

JESUS ESSENTIALS – WEEK 3 – GRACE AND LAW

MONDAY – Perfect Obedience



Matthew 5: 17 *Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to destroy but to fulfil.*

The term “Law or the Prophets” often heard said by the Jews of Jesus’ day referred to the Scriptures or Old Testament. As Jesus opens this long discourse about the law, He makes it clear that rather than destroying anything, He wanted to free it from the way Pharisees and Scribes had wrongly interpreted it. (Enduringword.com).

To emphasise His intention to not abrogate this law, our Lord Jesus has embodied all its commands in His own life; in His own life there was a nature which perfectly conformed to the law of God. Further “as was His nature, such was His life” – Spurgeon.

When He reassures them of His intention with “*I did not come to destroy*”, there is also a glimpse of

His authority apart from the Law of Moses. With “*but to fulfil*” He confirms no contradiction, no addition except one thing no other person had ever added to the law: perfect obedience. This is certainly one way Jesus came “*to fulfil*” the law.

Jesus fulfilled the penalty of Law and the Prophets for us by His death on the cross, taking the penalty we deserve. (Enduringword.com).

Consider: How do you merge the OT law and the “...greatest commandment in the Law...” in **Matthew 22: 37-40**, given that Jesus points out in “**Matthew 22: 40** *On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.*”?



Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank You for love and patience that we can gratefully accept Your gift of grace in the sacrifice You made in Jesus on the cross but struggle daily to follow the example He lived while He was here on earth. Please lead and guide us Lord, to reconsider our motivations and actions regularly and continually considering the perfect example You have given us. AMEN

TUESDAY – Christ and The Law



Mathew 5: 17 *Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to destroy but to fulfil.*

John Stott has bound Matthew 5: 17-18 as “Christ and the law” and in v17, the way that Jesus phrases the negative statement suggests that He was aware that some had indeed been thinking that thought which He now contradicts. This opinion would have stemmed from His new teachings and clear authority over evil spirits versus the law of Moses and the “teachers of the law” who could only claim the authority they quoted.

Jesus also used a powerful formula no other prophet or modern scribe had used; He would often introduce some of His most impressive utterances with “Truly I say to you”.

Jesus declares Himself plainly on the issue and makes it clear that He is here on a mission to fulfil the law.

The verb used ‘to fulfil’ translated means “to fill” and as Chrysostom expresses it, no repeal but a drawing out and filling up of them, and this on three values, doctrinal teaching, predictive prophesy and ethical precepts (the moral law of God).

Consider: How do you fare in applying the law and the prophets (OT) to your own life? Does it not hold more value when you consider that since the OT contains teachings, prophesy, and moral law, that those are what are of immense value to your journey with The Lord?



Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Word that You have sent out to accomplish what You sent it to do, like rain that waters the earth, that our lives can be guided and taught into a life that brings You glory and fulfils the two greatest commands Jesus gave us, to love You and love our neighbour. AMEN

WEDNESDAY – Attaining The Law



Matthew 5: 19a *Therefore whoever shall relax one of these commandments, the least, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven.*

In **Matthew 5:17** Jesus declared that He fulfilled the law adding His obedience too, but not in the legalistic thinking of the religious authorities of His day: consider that sacrifice is commanded by the law and fulfilled by Jesus, thus we do not run the danger of being the least by not observing animal sacrifice. (enduringword.com)

John Stott points out that all the laws of God are important to Him, and to relax it, to loosen its hold on our conscience and authority in our lives is an offence to God whose law it is.

Matthew 5: 19b *But whoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven.*

In **Galatians 2: 21** we are reminded that righteousness

comes through Christ's death on the cross, "*I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness is through law, then Christ died without cause.*", however the law stands as perfect expression of God's ethical character and requirements.

The law sends us to Jesus to be justified, because it shows us our inability to please God in ourselves. But after we come to Jesus, He sends us back to the law to learn the heart of God for our conduct and sanctification. (enduringword.com)

Consider: When you consider the enormous sacrifice Jesus made for you on the cross, do you also contemplate the example of His lifestyle that points back to the "Law and the Prophets" that you can follow in kind but not degree?



Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Love and patience as we gratefully accept the grace of the sacrifice of Jesus but struggle to attain to the example He lived. AMEN

THURSDAY – The Christian and the law



Matthew 5: 19a *Therefore whoever shall relax one of these commandments, the least, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven.*

John Stott has bound Matthew 5: 19-20 as “The Christian and the law” and “Therefore” introduces the deduction which Jesus now draws from the enduring validity of the law and His own attitude with respect to it.

Not all the commandments are equally weighty thus there could be a ‘least’ in our opinion, and to disregard a ‘least’ is to demote oneself to a ‘least’ subject. Spurgeon wrote “The peerage of Christ’s kingdom is ordered according to obedience”.

John Stott indicates that Christian righteousness is greater than the pharisaic righteousness because it is deeper, being a righteousness of the heart. The Freudian concept of ‘depth-psychology’ reflects that the concern of Jesus was for a ‘depth-morality’.

Pharisees were content with an external and formal obedience; Jesus teaches us that God’s demands are far more radical than this. The righteous which is pleasing to Him is an inward righteousness of mind and motive. We know well with the anointing of the shepherd boy David that “The Lord looks at the heart”.

This heart-righteousness the prophets foresaw as one of the blessings of the Messianic age as in Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 31: 33b *...After those days, says Jehovah, I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*

Consider: How can you turn the external adherence to the law into an internal moral guiding power?



Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for Your Word that contains Your perfect will for us, that guides us to seek and find Your will, Your Spirit that can enable us and Your Son Jesus who has redeemed us. AMEN.

FRIDAY – Completing the Picture



Matthew 5: 17-20 “Christ came to Fulfil the Law”.
(Southfellowship.org).

When humanity fell, it was a 4-fold fracture, our relationship with our Creator God, with other people, with ourselves and our relationship with creation were all fractured.

The OT, the law and the prophets were all meant to guide the nation of Israel back to what it looks like to live as a people of Shalom. When Jesus says He fulfils the law, He puts on display what it means to live a life of Shalom. It can be said that He did not come to discard the Law, He came to display their intent. Therefore the OT passages intended to do something in us, to also form us into a people that would be characterized by freedom, by love and by justice.

Matthew 22: 40 “*The whole Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets depend on these two commandments.*”

In **Matthew 22: 37-40** Jesus states the two greatest commands and

points out that which He has come to fulfil, that which He will not discard, are all summed up in those two.

When learning a new musical instrument, you learn chords, notes, and practice scales. The goal is not to play scales but to make music. Moving from the OT teachings of learning to live to the life Jesus has given us, is to put on display the love, the freedom, the justice; we are moving to making music.

Timothy 3: 16-17 points out that the Scriptures are intended and useful for shaping us, not telling us what to do in every situation, but forming us into people that we’re becoming.

Consider from Dallas Willard: “Trying merely to keep the law is not wholly unlike trying to make an apple tree bear peaches by typing peaches to its branches.”



Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for Your life that shows us how to live the heart of the Law. We pray for wisdom and guidance in taking that message out into the world. AMEN