

“The Perfect Rule of Righteousness”

The 20th century writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn once said that the simple truth about our time, the one thing that explains the emptiness of modern life in the materially wealthy West and the cruelties that he suffered in his own person in materialist Russia, was that man had forgotten God. As a result, justice now serves the desires and needs of a particular moment or preference. It doesn't transcend time; justice progresses with time until we all are freed from the constraints of the past. This approach to justice stands in contrast to earlier, historical accounts. For example, the Magna Carta, founded in 1215, placed the king under higher authority. The Declaration of Independence and its appeal to the “laws of nature and nature's God.”

In his book *Abolition of Man*, C.S. Lewis explains the difference between the two approaches as whether live in conformity with reality or change reality. “For the wise men of old the cardinal problem had been how to conform the soul to reality, and the solution had been knowledge, self-discipline, and virtue.”

In my tradition, the universal standard of right and wrong is called “a perfect rule of righteousness.” It is the law of God, or the moral law. Now, a deep study of Scripture reveals there are many kinds of law, some of which are no longer applicable. But I'm only talking about a divine rule that stands above all people, telling us what we ought to do and what we ought to avoid. It is written on the heart of all people. It was delivered and summarized to Moses on Mount Sinai in its written form, divided into two tables, and commonly known as the Ten Commandments.

One of the responsibilities of the church is to declare this universal standard of right and wrong. This declaration is not necessarily adding something new as it is helping people to realize what is already present. It exists just like gravity. The church declares this truth because a person is both body and soul. A soul needs care just like a body needs care for a person to live well.

At the same time, the church bears witness to the gospel of Jesus. The church must not add to the problem of the forgotten God. Who can stand perfectly under the weight of the perfect rule of righteousness? Only Christ lived in perfect conformity to reality, taking the weight of the law's demands on his shoulders, providing atonement on the cross. It is the responsibility of the church to declare that everyone who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness in his name. It is the responsibility of the church to declare the gospel message so that a society does not forget God.

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