

# The Law Fulfilled in Christ

by Tim Conway

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*This sermon delves deep into the importance of understanding and applying the Old Testament laws and commandments in light of Christ's teachings. It emphasizes the need to view the Old Testament laws through the lens of love for God and others, recognizing that true salvation is found in Christ alone. The sermon highlights the spiritualization of Old Testament laws by the apostles, focusing on faith working through love as the essence of fulfilling the law and the prophets.*

**Duration:** 1:22:55

**Scripture:** Matthew 22:37, Galatians 5:6, Romans 8:2, Colossians 2:16, James 2:8

**Topics:** "Understanding Old Testament Laws", "Faith and Love in Christ"

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## Description

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## Transcript

And I want you to biblically try to discern this, try to answer this. Well, let's pray. Father, I pray that You would lead us, help us, guide us, feed us.

Lord, give us light. May Your Word be powerful, may it be active, may it be like a sharp two-edged sword, may it accomplish the purpose for which You send it forth. We know that the Word of God is not bound.

I pray, Lord, that You would give it free course, free reign. And Lord, give us eyes to behold wondrous things from Your Word. I pray in Christ's name.

Amen. Okay, the question that I want to deal with is this one. Somebody writes, Dear GFM, I would appreciate if you would ask Tim to explain Matthew 5.19. So let's turn there.

Matthew 5.19. I think this is a great question. I think it's a great question about a portion of Scripture that probably does raise numerous questions in people's minds. So Matthew 5.19 is obviously part of the Sermon on the Mount.

Sermon on the Mount is really a very interesting whole. There's a wholeness to it. If we're going to deal with the Sermon on the Mount and aspects of it, it's just important to recognize that Matthew 5, 6, and 7 is all a part of one sermon.

That's why they call it the Sermon on the Mount. It's a connected set of teachings. And you can see that there is a flow.

If you sit down and maybe you read chapter 5 on Friday and chapter 6 on Saturday and chapter 7 on Sunday, if you're reading McShane's Bible reading, you systematically go through it. You can kind of lose this. It can almost seem like we've got a hodgepodge of teaching, but the Lord is just kind of indiscriminately teaching on a whole bunch of different things and it's almost random.

But that's not the case at all. There's a real cohesiveness to these three chapters and maybe we'll see a little bit of that tonight. But more to the point, 5.19 is in the context of 17, 18, 19, and 20, which is which is even a more important immediate context.

So let's look at 19. This is the one that I believe it was a young lady. I'm not positive, but I think she asked about specifically verse 19.

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. But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Well, we don't want to take that just by itself.

It's really important that we take 17 and 18 and 20 in the context. So let's unpack this. 17, do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.

Now that's interesting. Okay, Jesus shows up and we know what's happening. He is describing to us basically Christianity, what it is to be one of the people of God.

We know that the Sermon on the Mount starts with the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes describe what it looks like to be in the kingdom of heaven. And you know the Beatitudes, blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, and so forth.

He's talking about what it means to be one of his followers. You get into 13, 14, 15, you're the salt of the earth, you're the light of the world. And then he says this, and you need to recognize the whole Sermon on the Mount is about practical righteousness.

It's about how people who are in his kingdom live. It's how they respond to the law of God. It's how they respond when they're in secret, when they pray in secret and they fast in secret.

What does their life look like? It's got to do with what we do with money. Anyway, this is a very practical teaching of the Lord's. And look at verse 20.

Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. And then he launches right into showing us what the life of somebody who does enter the kingdom of heaven looks like and how it exceeds that of the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees. I mean, he's going to hit on anger and lust and divorce and oaths and retaliation and loving your enemies and giving and praying and fasting and not being anxious.

And he's going to constantly talk about how the hypocrite does things and how the Gentiles do things, but that's not the way his people do them. That's not the way his people respond. So what this sermon is all about is developing a righteousness.

It's a picture of righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees. It's the kind of righteousness of somebody who's genuine over against somebody who's the hypocrite, somebody who's false, somebody who's fake. And he says, I just want to remind you all that, again, today in our day, at our time, when we hear the term Pharisee, we automatically think hypocrite.

That's not what they heard back then. When they heard scribes and Pharisees, it was kind of like they heard pastors and deacons. That's the way it resonated in their ears.

They heard, wow, some of the most righteous people that we could imagine, some of the people that we count to be spiritual leaders, the kind of people that we count to be holy men of God. You're saying our righteousness has to exceed theirs? And he's saying, yes, absolutely it has to. Now, it's true they were hypocrites, but on the external, they looked extremely good.

They were very impressive. They played the part. Okay, verse 17.

Jesus is teaching his disciples that you don't want to think that I've come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. So let's just think for a moment before we go further.

What is the law? What is the prophets? We basically, when we think the law, maybe a good place to look, you don't have to turn there, but you know in John 1, we're told that the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ. Now think about that. The law came through Moses.

When we talk the law, you can search all through the New Testament. When you see law, basically what you're going to see is the 10 commandments get alluded to, all of Sinai, what was given there. I'm thinking right offhand of Romans and Galatians, where the term law comes up.

If you look, if you search that out, you're going to find the same thing that you find in John 1. The law was given through Moses. When we talk about the law, we are talking primarily about the first five books of the Old Testament and the commandments, and somebody has counted them, and it's typically assumed that there are 613 commandments that were given through Moses. And then when you add the prophets to it, this idea of the law and the prophets, it pretty much sums up the Old Testament.

You've got the law, you've got the prophets. You're talking the laws and the commandments, that's basically a summary expression of the Old Testament. You have to recognize, put yourself in their place in that day.

And what Jesus is basically saying is this, all the Scripture that they had, because they didn't have the New Testament yet, all the Scripture they had, and all the commandments contained therein, basically what Jesus is saying is it's intact. I am not coming to annul it. I'm not coming to do away with it.

I'm not coming to abrogate it or abolish it or eliminate it. That's what's happening. And the thing we need to recognize is this.

Look at verse 18. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away. Now that's key.

What He's saying is this, not only is this not going to pass away now in His time, He's saying the law and the prophets, all the commandments, all the commandments given in the law and the prophets, He's saying not only did I not come to do away with them, I want you to know they're never going to be done away with until, they're not going to be done away with until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished. So if we're looking at a time frame, we recognize this, all the way until heaven and earth pass away, none of it is going to, none of this law is going to be done away with. Now there is that catch at the end, until all is accomplished.

Now see, some would jump in right here and say, well yeah, see that, there it is. Jesus came and kept the law, He fulfilled it, it was accomplished and therefore He fulfilled it. