

Week beginning: 18th March 2007

Theme: '*Christ fulfills the Law*'

Welcome: Have you ever had a brush with the law? *Go on* share!
(You can't be re-tried ... that's double jeopardy!)

Worship: Don't forget to worship in your cell meeting. It is through worship that we draw near to God. Has someone in the cell got a favourite hymn of praise on their heart this week? – Sing it! *Also – read Psalm 19 together, taking it in turns to read a verse.*

Discuss – People often see the law (civil and biblical) as something that inhibits freedom and quenches fun. But ...

1. What does David say about God's Laws in Psalm 19? (Hint – he uses several different words for 'Law')
2. Can the cell think of ways through which God's Laws can actually make us *more free* – for example by keeping us out of confrontational and dangerous situations?

Word: *Read Romans 3:19-20*

'Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God. For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.' (New Living Translation)

Teaching Slot:

The Jews had distorted the purpose of the Law. It was never intended to commend a man before God, but rather to illuminate the man's sin. Just as a breathalyzer is designed to prove men are drunk and unable to drive, so the Law is designed to prove men are sinners and fall short of the glory of God. The Law provided an *unattainable* standard of righteousness which directed mankind to find a source of righteousness outside themselves. This explains the sacrifices of the Old Testament. When the Law revealed a man's sin, the Lord provided a way of sacrifice so that a man would not have to bear the condemnation of God. The Law was never given to save a man, but ***to show man that he needed a Saviour***. The dilemma of man is such that he is incapable of releasing himself from the shackles of sin. He must be saved by someone other than himself and by someone who does not suffer from the same sin-sickness (one drowning man cannot help another!) What man cannot do (provide holiness acceptable to the Lord) God has done in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Witness:

How long ago was it that you prayed the sinner's prayer? Come to think of it – have you ever prayed the sinner's prayer? Of course you have. But is there someone you know in church, in cell, at work or in the pub who needs to know the way to be right with God? Is the Lord calling upon you to help them in the same way that He graciously helped you? – Why not bring this prayer to them?

“Father, I know that I have broken your laws and my sins have separated me from you. I am truly sorry, and now I want to turn away from my past sinful life toward you.

*Please forgive me, and help me avoid sinning again. I believe that your son, Jesus Christ died for my sins, was resurrected from the dead, is alive, and hears my prayer. I invite Jesus to become the Lord of my life, to rule and reign in my heart from this day forward. Please send your Holy Spirit to help me obey You, and to do Your will for the rest of my life. In Jesus' name I pray,
Amen.”*