



Prayer of Thanksgiving: that God always gives us encouragement through the great promises and the sure hope he gives us. **"16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 ¶ and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him."** (Ro 8:16-17 ESV)

Please do not forget to pray for all the shut-ins and isolated brothers and sisters in our congregations Mrs. Jack and C. Campbell (Fredericton) and J. Steffes (Caribou, Me), Mr. Ross Bathurst, P. Ward (Saint John) and others.

Open Hand Food Bank – Moncton - is in need of grocery plastic bags to give out food to those in need. If you are interested in donating your unused grocery bags, you can bring them to church and someone will collect them and bring them over. Those who want to bring food to give to the **Open Food Bank** may do so by bringing to church and giving it to **Michael M.** of the Moncton congregation.

ACTIVITIES FOR THE MONTH OF March 2019

Times of worship services: **Moncton** – 10:30 AM every Sunday

In Saint John – March 10 and 24 at 2:30 p.m.

Communion- on the second and fourth Sunday of the month.

Address: Moncton—70 King St. —Sage building;

Saint John—50 Newport Cres., Portland United church.

Discipleship Group at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Vautour this coming Wednesday, March 13 at 7:30 PM. **Topic: continuation of 1 Peter chapter 2** – to continue – and possibly **chapter 3**

Please continue to lift one another up that we make every effort to supplement our faith with virtue, virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. Please pray that as we grow in these qualities as they will keep us from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Paraphrase taken from 2 Peter 1)

We thank God for the growing youth ministry in Madagascar. We are filled with hope as we deepen in relationship with Christ and one another. Please join us in praying that the youth continue to grow in the knowledge and grace of our great God. (taken from March GCI Prayer Guide)

We lift up our GCI community in Argentina. Let us pray for their fellowship today. **"I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him."** - Eph. 1:16–17 (taken from March GCI Prayer Guide)

GRACE COMMUNION HYDERABAD, INDIA We celebrate a successful emerging leadership retreat that ministered to forty-three participants. Pray that these leaders will continue to grow deeper in relationship with Jesus and pursue the good work he has for each of them. (taken from March GCI Prayer Guide)

Please pray for people in our own New Brunswick communities that more will come to saving faith in Christ as the response to God's calling on their life.

Monthly GCI prayer guide is now posted in featured articles on our www.worshipim.ca website.

AUDIO SERMONS are also now uploaded to YouTube.ca. To listen to those sermons, you can Google **Grace Communion International New Brunswick** or go to <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgKazyWhmKmDZy69vJcFfPg>. Please pray that they will be a source of inspiration in sharing the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ to a wider audience. They continue to be available in our local website at www.worshipim.ca

The good news of the gospel is a message to be shared with others. Please pray that God will give us the love and wisdom to be able to share this message with others in a loving, clear and confident matter as we participate in his missional work on the earth in our generation. **“5 ¶ Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.” (Col 4:5-6 ESV)**

Please pray that God will put an end to the senseless violence happening in North America continent and other parts of the world.

Pray that we will see the good works that God has prepared for us in advance so that we can enthusiastically participate in the on-going work He is doing now on this earth in bringing people in relationship with him in Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

Please pray, as per Jesus’ instructions, the disciples prayer, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. 10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt 6:9-10) as our world is suffering so much and in need of complete restoration by the King of kings, Jesus. As we are his royal priesthood, let us proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light, as we are instructed in 1 Peter 2.

Pray for the world and for all people: we live in a world that does not know the way to peace. Important to pray as we are instructed by the apostle Paul — **“1 ¶ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior,” (1Ti 2:1–3 ESV)**

OLD TESTAMENT LAWS: DOES GOD MAKE MISTAKES?

(From: <https://www.gci.org/articles/does-god-make-mistakes/>)

God does not change ([Malachi 3:6](#); [James 1:17](#)). Indeed, his Hebrew name *Yahweh* indicates that he is The One Who Is, or the Eternal One ([Exodus 3:14](#)). But if God remains the same, how can his laws change? Can the Eternal give temporary laws?

God gives certain commands to some people but not to others.

It is obvious throughout Scripture that God does in fact give commands to some people but not to others. Commands he gave to Noah do not apply to others. When he told Abraham to sacrifice his son ([Genesis 22:2](#)), he did not intend for anyone else to go and do likewise. When he commanded Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, he did not intend for anyone else to do it.

