

## **The Disposition of Grace, II**

There are a couple of verses from Psalm 25 that I like to use from time to time as an invocation for this course. In this session I would like to look a little more broadly at Psalm 25 so we can pick up some of its context. We will use these verses as our prayer this session. If I had to give Psalm 25 a heading, I would call it the Covenant Way of Life. It is the first psalm that refers specifically to the covenant, and for that reason it has all the more interest to us in that it is really a prayer that we may live the covenant way of life. Verse 6 begins with a call to remembrance, “O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses which have ever been foretold.” I am reading from the prayer book Psalter, which is Coverdale’s translation. That was the first translation of the Psalter directly into English. And the NIV obscures a point in the way it renders loving kindness as “love.” It is the Hebrew word *hesed*, the closest word we have to grace, and it is translated as kindness, mercy, or loving kindness. And the other word that is here is translated “tender mercies.” Paul picks up on that, as we saw before in Romans 12:1, when he says, “I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the tender mercies of God.” So keep that linguistic connection alive. I highlight that. Verse 8 also is better in this translation: “Gracious and righteous is the Lord; therefore will He teach sinners in the way.” This statement is remarkable, that He is gracious and righteous and therefore He will teach sinners in the way. “The meek will he guide in judgment, the gentle then shall he learn his way.” Now, that is an archaic use of the term “learn.” It is effective teaching. We were taught in school not to say “I will learn you,” but “I will teach you,” but it is good sixteenth century English. And in the portion that I will use for invocation, that does occur. Verse 10 says, “All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.” Then verse 11 goes on to say, “For thy namesake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great.” Keeping the covenant among God’s fallen people is not a perfect thing, and so the blessings come to those who keep God’s covenant in the context of offering forgiveness of sins as well, and I think that that is a very important truth. Verse 14 in the older translation says, “The secret of the Lord is among them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.” With the Hebrew word there it is actually, “The counsel of the Lord is among them that fear Him.” And the word is used in both in the sense of council, the council of God’s associates, and also in the sense of counsel, the communication God intimately confers among His associates. So this relates to the intimacy of the covenant, those who belong to the Lord are God’s friends. It is the friendship of the covenant. It reminds us that Jesus, in John 15, calls us His friends. He says, “I no longer call you servants, but you are my friends” and instructs us in His way at that point. So there are a number of wonderful themes that relate to God’s covenant fidelity, the intimacy of the covenant, and instruction in the covenant way of life in this psalm, and it will repay your very careful study.

The verses I would like to use for our invocation begin with verse 4 in the modern versions. Let us make this our prayer. “

*“Show me thy ways, O Lord, and teach me thy paths. Lead me forth in thy truth and learn me for thou art the God of my salvation; in thee hath been my hope all the day long. Call to remembrance, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses which have been ever foretold. O, remember not the sin and offenses of my youth, but according to thy mercy, think thou upon me, O Lord, for thy goodness.” In the name of Jesus, amen.*

Last time we started the section that I am calling “The Disposition of Grace.” The older theological term for disposition is *habitus*, that change of heart that the Holy Spirit brings about in regeneration as we are united to Christ by faith. The Holy Spirit works in us faith, hope, and love—what are traditionally called the theological virtues. But those are the characteristics of the heart that are transformed by God’s grace.

And as we saw last time, those form the structural background for various kinds of instruction in the New Testament. It all proceeds from a heart that God has established as His own, creating within us faith, which engenders hope, which works itself out in love. Now, coordinated with that *habitus*, that disposition that God brings about in that grace, is the freedom that comes with that.

So my topic for this part of the session is the topic of Christian liberty, a phrase that was used in the sixteenth century by the Reformers as a way of summarizing the Gospel. That is what the Gospel was about; it was about the freedom that we have in Christ. It was the original liberation theology, and it was related to the work of Christ on the cross and the gift of the Holy Spirit, a very profound theme. Luther wrote on both in his last appeal for reconciliation with the Roman Church, “The Freedom of a Christian.” In it he laid forth the Gospel, justification by faith alone, and he went out of his way to say it is not opposed to works. It is just putting them in the right place after the acceptance with God is established through faith in union with Christ. Faith does not wait for good works to be commanded; it has been doing them already. So Luther had a very sound perspective on the place of good works in the Christian life, and really his psychological insight is sound. He argues, “As long as you are concerned about your own salvation in what you do, you are actually using your neighbor as a means to your end.” Being accepted with God by His grace really frees you to serve your neighbor for your neighbor’s sake, and I think that that is a sound principle.

Calvin also picks up on that in a chapter in the Institutes, which were first published in 1536. Calvin included a summary of the Gospel in the Institutes and that chapter still repays careful reading. You would do well to read it if you have the Institutes or could find them in a library. It is a brief section, but you will find Calvin very enjoyable in that section especially. The whole point of Christian liberty, it says, is to quiet frightened consciences before God, and he expounds the doctrine of justification by faith and the doctrine of adoption. For those of us who are assured of our justification by faith and yet still timorous in terms of the works that we bring to God, God accepts them from His children, however rude and imperfect they may be. So it is a great relief from the perfectionism that can sometimes affect people. They just think that they have got to work it all out for themselves, but the doctrine of adoption brings great assurance as well as the third part, which is that we are free from the traditions and commandments of men. We will go into one area in which that was specifically the case in the Reformation. But that was the doctrine of Christian liberty. It was a summary of the Gospel, and the *Westminster Confession* devotes a chapter to Christian liberty in which it brings together all those themes in a very effective way, I think. First of all, it talks about freedom from certain things, chief of which are the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, and the curse of the Law. The Gospel brings freedom from all those things that were against us. Why? Because Christ on the cross bore the guilt of our sin and endured the wrath of God and the curse of the Law. He died in our place. He paid for our salvation. Jesus paid it all, so that “The terrors of law and of God with me can have nothing to do.” That is in one of Toplady’s great hymns. We remember some of his others more, but that line I think captures the essence of it: “My Savior’s obedience and blood hide all my transgressions from view.”

*The Westminster Confession* goes on to say, and what we should always include, is that Christian liberty is not only freedom from these things, although when you are freed from those things, that is freedom indeed. But just because we are freed from those, we have free access to God both more boldly under the new covenant than under the old, but we are also free to yield obedience. And *The Westminster Confession* makes two points with respect to motivation for that obedience. The freedom that the Gospel brings in terms of motivation is to yield obedience not out of a slavish fear, but out of a childlike love and a willing mind. That is a very powerful phrase that we are now, in the Gospel, free to yield obedience not out of a slavish fear but out of a childlike love and a willing mind. You see how in that phrase they bring together the rational, affectional, and volitional aspects of human nature. A childlike

love is motivated by the thought of pleasing our heavenly Father. But what is a slavish fear? Well, a slavish fear is obedience under the threat of punishment. And Augustine was an astute observer in this regard. He pointed out that if your motivation in yielding obedience is out of a fear of being punished, that implies that if the punishment were not there you might just as well not do it, because you are not really in love with the giver of the Law. And you do not really have a love for righteousness, you are just afraid of Him. You are afraid of being punished and so *The Westminster Confession* rightly focuses on that motivation that it is not slavish fear but a childlike love.

The two texts on which they based that assertion are Romans 8:14-15 and 1 John 4:18. Romans 8:14-15 says, "Because those who are led by the Spirit are sons of God, for you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you receive the Spirit of sonship, and by him we cry 'Abba, Father.'" Sonship makes a difference in terms of our motivation in the Christian life. And then before I read 1 John 4:18, I will begin with the assertion that God is love: "Whoever lives in love, lives in God and God in him." Verse 17-18 says, "In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us." The fear of punishment must be removed in order that love may reign supreme as the impelling motive of the Christian life. And in John, "fear has to do with punishment" is a key phrase. The word for punishment there is the word that is used for God's retributive justice on those who are finally impenitent. It is God's retributive justice on the wicked. But for those of us who are in Christ, that judgment has already been borne. God's retributive justice was poured out on Christ, Christ took on Himself that retributive justice for us on the cross, and so we are free from motivation out of that threat. We are awaked by the Law to flee to Christ in the first place. That is certainly true. From Newton's great hymn, "it was grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved." That is, once you are in Christ, those fears are no longer the motivation of the Christian life.

