

The Timeless Voice: We have a higher hope than U.S. law

Every day we see the problems facing our country – drug abuse, violence, crime, education woes, and so on. And though we often point the finger at external circumstances, the root of each of these problems is the sinful heart of man. No one is immune from sin, and we can see its fruit all around us.

Throughout history, people have tried to control and contain this sin through laws. A just society must. Yet laws alone fail to resolve the root problem. Laws can provide guidelines and restrictions, but they cannot change the heart of man. Man-made laws will continue to fall short of the solutions we really need as long as we continue to fall short of holiness.

We can see the shortcomings of the law most especially as we look at ancient Israel. The Israelites were blessed by perfect law from the Holy God. Yet, Israel still faced enormous problems in their own nation. Their hearts were still wicked, and so the problems persisted.

The perfect law was unable to do what only God can accomplish, to give God's people new hearts. God promised this inner transformation to Israel through the Prophet Ezekiel: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws" (Ezekiel 36:26-27). Only after this transformation would Israel have the power to obey the law.

If God's perfect law could not sanctify Israel, then certainly, our laws cannot sanctify America.

That is not to say we should ignore the legislative process entirely. As Paul explained, the law is a guide and a moral

teacher (Galatians 3:24). Without the law we would not know we need a Savior (Romans 7).

The problem arises, however, when we put our hope for cultural transformation into worldly solutions. We cannot put our focus, our passion, or our hope into changing laws. It cannot become our “gospel.” Rather, we must focus on the only true and lasting change, a transformed life through the salvation of Jesus Christ.

True transformation will only come by witnessing the gospel and one-on-one discipleship. America will be transformed one person at a time. Yes, it is more work than just passing a law, but it is the example that Christ set for us. When we all do our part as the body of Christ, we will be amazed at how much impact we can have in our communities, state, and nation.

If we are to engage in legislation, let us use it as a tool to witness the gospel. Let us use law to point to people’s need for a Savior and a deeper transformation that can only come through Christ. Let us lead people to the One who has power to bring hope, life, and love – the power to make all things new.

As the famous hymn says: “My hope rests on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus’ name.”