

II.VII THE LAW OF GOD STILL APPLIES TODAY: Matthew 5:17-20 - Shepherd School

I. OPENING RAYER: All.

II. SERMON:

THE LAW OF GOD STILL APPLIES TODAY: Matthew 5:17-20

INTRODUCTION. How do you think about the Law and the Prophets now that Christ has come?

Jesus Himself gives you a great warning to think correctly about His Law and Prophets when he says, "Do not think" (**Matthew 5:17a**). **Read Matthew 5:17-20.**

How you think about the Law and the Prophets can be the difference between heaven and hell; or, at the very least between being least and great in the kingdom of Christ.

This passage of Scripture is especially crucial for today, because the professed church seems filled with both Antinomians as well as those, like the Scribes and Pharisees, who pretend to have a righteousness based on their works, while they only wash the outside of the cup.

You need to pay careful attention to Christ's words here in Matthew 5:17-20, for God's glory, your neighbors' good, and your eternal gladness.

DOCTRINE. Those who *relax God's Law* will be called least, and those who *do it* will be called great in Christ's kingdom.

CONTEXT. This portion of Scripture can be seen as the introduction to Christ's sermon on the mount, with the Beatitudes and the Salt of the Earth passage seen sort of like the preface.

OUTLINE. As for the outline, I want to point you to *eight points of instruction* drawn directly from the text and then finish with some simple exhortations.

I. CHRIST DID NOT COME TO ABOLISH THE LAW OR THE PROPHETS (Matthew 5:17a).

Matthew 5:17a "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets;"

I) Christ did not come to abolish what Moses wrote in the Law.

II) Christ did not come to abolish what the Prophets wrote in the rest of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Therefore we can say,

Unhitching from the Old Testament is unhitching from Christ, who says He came not to abolish the Law or the Prophets but to fulfill them.

II. CHRIST CAME TO FULFILL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS (Matthew 5:17b).

Matthew 5:17b "I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

**NOTE, He says twice, "I have not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets."*

QUESTION. In what sense does Christ mean He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets?

Let me give you **FIVE** answers:

ANSWER 1. Christ fulfills the Law and the Prophets by literally fulfilling all of the promises, predictions, and foreshadowings of Himself in them. All the Law and the Prophets bear witness about Him.

- **Acts 10:43** "To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

ANSWER 2. Christ fulfills the Law and the Prophets by clarifying the true sense of the commandments. He removes the false teaching and presents the true understanding and application of God's Law.

- **Matthew 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43,** "You have heard that it was said. . ."
- **Matthew 6:1** "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them." **This shines light on why Christ says what He does in Matthew 5:20:**
"For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."
 - **POOLE:** "Our Saviour designing, in his following discourse, to give a more full and strict interpretation of the law than had been given by the Pharisees and other Jewish doctors, prefaces that discourse with a protestation against his coming to destroy the law, and averring that he came to

fulfill it."

- **LET ME BE CRYSTAL CLEAR: The Sermon on the Mount is largely a polemic against the false teaching of the Pharisees.**

ANSWER 3. Christ fulfills the Law and the Prophets by meeting the righteous requirements of God's Moral Law through His sinless life. He then accredits His righteousness to all who believe.

- **Romans 3:28** "For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law."

ANSWER 4. Christ fulfills the Law and the Prophets by suffering the just punishments of God's Moral Law through His substitutionary death. He removes the sin of His people.

- **Galatians 3:13** "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree'"

ANSWER 5. Christ fulfills the Law and the Prophets by enabling Christians to walk in obedience to the Law. Christ enables believers, by regeneration and sanctification, to obey the Law of God from the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- **Romans 8:3-4** "3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."
 - **TRAPP:** "Thus Christ still fulfills the law in his people; into whose hearts he putteth a disposition answerable to the outward law in all things, as in the wax is the same impression that was upon the seal."

III. EVERY CROSSING OF A "T" AND DOTTING OF AN "I" IN THE MORAL LAW OF GOD STANDS FIRM IN PERPETUITY (Matthew 5:18).

Matthew 5:18 "For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished."

- **POOLE:** "[When Christ says] 'Till heaven and earth pass,' etc.; [he means] the law is the certain and unchangeable will of God concerning reasonable creatures, and it shall never be altered in the least tittle, nor ever be abolished; you may therefore be secure that I come into the world upon no such errand."

IV. WHOEVER *RELAXES* ONE OF THE LEAST OF THE COMMANDMENTS IN THE MORAL LAW OF GOD WILL BE CALLED LEAST IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM (Matthew 5:19a).

Matthew 5:19a "Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven,"

- **HENRY:** "Thus to vacate any of the ten commandments, is too bold a stroke for the jealous God to pass by. It is something more than transgressing the law, it is making void the law (Ps. 119:126)."

V. WHOEVER *TEACHES OTHERS TO RELAX* ONE OF THE LEAST OF THE COMMANDMENTS IN THE MORAL LAW OF GOD WILL ALSO BE CALLED LEAST IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM (Matthew 5:19a).

Matthew 5:19a "Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven,"

USE FOR WARNING

Those who relax the Law are least; and those who both relax and teach others to relax the Law must be doubly-least.

Those who relax or teach others to relax the Law are least in the visible Kingdom of grace on earth and likely will be excluded from the Kingdom of glory in heaven.