We need to say something about fear as it appears in the Bible. The best thing that I have seen on the fear of God is the final chapter of John Murray's book *Principles of Conduct*. And Murray notes what is common to note, but the way he does this is very effective, that fear is used in the Bible in two very different senses. It is used in the sense of dread or terror, and it is used in the sense of veneration or honor. And those two are sometimes used very close together in the same sentence. As a matter of fact, in Exodus 20 at the end of the account when Israel is saying, "Let Moses speak to us. Do not let the Lord speak to us; it is just too terrible," Moses says to them, "Fear not, because the Lord has come to provoke fear in you that you may obey him." "Fear not," in the sense of dread and terror that shrinks away from God, because God's purpose is to produce the veneration and the honor due to Him as Lord. Obviously fear in this sense is still motivation in the Christian life. The veneration and honor due to the Lord because He is Lord is always there. But the fear of dread and terror, which is being under the Law, is not the motivation in the Christian life. That has been removed by the atonement of Christ. We know that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. That phrase occurs in at least three places in the book of Proverbs. It also occurs in Psalm 111. I think we ought to look at the context of that in Psalm 111, because this is another place in the Psalms that gives us the covenantal context for the fear of the Lord. Psalm 111 begins, "Praise the Lord, I will extol the Lord with all my heart in the counsel of the upright and in the assembly," and he goes on to narrate what the Lord has done for His people and to talk about the attributes of God that are relevant to the covenant way of life. At verse 9 it says, "He provided redemption for his people. He ordained his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name." It is the context of the covenant of grace. God is to be venerated because holy and awesome is His name, but it is the God who in His mercy and in His grace has provided redemption for His people. And then you come to verse 10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. All who follow his precepts have good

understanding, to Him belong eternal praise.” So it is not the terror or dread of the Lord, it is obviously the veneration and honor that is due to Him. I think that we can summarize the Christian life with the phrase “obedient love” for you to understand that that is a reverent love for God that issues in obedience. I would say the fear of the Lord in the positive sense in which it is intended, as the beginning of wisdom, is reverent submission to the will of God so that we do bow before His majesty and authority. But it is motivated by our love for Him that we yield obedience to Him.

In that sense fear has to do with punishment and is not the continuing motivation of the Christian life. But what about Philippians 2:12-13 where it says, “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”? That phrase seems to be in conflict with love as the exclusive motivation of the Christian life. People tend to look at that and understand it as meaning that somehow now they must nervously approach the Christian life to live lives of nervous apprehension, because it is up to them to work this salvation out. It cannot be translated that way in the context of Philippians. It is translated that way by the New American Bible, the modern Roman Catholic version, which translates it as “Work with anxious concern to achieve your salvation.” Well, that is a good traditional Roman Catholic approach, but I have found that it is also a popular approach among Protestants. We take it that way also. But if you look at Philippians, going back to Philippians 1, Paul begins with the assurance he has that “he who has begun a good work in you will carry it on to the day of Jesus Christ.” Salvation is God’s work. So when you come to this passage in Philippians, Paul says, “As you have always obeyed when I was with you, now much more than when I am not with you, work out your salvation.” What does he mean? He means the salvation that God has given to you. Put it into practice. Why? Because “it is God who is at work in you both to will and to do his good pleasure.” So within the context of Philippians, it is clear that your salvation is not the salvation that we achieve. It is the salvation that is God’s gift to us in which our activity is elicited. You know, practice your salvation, put it into practice, realize it, and so forth, because it is God who is at work in you to will and to do His good pleasure. I think that the fear and trembling then refers to that sense of awe and responsibility that flow from the knowledge that it is God who is at work in us. It is God who is working in us both the willing and the doing of His good pleasure. This is a marvelous thing, and it should be approached in the proper attitude.

