

## **EPISODE SEVEN - Introduction**

Welcome to the Living By of Faith podcast. My name is Josh DeGroot, and this is episode number seven. Thanks for checking this out. This is a podcast where we look at current news and events, theology, practical issues, and a little bit of history from the perspective of the Christian's life of faith in Christ. Let's get started.

I want to talk about the muting of voices today that seem to be out of step with the powers that be. YouTube and Facebook, two of the largest gatekeepers of information, have taken it upon themselves to be our protectors against harmful messages and "misinformation". And when you realize that there are 2.6 billion active users on FB and 1.3 billion people watching YouTube videos, you realize that is a lot of power for these gatekeepers/protectors.

There are a couple of examples I want to bring up. One video seemed to have been blocked because it goes against the narrative pushed by the mainstream media and the medical establishment regarding COVID-19. And the other was shut down because it openly addressed the COVID-19 pandemic, looking at the scriptures to help us understand God, this present pandemic, and what our response should be. Both videos were blocked - probably for different reasons. But the important point is that more and more, dissenting voices are silenced.

The first example is a press conference in which two California doctors called local reporters to their facility in order to share their findings from their local coronavirus testing. They also went through a whole bunch of publicly available scientific data, challenged the mandated lockdown in California and across the country, and even questioned the motives of government officials in charge. The YouTube video quickly went viral, amassing over five million views really fast. YouTube went into action and blocked the video. These two men are not amateurs throwing out their unfounded ideas. They are doctors who understand the immune system, virology, and are looking at public data and saying, "huh"?

Why was it taken down. Well, one of the doctors when asked in an interview didn't know for sure. But we do have an interview from the CEO of YouTube in which she said that any video that goes against the guidance of the WHO will be blocked. The World Health Organization? Yes, the same WHO that seems to be in cahoots with the Chinese Communist Party and may even be China's accomplice in covering up the early spread of the virus in and from China. Is this about science or something else?

The second example should be of special interest to Christians. It is an audio version of John Piper's book entitled "Coronavirus and Christ" on YouTube. The audio version of the book was released on YouTube and was listened to widely and again was quickly taken down. And it was taken down, not because it went against WHO guidance, but because of its clear biblical teaching that is out of step modern sensibilities...

This should not surprise us; in fact, I think we will see it more and more. YouTube didn't say which parts of the book violated their community standards or what community standards were violated, but if you read the book, it's not hard to see which parts may. In the book, Piper makes plain the biblical teaching of God's control over disaster, plagues and pandemics, and that this present pandemic is God's

judgment. He clearly states the biblical teaching that homosexual intercourse is sin. And near the end of the book, Piper says “the coronavirus is a call for repentance to all of us to bring our lives into alignment with the infinite worth of Jesus.” In other words, Piper’s book affirms biblical Christianity and speaks of sin, righteousness and judgment; he then holds out the hope of the gospel. But because it violated YouTube’s modern sensibilities... it had to go.

Again, we should not be surprised when these things happen. Jesus said, “if the world hates you, know that it hated me before it hated you.” We should not be surprised. But it should be a wakeup call. This is the environment in which we are called to be witnesses of Christ. The gospel of Jesus Christ which calls all men everywhere to repent is threatening, but it must be preached if people are to be saved.

### **Catechesis section → the law of God - personal, perfect, perpetual obedience...**

The next section is the catechesis section. For centuries Christians gave themselves to the practice of learning the doctrines of the Christian faith by way of a catechism. Catechesis simply means to teach orally or instruct by word of mouth. This is a practice that is sorely missed in our day and I think we would benefit tremendously by taking it up again, and so I want to do my part to promote the practice of catechesis. **Mention “Children’s Mode”.**

All that said, I’m making my way through a modern catechism called New City Catechism. It takes the form of 52 questions and answers with scripture - so one for each week. You can buy the book online or you can download the app on your phone for free. So we are on question 6 this week:

**Question 7:** What does the law of God require?

**Answer 7:** Personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience; that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love our neighbor as ourselves. What God forbids should never be done and what God commands should always be done.

**Personal.** Not just outward submission. That was the problem of the Pharisees (white washed tombs). The law of God requires inward, happy submission of our minds and hearts. Perfect. Without spot or blemish. Perpetual. So not just for a day or a week or even a year, but ongoing without end. Of course, the law is summed up in loving God and loving neighbor - personally, perfectly, and perpetually.

Every honest person who hears this says, “Uh oh!” because we know that we fall short. One of the main purposes of the law is to show us the righteous nature and character of God, show us our sin, and our need for a Savior. Only the Lord Jesus Christ has fulfilled the law perfectly and he has done this FOR all who look to him in faith. And when we receive Christ and receive forgiveness, then we have new life and strength to obey the command to love God and neighbor and thus fulfill the law in Christ.

**Matthew 22:37-40** - And [Jesus] said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

## **Christian History Section -**

In the history section I want to continue the discussion from last week about the Protestant Reformation. Last week I unpacked the five solas of the reformation. This week and next I want to take a little more time to discuss two of them. This week, sola fide or faith alone. Remember Luther nailed the 95 theses to the castle door, but it was two years later that Luther understood the gospel and was converted.

Up until that point, Luther thought that the only way to be right with a righteous God was to achieve a righteousness through one's works. He was a monk and by his own account, the most monkish monk you could find anywhere. He was meticulously seeking to achieve his own righteousness, and he was miserable in all his efforts, because he knew he still did not measure up.

So it was in 1519, that he was studying the book of Romans, and the phrase "the righteousness of God" stuck him like a thorn in his side, because the only way he could understand that phrase was that the righteousness of God is the righteousness through which God punished sinners. And of course, this shows that Luther understood the central premise of the book of Romans (especially the early chapters) - how can a sinner be made right with a righteous God. Well, he was studying the book of Romans in the first chapter and came to verse 17 which reads:

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, 'the righteous shall live by faith'.

Luther said, "I beat on Paul to understand..." Finally, he understood the gospel. He understood that the gospel reveals the righteousness of God by God giving righteousness as a gift to be received passively by faith in Christ ALONE, apart from works of the law. And when the lightbulb went on for Luther, here's how he described his conversion: "It was as if the gates of paradise were swung open to me, and I was born again." Righteousness received by faith, not achieved by human effort. And here is what this means. At the moment a sinner repents and believes in Christ, at that very moment, before he has done any good work, he is declared righteous or justified by God for all time. Luther used a latin phrase to describe this: "Simul Justus Et Peccator - meaning: at the same time righteous and sinner."

This message took Europe by storm and you can understand why. The entire continent was living under the dark cloud of Roman Catholic superstition and sacramentalism - and there was NO peace with God. This message came like a river of refreshing water to souls and scores received it with joy! This gospel must continue to be heralded by Christians everywhere. For the same fundamental problem is faced by every human being on the face of the earth - how can a righteous God be gracious to sinners? We do not achieve a righteousness before God through our effort and work, but through faith in Christ alone - sola fide.

## **Conclusion:**

Thanks again for listening to the living by faith podcast. If you found it helpful, please subscribe, like, and share. Until next time, "may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Spirit be with you all."