When he told Joshua to go around an enemy city seven days in a row ([Joshua 6:2-5](#)), he was not creating a law for all future followers. Similarly, when Jesus commanded his disciples to go only to the cities of Israel ([Matthew 10:5-6](#)), he was not creating an eternal law.

Even though God remains the same and his purpose remains the same, he sometimes gives commands that are suited to a particular person and circumstance. When we read a command God gave Abraham, we do not have to assume that we must also obey it. When we read a command given to the Jews, we do not assume that we must do it, too. Some of the commands he gave through Moses are still valid for us today; others are not, and we want to know how to discern the difference.

Animal sacrifices

Most Christians know that God commanded his people in the Old Testament to make animal sacrifices. Every day, they had rituals to perform, animals to kill and burn on the altar. There were various washings, grain offerings, wine offerings, and other offerings. Most Christians also know (by observation, if nothing else) that Christianity does not involve any animal offerings. What God once commanded, he no longer requires.

In this case we would be wrong to try to do what Israel was commanded to do.

We can see this explained in the book of Hebrews, chapter 10. The law was only a shadow, verse 1 says, not the reality of salvation. We could compare it to a sketch or a simple diagram, not the full picture. Or it is a silhouette, not the real person. Although the law had “the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year,” it was not able to make the worshippers complete, and it could not cleanse their consciences (verse 2). “It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (verse 4).

So when Christ came into the world, he said (quoting one of the Psalms) that sacrifices were not what God really wanted (verse 5). And by doing God’s will, Christ did away with the need for sacrifices (verses 9, 18). Christ did what they could only symbolize, and now that the reality is here, we no longer need the picture. The sacrifices were only a temporary command, given to the nation of Israel until Christ would come and fulfill what the sacrifices symbolized. God gave these commands — but he did not give them to us. We can’t assume that “if they were good enough for Israel, they are good enough for us.” No, in this case we would be wrong to try to do what Israel was commanded to do. We are a different people.

I use the example of sacrifices because it is something that all Christians agree on: These commandments given to Israel do not apply to us today. God himself, in the Scriptures, has told us so. Earlier in the book of Hebrews, we are told that “there must also be a change of the law” ([Hebrews 7:12](#)). The subject in that chapter is the priesthood. The Law of Moses said that only Levites could be priests. But Jesus Christ is our priest now, and the fact that he is a priest (even though he is not a Levite) shows that there has been a change in the law. The law that restricted the priesthood to Levites is no longer in force. The Eternal’s laws have changed.

The law told people that they were sinful, but it could not cleanse their consciences.

So, the book of Hebrews tells us, “The former regulation is *set aside* because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God” (verses 18-19). We draw near to God by Jesus Christ, of course, but notice those strong words about the law that God had given: It was *weak* and *useless*. It told people that they were sinful, but it could not cleanse their consciences. It could not forgive their sins. It was not the way that God was trying to save people. It had only a temporary purpose.

Later, we are told that there was something wrong with the first covenant (the agreement that God made with the Israelites at Mt. Sinai). The people couldn’t keep their part of the deal. God knew they couldn’t, but he made the covenant with them, anyway. It would be like us making a contract to sell our house for ten million dollars, knowing full well that the “buyer” didn’t have any money. Something is wrong with an agreement like that. God made this agreement with Israel even though he knew that they couldn’t live up to the bargain.

We need a Savior, not more and better laws. We need supernatural rescue.

God had a purpose in this, of course. It was one step in his purpose to bring us salvation. But it was just a preparatory step. It was designed to show that people could not keep laws. We need a Savior, not more and better laws. We need supernatural rescue, not more guidance and teaching.

A temporary law

Paul asks, “What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come” ([Galatians 3:19](#)). It was a temporary addition, designed from the start to be in force only until Christ came. That is why sacrifices and offerings are no longer needed. The same law that restricted the priesthood to Levites, the same law that commanded animal sacrifices, is all swept away by the coming of Christ. “The law was put in charge to lead us to Christ,” Paul writes (verse 24). “Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law” (verse 25). The law that Moses gave no longer supervises our relationship with God. We do not look to Levitical priests or sacrifices or rituals or anything else that is found only in the Law of Moses. Instead, we look to Christ. We trust in him for our salvation, not in our ability to keep laws.

Paul says the same thing in a different way in Ephesians 2. There he discusses the laws that separated Jews and Gentiles, laws that Jews had to keep to make them different from Gentiles. (Many of the laws we mentioned above were never given to Gentiles, and God did not expect Gentiles to keep them; they would cause Jews to be different from Gentiles. This purpose is specifically mentioned for some laws, such as in [Leviticus 20:24-25](#).)

