



Minding the Gap - March 2016

A Faith and Work Publication

Welcome to Minding the Gap, a monthly thought about faith in the workplace!

"Law & Gospel in the World of Work"

I have to believe that the statement "Law and Gospel" is a phrase with which we're somewhat familiar. It is a basic principle upon which Jesus reframed the entire purpose and dynamic of living. Perhaps one of the clearest examples of this perspective is Jesus' teaching in the "Sermon on the Mount". Specifically, when you read Matthew 5:38-42, you have a good description of the contrast between **Law and Gospel**:

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. But I say to you, do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you."

As we know from the Old Testament, the former teachings for the Hebrews were based on the Law or as they called it "Torah". There is clearly benefit in "**Law**" because it provides order, rules, control, boundary, stability, etc. which everyone needs in their lives. Jesus even said that he came not to abolish but to fulfill the law. Or said differently, to take us beyond it to an even better condition where we live in love, grace, peace, wholeness (**Gospel**). However, in doing so, we sometimes feel like we are moving into conditions of disorder, complexity, shades of gray, etc., which results in discomfort. But "yes" this is, in fact, where God is asking us to go.

Nowhere is this more challenging than in the "world-of-work" --- to be a person who carries the essence of the Gospel into an organization. Plain and simple, the essence of the Gospel isn't the first thing we consider in helping organizations run orderly or efficiently. It's 'laws'(regulations, policies, guidelines) that make organizations run more smoothly and thank goodness for them. The problem is 'laws' don't touch the heart, but the Gospel does. And, as I once heard said, "What goes deepest to the heart goes broadest to the world." This axiom is especially true in the realm of relationship, which is at the heart of the Gospel. Unfortunately, the great majority of relationships within work occur on a **transactional basis** (you do that for me and I'll do this for you). The "good news" is with the presence of Gospel, relationship becomes **transformational**. Transformational because then relationship contains the elements of love, compassion, commitment and trust, those being the key ingredients for making an organization effective if not efficient. Richard Rohr becomes even more descriptive about the Gospel and relationship when he writes: "The only people who change, who are transformed, are people who feel safe, who feel their dignity, and who feel loved. When you feel loved, when you feel safe, and when you know your dignity, you just keep growing! That's what loving people do for one another--offer safe relationships in which we can change. This kind of love is far from sentimental; it has real power.!"

Blessings to you this Holy Week and Easter!

- Jim Grubs

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