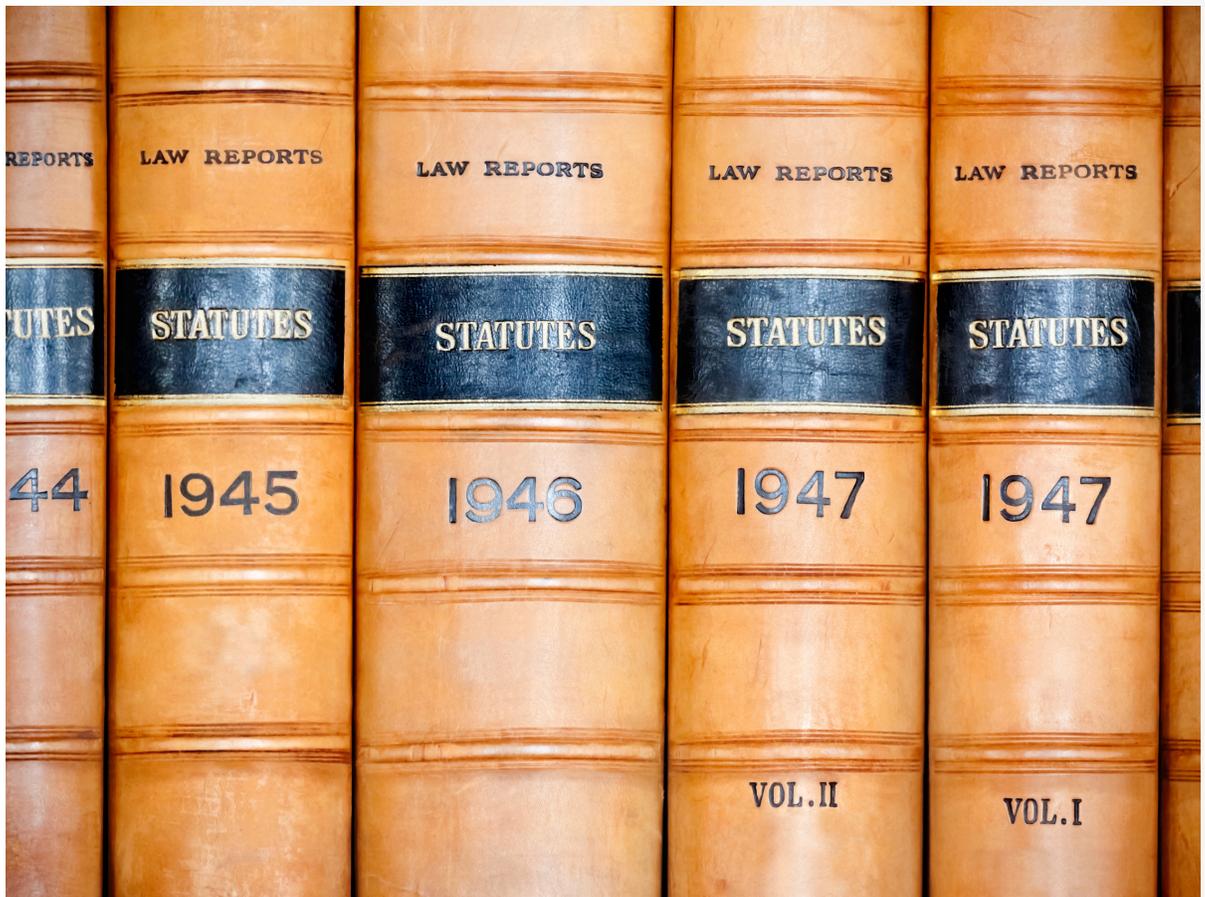


THE TEN PLEASURES

PSALM 40:8

# THE PERSON WHO IS OUR PLEASURE



**FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

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# INTRODUCTION

"Christ has redeemed us from the Law, so why should I study it?"

"We are no longer under the law, but under grace, so what's the point in learning about the law?"

We've all heard statements like these. Maybe we've even made them. Christ is contrasted with the law or grace is contrasted with the law so that God's law is squeezed out of the church as irrelevant and out of our lives as of no practical or spiritual use. Christ is used to displace and replace the law. The result though is not only less law but less Jesus and therefore less joy.

**"But how can I find Jesus and joy in the law?"**

Today we will consider four ways to find Jesus in the law and therefore joy in the law. The aim is that we will be able to rejoice with the Psalmist: "Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119:97) and "Blessed is the man who's...delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night" (Ps. 1). Maybe we can even join Jesus who said "I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:8; Heb 10:5-7) or Paul who said, "I delight in the law of God, in my inner being...I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin" (Rom. 7:22, 25).

## BACKGROUND

Last week we began to build the biblical framework for calling the Ten Commandments the Ten Pleasures by looking at *The Path to Pleasure*. This week we will consider *The Person who is our Pleasure*.