In the book I have given some of the linguistic arguments for why we should understand the verb that way, in terms of putting into practice our salvation. Your salvation, as Paul mentions here, is not a goal to be achieved by human effort, but a gift bestowed by God’s grace. And it is not wrong to take this individually, because you cannot make a dichotomy between the body of Christ and its members. It is addressed to the Philippians corporately. He says, “as you have always responded appropriately when I was with you”—he is talking about the congregation—“so now much more in my absence,” you all, “work out your salvation,” the salvation God has given to you, “with a proper sense of awe and responsibility.” Now, that affects each individual member, but it does highlight the corporate aspect of God’s work in His people. I think the Phillips translation got it right. Phillips came out when I was in college. Somebody gave me a copy of *Letters to Young Churches*, and that was a very helpful paraphrase of the Scriptures. The way he translated this verse is “Work out the salvation that God has given you with a proper sense of awe and responsibility, for it is God who is at work within you giving you the will and the power to achieve his purpose.” As a paraphrase, I do not think that you can do better than that. Now, those of you who have studied Greek can check it out and you will see each of those components as the basis in the Greek of the text. So I think that it is very useful to understand it that way and to understand that the motivation of the Christian life is not fear of punishment—the Law has been totally dealt with—but rather God’s grace and love.

I said earlier that fear has to do with punishment. The word for punishment in 1 John, *kolasis*, is God’s retributive justice. We need to make a distinction, and it goes back at least to Chrysostom in terms of the

theological distinction between God's retributive justice and His corrective love. It helps us with our motivation in the Christian life to understand this distinction. It would be helpful to look at Calvin's *Institutes* 3, chapter 4. The chapter heading describes what comes: "How Far from the Purity of the Gospel is all that the Sophists in Their Schools Prate about Repentance; Discussion of Confession and Satisfaction." What this chapter is about is the Roman Catholic doctrine of penance. The sacrament of penance has four parts. First is contrition, which is godly sorrow for sin. Attrition, which is being sorry for consequences, at least, is acceptable, but ideally it should be contrition. There is confession, which is to a priest who provides absolution and imposes a penalty, and that is called satisfaction. It is a token penalty. Obviously we cannot fully satisfy for our sins, but there is something that we must do that the priest prescribes in order for us to be right with God. There is some token punishment that we go through in order to make it up to God. That was imposed by church law in 1215 at the Fourth Lateran Council. The church made this rule that all the faithful of both sexes who have arrived at years of discretion at least once a year must confess all their sins to their own parish priest and accept the penance that he prescribes. Otherwise, they will be excommunicated in this life and after death will be denied a Christian burial. Now, that is a serious rule. And it provoked a lot of legalistic approaches from 1215 to 1517. It was a very burdensome kind of a thing, because you have to go to your parish priest to confess all your sins, receive absolution, and provide satisfaction for what you have done according to his precept. So what is the first of the 95 Theses that Martin Luther posted? When the Gospel says, "Repent and believe the Gospel," it did not mean do penance. It meant rather that we should understand that we are simultaneously just and sinners, and our whole life is to be lived in the humility that comes from that wisdom, confessing our sins, but at the same time knowing that we are justified by faith alone.

Although people distance themselves from the Roman Catholic Church in Protestant circles, there is still a tendency to want to do something to show God we are worthy of His grace. It is a very ingrained human tendency among fallen human beings. It is a very powerful element that people take as motivation to offer some atonement and somehow make it up to God for what we have done. There is a very good analysis of that in a book by John Miller called *Repentance and Twentieth Century Man*. He makes the point that motivation for changing your life direction is the lordship of the crucified Savior. Penance centers on what a man does. Looking to yourself for power to grow in grace, you will never have it, and you will always be left powerless, imprisoned, and seeking for some solution that is outside of Christ. John Miller encourages repentance, but it is evangelical repentance that is associated with our union with Christ and looking to our crucified Savior for the total satisfaction for all of our sins. Jesus paid it all. There is no atonement that we can offer. It is true that "whom the Lord loves He disciplines," so there is corrective love that we can expect if we are God's children, but that should not be confused with God's retributive justice on the unbelieving. It is God's corrective love, which although painful, is nevertheless to be welcomed in terms of its purpose of restoring us to the fellowship of our Father. That is what Calvin is after in this distinction that he makes between God's corrective and his penal judgments. I will not go over them, but Christ has provided full satisfaction. Forgiveness of sins involves remission of penalty. There is no further penalty to be paid. Christ's unique sacrifice alone can remove penalty and guilt. And then Calvin has these distinctions between God's judgments, penal and corrective, that he traces back to Chrysostom. Judgment of vengeance serves to punish, judgment of chastisement to improve. So punishment and discipline, I say, are as far apart as God's wrath and God's love. And we need to understand that when God disciplines us it is not that He is pouring out His retribution. It is rather out of His love that He corrects us in the Christian life and restores us to right paths. So we should look for that correction.

