

SERIES: The Good News, as Reported by Matthew

SERMON: **Will It Be Legalism or Gospel?**

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 12:1-14

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Every year since I have been back in Wichita we have done an Advent series in December, but having preached almost every Christmas text I know in previous years, I decided we would continue in our series on the Life of Christ from Matthew. We have, of course, focused on Advent in our musical worship, with the Advent candle, and with our choir programs. Also next Lord's Day our youth pastor Josh Black will preach on a passage in Matthew 12 that has a definite Advent flavor.

This morning in Matthew 12 we come to a watershed event in Jesus' life. It may not appear so important when you first read it, but it signals a major change in the attitude of the Jewish leadership toward Him. They have been suspicious since He first began to teach, but starting with chapter 12 their suspicions harden into murderous hatred. The key words are found in verse 14: "But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus." What did Jesus do to bring the full wrath of organized religion down on Him for the first time? You may be surprised!

Turn to Matthew 12:1-14. I believe this is one of the most important passages in the entire Gospels. Please stand as I read from the NIV.

*At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath."*

*He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. Or haven't you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent? I tell you that one greater than the temple is here. If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."*

*Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"*

*He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."*

*Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.*

Nonconformists love to call Jesus their hero. After all, wasn't he always tweaking the powers that be and always doing His own thing? Well, no. Jesus *never* did His own thing, EVER. He *only* did His Father's thing. He refused to conform alright, but never in order to assert His own agenda or establish His own rights. It was always to bring people back to God's agenda.

Let's begin this morning with the observation that . . .

**Jesus is confronted for failing to keep the accepted rules of religious devotion. (12:1-2)**

I speak of “the accepted rules of religious devotion” very purposefully, to distinguish them from God’s rules. Sometimes these two categories overlap; more often they do not. As the events of Matthew 12 unfold Jesus is being accused of breaking the Fourth Commandment. It has been well said that God didn’t give Ten Suggestions but Ten Commandments, so we’re dealing with a serious matter when we say that Jesus is confronted for failing to keep the Sabbath. There are some interesting theological arguments, which we don’t have time to get into this morning, about whether this Fourth Commandment, of all the Ten Commandments, might have been abrogated by Christ and no longer be in effect today (certainly the fact that we are worshipping on Sunday, not on Saturday, shows that we believe some change in the Sabbath law has occurred), but there can be no doubt that it was in effect in Jesus’ day.

But before we accuse Him of actually breaking one of God’s rules, it is important to recognize that the religious bigwigs of Jesus’ day had made certain additions to the Sabbath Law. Here’s what God actually said, through Moses, in Exodus 20:8-11:

*Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*

Now wouldn’t you agree with me that this Commandment is pretty clear and specific? It’s the longest of the Ten Commandments, I suspect because God didn’t want to be misunderstood. But the Jewish religious leaders still misunderstood. They didn’t feel God had been specific enough, so they decided to help Him out. They added hundreds and hundreds of pages of explanations as to what God supposedly meant when He gave the Fourth Commandment. As interesting as it is to examine these extensive interpretations of the Sabbath, I have time this morning to share only a few—just to whet your appetite. I will include more on the website.<sup>1</sup>

For example, one section of the Jewish Talmud has 24 chapters of Sabbath law interpretations. One of these specified that a person could travel only 3,000 feet from his house on the Sabbath. Anything more would be work. However, if he had previously placed some food at the end of that 3,000-foot limit, he could go there to eat it; and because the food was considered an extension of his house, he could then go another 3,000 feet beyond the food. By extrapolation, one could go almost anywhere he desired *if*, on the day before the Sabbath, he deposited a series of sack lunches. To us that smacks of hypocrisy and just plain silliness, and we may be tempted to scoff at the primitive rationalizations of first century religious zealots.

But if you think this kind of thing died out with the Scribes and Pharisees in Jesus’ day, let me quickly disabuse you of that notion. In the West County Journal in St. Louis a few years ago there was an article about how the Chesterfield City Council agreed to designate a section of the northeastern part of their city as a special area for a local synagogue. Since Orthodox Jews are not allowed to carry anything, including children, from one place to another on the Sabbath,

mothers of young children could not attend the synagogue. But by getting the Council to designate the telephone lines from Olive Rd. to Woods Mill to Conway to White Road as an *eruv*, they could call the encircled area a house or a domain, and everyone living within that area could then carry a child to the synagogue because they wouldn't be leaving their house. The synagogue paid the city of Chesterfield \$1 a year for this designation. I understand Orthodox synagogues practice this in many major cities.

