

# Fulfillment of the Law

by Bill McLeod

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*Bill McLeod's sermon emphasizes that love is the essence of fulfilling God's law and is crucial for authentic Christian life and community.*

**Duration:** 39:35

**Scripture:** Matthew 22:39, Romans 13:8, Romans 13:10-11, Ephesians 4:32, 1 Peter 1:22, 1 Peter 4:8

**Topics:** "Law Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a story about a man who was called by God to spread the word among English people. The man started off on foot, then progressed to a horse and eventually a car, but every Saturday he would go door to door, trying to win people to Christ. The preacher emphasizes the importance of having fervent love among believers, as love covers a multitude of sins. He encourages looking for the good in others and helping them in their struggles. The sermon also highlights the danger of hypocritical love and the need to love in truth and action, not just in words. The preacher references various Bible verses, including 1 Peter 4:8, Romans 12:9, 1 John 3:18, and Ezekiel 33:31, to support his message.

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## Transcript

Well, good morning. Beautiful day. I don't normally preach in a sweater.

It's the first time in 50 years. But I have my shoulder operated on, and I can't get a coat on anymore. And they must have dislocated some of these guys when they were chopping away, and I can't get a suit coat on.

Praise the Lord. Okay. Well, we're back on our bicycle.

I have an extra cycle, and we're putting in half an hour a day. But I can't use my right hand, so I hold on with the left. And so far, I haven't fallen.

Okay. I want to read a few verses from Romans 13, beginning at verse 6. He says, For this cause pay you tribute also. He's talking about income tax or taxes on property, whatever.

We're to pay tribute. For they are God's ministers, people who are supported by our taxes, are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom is due, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

Owe no man anything. Notice the context here. When he says, Owe no man anything, he's not talking about owing money to somebody.

He's talking in the context about rendering tribute and custom and fear and honor to others. Owe no man anything but to love one another. For he that loves another has fulfilled the law.

For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet. And if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. By the way, that phrase occurs ten times in the Bible, three times in the Old Testament, seven times in the New.

Very important. Love works no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And that knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and loose living, not in strife and envying, but put you on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof.

Moody was a famous American evangelist. Most of his crusades were in the States. He had some in England and Scotland, Ireland, and once in Canada.

They reckon about a million people found Christ as their Savior through his labors. But not long before he died, addressing a group of 400 pastors, he said something like this. He mentioned the fact that thousands and thousands had been saved, but he was hearing from pastors who were saying, We have all these new converts in our churches, but they don't seem to have much love in them.

There's all kinds of divisions and trouble going on in our churches, and they were appealing to Moody to have some remedy for this. Because some churches received maybe 500 members and some even more than that. And as he listened to the pastors that day, as he spoke to the pastors, here's what he said.

Hold the churches to love, for this is where we've gone wrong. Was he right? I think he was. We have the same problem today.

My wife and I, just in the last few days, we've heard of three or four churches that are struggling, divisions, problems. It shouldn't be. But listen to what Moody said.

The problem is just a lack of love. The Bible has a great deal to say about this. 1 Corinthians 13, 8 says love never fails.

And by the way, it's the only thing that never fails. And in the Song of Solomon, Chapter 8, there's a verse that says, Love is as strong as death. That's a mighty statement, right? Love is as strong as death.

We need to think of what's happening. Now we're warned by Christ in Matthew 24, 12, that in the last days, just before His return, because iniquity would abound, sin would abound, the love of many would get cold. And that's happening today in our churches.

We see sin abounding, getting worse, not better. And it looks like the entire financial world structure is going to collapse. And one of the leaders said just the other day, we're very close to it right now.

And mainly, as they're all confessing, it's because of covetousness and greed. People earning \$3 million a year, they're not happy. They want \$5 million a year.

The Bible says to all of us as believers, having food and clothing, let us be there with content. What? No two cars, four-bedroom house, 500,000 in the bank, none of this stuff? Having food and clothing, let us be there with content. We note in 2 Timothy 3 where he talks about the last days, and there's two things said, one at the beginning and one at the end of the statement.

Men shall be lovers of themselves and lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Is that true? Yes, I think it is. I heard somebody say just yesterday, he said hockey is Canada's religion.

