



With a basic understanding of Law and Gospel from our [previous Conversations](#), today, we explore why the insistence on a distinction. Returning to probe that with the Director of Communications (Dr. T) is Rev. Al Lewis.

Dr. T: In previous *Conversations*, you explained the purpose of God's Law, but why do Lutherans insist on distinguishing Law and Gospel?

Rev. Lewis: Most of us have sought the key that unlocks some treasure—however, we define 'treasure.' The treasure could be marrying a loved one or finding that perfect gift, the purchase of a new car or a special antique vehicle, that first house, a longed-for vacation, an effective medical treatment and so forth.

As a redeemed son or daughter of God, we know He has given us the greatest of all treasures, forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation because of Jesus' life of perfect obedience, His innocent death, and victorious resurrection for us as revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures.

And, at the same time, we know there are times when the Bible seems difficult to understand and even appears to be contradictory. For example, consider these verses: the righteous shall live by his faith (Habakkuk 2:4b ESV); 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous (1 John 3:7 ESV); and, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:23-24 ESV). A key is needed to properly unlock the Bible, so we not only understand the message but know how to correctly apply the teachings to daily life. This key is the proper distinction between Law and Gospel. Knowing the correct definition of 'Law' and 'Gospel.'

Being able to identify when the Bible is communicating the Law and when it is communicating the Gospel. And then applying both appropriately.

Without knowing the proper distinction between Law and Gospel, the Bible becomes a locked book, and its message can easily be misinterpreted leading to confusion and controversy. Improperly applying Law and Gospel can lead to a sinner being left comfortable in their sins or a contrite sinner doubting that God forgives them for Jesus' sake. Or it can turn Jesus into a new Moses or Lawgiver. Making the Gospel into some kind meritorious work that we must do in order to earn God's favour.

Rev. Al Lewis graduated from CLS in 1992 and served as a parish pastor in B.C. and Alberta. After retiring in 2013 he ministered as an Intentional Interim Pastor in three congregations over ten years dealing mainly with conflict ministry. He is currently serving as vacancy pastor at King of Kings Lutheran Church, Dickson, AB.

There is more to say on this topic. So, we will pick up this *Conversation* in our next entry, as we continue our journey back to the basics.