The Pharisees also developed Sabbath regulations that related specifically to the issues raised in today's Scripture text. A Jew could not pick even a handful of grain to eat on the Sabbath because picking the grain was considered reaping, rubbing it between the hands was considered threshing, and chewing it was considered grinding. But it was all OK if he were starving—which, of course, is pretty difficult to prove. When is the last time your child claimed he was starving, having not eaten anything for at least twenty minutes?

Another law stated that if a person became ill on the Sabbath, only enough treatment could be given to keep him alive. Treatment to make him improve was declared to be work, and therefore forbidden.

The critical issue is that the religious leaders failed to distinguish what God said from what they said about what God said. The two came to be viewed as identical.

**Jesus' disciples break a Sabbath rule.** (1, 2) Please understand that I am acknowledging only that the disciples broke "an accepted rule of religious devotion," not that they violated God's actual Sabbath law. Here is the charge that is leveled at Jesus by the religious leaders: "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath." It was unlawful because their laws have been violated, not God's Law. But the disciples are not alone in this illegal activity.

**Jesus Himself breaks a Sabbath rule.** (9-12) He heals a man on the Sabbath. The question the religious leaders ask Him in verse 10 is a rhetorical one. They are not seeking information when they ask, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" They expect a negative answer, because clearly their interpretation of the Sabbath does not allow for such an act. Jesus has done more than help the man with the shriveled hand stay alive; he has dramatically improved the man's condition.

But once again there is nothing in Exodus 20 that demands that one refrain from healing on the Sabbath. Jesus' actions broke only their man-made additions to God's rule.

Now on the surface both Jesus' disciples and Jesus Himself are accused of breaking the Sabbath. But instead of becoming defensive Jesus goes on the offensive! The confronted becomes the confronter.

**Jesus confronts those who interpret the rules of religious devotion legalistically.** (12:3-8)

I introduce here a term that is not actually found in the text but the concept is. It is “legalism.” I don’t know how familiar you are with this term, but obviously it is related to law or to what is legal. It’s a term that needs careful definition.

**Legalism demands conformity to an *extra-biblical* standard or turns a biblical principle into a law.** This is a critical point. Law-keeping is not automatically legalism. Sometimes it’s just obedience. When God says, “Thou shalt not murder,” for example, we don’t call those who take that commandment seriously “legalists.” Or when God says, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” we don’t dismiss faithful spouses as legalists.

A legalist is one who elevates a man-made rule (like not drinking any alcohol) to the level of a divine commandment. Or he may take a good biblical practice or habit (like fasting) and turns it into a hard-and-fast rule, in the process distorting what the Bible actually says.

**Legalism always fails to read the Bible carefully.** (3, 5) Did you notice that twice in our Scripture passage Jesus says, “Haven’t you read . . .?” “Haven’t you read . . .?” That’s a crucial question. You keepers of the rules of revealed religion, haven’t you read what God revealed to you? You leaders of those who call themselves “the people of the Book,” haven’t you read the Book? And friends, let me just stop and ask right here, “How many times would Jesus have to say that to us when we are arguing our viewpoints and excusing our behaviors? Have we actually read and studied and accepted what He said in the Scriptures?”

When the Bible is read carefully, one quickly discovers three important truths regarding the Sabbath:

**1. The Sabbath does *not* restrict deeds of necessity.** (3) “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry?” What a masterstroke! Jesus literally goes for the jugular by appealing to an incident in the life of Israel’s greatest king, one of their greatest heroes, the founder of Jerusalem as the seat of government, the leader of the Golden Age of Israel. “David entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests.”

The original story is recorded in 1 Samuel 21—you can read the details there as big as you please. There was no excuse for the Pharisees not to know this story, and I’m convinced they probably did know it, but like us so often, they refused to apply it to their own lives! According to Jesus, David’s actions have direct application to the accusation of the Pharisees against His disciples. David violated a religious rule, even one found in the Bible (!), and yet it was OK with God because it was an act of necessity!

It seems to me there are three possibilities when we consider the purpose of religious rules like keeping the Sabbath or allowing only priests to eat holy bread:

1. The rules are made to be kept. Period, end of discussion!
2. The rules are made to be broken (some people look at all rules as a challenge, i.e. how can I break these and get by with it?).

3. The rules are made for a higher purpose. In other words, there is a spirit of the law that goes beyond the letter of the Law.

See if you can figure out which of these three options Jesus would choose. Listen to His statement in the parallel passage in Mark 2:27: “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” To me that sounds an awful lot like Jesus believed religious rules have a higher purpose.

