

Mission: Rescue Souls – Week 4 – The Great Mirror – Bible Study Helps

Title: The Great Mirror: We have to talk about sin

Sermon Summary:

This sermon emphasizes the critical role of God's law (the Ten Commandments) in evangelism and leading people to salvation. The sermon teaches that God's law functions like a mirror, revealing sin. Most people minimize their sin and believe they're good enough for heaven, but the law exposes the truth that all have fallen short of God's perfect standard of righteousness. The sermon demonstrates how to use the Ten Commandments in witnessing conversations to help people recognize their guilt before God, creating the spiritual desperation necessary to reach for Jesus Christ as Savior. The law doesn't save people—it reveals their need for a Savior and leads them to faith in Christ alone.

Key Points:

- God's standard for heaven is absolute righteousness and moral perfection
- The law (Ten Commandments) reveals sin—it shows what is already there
- Most people will go to hell and few will find heaven, according to Jesus in Matthew 7:13-14
- People minimize their sin, thinking their good outweighs their bad, revealing they don't understand how God looks at sin
- God has given light to every man
- The conscience bears witness to God's law written on every heart
- Breaking even one commandment makes a person guilty of breaking all of them
- Effective witnessing requires discussing death, judgment, and personal sin before presenting the gospel
- The law is a schoolmaster that leads sinners to Christ by showing them they cannot save themselves
- When people truly see their sin clearly, they become desperate for the Savior
- Spiritual warfare intensifies when someone gets close to salvation

Scripture Reference:

- Matthew 7:13-14 (primary focus: the narrow and wide gates)
- Romans 3:20, 23 (by the law is the knowledge of sin; all have sinned)
- Hebrews 9:27 (appointed unto men once to die, then judgment)

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- Mark 10:17-22 (the rich young ruler)
- Romans 1-3 (comprehensive treatment of human sinfulness)
- James 2:10 (guilty of breaking one commandment means guilty of all)
- John 3:18 (he that believeth not is condemned already)
- Galatians 3:19-25 (the law as schoolmaster to bring us to Christ)
- 1 Timothy 1:8-11 (lawful use of the law)
- 2 Timothy 2:23-26 (instructing those who oppose themselves)

Stories:

- The young man who wakes up late for work and looks in the mirror, discovering his disheveled appearance—illustrating how the law reveals our true spiritual condition
- The swimming competition across the Atlantic Ocean where no one reaches the goal, regardless of how far they swim—illustrating that all fall short of God's perfect standard
- The driver speeding on the highway who suddenly sees a state patrol car and realizes personal guilt—demonstrating how the law makes us aware of our specific violations regardless of what others are doing
- The rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-22) who thought he had kept all the commandments but walked away sorrowful when confronted with his idolatry of money
- The hypothetical doctor's office scenario where a cancer diagnosis makes the cure immediately desirable—illustrating how recognizing our sin makes us desperate for the gospel

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Discipleship Questions

How does understanding that God's standard for heaven is moral perfection change the way you approach conversations about salvation with non-believers?

In what ways do people today minimize their sin, and how can we compassionately help them see the gravity of their offenses against God?

Why is it essential to discuss death, judgment, and sin before presenting the good news of Jesus Christ, rather than starting immediately with God's love?

How does the metaphor of the Ten Commandments as a mirror help us understand the purpose of God's law in revealing our need for a Savior?

What does it mean that the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, and how should this influence our evangelistic approach?

When Jesus told the rich young ruler to sell everything and follow Him, what does this reveal about the idols in our own hearts that compete with our devotion to God?

How can we develop the patience and gentleness required to instruct those who oppose themselves in their thinking about salvation?

Why do you think many people believe most are going to heaven when Jesus clearly taught that the gate is narrow and few find it?

What role does spiritual warfare play when someone is on the verge of accepting Christ, and how should this awareness affect our persistence in witnessing?

How does recognizing that God has written His law on every heart and given light to every person change your confidence in sharing the gospel with strangers?

Small Group Guide: The Great Mirror

Mission Rescue Souls Series - Matthew 7

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking God to help you see sin clearly, to give you compassion for the lost, and to empower you to be effective witnesses for Christ.

Ice Breaker (5-10 minutes)

Question: Have you ever had a "mirror moment" where you suddenly realized something about yourself that you hadn't seen before? What was that experience like?

Review: Key Points from the Sermon

Main Idea

God's law (the Ten Commandments) acts as a mirror that reveals our sin, helping people understand their need for a Savior before it's too late.

