May 21st, 2017

ICA Sunday Pulpit Message

Son of God Must Battle with Legalism (Mt 12:1-8)

(Intro)

It’s good to see you. Greet those around you. Have you had a good week? Today’s title is, “Son of God Must Battle with Legalism”. God has the law. In nature, we have principles. We have laws. On Heaven and Earth, there are laws we must follow. When this law is fairly used for everyone, it is valuable to everyone. When this law is used in a bias way, it is useless. I used to work for the National Tax Service in Korea. I had to investigate a company’s taxes on purpose. It was an order from the head office. It is the law to return taxes. Doing this unfairly on purpose is not God. Doing that isn’t unlawful. In today’s scriptures, you will see the Pharisees were the experts of the law of God. They wanted to bring out their law to condemn, criticize and kill Jesus. That is legalism.

1. Law is God’s word as well as His eyes and conscience
2. There is no one who can be saved through the act of law (Rom 3:20)
3. Law plays the role of the teacher that leads to Christ (Gal 3: 23-25)
4. Christ ended the law to fulfill His will to all who believe in Him (Rom 10:4)

The law is God’s word. It isn’t bad, it is good. It is outstanding. The law is God’s word, as well as His eyes and conscience. We are sons of God and we belong to the kingdom of heaven. It is the way we must follow. It is the law. God told Adam and Eve to not eat the fruit. That was the first law given by God. That was His POV and conscience. God knows that Satan will deceive mankind. It was God’s conscience for Adam and Eve to rule over the Garden and live happily ever after. If humankind, which was God’s creation, follows God’s law, they are able to enjoy all His blessings. After Genesis 3, mankind fell into the power of Satan. People do not know this. After that, people had no choice but to be manipulated by Satan. People say that they fall into destiny or fate. Because people are under the control of Satan, they cannot worship God. People in the world are separated from Him, so they cannot follow His word. They cannot protect their conscience. They don’t have the strength. In Romans 3:23, it talks about how you cannot be righteous with the works of the law. Why did God give us the law? It is in Romans 3:20. “Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.” There is no one who can fulfill God’s conscience or His heart. Why do we have to look at the Old Testament, which is filled with God’s law? It is the beginning of mankind and sin. It is the beginning of the Gospel and history. All the important facts are in the Old Testament. Mankind cannot fulfill the condition of the law. However, the Old Testament shows you what God wants. Therefore, what does God desire? God knows that we must fulfill His law but cannot. God wants us to realize that we are weak and must realize His law. In Galatians 3:24-25, it is written, “the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” God gave us the law. He has given us the law for our needs. However, we cannot fulfill the law completely. No one can fulfill the law, so everyone will be judged. However, God never abandons us, so He has prepared the way of salvation. God has freed us from the law. God has formed a relationship so we can be His sons and He can be the Father. It is not the relationship between master and slave. So, we have the privilege of God’s children. I have 3 children. Because their father is the pastor, they don’t worship during the week. I am not rebuking them. God has opened the way between us. Therefore, He is Father God. He is the Savior, the Messiah and Christ. Those who believe in Him and accept Him as Lord will be able to call Him, Father God. A senior pastor strongly recommended me to mention about John 1:12 and 3:16 in every sermon. “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Because of that, church members assume that pastor can memorize these two bible verses. They can think according to their own level. The law itself is good and tremendous. The law has only function to reveals our sins. If we accept Jesus as our Lord and master, how do we become His children? We have original sin from Adam. How can we go to heaven? How can we become sons of God even though we have sins that we commit? It is not myself, but Christ that we hold onto. It is in Romans 10:4. “Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.” He completely fulfilled the law. He came in a human form to fulfill the standard of the law. He was crucified and judged. He did all that because of our sins, not His. God utilized the vicious Israelites who crucified Jesus, the Son of God. Throughout the history of God, He doesn’t revel Himself to punish evil, but uses the other evil to punish that. God punished the Israelites for 2,000 years through Egypt, Babylon or Philistine which were the great nations because they rejected the word of God and worshiped idols. He who had no sin took our sin and was judged for us. It is Jesus. He took the judgment of God for us on the cross. He has fulfilled and finished the law of God on our behalf. “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.” It is written in 1 Pe 3:18. He was righteous and sinless, but died for those who have sin. He could guide us to lead us to God. 2 weeks earlier, we had a message regarding the age without peace. And, we celebrated the first year of Mother’s Prayer Sunday last week. This week, we are going to talk about an age without kindness and mercy. The law itself is God’s eyes and conscience. Therefore, the law is the truth. What about the function of the law? It reveals the sins and transgression of humankind and allows them to acknowledge that they are sinners. It leads humankind to God who is love and salvation. If you use the law to torment others, that is legalism. It makes you fall into the condemnation of others and destroys souls. That is the scheme of Satan. In Rom 10:4, it talks about how Christ is the end of the law, as you know. It means that He could handle all of that. No accountability, with unconditional love, He makes us free from the guilty feeling and condemnation of others. On contrary to this, if you keep accusing and judging others, you will be seized by the guilty feeling and condemnation of others. Then, you will become lethargic and powerless. In the middle of that, Satan is working. We could pay for what another did, but we need to forgive? Why don’t we take revenge? If you take revenge, you have no choice but to fall into Satan’s schemes. You shouldn’t fall into Satan’s schemes. With the name of Jesus Christ, you belong in heaven. This is the right way to see the law.

