April 8th, 2018

ICA Sunday Pulpit Message

**Law or Liberty? (Romans 8:1-4)**

<Introduction>

This happened not long after I moved to Austin. I went to a Korean market to buy some groceries. When I entered the store, this lady on the other side saw me and gave me a smile; she continued to look at me and smile at me, so I thought, “Is she interested in me?” When she came up, she asked if I was Ted Kim, to which I said, “yes.” It turns out she used to be my co-worker in Korea. That lady now attends this church. I had the misunderstanding that the lady was interested in me.

There was an accident that happened in Spain. The train was passing by this tunnel. At that time, the train was controlled by two different people from the front and from the back; in other words, when the front train turned on its engine, the train went forward. If the rear train started its engine, then the train went backwards. This train was passing through the tunnel when it suddenly stopped. The engine at the front tried to move it forward, but the train wouldn’t budge. At the same time, the engine at the back tried to move backward, but the train wouldn’t budge. The people at the front and the back didn’t have any type of communication and couldn’t figure out what was going on, so they continued to run their engines. As they were playing this game of tug of war, the train was filled with the gases from the engines, and about 500 people died from suffocation. The two train conductors were trying to go their own ways, and as a result, suffering ensued. It is the same in our own worlds. Many people attend church and live their walk of faith, but because of misunderstandings, they suffer. We have to know whether it’s law or liberty. It is by God’s grace that we received salvation. Today we must realize whether it’s a law or a freedom.

1. The demand of your boss is different from the desire of your father.

What does your boss require from you? They would want more benefit of their business; in other words, they want a gain and not a loss from their workers. That’s why they ask you to do your best and not be lazy. No matter how kind or nice your boss is, they will require something from you. They don’t want any type of loss. They demand the work that they are paying you. Now, what does a father want from his child? Of course, a father wants you to be recognized in your workplace, but his heart is elsewhere. Sure, work is important, but he will put your happiness and health above anything else. Of course, he wants you to think about your relationships with your boss, but he doesn’t want you to compensate your health for that. He doesn’t want you to suffer through that because work, itself, is not as important as his own child. The perspectives are very different. It’s the same in the spiritual world and the walk of faith. This world is seized by Satan. The outer shell looks very nice and extravagant, but Satan is trying to deceive you and confuse you. Satan emphasizes what we do on our outer appearances, and he has more interests in our actions. However, God is different. Of course, He will punish the bad things that you do, but there are things more important to God. If a child is sick, the parent wants to be sick in his stead. If a child commits a crime and goes to prison, the parent wants to be there in his stead. That’s the heart of God. However, Mankind committed sin and was separated from God. Despite this, God still wants mankind to be restored. He wants all of mankind’s souls to be saved, and that’s why God came to Earth in the form of a man and suffered on the Cross. Why? Because God wanted to save us. Someone who has more interest in a person will come forward. A person who likes you more, who is fonder of you, will sacrifice himself for you. That’s the heart of a parent. Because of our sins, Jesus came to us. Because of our sins, He died in our stead. What does God desire from us to understand the heart of a parent?

1. Law makes you feel guilty, but the Gospel gives you liberty.

The Law and the Gospel are both complete; they are both given by God. The Law and the Gospel both belong to God. However, the goals and purpose of the two are different. What is the Law? The Law is a standard of God who is righteous in kind. No one can meet God’s standards and perspective. If He applies the Law as standards of people, then no one can meet God because the Law brings out the sins and weaknesses of mankind. When the Law is applied to mankind, no one can meet God’s standards. Naturally, it will reveal the sin that is inside of you, and that is the purpose of the Law. Because it has that purpose, which direction is it going? Since the Law would reveal all of our sins, we need to be saved. Then how can we be saved? We need to follow the directions to receive salvation. Romans 3:20 says, “For by works of the Law no human being will be justified in His sight, since through the Law comes knowledge of sin.” Through the Law, we became conscious of our sin. Despite the fact that the Law is complete, we cannot receive salvation from it. No one can complete the Law to receive salvation. I’m not saying that the Law is not complete; the Law is God’s conscience and sight, so it’s very important and precious. You just need to realize that you cannot fulfill the Law.