There is a third category I think we need, and that is God's perfective love, which is not necessarily correcting a believer in his sin. Rather, God uses suffering in the Christian life for other purposes. God did that in connection with Job. Job's counselors were wrong to accuse him of sin in his life that God

was trying to root out. Job mouthed off beyond what was appropriate for him to do, so he had some repenting to do in the end. But as far as his counselors were concerned, God justifies Job rather than their accusations. So bear in mind that God sometimes uses suffering for other purposes than discipline or correction. He uses it to make us into the kind of persons that He desires us to be as examples to others, as helpful to others. Part of the mystery of Christian suffering is that we make up the sufferings of Christ; that is, our sufferings are joined to His not in a propitiatory or redemptive way, but nevertheless, they are participating in the birth pangs of a better world to come. And the way we respond to those, either persecution from without or the internal miseries that afflict us from within, shows to others something of God's grace, mercy, and love.

Is it ever right to attempt to make atonement for our sins? If you have ever been through a dark period in which you were rebellious and have been graciously brought back to the Lord through His corrective love, you know that that does not make you complacent; it does not create laxity or complacency. The fact that God has been so merciful to re-call you is the very thing that moves you not to make atonement, but to delight yourself in the Lord, to bask in His goodness, and to desire to serve Him with your heart. It is not to make atonement, but in gratitude. The motivation is gratitude. It is understanding that we were helpless and hostile sinners and God reconciled us to Himself through the death of His Son. If God has reconciled us, then we simply need to enter into the reconciliation. There is nothing that we can do to pacify God. It is by the obedience of the One that the many are made righteous. We always think, "Yes, it is me and Jesus. It is the obedience of the One and my obedience which, granted is a token, but it counts for something." The Bible says, that it is through the obedience of the One, not One plus any fraction of one. If you introduce a fraction to any extent you destroy the point. It is through faith alone in Christ's fullness of His work. And I am sure people say, "Well, it is not fair, you ought to pay something," but that is God's mercy and grace. Calvin comments on the misuse of the text of David and the death of the child that he had by Bathsheba. It does not have anything to do with David's forgiveness. That was complete in itself. And when David sees that the child has died, he goes up to worship. He goes directly to worship. Now, there is an adulterer, a murderer, and a liar. He has been living a lie all this time, is confronted by the prophet and repents, and the prophet says, "God has put away your sin." And when the issue of whether the child will live or not is gone, David goes up and worships. He is accepted. Calvin says you ought not to make the exception in that circumstance into a kind of a mandate for imposing penalties on everyone.

You also might ask a question about the affliction of the soul associated with the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament. Did it have as its purpose, not being the offering of atonement, but rather reminding of the need and the atonement in Christ? As I understand it, your sins are confessed over the scapegoat. Aaron confesses his own sins and the sins of the people over the scapegoat, so it is a service of repentance, but it is not making atonement. In Leviticus 17, it is the sacrificial lamb that is offered. It is the blood of the lamb that makes atonement because God has appointed that on the altar for your souls. We cannot make atonement for our souls. Contrition is right. Contrition and confession are a part of repentance. Also, amendment of life is a part of repentance, but that should not be confused with the atonement where Christ bore all of our sins. There is no longer a need for us to pay anything. Some evangelicals are now toying with the whole doctrine of purgatory. The idea is we are not ready to meet the Lord until we have gone through some more correction. Well, the New Testament says, "When Christ comes again, those who are alive at the coming of the Lord will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." They are transformed. It is obvious that there is no purgatory for them. Why should there be for those who are taken immediately into the presence of the Lord? That is the Lord's business in terms of how He accepts us, but we are accepted in Christ. We are complete in Christ. The goal is to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