1. Christ, who made the law, battles with legalistic people
2. Dispute of the Sabbath (Mt 12:2, 10, 14, 24)
3. Dispute of exorcism (Mt 12:4)
4. Dispute of the sign (Mt 12: 38)

Today, we read Matthew 12. Jesus and His disciples went through the grain fields. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. The Pharisees followed Him to see if He does any wrong. It was the Sabbath day. They asked why are you doing this on the Sabbath day. They said that He shouldn’t work on the Sabbath. Not only that, Jesus healed the diseased on the Sabbath. They were arguing and saying that you shouldn’t heal those on the Sabbath. They were saying that you were going against God’s law, so He can’t be the Messiah. Jesus is responding to those things. He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread--which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests.” His response was based on the Old Testament. Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." He said that the purpose of the Sabbath was to save people. That is why Jesus said that He was the one greater than the temple. It means that He is God. He said that He was the one who made the law. He desires mercy, not sacrifice. He said, “For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." It means that everything is up to Him. In verse 10, they tried to accuse Jesus. Jesus was doing His ministry to drive out demons. However, the Pharisees were not able to do, so they were saying that Jesus was the leader of demons. Then, Jesus responded how can evil spirits fight against one another. Their kingdom will fall. The Pharisees couldn’t respond, so they wanted to kill Him. After that, Jesus warned them, “Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.” Also, He called them, ‘You brood of vipers’. That’s why they stood back and asked for miracles. They said that if He was the Messiah, He could perform miracles. At that time, Jesus was really angry. He was saying that He had been performing miracles for a while now. He answered, “But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.” He was prophesized to resurrect after 3 days. And, He gave another parable. "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation” Jesus, who made the law and was the main figure of the law, was confronting with the Pharisees who represented legalism. According to this, we can know that as sons of God, we have no choice but to dispute legalism that confronts the Gospel. I was a non-believer. I told my family members that I wanted to go church and they criticized me for it. I told them about my position in the church. They said that I would bring down the family. I was so thankful and happy, I even cleaned the church bathroom. Someone saw me clean and said that I didn’t even clean at home. I had a fight with my wife. I said that I would go to theological seminary school. My family members said that I couldn’t do that. I became a pastor. I had a heart to do this ministry well. However, my family members questioned me. What does that mean? It means that sons of God will confront legalistic people. In the midst of that, you need to interpret correctly. If we argue with each other, we will fail. I hope that you will receive answers.

