

Washington church of Christ

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The Washington Messenger

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Order of Services Sunday November 30, 2014

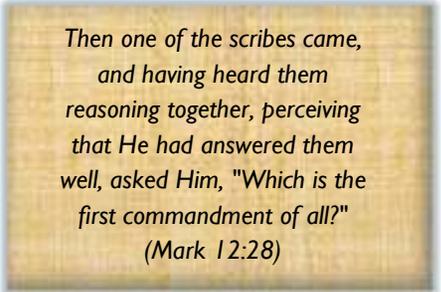
Song Leader	Tom Dolan
Prayer	Bill Duryea
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Scott Thomas
Prayer for the Cup	Brian Jeffries
Prayer for the Collection	Ralph Ruggiero
Assisting at the Table	David Osinski
Morning Closing Prayer	Bob Celentano
Evening Opening Prayer	Arnold Thompson
Announcements	Matt Grimaldi

Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm
Thursday Morning Bible Study	11:00 am

Laws Which Test Our Faith...

There are many diverse commands in the Bible which constitute the complete will, or law, of God. It has been said that in the days of Christ, the Scribes made a ritual of repeating that their Law contained 243 affirmative commands, as many as the bones in the human body ... and 365 negative precepts, as many as the days of the year ... the total being 613 laws, the number of the letters in the Ten Commandments. The New Testament, the Law of Christ, also has many commandments. For the purpose of this article we might classify these laws into two categories ... *moral* and *positive*. A definition will help us see the difference.



*Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?"
(Mark 12:28)*

A moral law has an inherent ability to regulate human conduct and relationships. Webster defines *moral* as ... *relating to the practice, manner, or conduct as social beings in reference to right and wrong.*

Relative to each other, and in all well-ordered communities, there are things which are recognized as wrong and other things recognized as right within themselves. Stealing, lying, and murder are inherently wrong in such communities. The commands in the Law of Christ which regulate these matters are often called moral laws. They are easily obeyed, because human reason agrees that these laws are correct.

Positive laws are of a higher order. They often test our faith in God and Christ. They also many times test our respect for Divine authority. There may be nothing about a positive law which conforms to human reasoning. In fact, some of these laws are actually contrary to human reason and conduct. In contrast to what we have termed moral laws, positive laws are based, and settled, on the authority of the law giver. They need no explanation or reason other than this. Divine positive laws require obedience because they are Divine.

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. (Matthew 28:18)

Positive laws can test our faith in a number of ways. We must obey a command of Christ even when we fail to see that the thing commanded can do any good within itself. Here, we must truly heed the words of the Apostle Paul and *walk by faith, not by sight.* (2 Corinthians 5:7)

Many people rebel at simple commands of Jesus because they don't see what good the thing commanded will do. This is especially true of *baptism for the remission of sins* (Acts 2:38). But we are not the first people to be required to act in this manner.

In Exodus 12, the children of Israel were required to take a lamb without blemish, a male of the first year, as the Passover lamb. After the lamb was slain, its blood was to be put on the two side door posts and the upper door post of their houses. If they did this, God promised to pass over their houses in the night when He smote all of the first born in the land of Egypt.

Israel was noted for their disobedience in the days that followed their deliverance from Egypt, but there is no record in scripture of their failure to comply with the *positive* command of God on this occasion.

Think of all the questions they might have asked, if they had been like some men today ... "How can that do any good?" ... "Is there any saving power in blood on a door post?" ... "Why on the door posts, why not on the steps?" ... "Doesn't He know which houses are ours?" ... "If He wants to save us He will, without all of this bother!"

These, and other questions which display disobedience and unbelief, are asked today about many of Christ's commands. Yet, on this faithful night, long ago, life was preserved in Egypt so far as their obedience to God's command went. They obeyed although no man can philosophically connect blood on the door post with salvation from physical death. If we today, like Israel in this instance, are willing to obey without seeing what good a thing will do within itself, but simply because Christ gave the command, we will be saved from spiritual damnation.

Our faith may also be tested by a positive law for which we can see no reason. When Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden, they had access to all the trees in the garden, except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. (Genesis 2:17) God had decreed that they would die if they ate of this tree. Can you see a reason for this law, when they had free access to every other tree in the garden? Obviously, neither could they ... and through their disobedience they were banished from the Garden of Eden and God's law stood firm.

God commanded that only the Levites should handle the Ark of the Covenant. (Numbers 4:15) In my limited knowledge I see no reason for this law, and, in a moment of urgency, neither did Uzzah. He reached out to steady the Ark as it was being drawn by oxen over a threshing floor... the events leading to this situation deserve their own article ... and he died right there beside the Ark. (2 Samuel 6:5-7)

Many fail to receive salvation, or have grown tired of serving the Lord, because they can see no reason for the things commanded by Christ for salvation and faithfulness. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Hebrews 10:25) But they will learn that the Law of Christ is as authoritative as the Law of Moses under which Uzzah died for his disobedience.

A third, and often the hardest, trial of our faith is when we are required to do something which we feel is wrong within itself. This is when human reasoning and emotion will often cause us to disobey God. Someone might ask if such a thing has ever been required.

In Genesis 22, Abraham was told...

Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." (Genesis 22:2)

Abraham was not a hardened pagan without a conscience. He knew it was wrong to kill, and he must have felt the outward inconsistency between the sacrifice of his son, and the promise that in him his seed would be blessed. But in the triumph of faith he believed that

God was able to raise him up, even from the dead. (Hebrews 11:19) God commanded, and Abraham obeyed.

In this Christian age we are not required to offer our children, but we may have to disobey some commands of man, or civil law, or even disobey our parents in order to comply with a command of Christ. When such a situation arises we ought to obey God and Christ, rather than Man. (Acts 5:29)

Our Prayer List...

For Spiritual Responsiveness – Those studying with us in the Thursday morning Perkin's Study ... All of our wayward members

For Physical Healing – Ellen Jinks - Bill Duryea's Parents ... Arnold and Ray Thompson ... Georgia DeLorenzo

For Wisdom and Good Judgment – The Leaders of our congregation ... the leaders of our nation

For God's Care and Good Providence – Our young people away at college ... Our young people here at Washington ... our members who are traveling ... the men and women in military service ... our congregation ... the Evangelist and Teachers We Help Support

EVENTS AND NOTES

- ▲ THE NEXT MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR NEXT SUNDAY AT 4:00PM
- ▲ OUR NEXT PERKIN'S THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY WILL BE ON DECEMBER 11TH ALL ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE WHENEVER YOU CAN ... MORE IMPORTANTLY INVITE THOSE WHO MAYBE SEEKING JESUS!
- ▲ ALSO, REMEMBER THE TUESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY AT THE PANERA BREAD IN HACKETTSTOWN.
- ▲ DON'T FORGET TO JOIN OUR "MEET-UP" SITE ON THE WEB ... [HTTP://WWW.MEETUP.COM/THURSDAY-MORNING-BIBLE-STUDY-AT-PERKINS-IN-PHILLIPSBURG-NJ](http://www.meetup.com/Thursday-Morning-Bible-Study-at-Perkins-in-Phillipsburg-NJ) ... CHECK IT OUT!