I want to say something more specific about our love for God. I have been arguing that love, not fear of punishment, is the motivation of the Christian life. There is a place for what we call the directional use of the moral law, but the curse of the Law has been borne. The curse of the Law is no longer a threat to us because Christ has fulfilled the Law in our stead. As far as love for God, in the Gospels a scribe comes to Jesus and asks Him for His opinion on which is the greatest commandment of the Law. And Jesus' response is to quote the *shema* from Deuteronomy 6: "Hear, O Israel, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength." And then He goes on to say, "The second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commands hang all the Law and the prophets." So there is not just one great commandment, but there are two. In principle, to love God with all your heart would include loving your neighbor because God has created human beings in His image and requires that we treat His image the way He does. But it is too important not to be put up there right alongside the first and greatest commandment. So they are not one great commandment. There are two, on which all the biblical revelation hangs. All the Law and the prophets is the whole biblical revelation of God's will. I think of it as hanging as a door on its hinges. You need two hinges for a door to work properly.

My wife and I restored a house that was built around 1850, and some of the problems were with the doors that after that many years either had a top hinge or a bottom hinge missing. Well, if you do not have both hinges working, you are going to either bump your head or bump your shins. You have to have both hinges to work, and so it is with the Christian life. It is a door that swings on these two hinges. Now, most of Christian ethics in our generation has been occupied with talking about neighbor love and exploring neighbor love. And there is something biblical about that because Paul, when he talks about love as the fulfilling of the Law in Romans 13, does have in mind neighbor love. And Hebrews 6:10 says, "Remember, God will not forget your work of love and the love that you have shown him by the help that you have given to his people." So Charles Colson's book on *Loving God* is really stories about folks who have loved God by loving their neighbor, and that is appropriate.

The older theology, though, did include an exposition of love for God in the direct sense, and they divided it this way. They said when you look at the full scriptural evidence, love for God is a complex. The Latin terms are *complacentia* and *benevolentia*. Before we translate those as complacency and benevolence, beware. The English word "complacency" does not represent *complacentia*. Our love for God is anything but complacency in the modern English sense. This really meant satisfaction. And *benevolentia* is goodwill. Neither of those is entirely helpful to us. I think the best way of understanding it is to think about love in terms of delight and in terms of service. So you have here both the thought of loving God by desiring God—that is the title of Piper's book, *Desiring God*—and also pleasing God in terms of the service that we offer. Both are part of the complex of loving God. Now, it is based on knowledge of who God is and what He delights in so that there is rational basis for this, but you can see it is both an affection and a volition. There is an affectional and a volitional aspect, as well as a rational aspect, to our love for God. Puritan theologian William Ames called one side of it the affection of "resting in God," and for the other side he used the phrase "yielding to God." And that is another way of getting at the complex that is involved in these things.

It is interesting to go through the Psalms and look at it from this perspective. You have the various verses in which a love for God is expressed in terms of delight in God and admiration of His attributes, and those lead to pleasing God and walking in His ways. If you delight in the Lord, then you are going to delight in the things that He delights in. If God is righteous, then you are going to hunger and thirst after righteousness. I think that there is an order here that the delight in God as the Author of our lives, Creator and Redeemer, issues in yielding to Him in grateful service that we offer to Him. But both are involved in our love for God. You cannot reduce it to either one. Typically you find Reformed

theologians reducing it to obeying God in terms of doing His will. John Piper, I think, is moving in the other direction of the tendency of reducing it to desiring God. He does not intend that, but I think for balance we need to be aware of both of those themes in Scripture. Love for God is both delighting in Him and serving Him. God's first purpose in redeeming us was to have us as His own rather than to use us. I think that we sometimes obscure that, but we are His treasured people. That is Exodus 19, that God has chosen us out of all the nations to be His treasured people. The King James translated that "peculiar people," but it meant a peculiar treasure to Him. We are God's inheritance, just as the lot was cast for the 12 tribes of Israel to receive their inheritance. We are God's lot. We are God's portion that He has chosen for His inheritance. And our response to being God's inheritance is to delight ourselves in the Lord and, of course, to submit ourselves to His will.

