

# A WORD ON WORSHIP

## Review of Message from March 12, 2017

BY PASTOR ANDREW KICKERT, SUNRISE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Hear Sunday Sermons at [www.SunriseTC.org](http://www.SunriseTC.org)

### Genesis 31:42

*“If the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had not been for me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the toil of my hands, so He rendered judgment last night.”*

Ethics is the difference between legality and morality. We live in a day when Christians and non-Christians alike think that whatever is legal is legitimate Christian activity. We, like Jacob, have our own pole-peeling and wheeling and dealing, which we think God is obliged to bless. No wonder the world is legalizing homosexual marriage and the right to government paid abortion. To them, legality is morality so if it isn't illegal, it is moral.

Laban had lived in close association with Jacob for twenty years, and he was convinced of Jacob's lack of integrity. Laban believed that Jacob stole his goods and that Jacob had underhandedly gotten possession of his flocks. Does this sound like a man who was convinced that Jacob was a godly man? And yet Jacob seems to be convinced of his own integrity. He is certain that God is on his side because of his uprightness. How could Jacob have been so mistaken? I have come to believe that the answer is that Jacob was a legalist. Jacob prided himself on being a man who kept the letter of the law. Never, to his knowledge at least, had he ever broken his word. He had made a deal with Laban, and he had always lived up to it. Oh, he had peeled those poles all right, but that was not a breach of their agreement.

But here is the heart of the error of legalism, for legalism equates morality with legality. It believes that righteousness and the keeping of the law are one and the same thing. A man may have no system of ethics whatever, but so long as he does not break the law, he feels morally pure. He feels confident of the approval and blessing of God. Legalism is sinful because men love to set human standards which, if they are kept, produce a man's righteousness. Christian liberty views the standard for our thoughts and actions to be our Lord Himself, for it is to His image that we are being conformed (Romans 8:29).

The Bible does draw lines, clear lines at times. There are absolutes, and there are rules. But in addition to these, perhaps I should say above all these, is another standard of conduct which we shall call ethics or convictions. Many Christians seem to have too few of these, and yet this is what sets a true Christian apart in the eyes of the world. How many of us are viewed by the world as Jacob was by Laban? How many of us have convictions that cause us to avoid certain practices, even if they are legal? Christian ethics should be so high that legalistic rules are never necessary, at least for those who are righteous.



**Sunrise Community Church**  
*Come acknowledge the Lord in our midst*  
**EVERY SUNDAY BEGINNING AT 8:45 A.M.**

9642 Live Oak Ave. • Temple City, CA 91780

(626) 287-6120 • [PastorAndy@SunriseTC.org](mailto:PastorAndy@SunriseTC.org) • [www.SunriseTC.org](http://www.SunriseTC.org)