



"And now I am no more in the world,
but these are in the world..." (John 17:11).

Use this recent news story to help your students see the relevance
of this week's lesson from the Standard Lesson Commentary®
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WHEN THE LAW IS GOOD . . .

Law enforcement authorities ordered more than 180,000 people in northern California to evacuate several towns last Sunday night. Some people did not evacuate, thinking they could save themselves. Authorities feared that the 770-foot high Oroville dam—the tallest in the country—was in danger of failing due to recent heavy rains. The main spillway had already been damaged, and Sunday the reservoir reached its capacity and overflowed the emergency spillway. That's when authorities used the power of the law to force the evacuation. If the dam had failed, their order could have possibly saved countless lives.

. . . AND WHEN IT ISN'T

In Galatia, Christians had found spiritual freedom by trusting in the grace of God. Later, many of them were persuaded to retreat from faith. They began to trust in the law's commandments and their own ability to fulfill those commandments as the means to gain God's favor and love. Paul reminded them that the law could not save them and neither could they save themselves.

1. Are the edicts of civil law always good? Is religious "law" always bad? What exceptions can you cite?
2. What parallels do you see between people's refusal to obey the evacuation orders and some Christians' rejection of the gospel?
3. Why did the Galatians turn back from the gospel to the law?
4. In what ways are Christians tempted to do the same today? Give examples.
5. Do you struggle with this issue in your spiritual life? Explain.

—Charles R. Boatman

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