



The law & Gospel method of Bible study is the Church's traditional way to study the Bible, which was popularized by Martin Luther. Law & Gospel Bible study makes a distinction between God's two main Biblical themes: law & Gospel. God's law theme identifies our sin, by revealing what God wants us to do that we don't do. God's Gospel theme identifies our need for Jesus the Savior, and reveals how God's love offers us salvation through Christ.

STEP ONE PRAY FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT TO REVEAL GOD'S VOICE THROUGH THE TEXT:

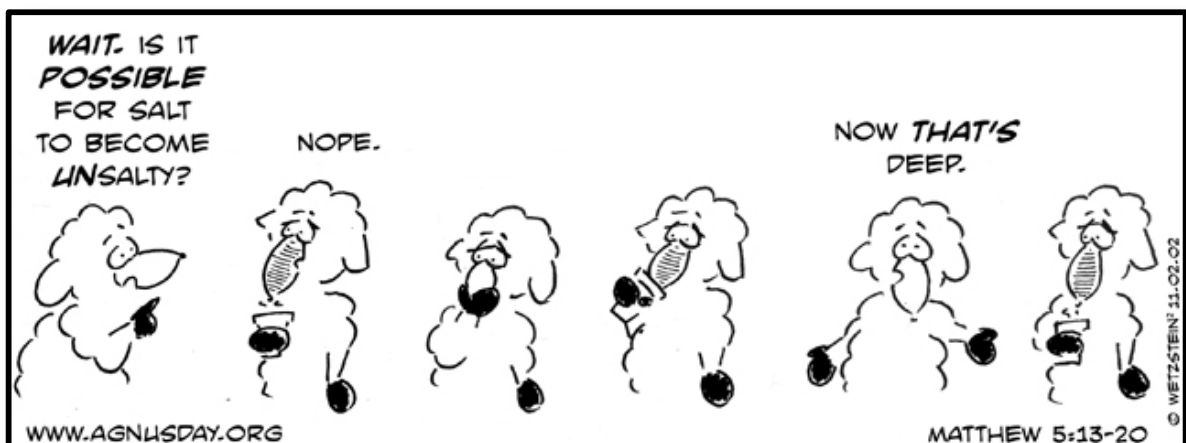
"Father, let your law and Gospel voice renew our love, faith, and hope."

STEP TWO READ THE TEXT REPEATEDLY UNTIL YOU CAN TELL IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

Matthew 5:13-20 (See the reverse side of the worksheet for the printed Gospel text)

STEP THREE REVIEW A STUDY BIBLE TO DETERMINE THE TEXT'S THEOLOGICAL MEANING:

In each case Jesus simply declares that his disciples are salt and light. He does not tell them to become such; they are such. They are such because they possess the presence of Christ himself in their lives. In John 8:12 Jesus says, "I am the light of the world." But here he says, "You are the light of the world." The rest of the passage has to do with righteousness, the very righteousness which is to permeate our witnessing. The position of Jesus concerning righteousness is distinguished from that of the scribes and the Pharisees: "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." The righteousness of the Christian must go beyond theirs. Today righteousness means things like virtue, correctness, and uprightness. It has a narrow, moralistic connotation. It is a static term. But, righteousness has a broader meaning in the Bible. It is dynamic not static. Certainly it has a moral meaning. But it has the equal connotation of one's being in the business of making things right—right between God and persons, and between persons and their neighbors. And so our text goes on to say that the unrighteous person is one who insults his brother, while the righteous one gets reconciled with his brother before offering a gift at the altar. The Pharisees had righteousness in a static sense, but they were the "separated ones." They were not in the business of bringing about reconciliation or wholeness in society. The followers of Jesus, by contrast, are to exceed the Pharisees in righteousness—not righteousness in the static sense of setting up regulations which one observes, and then is called righteous by his fellows, but righteousness in the dynamic sense. Christians are not called to display virtue; they are called to be salt, light, and leaven in society.



Matthew 5:13-20 ¹³"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. ¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. ¹⁷"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

STEP FOUR COMPLETE A LAW & GOSPEL BIBLE STUDY TO *Restore Hope in the Savior*

Law Question: *How does this text reveal our sin (self-centeredness) and how we do not live as God desires?*

Answer.....

Gospel Question: *How does this text reveal God's gift of Jesus as the Savior who freely offers us salvation?*

Answer.....

Please send your "answers" to Pastor Bob: Schmalzle@yahoo.com which he likes to incorporate into the sermon.

STEP FIVE PRAYERFULLY MEDITATE UPON GOD'S GOSPEL VOICE: *Restoring Our Hope*

A. Quietening Our Inner Sanctuary: *We quiet our hearts (souls) by focusing on our breathing. Breathe in slowly to the count of five (J-E-S-U-S)...hold your breath to a count of six (C-H-R-I-S-T)...exhale to a count of seven (T-H-E-L-O-R-D). Repeat this pattern of breathing until you are relaxed.*

B. Dwelling within Our Inner Sanctuary: *We meet the Lord Jesus in the sanctuary of our hearts (souls), which is a place created within our mind's eye for us to be with the Lord. Using our favorite sights, sounds, smells and feelings, we visualize our inner sanctuary as a place of peace where the Lord Jesus meets us.*

C. Listening to God's Voice in Scripture Speak to Us through Jesus: *As Jesus meets us in our inner sanctuary, he lovingly shares God's Gospel message of hope from the Scripture text we have just studied. Listening to God's Gospel voice restores our trust and hope that Jesus' death and resurrection freely offers us eternal Salvation. When Jesus speaks to us, our souls are nourished and refreshed.*

STEP SIX SHARE THIS LAW & GOSPEL BIBLE STUDY WITH A FRIEND:

Forward this via email, give a printed copy, or post on social media