

Bible Basics Conference 2008: Dispensations

Part 10

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[00:00:00] Well, it is my job to take on session number 10. I'm very thankful that 10 is the number in Scripture which we often say is the number of responsibility. I spoke to an old sister last evening and she said to me, we've heard a lot today and each one of us is responsible to live up and to answer to what we've heard. And so what I say in the little session here will be something that will be practical. And I trust as we have listened to these lectures on the dispensation, we've had a lot of doctrine, a lot of truth that we may look at them and apply them to our lives in our everyday walk. Now I'm going to begin by reading two verses.

[00:01:08] One is in Isaiah. It's Isaiah 30 verse 21. We'll just read the middle of that verse.

Isaiah 30 verse 21. This is the way, walk ye in it. And a verse in James chapter 1.

James chapter 1 and verse 22. But be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving [00:02:16] your own self. So what we've heard this week and we have now got to put it into practice and we've got to say what difference is it going to make what I've heard? Is it going to be any different or am I going to go home tonight and go to school, to college, to work tomorrow or whatever we do? Is it going to have any effect upon my life? And upon the various subjects, the various points that are for me to bring before you. The other problem I had is as I sat listening to the lectures yesterday and again today, I was [00:03:05] slowly ticking off all the points that I was going to bring out. All the practical points that I heard. Hugh spoke from Galatians 3. The law is the schoolmaster to Christ. I thought there goes a good point. Ernie spoke on that verse from Romans chapter 10. Christ is the end of the law. Nick spoke on the progressive revelation of God. And there went my third theme. And then Andrew mentioned last night the fact that this world is under the authority of Satan. And there went another one. But then I thought to myself, if I'm going to try and tell you something practical, it's got to be based on the doctrine. And we've heard the doctrine of the dispensations. And I want to just to open this up and to [00:04:07] apply it to us. Now, here we have a Christian who ignores dispensation distinctions is likely to go wrong in our practical life. And we have some examples. And we're going to look very briefly at these examples. The first one is law keeping. And the second is worship.

And we have two things, the addressing to Christ and the use of Old Testament Psalms. And then on here, it's Christian giving. Very practical things that we should consider as we have spent time looking at the dispensations. The one that we're going to look at first is this whole question of keeping the law. There are many believers that firmly believe [00:05:04] and we have to accept that they are genuine believers on the Lord Jesus. They are part of the church. They will be part of that company that will form the bride of Christ. And yet they believe sincerely that we ought to keep the law, that we ought to follow the law, that the law should be the motive in our lives, obeying the law. And so I asked the question, is the law sin? It wasn't me asked the question. It was the Apostle Paul writing to the Romans in Romans 7 verse 7. And the answer is given, no, the law is not sinful. What is the law?

The Apostle Acts in chapter 7 verse 12. And he answers it, it is perfect, it is just, it is good. There is nothing wrong with the law. And as we heard previously, the law is [00:06:03] our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. And I think that gives us a little help and it shows the distinction. The law till Christ. We read in John 1, the law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Christ Jesus. And what is the purpose of the law? Paul goes on to say, the purpose of the law is that it shows us what sin is. And I'm sure that we know what sin is. But that same law can be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. And so we find that we could not keep the law. And the verse that we could perhaps read in Romans chapter 8 and verse 4. We've got that there. Romans 8 verse 3, for what the law could not do in that it was weak [00:07:10] through the flesh. God send in his own sinful son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. The law couldn't heal man. The reason why the law didn't work was not because the law was bad. It was because we are bad. It's because we have within us the flesh and the flesh could not keep the law. And again, referring to yesterday, to those verses in Deuteronomy, where we have the curse and the blessing, because we are incapable of keeping the law. And if it was left to us to keep the law, it would be failure after failure. And the wonderful thing is, is that because man couldn't keep the law, because man couldn't obtain eternal [00:08:02] life on this earth through keeping the law, that God sent his son, the Lord Jesus. And so when a believer attempts to keep the law, we are trying to improve the flesh. It's the flesh that will want to keep the law. It's my own self that would want to do something to seek to be slightly better, to be more in keeping with what God wants. But we find that the law was unable to be kept by mankind. But it does say in that verse eight, four, it's fulfilled in us. And I'm going to take up the story that we had yesterday of Mary. You remember the story of Mary, the young girl who was in the house as a maid. And while she was in that house, she had to abide by the rules. And if [00:09:02] she broke the rules, she got punished. And yet there came a time as she grew into, from a maid to a young girl, that the son of the house spied her. And the son of the house said he would like to have her for his wife. And instead of being a servant, she was promoted, and she became the wife of the heir of the whole house. And in that condition, she didn't keep the law. It wasn't her object to keep the law. But she did keep the law. And the reason why she kept it was because of her love for her husband. And if we really have affection for the Lord Jesus, we will automatically, so to speak, keep those laws that God has given. They are just, they are perfect, and they are good. And so we're not going to say we're going to completely dismiss them. But we're not making them our motive in life. And so as we move through this scene, we will be able to fulfill the law by [00:10:10] our devotion to the Lord Jesus. The next question on our list was, is Jesus my King? Very good question that is often raised. And there are many of our believers, again, that believe that the Lord Jesus is King, and they feel free to sing to the Lord Jesus as the King. And we have further questions on this subject in relation to singing to the Lord Jesus as King. But I ask this simple question, is Jesus King now? Is the Lord Jesus the King? Well, Luke 19, 14 gives us the answer. They said, we will not have this man to reign over us. The nation of Israel united together and said, [00:11:06] we don't want Jesus as our King. And at this present moment, the Lord Jesus is a rejected man. He is rightfully the King of Israel. And one day, as