Now, what is the Gospel? God, who is righteous and kind, gave us the Gospel. It is a method for helping us to receive salvation. Because mankind cannot be saved on their own, Jesus Himself came to us. He came to us to serve and sacrifice Himself for us. That’s the purpose of the Gospel. Then to which path is the Gospel guiding us? It’s towards God’s unconditional love. He has given us His love and grace, and He is the Christ. That is why we have no choice but to get on our knees and confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. It is the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who is the way to solve all of our problems. The Law and the Gospel are different. Satan tries to nitpick all the problems of mankind. When you commit this sin, you will feel this conscience or guilt. When people see your flaws or mistakes, they can tell you about them. There are people who will nitpick at your problems all the time. That’s not the Law; that’s legalism. It’s very scary. They are not reflecting back on themselves, but they are applying the “Law” to others. Through Jesus Christ, everything was finished. There are evidences that He has finished everything and has opened His arms out to us. Jesus has freed us from the forces of the darkness. Of course, people have a conscience, so they will feel this guilt. If there’s someone who is seized by their guilt 24/7, then they are bound by something. Romans 8:1-2 says, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the Law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the Law of sin and death.” This was a confession of Paul. In the King James Version, it is recorded, “the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made ‘me’ free.” Paul said “me” because you, yourself, are important. People are generally bound by three things: the law of Physics, the law of Biology, and the four phases of life. If you look in the law of Physics, people are affected by gravity. Objects fall from top to bottom. So when you’re at the top of a building and step off the edge, you will fall to your death. If you look at the law of Biology, a person will go through the four phases of life; they will be born, age, be sick, and die. All mankind will go through these four phases of life. No matter how healthily you eat and how much you exercise, at the end of your life, you will die.

No one can avoid death, and no one can say that they are sinless. Satan is trying to put you through the law of sin and death; they will try to make you fall into the guilt of the law of sin and death. “Because you did this wrong, you must die.” “Because you sinned, you must be punished.” He will give you that type of conscience, and he will make you be bound to fate and destiny. However, what did God give us? He gave us the Gospel. Jesus Christ proclaimed on the Cross, “It is finished.” Everything is complete, and He has died for our problems. Be free inside of Jesus Christ. You have been liberated. He has restored our souls and healed from our scars. What’s more important is that Jesus has provided us with a new strength.

1. Now we live within Christ who completed the law.

After receiving salvation, we live inside of Christ. There are reasons why we need to live inside of Christ. How does Christ, who completed the Law, perceive us? He knows every sin that we’ve committed. With all those sins, how does He perceive us? He will see our spiritual state. However, if you enter inside of Jesus Christ, what will happen? When God is looking at us, He will be looking at Christ. You might say that we are playing with these words, but Paul even said this. He said, “Inside of Christ.” He uses the phrases “in/through/by/according to Christ” continuously. Even in today’s Scriptures, it’s “through Christ.” What does it mean that you have accepted Jesus Christ? Not only is He your Lord and Master, but He is representative of you. He will represent your soul and body. When God is looking at you, He is looking at the Christ inside of you. When Father God looked at His Only Son, what did He say? He said that this was His One and Only Son who pleases Him. That’s how we will be viewed if we remain in Christ. That’s why we live inside of Christ. Now, there’s another meaning to being in Christ. 2000 years ago, Jesus has ascended into Heaven. He is no longer of this world. However, He made a promise that He would send the Helper/Advocate/Comforter, the Holy Spirit. So what is the Holy Spirit doing? Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and He performed His ministry through the Holy Spirit. He did nothing with His own power. He was resurrected from the power of the Holy Spirit. That power filled the hearts of the Early Church members. What does it mean that you are inside of Christ? It means that you have the power of the Holy Spirit. When you receive the power of the Holy Spirit, you will be able to overcome the power of Satan. You will win the spiritual battle. That’s why we pray that we will be filled with the Holy Spirit. I bless that you will receive the power of the Holy Spirit that will save your life.

<Conclusion>

If we look at the perspective of Law, we are all sinful. However, within the perspective of the Gospel, we are saved. Inside of the Law, we are sinners and Satan will continue to condemn us and wreck us with guilt. If you condemn others, then you are seized by Satan. By condemning others, you will feel guilty. However, in the Gospel’s perspective, Jesus Christ has completed everything and saved us. There’s nothing else we need to pay back. By Law, we are free, and that’s why we have been liberated. In Korean, liberty and freedom mean the same. However, they mean different in English. You can say that you have freedom, but by the law, you are liberated. By God’s law, you have become righteous and been liberated from Satan’s chains. I hope that you will remain in this blessing. Stand as sons of God. When you are bound by condemnation and guilt, you will be seized by the evil spirits, and you will be bound by Satan’s curses and destiny. Furthermore, you will be bound and nothing will go well for you. The Gospel is the complete opposite of that. Everything is open for you. The guidance of the Holy Spirit will be with us. Even though we say that we don’t know what will happen in the next 5 minutes, we will be okay because the Holy Spirit is within us. God has called you to the liberty of the Gospel. I hope that you will discover everything within Jesus Christ.

<Prayer>

Dear Heavenly Father, we give You all the glory. I praise the name of our Father God, who is righteous. Help us let go of our misunderstandings and misconceptions. Help us receive healing through the Gospel. Help us enjoy the liberty given to us through the Gospel. Help us to challenge the rites of the world through the Holy Spirit. I bless and pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.