**2. The Sabbath does *not* restrict service to God.** (5-6) Jesus asks again in verse 5, “Haven’t you read . . .”, and this time rather than referring to a particular story, he describes a fact that everyone recognizes as normal throughout the Scriptures, namely that “on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent?” Priests worked on the Sabbath; in fact, it was their hardest day of work. I understand that. For thirty-three years Sunday has been my hardest day’s work. In fact, you’d be surprised how often I’m teased for working *only* one day a week. It happens to be the Lord’s Day, the day we have set aside for rest and worship.

Yet no one—not even the strictest “Sabbatarians” among us—accuses me or our other pastors of violating the Sabbath principle just because we work on Sunday. And frankly, the same goes for the several hundred people who serve in Children’s Ministry on Sunday morning or the ABF leaders or the sound booth technicians. They all work! But it’s not a violation, because the Sabbath principle was never meant to restrict service to God. (By the way, let me encourage all those who serve God so faithfully on Sunday so that the rest of the congregation can worship and fellowship and learn. You’re a blessing to the rest of us! Thank you for working on Sunday!)

**3. The Sabbath does *not* restrict acts of mercy.** (7) Verse 7: “If you had known . . . (which, by the way, is just another way of saying, “Haven’t you read . . .?”) . . . If you had known what these words mean, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the innocent.” The quotation here is from Hosea 6:6, and the point of the prophet is that God is far more concerned about our hearts than He is about our outward demonstrations of religious devotion. When it comes right down to it, a heart of mercy always trumps an animal sacrifice, or a perfect attendance pin, or a beautiful solo, or even a great sermon.

Friends, legalism always fails to read the Bible carefully and thoroughly. In fact, I think virtually every iota of legalism in the church, virtually every man-made rule that sidetracks people from devotion to Christ and focuses them on rules and regulations, would disappear overnight if the Bible were taken seriously and read honestly.

I hasten on to a third point Jesus makes in answering His legalistic critics:

**Legalism values possessions more than people.** (11, 12) In verse 9 we find Jesus encountering a man with a shriveled hand as he enters the synagogue. Was he planted there by the Pharisees? I have little doubt, for the next sentence says, “looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, they asked him, ‘Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?’” Oh, by the way, here’s a man with a crippled hand.” Jesus answers, “If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out?” Of course, anyone would. Anyone can see that

rescuing a sheep in no way violates the spirit of the Sabbath law. But then Jesus asks, “How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

Jesus values people more than possessions, but legalism does the opposite. Let me try to bring this home to us here in the evangelical church, today. You know, it’s so easy to look down our noses at first-century Pharisees; yet it’s so hard to see our own legalism. I saw a lot of it in the church I grew up in—a lot of man-made rules that became paramount. If you smoked, you were automatically a spiritual loser in our circles, if not a rank pagan. Likewise if you drank alcohol or danced or went to the movies or played cards or wore makeup. So I conformed. I didn’t wear makeup.

In a very real sense, this attitude made cigarettes more important than people, because we were willing to write off a human being because of his cigarettes. Similar things are done in respect to dress and hairstyles and jewelry and body piercing and tattoos. Almost anything can become more important to us than people if we’re not careful.

**Legalism condemns and breaks fellowship with those who do not conform. (10-14)**

After Jesus healed the man with the shriveled hand, we read, “the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.” Legalism has such a powerful stranglehold on some people. The Law, you see, is our natural and automatic defense mechanism. We love the law. Why? Because the Law gives us a wonderful sense of security. It’s black and white, and there’s no wiggle-room, no room for heart, which is so unpredictable and so uncontrollable. The law gives us a quick and tidy way to measure our spirituality against the spirituality of others. It allows us to judge them—by political party affiliation, by whether they have memorized enough Scripture or have regular quiet times, by whether they parent God’s way or share our commitment to the right social causes or the right doctrinal issues. That’s legalism at work.

I’ve personally never been threatened with death by a legalist, as Jesus was, but I did lose an academic job once to legalism. When I was teaching in a Bible college in 1974 I was accused by the new president, a hard-nosed fundamentalist, of advocating social drinking. The evidence against me was that in my class on the Life of Christ I taught that Jesus turned water into wine. He claimed it was grape juice. My contract was not renewed. Let me tell you, legalism can be vicious. Are *we* vicious with it? Do we expect our brothers and sisters in Christ to jump through our man-made hoops before they are acceptable to us?