Use the Law lawfully (1 Tim. 1), lest you be a soul murdering false teacher, promoting damnable heresies.

VI. WHOEVER *DOES* THE COMMANDMENTS IN THE MORAL LAW OF GOD WILL BE CALLED GREAT IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM (Matthew 5:19b).

Matthew 5:19b "but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

VII. WHOEVER *TEACHES OTHERS TO DO* THE COMMANDMENTS IN THE MORAL LAW OF GOD WILL ALSO BE CALLED GREAT IN CHRIST'S KINGDOM (Matthew 5:19b).

Matthew 5:19b "but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

- **HENRY:** "Those who extenuate and encourage sin, and discountenance and put contempt upon strictness in religion and serious devotion, are the dregs of the church. But, on the other hand, Those are truly honourable, and of great account in the church of Christ, who lay out themselves by their life and doctrine to promote the purity and strictness of practical religion; who both do and teach that which is good; for those who do not as they teach, pull down with one hand what they build up with the other, and give themselves the lie, and tempt men to think that all religion is a delusion; but those who speak from experience, who live up to what they preach, are truly great; they honour God, and God will honour them (1 Sam. 2:30), and hereafter they shall shine as the stars in the kingdom of our Father."

VIII. YOU MUST HAVE FORGIVENESS OF YOUR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, THE IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST, AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD WHO ENABLES YOU TO FULFILL THE LAW FROM THE HEART (Matthew 5:20).

Matthew 5:20 "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

- **HENRY:** "[The Scribes and Pharisees] were partial in the law, and laid most stress upon the ritual part of it; but we must be universal, and not think it enough to give the priest his tithe, but must give God our hearts. They minded only the outside, but we must make conscience of inside godliness. They aimed at the praise and applause of men, but we must aim at acceptance with God: they were proud of what they did in religion, and trusted to it as a righteousness; but we, when we have done all, must deny ourselves, and say, We are unprofitable servants, and trust only to the righteousness of Christ; and thus we may go beyond the scribes and Pharisees."

SEVEN CONCLUDING EXHORTATIONS.

I) Think about the Law of God like Christ teaches you to.

II) Look to Christ and His death for forgiveness and teach others to do the same.

III) Look to Christ and His life for righteousness and teach others to do the same.

IV) Praise God that the righteous requirement of the Law is fulfilled in you as you walk by the Spirit.

V) Praise God that He accepts even your sin-tainted Law-keeping for Christ's sake and calls you great in His Kingdom.

VI) Rebuke those who seek to relax or teach others to relax the Law of God, showing them how God says they are but least in the Kingdom of Heaven.

VII) Strive to keep and teach the Law of God, by God's empowering grace, never unhitching from it.

III. SONG:

B r e a k (start back at 7:10pm)

IV. 1689 Confession: Ch 19. Par 3-5 (finish by 7:35pm)

V. DISCUSSION (finish by 8pm)

God's Law Made Easy

The Ten Commandments

Closing Prayer

SYLLABUS

📖 SHEPHERD SCHOOL - SEASON TWO (2026) - THE WORD, THE GOSPEL, & THE LAW 📖

WEEK	Scripture	Book I <i>(read before)</i>	Book II <i>(read before)</i>	1689 Confession	Certificate Essays	Certificate Exposition
1. 2/12	2 Timothy 2:1-7	INTRO	INTRO	INTRO	INTRO	INTRO
2. 2/19	1 Thessalonians 2:13	The Properties of the Written Word, Part 1: Authority and Clarity <i>Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1)</i> by Joel Beeke (pg. 334-351)	The Ten Commandments <i>Obedience & Love</i> by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 1 Par. 1-3		
3. 2/26	Isaiah 8:19-20	The Properties of the Written Word, Part 2: Necessity, Unity, Efficacy <i>Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1)</i> by Joel Beeke (pg. 352-370)	The Ten Commandments <i>The Preface to the Commandments (pg. 12-29)</i> by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 1 Par. 4-5		
4. 3/5	Psalms 19:7-11	The Properties of the Written Word, Part 3: Inerrant Veracity <i>Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1)</i> by Joel Beeke (pg. 371-382)	The Ten Commandments <i>The Preface to the Commandments (pg. 29-43)</i> by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 1 Par. 6-8		First Draft Exposition Due *Certificate path will meet an extra night this week
5. 3/12	2 Timothy 3:15-17	The Properties of the Written Word, Part 5: Sufficiency <i>Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1)</i> by Joel Beeke (pg. 395-408)	The Ten Commandments <i>The Right Understanding of the Law</i> by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 1 Par. 9-10		
6. 3/19	Matthew 19:17 + Romans 2:14-15	Introduction + The Essence of God's Law <i>God's Law Made Easy</i> by Kenneth Gentry (pg. 1-24)	The Ten Commandments <i>The First Commandment</i> by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 19 Par. 1-2		
7. 3/26	Matthew 5:17-20	Christ and God's Law + The New Testament and God's Law <i>God's Law Made Easy</i> by Kenneth Gentry (pg. 25-46)	The Ten Commandments <i>The Second Commandment</i> by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 19 Par. 3-5	Short Essay on the Sufficiency of the Scriptures *1,000-1,200 words	