The law created a barrier between the two peoples, and it created some hostility between them. But Christ destroyed this barrier “by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations” ([Ephesians 2:14-15](#)). He did this, Paul says, to reconcile both people to God through his cross (verse 16).

Jesus did not die to remove human-made laws. In God’s sight, human religious laws were never in force in the first place. But Jesus’ death did set aside God-made laws, such as animal sacrifices, because they had been designed in

advance to cease when Christ died. In this way Jesus removed laws that separated Jews from Gentiles. This includes animal sacrifices and many other laws. Now, God does not have different rules for Jews than for Gentiles.

Jesus' death set aside some of God's laws, such as animal sacrifices, because they had been designed in advance to cease when Christ died.

The laws of Moses have fulfilled their purpose, and now there is no need for anyone to offer sacrifices or do the old rituals. As it says in Hebrews, the old covenant is "obsolete" ([Hebrews 8:13](#)). Laws that the Eternal gave are indeed obsolete. Not because we are tired of them or think they are old-fashioned, not because church history says so, but because God himself says so in Scripture.

But how much does this include? The old covenant included laws against stealing, murder, and adultery. Are those laws obsolete? Of course not. We will need to investigate a bit further. But to provide a better foundation for our studies, we need to take a closer look at circumcision.

Review

God gave commands that were designed to be temporary.

It would be wrong to offer sacrifices, even though God once required them.

What is wrong with the argument, "God's law doesn't change, because God doesn't change"?

Author: Michael Morrison

CHRISTIAN LIVING STORIES: MISSION / PURPOSE (From GCI - <https://www.gci.org/articles/mission-purpose/>)

People who have a purpose in life live healthier and longer lives, concluded neuropsychologist, Patricia Boyle. Dr. Boyle was quoted in a Wall Street Journal article by Diane Cole entitled "Why You Need to Find a Mission" (January 14, 2013). Having a purpose, Boyle pointed out, slows cognitive decline. When asked to define purpose in life, Boyle replied, "It's the sense that your life has meaning. You're engaged in things that you think are important on a broader level, beyond just yourself." She goes on to say, "Being purposeful is not something that just happens without your being active and intentional." I found this article thought-provoking, especially from a Christian perspective.

To be honest, I'm not big on "missions" and "mission statements." To me the word "mission" sounds task-oriented. Being a bit lazy, I tend to shy away from anything remotely resembling more work I might have to do. But I do like the word "purpose." To me purpose indicates my life makes a difference and reminds me what I do every day matters to God and those around me.

I'll never be a Mother Teresa, and you'll never be a Dr. Albert Schweitzer or a Billy Graham. But I suggest that's not what God specifically called you or me to do. Maybe God called us to live ordinary lives intentionally trying to do what he would have us do in any given circumstance.

While I admire great missional leaders who do extraordinary things, I think God is just as pleased with the Christ-centered grandmother who raises her grandchildren with godly principles because her drugged-out daughter is in jail. The aged spouse who cheerfully cares for a mate with Alzheimer's touches my heart. The policeman with a devotional in his pocket who puts himself in harm's way to protect others paints a picture of what Christianity is about.

I think about the soldier who fights for my freedom counseling with a chaplain and praise God that the chaplain is there. The housebound prayer warrior who sends out cards and letters of encouragement is on mission with God. The single mother grocery clerk, working two jobs to keep her family fed, who smiles at me and tells me to have a blessed day is on mission. The dedicated teacher, trying to teach morality to her students in spite of low pay, overcrowded classrooms, and under-funded programs has God's heart and understands her mission.

Mission is done by ordinary people who rely on our extraordinary God; people who see their purpose as simply trying to live a Christian life. By living in mission, they bring glory to God and positively affect those around them. For some of us I believe our mission—our purpose in life—is as simple as sharing the love of God by how we live our lives. We are God's workmanship, created to live our lives according to his will ([Ephesians 2:10](#)). If we stay God-centered, he will give our lives meaning, keep us focused and motivated—and provide the strength that can keep us going ([Philippians 4:13](#)).

Author: Barbara Dahlgren

GCI principle website and Moncton Websites—www.gci.org, www.worshipim.ca, www.facebook.com/GCIMoncton; For a wealth of helpful articles about God, grace and his plan for salvation, who we are, etc., please see the GCI.org website. *Contact Information: Pastor's contact information: email—evautour47@outlook.com*