Three Main Points:

1. **God's standard for heaven is righteousness** (moral perfection)
 2. **God's law reveals the truth about our sinful heart condition**
 3. **God's law leads the sinner to faith in Jesus Christ alone**
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message (15-20 minutes)

1. **The Mirror Illustration:** How does the mirror analogy help us understand the purpose of God's law? In what ways does the law reveal rather than create our sin problem?

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2. **The Wide and Narrow Gates (Matthew 7:13-14):** Jesus said many will go through the wide gate to destruction and few will find life. How does this reality affect how urgently we should share the gospel?
3. **The Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10:17-22):** What did Jesus reveal about this man's heart condition by using the commandments? Why did the man walk away sorrowful?
4. **Romans 1-3:** Paul spent three chapters proving all are guilty before leading to "all have sinned" in Romans 3:23. Why is it important to help people understand the depth of their sin problem rather than just quoting Romans 3:23?

Personal Reflection (15-20 minutes)

5. **Your Own Salvation:** Can you remember a time when you truly saw yourself as a sinner before God? What brought you to that realization? How did it change your understanding of grace?
6. **Talking About Sin:** Why do you think most Christians (and non-Christians) prefer to avoid talking about sin? What makes this conversation uncomfortable?
7. **The Conscience:** The sermon mentioned that God has written His law on every heart and given everyone a conscience. Have you seen evidence of this in conversations with unbelievers?

Application to Witnessing (20-25 minutes)

8. **Current Approach:** How do you typically share the gospel? Do you include a discussion of sin and God's law, or do you focus mainly on God's love and Jesus' sacrifice?
9. **The "Aha Moment":** The moment when someone realizes they've sinned against God is an "aha moment." Have you ever witnessed this in someone you were sharing with? What happened?
10. **Compassion vs. Confrontation:** How can we balance being gentle and patient (2 Timothy 2:24-26) while also being clear and direct about sin and judgment?
11. **Practical Scenarios:**
 - If someone says, "I'm a good person," how would you respond using what you learned in this sermon?
 - If someone says, "All roads lead to heaven," how would you help them think through that claim?

Key Takeaways

Biblical Truths to Remember:

- **Hebrews 9:27** - "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, the judgment"
- **Matthew 5:48** - God's standard is perfection
- **Romans 3:20** - "By the law is the knowledge of sin"
- **Galatians 3:24** - "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ"

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- **1 Timothy 1:8-9** - The law is good if used lawfully—for sinners to see their need

Important Principles:

1. Most people minimize their sin and don't think they need a Savior
 2. The Ten Commandments help people see sin as God sees it
 3. We must talk about sin, death, and judgment before grace makes sense
 4. The conscience bears witness to God's law written on hearts
 5. Our motive must be compassion, not condemnation
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice:

1. **Study the Ten Commandments** - Spend time this week going through each commandment and asking God to show you how you've broken them. Let this deepen your gratitude for grace.
2. **Memorize a Witnessing Approach** - Practice using the Ten Commandments in a gospel presentation. Role-play with another group member or family member.
3. **Pray for Specific People** - Make a list of 3-5 people you know who need Christ. Pray daily for:
 - God to prepare their hearts
 - An opportunity to have a spiritual conversation
 - Boldness and compassion for you
 - The Holy Spirit to reprove them of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come
4. **Have a Conversation** - Attempt to have a spiritual conversation with someone this week. Use questions like:
 - "If you died tonight, are you 100% sure you'd be in heaven?"
 - "How do you think God will judge people? The Bible says..."
 - "How many of the Ten Commandments do you know?"

Accountability:

- Share with one other person in the group which challenge you're committing to
 - Plan to report back next week on what happened
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The Ten Commandments - Quick Reference

Use this as a tool in witnessing conversations:

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1. **No other gods before Me** - Have you always put God first?
2. **No graven images** - Have you worshiped anything other than God?
3. **Don't take God's name in vain** - Have you used God's name as a curse word?
4. **Remember the Sabbath** - Have you neglected what God commands?
5. **Honor father and mother** - Have you always honored your parents?
6. **Don't murder** - Have you hated anyone? (Jesus said this equals murder in the heart)
7. **Don't commit adultery** - Have you looked with lust? (Jesus said this equals adultery)
8. **Don't steal** - Have you taken anything that wasn't yours?
9. **Don't bear false witness** - Have you ever told a lie?
10. **Don't covet** - Have you wanted something that belonged to someone else?

The Point: If someone has broken even ONE commandment, they're guilty of all (James 2:10)

Closing Prayer (5-10 minutes)

Prayer Focus:

- Thank God for His perfect law that shows us our need
 - Thank Jesus for being the only One good enough to save us
 - Ask for boldness to share the gospel this week
 - Pray for specific people on your lists by name
 - Ask God to give you compassion for lost souls
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For Further Study

Recommended passages to read this week:

- Romans 1-3 (Paul's full argument about universal guilt)
- Mark 10:17-31 (The rich young ruler - full context)
- Galatians 3 (The purpose of the law)
- Psalm 19 (The perfection of God's law)

Question to ponder: How has understanding the purpose of God's law changed your appreciation for grace?