we've seen previously, He will be King. But at this moment, the Lord Jesus is rejected. That verse in 1 Corinthians 15, 25 says, He must reign. It is absolutely vital in a world in which the Lord Jesus was cast out and crucified that He is going to reign and He is going to be supreme. But at the moment, the Lord Jesus is not King. When He is King, we shall reign with Him, 2 Timothy 2, verse 12. The Corinthians, they got it wrong because [00:12:01] they reigned as Kings. We're living in a day, dearly beloved friends, when our Lord Jesus is rejected. Where He is not wanted. And if we are going to be associated with Him today, we have to be associated with a man that is rejected. And are we prepared to follow a man that is rejected and not wanted by this world? Because if we are going to be true to what we've heard today and yesterday, we're going to have to follow a man that is rejected. Not one that is King, but one that will be King. I might not have convinced you yet, but if you look up the term King in Acts and all the epistles, it will only appear in relation to the Lord Jesus twice. In 1 Timothy, one of those verses says, who in his day he will declare, who is that only potentate King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And yet [00:13:04] it's around 460 times that the Lord Jesus is referred to as our Lord. And why don't we stick to the scriptural definition and call Him our Lord? And may that have an effect upon us, that we may, in our practical lives, realise that the Lord Jesus is the one who should be in control of our whole life. And so, is Jesus King at this moment? No. But he is going to be, and he is, or he should be, our Lord. Now we come to giving of tithes. Perhaps we are well familiar with the fact that in the Old Testament, there were those that gave tithes. And most of us would probably remember Jacob, who made a covenant with God, or he made a suggestion to God that if God looked after him, [00:14:07] he would give 10% of tithes of all that he had. Abraham, he gave tithes to Melchizedek, so it was something that had already begun. And in the end of Leviticus, we find that there were tithes not only of money, but of land, and of trees, and of the animals. So a giving of a tenth was something that seemed to have been established in the Old Testament order. But then I answer another question, a question that I think we all know the answer. How much did the Lord give? I'm sure that we all would look at this and we would say, well, did he give 10%? Cannot visualize the Lord Jesus just giving 10%. 20 or 40? 50? No, when the Lord Jesus was here, the opening words we mentioned in our meeting here this morning, [00:15:08] at the age of 12, he could say, don't you wish or not that I should be about my father's business? The Lord Jesus gave 100%, and Galatians 2 verse 20 says, he gave himself. There was nothing more that the Lord Jesus could give. He gave himself, Matthew 13, 44. He gave all that he has. And if the Lord Jesus was prepared to give all that he has, how about each one of us? Because you know, we're not following Jacob. If we were following Jacob and had Jacob as our Lord, we could justify give 10%. If we were following Moses and the nation of Israel, we could give 10%. But following the Lord Jesus, nothing less than 100% of our lives, of our income, of what we had is worthy of the Lord Jesus. Remember those words that the Lord Jesus said, [00:16:03] they're recorded in the three gospels. He that will not come after me, lay down, take up my cross and follow me is not worthy of me. And in Luke 14, we read there, you cannot be a disciple of the Lord Jesus if you are not prepared to devote yourself 100% to him. And so nothing less than 100% is right for us Christians. And this is the challenge that I would give to each one of us. Are we prepared from this day forward to devote our lives 100% to him? Because after all said and done, you don't belong to yourself. 1 Corinthians 6 says, you are not your own, you are bought with a price. Everybody here that is a Christian that knows the Lord Jesus, he has bought you. He bought you in his death upon [00:17:01] Calvary's cross. He bought you, you belong to him. And each one of us should devote our lives 100% to the work of the Lord Jesus, not just our money, but our talents. Some of you are at university, some of you are at colleges and you don't have much money, but you have time and you have brains and you have talents. These are the sort of things that we should give 100% to the Lord. And so nothing less than 100% is right for the Christian. Many of us would perhaps agree with that. One of the sad things is that we look around and we tend to look down at our brethren that give 10% of their income and we say, well, I don't give

10%, I give 100%. And we give ourselves a pat on the back and we say, yes, everything that we have, we hold for the Lord. And then we proceed [00:18:01] to spend our money on whatever we like for ourselves. And the challenge tonight is this, are we prepared? Are we serious about our Christianity? If so, we should be seriously thinking about giving everything that we have, of holding everything for the Lord Jesus and for his glory. And if we do, we get a reward in heaven. What a tremendous fact that the Lord Jesus is going to reward those that give for him in this scene. And then we come to this final one in relation to the Psalms. What are the Psalms? Quite simply, they're the Jewish hymn book.