And how does legalism affect our attitude toward the lost? I quote a former colleague, Paul Stolwyk, who is one of my favorite people alive. Paul majored in partying at Mizzou but came to faith in Christ during his last semester in 1985. He showed up at our church plant in St. Louis about six months after I went there. Upon realizing how gifted and committed he was, our little church sent him to Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He returned to serve at First Free and he’s still there twenty years later. In a sermon nearly ten years ago he shared,

*There is an interesting thing I have discovered about people who have not yet experienced the forgiveness and love of Jesus. After years of exhaustive research, I have discovered that pagans tend to live like pagans. They say things, do things and believe*

*things just as you would expect. They are wonderfully consistent.*

*The problem I am discovering is that my ministry to them is often thwarted because I want them to act better before I tell them how much Jesus loves them. What is worse is that I often find myself condemning them in my heart for the words they say, for how they raise their children, and for the lifestyle I perceive them leading. I find myself separating from them, often with the excuse that I have some religious activity to attend.*

A little later in the sermon, Paul added the following:

*A couple of years ago, I took a call from a young man who was considering the Evangelical Free Church as a denomination in which to serve as a pastor. After some initial discussion about doctrine and leadership structure, he asked me about our church's stand on alcohol. I told him the church didn't take a stand, but I preferred Bud Light. (You have to know Paul to appreciate how absolutely funny that comment was). I told him we taught against drunkenness, but we left this lifestyle choice up to the individual believer.*

*He then asked me if our elders drank alcohol. I told him I had no idea if they did or not, but to my knowledge each was living responsibly in this area. He then asked me if I didn't think it was important to have a written policy concerning the use of alcohol that they would sign. I agreed with him that this was a good idea and at the same time we should decide whether they could smoke or not, what kind of car they could drive, and how long they could work in a given week. He didn't appreciate my point.*

Have you been on the receiving end of legalism? It's not very pleasant, I can assure you. Have you ever dished it out? Are you still trapped in this wrong way of thinking and acting? If so, break free today and begin to enjoy the freedom of the Gospel. The Gospel, by the way, permeates this story through and through.

### **Jesus confronts us with the Gospel.**

The Gospel is the Good News that God has solved our sin problem by making someone else pay. That Someone Else, of course, was Jesus, who died on the Cross that we might receive eternal life. The Gospel is the way of grace. Let me briefly share with you how the Gospel and legalism differ.

**The Gospel prioritizes human needs above religious rules.** (3-7, 11-12) Now it's very important to understand that the kinds of issues we're talking about are religious rules, not moral laws. Please don't think the Gospel puts human needs above the basic moral law of God. That's the mistake made by the perpetrators of Situation Ethics. They say that the only law is the law of love, and your motive is the only thing that counts. If you commit adultery, but you do it out of love, it's OK. If you abort a baby, but you do it out of love, even self-love, it's OK.

Nonsense! God never says that; in fact, He constantly warns against such foolish rationalization

of sinful behavior. There are moral absolutes, my friends, which God gave us—not to spoil our fun but for our good. But when it comes to the rules and regulations He gave to govern our worship and our service—human needs do take precedence.

Will you think with me about some practical implications this might have for us here at First Free? We have a rule we have established that we will allow no food or drink in this worship auditorium. That makes sense to me. It allows us to keep the place clean and neat; after all, no bride wants to walk down an aisle with a great big coffee stain on the carpet. But is that a rule we want to become legalistic about? What if a first-time visitor doesn't see the sign on the door and walks in with a tall Starbucks latte in his hand? How should we react? If we embarrass him by asking him to leave until his coffee is gone, we will probably never see him again, and he may never have a chance to hear the Gospel. Is that worth preventing a potential stain on the carpet? I don't *think* so. Carpet can be replaced; people can't. The Gospel prioritizes human needs above religious rules.

**The Gospel cannot be mixed with legalism.** (9:14-17) For this point I take you back a few chapters to Matthew 9:14-17. It's another passage about legalism, but this time the legalistic attitudes are not coming from the Pharisees but from the good guys—the disciples of John the Baptist (you see, legalism is an equal-opportunity offender; you can find it in the worst of churches or the best):

*Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"*

*Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.*

*"No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."*

Now this little homily about the wineskins has been used and abused by many interpreters. But whatever indirect applications one might make from it, the most direct application, right from the context, is that the Gospel cannot be mixed with legalism. You can't live by grace and law at the same time.<sup>ii</sup>

The new wineskins of freedom in Christ and the life in the Spirit simply cannot co-exist with the old way of trying to attain God's favor by keeping rules and regulations. The Gospel is incompatible with a religion of works. You must abandon the one to fully embrace the other.