Is that your religion? For some people it is. There are in the States numbers of TV stations that have nothing but sports on 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We're mad on sports.

It is some people's religion. I trust none of us in this room here. 2 Timothy 3 verses 1 and on, 1 to 4. Romans 12, 9 says, Let love be without hypocrisy.

And hypocritical love is love that is not felt but acted. I mean, we can act in a loving way and not really mean it. So we're warned, let love be without hypocrisy, Romans 12, 9. 1 John 3, 18, Let us love in word or in tongue, but indeed in truth.

Well, he's just following through with this idea of having a hypocritical love. It's not in word, it's not in tongue, it's indeed and in truth. And that is what God is looking for, of course, in our hearts.

So 1 John 3, 18 then, Let us love in word or in tongue, but indeed in truth. Ezekiel 33, 31 says, With their mouth they show much love, but their heart goes after their covetousness. Is that a problem? I'm sure it is for many in our day because everybody is striving to get a little more money in the bank for a rainy day.

Is God going to die someday? As Christians, we need never fear. He'll look after us. He's pledged himself to be that and to do that.

So with their mouth, much love, heart, covetous. And covetousness is idolatry. A covetous man is an idolater.

So the Word tells us very, very clearly. Matthew 5, 46, Christ said, in effect, If you only love those that love you, what reward do you expect to have? There are many of us, we don't love outside our own family. We love our family, that's it.

But Christ said, If that's all you love, and you're the example he gave of himself. He said that his Father, God, makes the rain to fall and the sun to shine on the field of the wicked as well as on the field of the righteous. That's the example he gives.

So we're to love all men, everywhere, as occasion demands and suggests us to be. 1 Corinthians chapter 12, it mentions the gifts of the Spirit. And it's followed by 1 Corinthians 13.

And they're a marvelous couplet here because the gifts of the Spirit, very important. Much written about it. Much preaching about it.

And in some circles, many very, very concerned and seeking for the gifts. And nobody's reading chapter 13 because it ends chapter 12 by saying that we should covet earnestly the best gifts. But he says, I want

to show you a far better way.

There's something far better than having a spiritual gift or gifts. So, he says, do I speak with a tongue of men and of angels and have not love? What am I? He says, you're a clanging gong or a clashing cymbal. You're just a noise, that's all.

And there's many, this chapter 13 goes on and on. No love, we're nothing. We can do nothing for God.

So, it's far more important, dear people, to be filled with the love of God than to have some outstanding gift that I can display. So, people will maybe look up to me. It says of Pharaoh one time in the Old Testament in Jeremiah, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, God said, he's just a noise.

Just a noise. That's really all I am. If I'm exercising some spiritual gift, but my heart is empty of love, I'm just a noise, just an actor.

It means nothing to God. Now, characteristics of true love, we read in Romans 13, love works no ill to others, to his neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

Ephesians 5, 25, husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church. And then Titus 2, 4, the older women are to teach the younger women to love their husbands and to love their children. Many times, older women can't do that because they don't love their own kids.

And they maybe don't love their own husband. But this is God's order. This is what he's telling us.

And 13, Romans, oh, no man anything but to love one another. That's the one thing we owe everybody we meet, is to love them to the glory of God. 1 John 3, 16, hereby we perceive the love of God because he laid down his life for us.

People say that was Jesus of Nazareth. That's right. But the Bible says God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

So then, 1 Corinthians 13a, people have asked me different times, do you know of a definition for love? No, I don't, but I know something quite close to it in 1 Corinthians 13. Love seeks not her own. Whatever it is, dear people, it's never self-seeking.

Love seeks not her own. You're always looking for people you can bless. People you can help.

People you can cheer. People you can inform about Christ. Look for opportunities.

I met a Christian one time, obviously a spiritual man. He was always looking, he told me, for somebody he could bless. If he saw somebody that looked sad, he went and put his arm around them, gave them a hug.

He would say, can I pray for you? We should be like that. Most of us are not. Anyway, love seeks not her own.

In 2 Corinthians 8, 7, and the last verse of the chapter as well, he talks about proving the sincerity of your love. And the proof of your love, he used that phrase, I think in verse 8. What is the proof of my love? He's talking about my love to God. Not in this context, a love towards other people, but to God Himself.

