

## Rules and Regulations (with kids)

- Where do we have rules and regulations?
  - eg school, road, country, kitchen...
  - get some examples!
- Why do we have them? What purpose do they fulfil?
  - safety, protect vulnerable people, help main function (eg of school) happens well...
- What do they not do?
  - achieve the main purpose themselves - eg living, school/education, etc
- We'll be thinking about what role or function God's laws play during this morning's service:
  - prayer that we'd understand
  - and for anyone whose job it is to make sure things are done in accordance with the rules....

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## Highway Code

- Have you ever found road signs confusing? (image: Highway Code)
  - did you dread the bit of your driving test where you had to identify some sign?
- Some of them are really very strange:
  - red circle round motor-bike and car (image: motorbike/car sign) - with motor-bike apparently flying over car! "Evil Kneevil not allowed here?"
  - wiggly lines for slipy road (image: wiggly lines) - I've heard that one as "watch out for drunk drivers"!
  - or the car tipping over the edge of a dock into water! (image: car into water) There was one of these near where my cousins stay, and visiting as a kid this actually frightened me!
- We laugh, but those signs are actually pretty important:
  - what happens if we ignore them?
  - could be dangerous; we might be booked by the Police...!!
- Rules of the road keep you safe while travelling.
  - but a copy of the Highway Code won't get us to destination - we need a guide!

## God's Rules

- Recap on "salvation history":
  - God created the world and people in it good; (image: good)
  - spoiled by sin (Adam & Eve); friendship with God broken (image: relationship shattered)
  - God invites restoration of relationship, trust, friendship... (image: hand) Process started as we observe Abraham being welcomed into friendship by God; runs through the whole OT till we come to the disciples slowly discovering that Jesus is God's Son, and their friendship with and trust in him is the first steps of relationship with God!
- But as we mentioned last week, if we went out the shops and did a survey:
  - "What do Christians believe; what is Christianity all about?"
  - one of the things that would be mentioned would be something to do with rules, commandments or laws; (image: commandments) Christians are folk who obey the 10 commandments, who are goody-goodies, that kind of thing.
- And God's law is certainly a hugely important theme that runs through the Bible:
  - Torah (Hebrew word: means instruction, doctrine, law); first 5 books; called books of the Law
  - OT Prophets - often calling people back to obedience of the Law;
  - in the NT too - calls to obey the Law; for instance, Jesus own words:
    - For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and

*the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.  
(Matthew 5:20)*

## Rules don't get you to God

- But there is a problem here!
  - (image: target/missed)
  - we can never keep all God's rules; too hard for us; we've all done wrong
  - as Romans 3:23 puts it, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."
  - if being friends with God depended on us keeping all his rules, we'd be doomed!
- But it doesn't!
- Like the road, you need something apart from rules to get you to your destination.
- Need someone to show you the way, and indeed to **be** the way - Jesus!

## Why have the law at all?

- So why have Law at all?
  - that's the obvious question!!
- Heart of issue Paul facing with the Galatians:
  - is salvation really for free, or do you still have to obey the rules?
  - *so what's the Law all about? Three ways of looking at it:*

### 1. Law provides safety

- Framework for human behaviour - as we said earlier, like rules for road.
- Imagine: suddenly there are no more rules of the road - can drive how you liked - no more speed cameras, or traffic police, or traffic wardens...  
(only lots more ambulances!)
- Imagine I always drove at 30 in built up areas, always stopped at traffic lights, always signalled before turning....
- Even though there were no rules, I'd be a good driver, safe...
- Law provides protection. Best when we keep to rules.

### 2. Law reveals problem (Bike Repair)

- Before coming to Motherwell, Helen and I used to live in Edinburgh.
  - traffic is terrible - real issues about getting from A to B on time, parking, etc!
  - a long time ago, when I was fit, I could do the 5 miles from my workplace to home in the same time as a car - in the rush hour!
- One of the delights of cycling is being able to do your own maintenance!
  - I have a very vivid memory of one occasion when I was fixing Helen's bike - she came home, and it was all in bits - she saw scene of devastation!
  - *"Thought you were fixing it, not decorating the flat with it!"*
  - honestly, I needed to take it apart to fix it!
- Sometimes necessary to makes things worse before they can be made better.
- Same for God.
  - trying to fix humanity - draw us back to being friends with Himself.
  - but sin has got in the way.
- Before he could fix the situation, He had to make it worse.
  - the Law is like taking everything apart on a bike - you can see more clearly that its broken, see that someone needs to put it back together, to "recreate" it!
- Law makes us see our sin:
  - without the Law, we might well think we were doing alright;
  - with it we know we aren't, that we can never keep all that God requires.
- Sometimes have to take things apart (make worse) to fix them.

### 3. Law leads to remedy (Patient in Pain)

- Think about it another way:
  - since Hugh and Hazel joined us, many folk in the congregation will have heard about leprosy;
  - one of the main problems with leprosy is that it kills nerves, leading to no feelings of pain; accidents, cuts, infections
- Imagine everyone in the world had leprosy; kept getting infections; never knew when had cut themselves.
  - then imagine that someone gave us pain!
- We would regard it as a gift, even though we'd discover how much a grazed knee hurts, a cut, a bruise...
  - for if we know we are in pain, we can go to the doctor, be cured.
- Law is like pain - tells us that sin is hurting us, how much damage it is doing
  - doesn't itself heal, but can encourage us to go to Great Physician.

### Lead me to Jesus...

- In other words, God's Law leads us to Himself, and in particular to his Son Jesus
  - that's what [Galatians 3:24](#) is talking about
  - it'd be a daft cyclist who took his bike apart but didn't fix it!
  - it'd be a daft patient who felt the pain and ignored it, knowing that all they needed to do was swallow their pride and ask for help.
  - [It'd be daft to ignore the Law's introduction to Jesus, the source of life!](#)
- The whole point of Christianity is not obeying the rules; the whole point of Christianity is meeting Jesus, knowing him as Saviour - the one who fixes what sin broke in us.
- *Call to repentance and faith, chance to respond*