

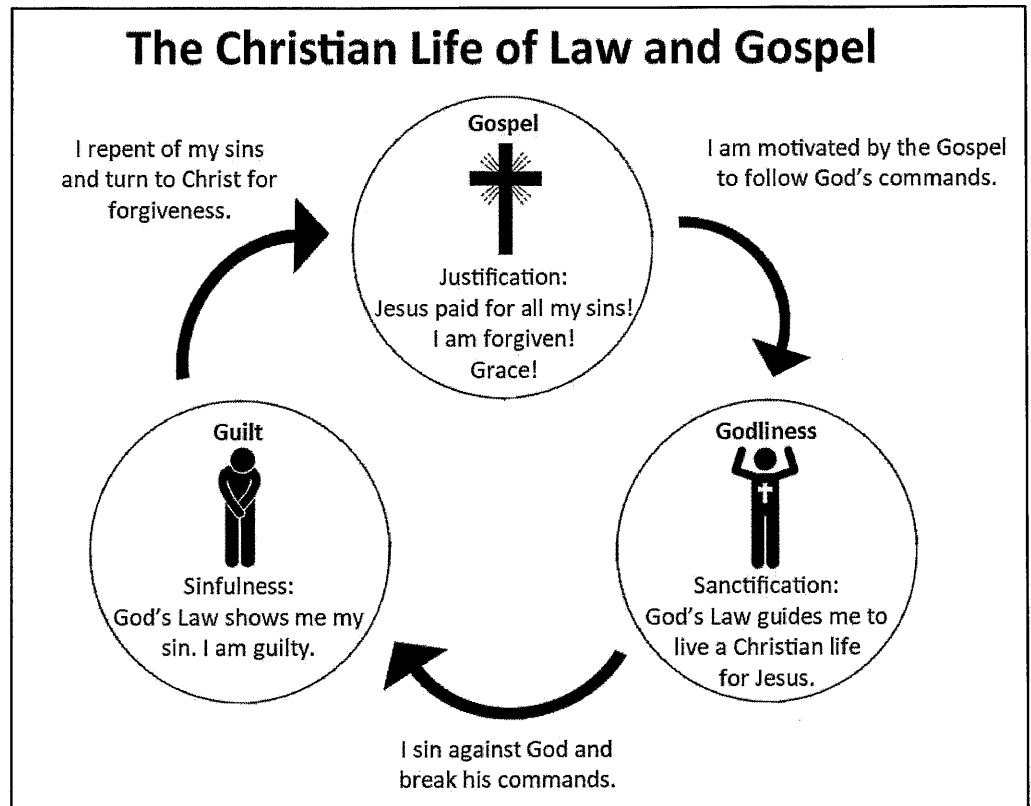
Are We There Yet?