And you know what he's saying? He says you can gauge the reality of your love to God by how much you give God. It should never be the tithe. It should be, Lord, what would you have me to do? I like these life

action people.

I know 10 years ago, their weekly needs were \$30,000, but they never took offerings. Do you know how they handle it? They tell the people, we don't take offerings, but in the prayer room there's an offering box. So right now, we're just asking you to pray and say, dear God, should I give anything? Show me what I should do.

And they said about 15% of the congregation that they're facing and preaching to will visit the prayer box. And somehow, they make it through. They said, well, occasionally we ran into the red, and the minute we do that, we take a big offering for missions.

And right away, we're back in the black again. Very unusual. I preached a few weeks ago to the faith mission in Canada and British Columbia.

They never take offerings either, but God has been doing some great things for them. They know how to pray, and they know how to believe God. Do you know what God gave them recently? Well, in that area, to buy property on a lakefront.

It'll cost you \$1 million just for the land. God gave them 40 acres, beautiful spot, a complete camp, all the buildings, swimming pool, and everything for \$1 million. They said, we just prayed, and somebody offered us this property.

That's how it is. But the proof of our love? Could we pray that way? What should I do today, dear God? Instead of thinking, well, I'll give at least a tithe. That's fine.

That's wonderful. Christ said about to tithe Matthew 23, this you ought to have done. It's right that you tithe.

But that's not the whole story. He was talking to Pharisees and Sadducees. 1 Corinthians 8, one says, knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

There's a difference. I can have a head filled with knowledge and be very cold spiritually. Love builds up.

Knowledge puffs up. Where are we at today? The source of all love, Jeremiah 31, God said, I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore, with loving kindness, I have drawn you.

So in John 13, 1, it says of Jesus, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. And the end was the cross. He said to the disciples, you are they who have continued with me in my temptations, in my trials, and I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father has appointed me.

In spite of the problems, they stayed with Christ. They knew he was being persecuted and hated, but they stayed with him to the end. And having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end, although he knew the end would be the cross.

Even, it says in Philippians chapter 2, the death of the cross. What a wonderful example he gave us there. He told us in John 15, 10, Abide in my love.

What does he mean? It comes up again in Jude. It tells us to keep within the love of God, to stay there. It's easy to become sour.

Very easy. But we're not to be that or do that. We're to abide in his love.

We're to stay, keep ourselves in the love of God. No matter what happens, no matter what people say or do. You know, in Rwanda, after that awful slaughter there a few years ago, hundreds of thousands of people died.

At least half of the people that died in that slaughter were believers in Christ. And after the thing was over and peace was restored, then what happened? An amazing thing happened. Revival broke all over the country.

And churches were springing up everywhere. And people whose loved ones had been murdered were searching for the people that murdered their parents or whoever it was. That they could make reconciliation.

This was going on all over Rwanda. No wonder there was a revival. It sort of went together.

And so, we can't hold grudges against anybody no matter what. Christ said, they'll say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Don't be surprised if that happens.

It will happen. But you don't hate those that do it. You love those that do it by the grace of God and for His honor.

Keep yourselves in the love of God, Jude 21. Romans 15 30 speaks about the love of the Spirit. That's the Holy Spirit.

It's the only place in the Bible where that phrase occurs. The love of the Spirit. Then in Colossians chapter 1, He speaks about your love in the Spirit.

If we're filled with the Spirit of God, we'll be filled with the love of God. And let me say this. There is no such thing as being filled with the Spirit of God and not being filled with the love of God.

They go together. They belong together. When He talks about us being rooted and grounded in love in Ephesians chapter 3, He goes on to say, And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled unto all the fullness of God.

And we can't be filled with the fullness of God unless we're filled with the love of God. They go together. It's something I'm afraid has been lost in this generation.

So 2 Thessalonians 3 5, Paul said, The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God. The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God. So we have to pray, God, direct my heart into your love.

And then Romans 5 5, it says, The love of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us. If I want to be filled with the love of God, it's not a mechanical thing. It's not something you learn.

It has to be done by the Spirit of God. So it means we have to yield to Him. Let Him have His way in your life.

There may be things you have to do. I've had to make things right in the past. And so, in order to be filled, somebody said, I must be filled at any cost.

