Law and Gospel are *so important* and yet so *often misunderstood*. Please crush us with the full weight of Your Law; then lift us up with the full sweetness of Your Gospel!



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