- Mom/dad, there yet?! Think back to any fam vaca you've ever been on. And kids, ever asked prnts that? Be honest. Prnts, favor: raise hands (don't care if kids adults or diapers) if ever heard: there yet. Unvrsl parenting experience for fam vacas: there yet? This summer, Yellowstone; drove WY to WI. There yet!
- Can't help but thnk re kids asking prnts "there yet" when read today's Gos, bec this man, tchr/law bsclly asks J: am I there yet? Doesn't mean: in hvn yet. Means: in kngdm/God yet; in God's ch/fam; have right rel w/God; there yet? See, he's on jrnly; wants be in kngdm/God; wants have right rel w/God, so smday can go hvn. So asks J: **vs. 28c**. Thinks: "if just keep coms, that'll get me in kngdm/God. So, what I need do; what God require/me?" Then J summrz 10 Coms. But unftrntly instd realizing "Haven't kept any; need Sav," this man: **vs. 32a**. "Yes, J, you're right! I agree. That's what's most imp. We need more ppl arnd here who think like you/I do, J, who keep coms like we. This is certly how I live my life, which, I assume, gets me in kngdm/God – right, J? There yet? But J: No. **Vs. 34b**; but defntly not there yet.
- Why not? What missing; what faulty re thinking; and what'd take get him into God's kngdm? For that matter, what re us? We're on journey, too; want go hvn, too. But 1st we have to be in kngdm/God, have right reltnshp w/God. So, are we there yet? We have to ask same qstn kids ask parnts on vaca & this man asks J here on his spirtrl journey: are we there yet?
- Well, one thing that stands out me re this man: diff fr other tchrs/law. He's actly genuinely intrstd tchngs/J. We're in Mk 12; earlier in ch, J gets bombrdd w/trick qustns from Jewish ldrs who just want trap J in words. E.g.: pay taxes to Caesar, or honor God? J: to Caesar/God. Then, asked re woman, married & widowed sev times; mockingly: in hvn, whose wife? J: in hvn, not going be married way here on earth. See, just trying trick J. But this man is diff! Genuinely wants know God's will for his life. So asks J: **vs. 28b**. "I want know," says, "bec I want be in kngdm/God; and I want know if I'm there yet."
- And this how J respnds: **vs. 29**. Dsn't start w/com at all; starts w/wrds from 1st Rdng, Dt 6, **Hear**. Heb: **Shema**. Those words: so imp/sacred. Bsclly mini creed, almost like Heb pldg/allgnc. Faithful Jews'd speak ev morn/eve in daily prys; they'd recite at ev service at tmpl; first wrds tght Jewish toddler speak. **Hear**. And this is where J starts: super famlr wrds. You want get in kngdm/God; let's start right here.
- 1st word: hear, listen up, open ears what God has say. In ev other relgn/wrld, & in natrl relgn/hrt, what's always 1st word? DO: this/that; here's what have do please God. If do this: hpy/angry. That's how we natrly think re relgn: what I need do? How this man thinks (what do?). But J doesn't start w/DO; starts w/hear/listen, bec God/Bbl has msg wants you hear – msg that's countrinttv; stands in contrast way we natrly think re relgn. But God wants you first: hear re his love/grace; first: focus on what he's done for you. Only then can you move on to what God wants you do. But can't start w/do; start w/hear.
- So J: Hear, OUR God. He's our God! He's not angry judge, disinterested deity; loving Father; OUR God, who loves us. Why love us? That's a big qstn! Why should God love us? Bec smthng we've done? Well, think what you've done: evil thghts, hurtfl wrds, sinful actions; ask self, why shld God love me? Truth: shldn't! We've given God no reason at all to love us; there's nothing in us that's inherently loveable. But msg God wants us hear: he's OUR God, who loves us anyway, fr dpths/hrt, despite the million reasons we give him not to. He is, and desires to be, our God.
- So, hear...LORD, ONE. His name: Lord; and he's the only one, true God. In ev: wrshp srvc/ch; lesson in SS; ev day in SJ schl; in ev sermon, devtn, Bible stdy, Cat class, we focus on Lord – how he: almgthy (can do anythng; evthng does, in love for us); holy (expects/bestows holiness); loving (sent Son JC Sav); and ONE (one & only true God). We focus on chrctr traits of Lord: who he is & what done for us. That's Gos! And that's where J begins when this man asks, there yet? J: **Hear...one**. Starts w/beautiful Gos.
- Only then does J lay out will/God, what we'd call God's law. **Vs. 30-31b**. It's the 2 tables/sections of law. 1st: love Lord w/every fiber of being, perfly, compltly, always, w/o fail. And 2nd: put your perf love for God into prctc in daily life by lovg evone arnd you equally perfly, compltly, always, w/o fail. That: what God demands. And guess what: that is impssbl! The 10 Coms are an impssbl standard. No one can live God's law perfly; cannot be done, by anyone, bec we're all sinful. So when this man, or any of us, ask, "God, am I there yet? Good engh, done engh?" answer always: **vs. 34b**, but defntly not there yet!

- So, how get there? How we live & put into practice these 2 great truths/GW: L&G? Invite you turn to back page. Chart; looks like this; called; I think this can be very helpful, bec we want be in kngdm/God, and this chart shows us what God tchs re how get there. Teach students. Start at top and walk thru.

- This is Xian Life L&G, and this is what brings us to, and keeps us in, kngdm/God.

- When J spoke these words: Tues of HW. Means in 3 days he'd be on cross, then on Sun rise alive out tomb. J was about to accomplish Gos for us, by fulfilling law for us. He was making this chart a reality. And this is what J wants you know/bel (that's he's paid for all your sins by his death/res), bec this is what brings you into kngdm/God – not just close, not just “not far,” but actually there!



- This tchr/law bsclly asked J: there yet? J: well, not far; but not there yet. I don't want that for you or me. I want all/us (chldrn, adlts, stdnts ev age) to know/bel what J's done for us, and to understnd how we can have true peace in kingdm/God. If you don't know J as Sav, you're kinda like traveler driving arnd, don't know where going; always wondering: there yet? And maybe you're not far, but defintly not there. But when you see your sin/Sav – when you know/bel: CJ taken away sins/cross; and when put trust in him – then you're there! Then you're actly in kngdm/God! Then you have a right rel w/God, patterned after Xian life L&G! That's Xianity!
- So, are we there yet? By God's grace, we are! Thru Xian faith/J, we are! We're there! J has brought us there. And for this we praise J, and we live for J, here on earth, and smday forever in hvn.

Mark 12:28-34

²⁸One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

²⁹“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ ³¹The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

³²“Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. ³³To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

³⁴When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.