Leader Notes

Tips for facilitating this discussion:

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- This topic can feel heavy; maintain a balance between seriousness and hope
- Encourage vulnerability about struggles with witnessing
- Don't let the group get stuck in theological debates; keep focus on practical application
- Be prepared to share your own witnessing experiences (both successes and failures)
- If someone shares about a difficult witnessing encounter, pray for them immediately
- Remember: we're in spiritual warfare when we witness—expect resistance

Time Management:

- If short on time, focus on questions 1, 5, 8, and 10
- The practical application section is most important—don't skip it
- Consider extending to two sessions if needed

"For by the law is the knowledge of sin." - Romans 3:20

5-Day Devotional: The Mirror of God's Law

Day 1: The Reality of Judgment

Reading: Hebrews 9:27, Acts 17:30-31

Devotional: Death and judgment are twin certainties every person must face. Like an unavoidable appointment on God's calendar, each of us will stand before our Creator. This reality should not paralyze us with fear but awaken us to urgency. God has appointed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness through Jesus Christ. This is why He commands all people everywhere to repent. Understanding this truth transforms how we live today and motivates us to share the gospel with others. The question is not if we will face judgment, but whether we will face it with Christ as our Advocate or alone in our sin. Today, reflect on your own readiness and ask God to give you compassion for those who remain unprepared.

Day 2: God's Perfect Standard

Reading: Matthew 5:48, Romans 3:19-20

Devotional: God's standard for heaven is not "good enough" but perfect. Like swimmers attempting to cross the Atlantic Ocean, our best efforts fall impossibly short of God's righteousness. Many people assume their good deeds outweigh their bad, but this reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of God's holiness. The law was never given to save us but to show us our desperate need for a Savior. When we measure ourselves against God's perfection, every mouth is stopped and the whole world stands guilty. This is not meant to discourage us but to point us toward the only One who met God's standard perfectly—Jesus Christ. Stop trusting in your own goodness today. Acknowledge that only Christ's righteousness is sufficient, and thank Him for offering it freely to all who believe.

Day 3: The Great Mirror of the Law

Reading: Romans 7:7-13, James 2:10-11

Devotional: The Ten Commandments function like a mirror, revealing what we truly look like before a holy God. A mirror does not create blemishes; it simply shows what is already there. Similarly, God's law does not make us sinners but exposes the sin already in our hearts. Paul confessed he would not have known lust except the law said, "Thou shalt not covet." Even breaking one commandment makes us guilty of all, because we have offended the Lawgiver Himself. This truth should drive us to humility and honesty. Have you told a lie? Dishonored your parents? Looked with lust? Coveted what others have? The law reveals our guilt, but praise God, it also leads us to the only One who can cleanse us. Look into God's mirror today with honesty, then look to Christ with hope.

Day 4: The Schoolmaster Leading to Christ

Reading: Galatians 3:19-26, 1 Timothy 1:8-11

Devotional: The law serves as a schoolmaster, a tutor designed to bring us to Christ. Its purpose is not to save but to reveal our helplessness and point us to the Savior. Like a drowning person who finally realizes he cannot save himself and reaches for the lifeguard, the law brings us to that moment of realization where we cry out for rescue. God's law is good when used lawfully—not to earn righteousness, but to expose our need for it. Once we come to faith in Christ, we are no longer under the schoolmaster, for we have been justified by faith. The law has done its work when it drives us into the arms of Jesus. If you have been trying to earn God's favor through religious performance, stop striving and start trusting. Let the law do its intended work: lead you to complete dependence on Christ alone.

Day 5: Amazing Grace After Conviction

Reading: Romans 5:6-11, Ephesians 2:1-10

Devotional: Amazing grace becomes truly amazing only after we see our sin clearly. When the doctor shows you the cancer spreading through your body, you gladly receive the cure. When you understand you are dead in trespasses and sins, destined for God's wrath, the gospel becomes the most beautiful news you have ever heard. Christ died for the ungodly—for sinners like us who could never save ourselves. While we were still enemies, God demonstrated His love through the cross. This is grace: unmerited, unearned, undeserved favor. We were saved not by works but by grace through faith, and this is God's gift. Now that you understand both your guilt and God's grace, let gratitude overflow into witness. Share this good news with others who remain blind to their condition. Be gentle, patient, and bold. Help them see their sin so they can see their Savior. The mission is urgent—rescue souls before it is too late.