At any cost. No room for bitterness in the life of a believer. 1 Thessalonians 4 9 says, We're taught of God to love one another.

Are we really? How is God teaching us? Well, in several ways we're told this quite clearly. By precept, by command, by example. Precept, 1 John 4 7, I believe.

Beloved, the word beloved means divinely loved ones. Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God. And everyone that loves is born of God and knows God.

He that loves not knows not God, for God is love. There are twelve places in 1 John, five chapters, twelve places where love is made the acid test of reality in the Christian life. You don't have it if you're not filled with the love of God.

Is really what it's saying. Then by command, 1 John 3 23, This is His commandment that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another as He gave His commandment. Why didn't He say these are His commandments? He gave two of them.

He didn't say that. He said this is His commandment. And the reason He put it that way is because you can't have the one without the other.

Believe on Christ and automatically you must become a loving person since God has loved you. Then the example of 1 John 3 16, Hereby we perceive the love of God because He laid down His life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. We should have the same love for the church of God and for God's children as God has for us.

In other words, as someone put it rather neatly, just pass it along. You got it from God, pass it along. Love, His love in our hearts.

1 John 3 12, Paul, it was a prayer of the Lord to make you to increase and abound in love one toward another and towards all men, even as we do towards you to the end. To what end? To the end that He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints. You and I are not ready for the return of Christ if we're not filled with the love of God.

That's really what it's saying there. 1 Thessalonians 3 12, But we're working together with God, Colossians 2 2 says, that we're to have our hearts knit together in love. Knit together.

Kind of a peculiar phrase, is it not? Knit together with brothers and sisters who love Christ. We have different personalities. Maybe somebody's personality bothers us, so we don't like to be with them.

We need to work on that. Work on it. Does God love this? Yes, He does.

And He wants His love to flow through you to that person whom you find difficult to admire. We're to be rooted and grounded in love. Then remember Ephesians 3 14, Paul prayed in Philippians 1 9, This I pray, that your love may abound more and more.

So he knew the problem. He knew what the answer was in his day. And so his epistles are loaded with reference to this particular truth.

Getting rid of all that's evil, being filled with the love of God, and then not living in a tin can somewhere, but being out where the people are. Try to be a blessing. Try to help others.

Pray for people. It's not just preaching the gospel. There's other ways of preparing people for the gospel.

Hearts knit together in love. And again, going back to Ephesians 3:14, Rooted and grounded in the love of God. You know, when you win someone to Christ, we automatically think in terms of getting this new convert established in doctrine.

That's really not what he's saying here. We need to get them established in the love of God. Otherwise they may have a head filled with doctrine and a heart that's empty of the love of God.

You know, it's not just a case of sharing the gospel. When you and I share the gospel, the person we're talking to, they're sensing. If you're a loving person, they'll get some loving vibrations from you.

Otherwise, they're always a religious nut. They didn't get any religious vibrations at all. So we have to be right with God to be right with men.

It doesn't work the other way around. Right with God, filled with His love. We're told in 1 Thessalonians 5a, Put on the breastplate of faith and love.

So that's something I have to do. I'm to put on the breastplate of faith and love. Did you know that faith and love in the New Testament occur together in the same verse or context 32 times? Faith works by love, right? That's what it says.

You need more faith. You want more faith. You need to have it.

Okay. Faith works by love. Here's what Spurgeon said.

Faith is confidence in the love of God. When we don't really truly understand, you know, God is love. That's twice said.

But maybe we don't get it. I don't know. Faith is the soul at rest in the love of God.

That's exactly what Spurgeon said. He believed it and he preached it all his days. So, faith works by love.

He that loves another has fulfilled the law, as we read in Romans chapter 13. 1 Peter 1:22 says this, Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, see that you love one another with a pure heart, fervently being born again. I don't know why it is as Christians we think this way.

I've accepted Christ. Now maybe five or ten years down the road I'll be filled with the love of God. We reason that way because that's what we see in the churches.

But in this text in 1 Peter chapter 1, that's not how it is. Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart, fervently being born again. If you're born again.

The next thing they should follow then is a heart that has a fervent love for other people, no matter who. Near Dauphin, years ago, there was a man I'm sure he's with in heaven now. He had been in the German army and he was telling us one day how in the war, he said, I was living for the first day I could shoot an English person.