It wasn't very long ago, perhaps 1500s, when the Psalms was the main hymn that was used in [00:19:02] all of our churches in this land. Indeed, when they tried to introduce some of the handwritten hymns in some of the churches, there was great trouble and they wanted to stick to the Psalms. And when would they use some of these Psalms? We have this one, 102, a great Psalm, which is used for the godly in time of trouble. 120 onwards, those that were going up to the feast, the songs of decree. 136, a time of joy and thanksgiving. And yes, they were very good and they are very right to be used at particular times. We touched on this subject that was mentioned yesterday about the revelation of God and I just mentioned this very briefly. God has revealed himself in different ways. We read the verse in Exodus 6 verse 3, read it a year later, it's well worth reading. God revealed himself to Abram as the Almighty. To Moses and the children of Israel, [00:20:05] he was revealed as Jehovah, the covenant-keeping God. But to the church, he's revealed as the Father. And I suggest that the Father, the revelation of God as Father, is the highest truth of Christianity. And the reason why I say that is because I want to justify that statement by the three verses that follow. Hebrews 1, God who at sundry times in a diverse manner spoke unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by or in son. And so we find that the Father, we find that God has spoken, not by the prophets now, but he is speaking in his son. And speaking reverently, there is no other one that God could speak in. He gave his very best. We read the verse [00:21:08] in John 3, 16, we know it off by heart. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. And so coming into this scene of the son of God is something which is absolutely unique. And according to John 1, 18, the only begotten son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him. The only way in which the Father could be declared, the only way in which God as Father could be known, was if somebody came who was intimately and knew God. And the Lord Jesus was always in the bosom of the Father, and he came into this world and was competent to reveal the Father. And therefore we have a revelation of the Father by the Lord Jesus.

[00:22:01] And there is no other revelation. God is not going to be revealed in any other way, because he has been revealed by his Son as the Father. And John 4, verse 23 tells us very simply that God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth, because the Father seeketh such to worship him. And so true Christian worship is to the Father. If in this present dispensation, this present time of the of the church, we have a revelation of the Father in the person of the Lord Jesus, true Christian worship is to the Father, as God was not revealed as Father till the coming of his Son. And so the Psalms cannot be used for Christian worship because they were written before the Father was revealed. That to me is very simple. [00:23:04] If we want to use hymns which would be of Christian worship, they have to be those hymns which address God as our Father. We're very thankful that in our hymn book there are many hymns which are addressed to God as Father. So in the Psalms, what do we do with them? Are they any good for our practical use? Well the Psalms are the experience of godly men. They're an experience of men that walk through this scene. We too are walking through this scene, and we can use the Psalms as an expression of experiences that we have. But as far as our Christian worship, we cannot use the Psalms. They are addressed to God as

Jehovah, and if we are to act rightly, we have to use hymns which are addressed to God as our Father. There was a subsequent question [00:24:03] that was raised, passed on to me yesterday. It was in relation to addressing divine persons. The question goes similar to this. In the Old Testament, we have God known as the Almighty. We have God known as Jehovah. We have God known now as the Father. Is it right at this present day, in this present dispensation, to address God as Jehovah? Or should we always address God as our Father? Well I'm going to stick my neck out and say that everybody in this room has heard and has had the ability to sit under ministry this few days, where you have been brought to realise that the revelation of God as Father is the highest possible truth. And as responsible to reply to that, we ought to address God in our prayers as our Father.

[00:25:08] Would it be wrong for somebody who hasn't had this truth, and we have to acknowledge that there are those in churches around us that haven't had the privilege of sitting under ministry as we have, that has given us the truth of the revelation of the Father, and they pray to Jehovah. They may even pray to the Almighty. That's their responsibility. But I believe that our responsibility here today is to live up to the truth and to the light that we have. And having had these truths brought before us, that we live in a time, we live in a dispensation if you like, where God is revealed as Father. Surely it would be right for us to address God as Father. Indeed, I could go a step further and say it would be wrong for us not to address God as Father. And I use those words that the Lord Jesus said. God is a spirit, and they that worship him must [00:26:06] worship him in spirit and in truth. Why? Because the Father seeketh such. It is the will of the Father that there is those here in this scene that we are competent and have the intelligence to worship him as our Father. What a wonderful privilege. What a wonderful responsibility that we have. And so, hopefully, that's the end. These simple thoughts, each one of us here are responsible to answer to what we've heard this week. We're here, we're responsible to answer to what we've accumulated over many, many years, many of us in the assemblies, to live our lives that has the truth of the dispensations would be clearly seen that we would give ourselves totally and wholly to the Lord Jesus.