- The Path to Pleasure
- The Person who is our Pleasure
- The Power of Pleasure
- The Problems of Pleasure

Remember the first part of our framework which placed the law in a particular place and order: Redemption, Relationship, Rules, Reward. This order is assumed in this the second part of the framework. In other words, we are assuming that we have experienced redemption and are in a relationship with Jesus. Only then can we find pleasure in the law and in Jesus.



How can the law increase our pleasure in Jesus?



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# 1. THE LAW MULTIPLIES PLEASURE IN CHRIST'S CHARACTER

A person's words tell us much about them. This is especially true of God in whom there is no deceit, hypocrisy, or pretence. His Word is self-revealing. It tells us who he is. And the fact that so much of God's Word, especially the early part, is so taken up with law tells us a lot about God's character.

As Christ is God's eternal Word (John 1:1), who equally with the Father and the Spirit inspired God's written Word (2 Tim. 3:16), and also became God's enfleshed Word, the law reveals Christ's character as well as the Father's and the Spirit's. The law does not conceal Christ's character but reveals it.

**Christ is Sovereign:** The Old Testament precepts communicate the sovereign authority of the divine Lawgiver through the awesome signs and wonders that accompanied the giving of the law at Sinai, and through the unambiguous and undebatable manner of their framing. "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" leave no room for debate, adjustment, or compromise.

**Christ is Holy:** The moral law was intended to separate Israel from the nations as a uniquely holy nation. This points us to the moral character of Christ, the perfect Israel of God, as "holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners" (Heb. 7:26).

**Christ is Just:** In the moral law, we see Christ's concern for fairness and equity between God and man, and between man and man. In the penalties attached to transgression of it, we see that Christ does not just give the law and then show little interest in whether it is kept or not. Rather, the penalties show Christ's passion for justice and redress.

**Christ is Wise:** The law of God reveals the wisdom of Christ. No nation has abandoned the wisdom of God expressed in the moral law and prospered.

**Christ is Good:** God's giving of the law to Israel was an expression of His favor and goodness towards them (Deut. 4:8). Never was any nation so privileged as to have laws such as these. If practiced, the nation's existence and prosperity would be secured (Deut. 4:40; 28:1-14). The moral law shows the Lord's benevolent interest in every single area of human life: worship, speech, family life, business, poverty, oppression, etc.

## CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**If we hate the commandments, we hate Christ** (Rom. 8:7). If we love Christ, we love the commandments (John 14:15). We cannot separate the moral character of the law from the moral character of Christ. Our view of the law is our view of Christ.

**Praise Christ with the commandments.** As you hear and read them, reflect on all that they reveal of Christ's perfect character and praise him for his moral perfection.

THE LAW IS A COPY OF CHRIST  
NOT A CONTRAST WITH CHRIST



That's all about the Son of God before he came to earth.  
What about his life on earth?



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## 2. THE LAW MULTIPLIES PLEASURE IN CHRIST'S LIFE

The law does not only exhibit the pre-incarnate character of the eternal Son of God, it also expounds his incarnate life as the Son of Man. As he is the same yesterday, today, and forever, we are not surprised to read that, when he entered this world, the moral law was within his heart (Ps. 40:8; Heb 10:5-7). More than that, he was made under that law (Gal. 4:4), meaning that by volunteering to be God's servant he came to fulfill it (Mat. 5:17) and to obey it (Phil. 2:7-8).

We can therefore deduce the nature of Christ's earthly life from the nature of the Ten Commandments. They tell us what Christ's life was like towards God and towards man. They tell us what he was like outwardly and inwardly (Matt. 5:21ff).

Where Israel, God's national son, failed repeatedly, Christ, God's only-begotten Son, succeeded perfectly, continuously, and gloriously (Luke 4:1-13). Nothing less than this astounding, perfect, and complete righteousness of Christ is imputed to those who are united to Him by faith (2 Cor. 5:21). Even the law and the prophets testified of his righteousness (Rom. 3:21).

The law does not just show us how Christ lived but also what he taught. His first sermon was on the moral law, and as we would expect, he does not simply repeat it, but amplifies, enhances, and extends it (Matt. 5:21-48).

The more we read the two Testaments together, the more we will discover that the New Testament in general, and Christ's words in particular, are permeated with Old Testament law and concepts.

### CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Praise Jesus for his perfect obedience to the law.** Every time we hear God's law, we hear Christ's life, the life that is credited to every believer's account. Christ's perfect obedience is our perfect obedience.

**Praise Jesus for his perfect love of the law.** He did not just obey it outwardly but inwardly. He loved the law as he lived and as he died. Even though teaching and living it resulted in his death, he never let the possible consequences dim his love for the law or deter his teaching of it.

CHRIST'S LIFE EXPOUNDS THE LAW  
AND THE LAW EXPOUNDS CHRIST'S LIFE.



If the law multiplies pleasure in Christ's life, can it do the same in his death?



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## 3. THE LAW MULTIPLIES PLEASURE IN CHRIST'S DEATH

The law explains the nature of Christ's death in three ways.