There is, I think, a very moving statement in Calvin on motivation in the Christian life that I would like to share with you. Calvin's sermons on the Ten Commandments were only translated into English in this last decade. They are marvelous, and I think they give a very different perspective than what you would expect in Calvin preaching on The Ten Commandments. He goes through the book of Deuteronomy and expounds the Ten Commandments concretely in terms of the book of Deuteronomy, but this is what he says this:

The beginning of obedience, as well as its source, foundation, and root is the love of God. This love cannot exist until we have tasted the goodness of our God. For as long as we conceive of God being opposed to us, of necessity we will flee from Him. Therefore do we wish to love Him, do we wish to be reformed by being obedient to Him that we might receive all of our pleasure in His service? Then we must realize He is our Father and Savior, that He only wants to be favorable to us. Thus, once we have tasted his mutual love, which He reserves for us, then we will be motivated to love Him as our Father. For if this love is in us, there will be no doubt that we will obey Him and that His Law will rule in our thoughts, our affections, and in all our members.

And it is like that all the way through. It is always brought back to the motivation of the Christian life, and it is always love of God, not fear of God. Even Calvin, with his marvelous apprehension of the majesty of God, speaks of God in His tenderness, mercy, compassion, and love for us in expounding His love to us. It is a very refreshing exposition of the Ten Commandments.

So the first way in which faith works itself out in love is love for God, both in delight of God and in serving God, and that is joined to neighbor love. In a number of texts that is the summary of the Law. Most notable is Romans 13:8-10. Let us read it just to have it before us. Romans 13:8-10 says, "Let no debt remain outstanding except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves the other has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not covet,' and whatever other commandment there may be are summed up in this one rule: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no harm to its neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law." Paul says two things about love in this passage. One is that love is the summary of the Law; that is, it operates as a summary rule. It is quite general, but general rules are useful. Love your neighbor as yourself taken seriously is a solid rule. But it is also motivation.

Love is the fulfilling of the Law, and that is the sense in which I want to speak to it now. I used to ask ethics classes where in the Old Testament it says, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." In a class of about 30, there would almost always be one person who thought that it was a trick question and would answer, "It is not in the Old Testament; it is in the New Testament." Now, why they would think I would ask a trick question? That has always puzzled me. It is Leviticus 19, and there would usually be

one person in the class who would answer Leviticus 19. Look at this passage. It is an exposition of the Decalogue. It does not look like it after the opening, “Be holy, for I, your God, am holy,” which by the way is repeated in 1 Peter 1:13-16. So it is a fundamental principle of biblical ethics, Old and New Testament. The exposition begins at verse 3 with the fifth commandment: “Each one of you shall revere his mother and his father,” and so it looks like it is miscellaneous, but actually when you go through it, it is all the commandments. All ten of them are included in this exposition.

Embedded in this exposition of the Decalogue, really right in the middle, is verse 18: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Just look at the surrounding context of verse 17. “You shall not hate your brother in your heart.” Old Testament ethics is not just external. That is a mistaken impression people have. “You shall not hate your brother in your heart.” You may surely reprove your neighbor so that you do not encourage sin. If you do not speak in correction for those who are really associates with you, that is a fault on your part. And so loving your neighbor, if he is associated with you in some direct way, does not mean not challenging him on those areas that he goes astray. Verse 18 says, “You shall not take vengeance,”—that is the outward action—“nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people.” That is the internal part. This sounds like the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus gives a more searching exposition of these commandments, but it is already in the Old Testament that the attitude behind the deed is what the Law is about. And the corrective is “you shall love your neighbor as yourself,” so that it is both an affectional as well as a volitional aspect. It includes the attitudes as well as actions. The other verse where “love your neighbor as yourself” occurs is in verses 33-34: “When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.” You know, it is the reflection on how the Lord has dealt with us that is the pattern of our dealing with others. And here the Old Testament ethic is not a narrow nationalistic ethic; it includes those aliens dwelling among them on an equal footing, one mouth for all. He shall be to you as the native. Do not do him any wrong. And positively, love him as yourself.