**The Gospel establishes Jesus, not the Law, as the standard.** (12:6-8) Go back to chapter 12, verse 6. Jesus has just mentioned the temple where the priests worked, even on the Sabbath, and then He says, "I tell you that one greater than the temple is here." I think it is very difficult to grasp how shocking such a statement must have been to the Pharisees. The Temple meant everything to them; the Temple was their life; the Temple was the home of the Living

God. They would die to protect the Temple. How could anyone or anything be greater than the Temple?

Well, that's exactly what Jesus is claiming for Himself. And if there were any doubt, He removes it when He says, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." Jesus is claiming deity here, friends, and the Pharisees see it clearly; that's why they are so angry. If Jesus is Lord of God's Law, then He must be equal to the Lawgiver, to God Himself. This they cannot accept.

**The Gospel sets people free to love and serve others.** (11-12) The Pharisees have legislated the Sabbath to such a degree that they are no longer free to express genuine compassion and love. But when Jesus sees the man with the atrophied hand, He refuses to allow ecclesiastical legislation to stop him from doing what His heart tells Him to do. The needs of people shouldn't wait until the Sabbath is over.<sup>iii</sup>

**Conclusion:** So, there you have it, friends. It's either Law or Gospel. A list of rules will always leave you defeated because you can never know if you've done enough. The Gospel is the Good News that Jesus has already done for you everything that needs to be done. Don't ask the Law to do something it was never intended to do. Instead, look to Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

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1. John MacArthur lists the following regulations in his commentary on *Matthew 8-15*, pages 282, 283.

*Certain objects could be lifted up and put down only from and to certain places. Other things could be lifted up from a public place and set down in a private one, and vice versa. Still others could be picked up in a wide place and put down in a legally free place—but rabbis could not agree about the meanings of wide and free!*

*Under Sabbath regulations, a Jew could not carry a load heavier than a dried fig; but if an object weighed half that amount he could carry it twice. Eating restrictions were among the most detailed and extensive. You could eat nothing larger than an olive; and even if you tasted half an olive, found it to be rotten and spit it out, that half was considered to have been eaten as far as the allowance was concerned.*

*Throwing an object into the air with one hand and catching it with the other was prohibited. If the Sabbath overtook you as you reached for some food, the food was to be dropped before drawing your arm back, lest you be guilty of carrying a burden.*

*Tailors did not carry a needle with them on the Sabbath for fear they might be tempted to mend a garment and thereby perform work. Nothing could be bought or sold, and clothing could not be dyed or washed. A letter could not be dispatched, even if by the hand of a Gentile. No fire could be lit or extinguished—including fire for a lamp—although a fire already lit could be used within certain limits. For that reason, some orthodox Jews today use automatic timers to turn on lights in their homes well before the Sabbath begins. Otherwise they might forget to turn them on in time and have to spend the night in the dark.*

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*Baths could not be taken for fear some of the water might spill onto the floor and “wash” it. Chairs could not be moved because dragging them might make a furrow in the ground, and a woman was not to look in a mirror lest she see a gray hair and be tempted to pull it out. You could carry ink enough to draw only two letters of the alphabet, and false teeth could not be worn because they exceeded the weight limit for burdens. . . .*

*Among the many other forbidden Sabbath activities were: sewing, plowing, reaping, grinding, baking, threshing, binding sheaves, winnowing, sifting, dying, shearing, spinning, kneading, separating or weaving two threads, tying or untying a knot, and sewing two stitches.*

*The Sabbath was anything but a time of rest. It had become a time of oppressive frustration and anxiety. The people were sick to death of this system that had been imposed on them by ungodly, worldly legalists, and they were indeed “weary and heavy-laden”.*

ii. I’m reminded of Paul’s challenging questions in Galatians 3:1-3:

*You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?*

iii. Philip Yancey in his book, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, recounts a discussion he had with the editors of the Russian newspaper Pravda. The editors were lamenting that even though Christianity and communism had very similar ideals, the Russian government was unable to motivate the people to compassionately give for the children affected by the Chernobyl accident. The average Russian citizen would rather spend his money on vodka. Yancey then makes this perceptive comment:

*Seventy-four years of communism had proved beyond all doubt that goodness could not be legislated from the Kremlin and enforced at the point of gun. In a heavy irony, attempts to compel morality tend to produce defiant subjects and tyrannical rulers who lose moral core . . . Goodness cannot be imposed externally, from the top down; it must grow internally from the bottom up. (Page 75-76)*

The Gospel can set us free to willingly love others, and only the Gospel can do this. Legalism never will.