Legalism: The Un-Sin

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INTRODUCTION

- A most successful gambit was the invention of the pseudo sin called legalism.
- Legalism and legalists in our time have become very dirty spiritual words that are negatively charged in the minds of people.

1 What Do You Mean by Legalism?

- If by legalists you mean, Tony, you think we've got to keep God's rules, guilty.
- But if when you use that term about me, that I believe in the justification of an individual on the basis of rule keeping, I don't believe that.
- Obedience and faith in God's grace are not exclusive terms. They're not opposed to each other. Obedience and the grace of God work hand in hand.

2 Are God's Rules Optional?

1 Corinthians 15:1–2; 1 Timothy 2:4; Acts 10:34–35

- If rules don't matter at all, then everybody's automatically saved by Jesus' work on the cross.
- By which also you are saved if you hold fast the word which I preach to you. Unless you believed in vain.
- God loves all people unconditionally. But he does not save unconditionally.
- In every nation, he who fears God and does what is right is accepted of him or welcome to him.

3 They Responded to God's Rules

Galatians 5:1; 2 Corinthians 3:6–7

- They said, What shall we do? And they said, Repent. And be baptized. For the forgiveness of sins.
- They responded to this message. They did what God instructed them to do.
- Even if you kept the law of Moses perfectly, which no man did, there could be no salvation in that.
- They weren't saying the rules no longer matter, but Satan hatches his scheme.

4 The Overall Approach to God Has Not Changed

Acts 17:30; Hebrews 2:1–3

- The overall approach to God under both systems is not radically different.
- What does the Lord require of you? Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with your God.
- In our system, it means to listen to the New Testament rules and apply them in our lives.
- This new system, it incorporates something the old system didn't have: mercy. Mercy for failure.

5 Mercy Is Incorporated in This New System

Titus 3:4–5; Acts 8:18–23; 1 Corinthians 13:6

- The basis of salvation is no longer our perfect performance, but his mercy.
- You're in the gall of bitterness and the bondage of iniquity. But wonder of wonders, there's still hope.
- This is the love of God that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.
- You can't get away from the rules, even if you want to say there's only one rule, the rule of love. You can't divorce love from rules.

6 Why Emphasize the Rules?

Romans 4

- Keeping God's rules is what makes you better. It's not there to hamper you or hurt you or restrict you or to make your life less.
- He has a wisdom that is unmatched. Everything issues from his perfect wisdom. He knows what's best for us.
- It's the expression of our love and devotion to our Creator. That's why we should want to keep the rules.
- If he had to be justified on a basis of perfect performance, he couldn't make it. You couldn't make it, none of us could make it.

THE CHALLENGE

Are you saved? Not if you haven't responded to the message of Jesus Christ.

MY NOTES