**The transgression of the law:** The death of Christ was the greatest act of lawlessness ever perpetrated. If Christ's life demonstrated the law in an unprecedented way, his death showed lawlessness in a similarly unprecedented way, with his crucifiers breaking all Ten Commandments in some way or other to one degree or another. Sinners broke the law but they couldn't break Christ.

**The curses of the law:** The curses of the law were executed upon Christ, so that his people would be freed from the same curse (Gal. 3:10-13). Just as Christ's obedience to the law's precepts came to a climax on the cross, so also did his suffering of the law's penalties. If you want to better understand what Jesus suffered for His people, study the law's penalties and curses in Deuteronomy and Leviticus.

**The justice of the law:** Four essential principles of Old Testament justice anticipate and foreshadow God's justice in the death of Christ.

- **Retribution** is "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" (Lev. 24:20; Obad. 15). In Christ's death we see the infliction of divine retribution on Christ for the sins of those he represented – eye for eye, hand for hand, life for life, soul for soul.
- **Restitution** is the necessity of compensating for the damage done to others and to God's honor (Ex. 21:30; 30:12). The New Testament picks up on this idea and presents Christ's death as a ransom (Matt. 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19).
- **Deterrence** was to result from justice being so enacted that observers would be dissuaded from the sins that required it (Deut. 13:11; 19:20). The Apostle Paul expounds the cross of Christ as the ultimate sin-deterrent (Rom. 6:2-3; Gal. 5:24).
- **Rehabilitation** of the offender was possible under certain circumstances. This indicates that Christ's death also had the ultimate aim of rehabilitating sinners, and is confirmed by many New Testament references (Rom. 8:3-4; cf. 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:17).

### CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Grieve over the world's worst law-breaking at the cross.** The cross reveals human hatred of God's law and God's lawgiver. It shows us our crossing of Christ and our need for the crossed Christ.

**Praise the greatest law-keeping at the cross.** Christ's perfect obedience meant God's justice was perfectly satisfied at the cross. He magnified the law and made it honorable so that God could be just and justify the ungodly (Isa. 42:21; Rom. 4:5). God's honoring of his law at the cross motivates us to honor the law in our lives. Despite being under the law's curses, he maintained his love for the law, so that we could be redeemed from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13).

**CHRIST'S LIFE OF PERFECT LAW-KEEPING WAS ENDED BY SINNERS' PERFECT LAW-BREAKING.**



**We've heard a lot about Christ's law-keeping giving us pleasure in Christ.  
Does our law-keeping give us pleasure in Christ?**



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## 4. THE LAW MULTIPLIES PLEASURE IN CHRIST'S PRESENCE

The moral law does not only show us God's power to curse disobedience, but also his power to bless obedience (Deut. 28:1-14). The doing of the law did not and could not save, but it was linked to the flourishing and enjoyment of spiritual life in the saved soul (Lev. 18:5). If redeemed Israel separated from sin, death, and uncleanness, they would enjoy more and more of God's blessed presence among them (Lev. 26:12). That gracious order is so important to grasp: redemption, relationship, rules, and then reward (Ex. 19:3-6). Like Israel we are redeemed by mercy, brought into a living relationship with Christ, for which we show our gratitude by obeying his rules, which he in turn also graciously rewards with more of his presence.

Loving obedience brings Christ into the soul, and the soul to Christ (John 14:21). We express our love to Christ by obedience to his unchanging moral law, and this loving law-keeping opens a channel through which Christ communicates more of his love to us.

It is only in heaven that we see the law's order perfectly and beautifully honored and practiced – holy worship, holy rest, holy relationships, holy conversation, holy everything and everyone. There God's people will enjoy his presence perfectly because they will obey him perfectly. The law therefore gives us a description of Christ's present holy habitation, the place he resides in and reigns from – and the place we hope to join Him one day.

### CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

**Personalize the law to enjoy Christ.** Greater obedience to Christ = Greater presence of Christ. Don't stop at redemption and relationship but push on to rules and reward. I don't think any of us have any idea about how much of Christ we miss when we sin.

**Personalize the law to anticipate heaven.** It's so hard to enjoy Christ's holy presence in this lawless environment. But we can look forward to enjoying his holy presence in a perfect environment. There we will see the perfect Christ of the Law in the perfect culture of law with a perfect love of law.

LOVING OBEDIENCE ATTRACTS  
CHRIST'S LOVING PRESENCE



Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the story > Change others' stories



# SUMMARY



**PRAYER:** Beautiful incarnation of the law, give me delight in your law because I delight in you and I want to delight in you more. Amen.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What's your reaction to the verses about delighting in God's law in the 'Introduction.'
2. What other characteristics of Christ do you see in the law?
3. Write out some praises of Christ based upon the Ten Commandments.
4. How does the law help to increase your love for Christ's obedience?
5. What do you learn about the law from Christ crucified?
6. What does heaven look like based upon the Ten Commandments?

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