He just waited for that. And one day he had his chance and he had his sights on one of the army, the allied force. I don't know who it was.

He didn't know. But he said, I heard a voice that said, he too has a mother. He never shot anybody through the whole war.

He said, I made sure I didn't hit anybody firing the air down the ground. I couldn't kill anybody. But he was a huge man.

He had hands like hands. Just twice my size or more. But he loved the Lord.

And his wife found Christ through a Baptist church in the area. Now they were on a farm. And she told her husband one day, I'm going to be baptized by a merchant, by the Baptist.

Now they were Lutheran. You know what he told her? He said, If you do, I'll kill you. And she said, My husband was the kind of a person no matter what he said, how stupid it was, he would do it.

But she decided that God was bigger than her husband was. And the morning came for the baptismal service in Lake Dauphin. And here's what happened.

She got a big towel and stuff. He said, Where are you going? I'm going to be baptized, remember? He just stamped out of the room. He didn't think she'd do it.

She'd never disobey him. So after she was gone, he snuck through the bush and lay down where he could see the water. And he saw his wife in a line of six or eight people.

And he said, I kept saying to myself, She'll never do it. She'll never do it. She won't do it.

She won't do it. And she did it. And when she did it, he said, I was lying on the ground.

I said, Okay, God, you win. You win. I want to be a Christian.

And he could say, But he's a wonderful person. You know, God led him. Now his English was broken.

He was a great witness. And here's what he did. He had to farm.

Seed time or harvest made no difference. Saturday was his day for evangelism. And so he told the Lord, You know, My German is fine, but my English is horrible.

So I'd like to visit among German people. And the Lord said, No, I want you to visit among English people. So he did.

When he started off, he walked. Later on, he had a bike. Later on, he had a horse.

And finally, he had a car. But every Saturday, he went around the place, beating on doors, trying to win people to Christ. Instead of killing, saving.

But that was by the grace of God. But he knew what it meant to be filled with the love of God. That voice he heard certainly was from God.

One of God's elected people. That's how it started. That's not how it's finished.

So it says in 1 Peter 4.8, as if 1 Peter 1.22 was not enough, 1 Peter 4.8 it says, Have fervent love among yourselves, for love shall cover the multitude of sins. When you're filled with the love of God, you don't go poking around to see what kind of sins your brothers and sisters are in. That's not relevant any longer.

Love covers the multitude of sins. Look for the good points people have. Pray for them.

If they're struggling, help them. Don't condemn them. Help them.

We're told we're to provoke one another. Did you know that? Hebrews 10.24. We're supposed to provoke each other. It says that.

Provoke one another to love and to good works. Did you do that? Are you provoking one another to love and to good works? People were supposed to be doing that. This is part of the Word of God, remember? And we're to abide in His Word and walk in His ways.

Ephesians 4.12 it says, Be kind, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you. How many of your sins has Christ forgiven? Half? Three quarters? Or all? Well, we know He's forgiven them all. He has freely forgiven us all trespasses.

And so that is a background, He says, to us as His children. You're to be kind. You're to be tenderhearted.

You're to be forgiving one another. On what basis? Even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you. If God should treat us the way we sometimes treat other people, maybe in our own family, we wouldn't last long as children of God.

We'd be out in the cold again. But it's not that way. And God is simply calling us.

Remember? Hold the churches to love. Great revivals. I was in an area in the States where this one church I was in, when Billy Sunday was there, there were 500 converts in the church all of a sudden, almost overnight.

And it overwhelmed the church. They hardly knew how to handle it. Everybody was eager for God and some people were doing things that weren't probably biblical, but thought they were.

And it took a lot of grace and love and patience to handle it. Today, I'm sure most of you, knowing the situation we're facing now, are praying for revival. I don't know if you know how serious it is, but just the other day one of the leaders in the States said, We are very close to falling over the cliff.

And by that he meant the entire financial structure of the whole world will fall. And that can happen. We need to be praying much about the situation.

They've got a new president in the States. He said he was going to fix it. They're laughing because they know he can't fix it.

It's going to take a lot more than one person, even though a president is going to take the grace of God. We need that. And I pray constantly, and hopefully you do too, for a great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which will be...

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