1. Criticism and Condemnation based on legalism is Satan’s scheme
2. The same criticism and condemnation comes back to that person (Mt 7:1-2)
3. It is opening the doors for Satan (Rev 12:10)
4. It is an arrogation of God’s authority who is in charge of condemnation and judgment (Ecc 12:14, 2Tim 4:1)

If you criticize and condemn someone, it comes back to you as well. It is written in Mt 7:1-2, “"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” I often meet people and converse with them. Some people keep criticizing others who have nothing to do with them. I was like that. People do that because they have low self-esteem. They have that mindset to criticize others and compensate their inferiority. When you do that, People will criticize you. You point fingers. This is something that I spoke about before. You are pointing 1 finger at someone, but 3 are pointed at you. When you criticize, and condemn, you are opening the doors to Satan. When you criticize, and condemn others, it is the strategy of Satan. He will attach himself to you. It is a wicked spiritual cycle that will go on and on. One incident happened in the eastern area. A man stole this lady’s purse and she was beaten. She called the police and they asked how he looked like? Because she was disoriented, she couldn’t describe him well and said he had curly hair. A person with curly hair passed by and got arrested. Before the policy could stop him, the husband beat him. A few weeks later, the real culprit was caught. The 1st person was released was upset because he was beaten and framed. He had a heart of taking revenge. He got a knife to take revenge. The mother said that you believe in God, how can you take revenge. The son said he was so upset. He wanted to kill him. Even Jesus forgave His murders. The mom tried to calm down the son, but he could not. The man was sleeping and heard a voice. He heard his mother crying and praying. The mother was praying to God to change the heart of her son. The son went back to sleep. However, every night he heard the prayer of his mother. After hearing that prayer, his heart changed. He went to his mother and asked for forgiveness. Seeing her son change, she gave thanks to God. The son repented. All of a sudden, the door of their house opened. There was a thief that came in. He was crying with the mother and the son. It was the husband who beat up the son. The man who came in said that he would expect him to come after him, so he came in first. However, he said that he heard their prayer and his heart changed. He asked for forgiveness. They were crying altogether. This story sounds like a movie, but it was a true story. There is an endless cycle of revenge. It is an arrogation of God’s authority who is in charge of condemnation and judgement. If you exceed God’s authority, you will provoke His wrath.

(Conc)

Who are we as sons of God? God’s sons understand His heart. We are ones who follow the method of God. He knows how we think. He will see our heart preciously. How can we satisfy Him? God, who is the Judge, saved us without judgement. It goes beyond that. He made us as His sons. He freed us from the law and gave us the authority to drive out Satan. He allowed us to come out of the schemes of Satan. Jesus Christ is leading the way for us to receive the grace of God. He said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” You should confess and proclaim that you are free from Satan, who makes you fall into criticism and condemnation. “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.” The moment you confess that, you will be free from Satan’s schemes, you will have no peace. You will be free from your own path. You may condemn others or yourself. You may blame yourself when it doesn’t work well. That is Satan’s schemes. That’s why God has given us the authority to break. “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.” “I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.” We have the authority. Think about this. If you truly stand before the Lord, your God, then you cannot claim your opinion. Let us say that President Trump is here. You cannot assert your own opinion on him. It is the same. You cannot assert your own opinion to God. if you are truly free from your past, you can accept other’s opinions. God has saved you so you can wait for others. If victory is guaranteed, you cannot criticize others. Everything is ready for you. I will be in the place of the summit. God will bless me. Therefore, you will be able to forgive others. Lincoln is the most famous president. Who was the one who criticized him the most? It was Edwin Stanton. After being president, Abraham Lincoln appointed him as the Secretary of Defense. He cried the most after hearing about Lincoln’s death. Satan makes people judge, condemn and sin. He will make them fall into the eternal judgment of Hell. However, our Father God tells us to love one another so we can have victory. He allows us to consider and serve others. And He also allows us to have eternal life and be abundant. Not only that, He allows us to form unity to experience His miracles. There is 1 direction for God and Satan. This direction will always exist. It is what we need to choose. If you choose the 1 direction of God, then He will have the strength to continue. The Holy Spirit will help us to be imprinted rooted and natured. How can we go against legalism? We need to fight with the Gospel. we have to follow Jesus. We need to forgive and embrace. Then, you will be able to transcend and surpass as a spiritual summit. God will attach people to you.

(Prayer)

Almighty God, we give thanks. With the Gospel, thank you for letting me hold onto the Gospel with a calling. May they receive the same grace from You. Please allow us to break Satan, who is using legalism. May we receive Your miracles to glorify You. I give thanks and pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.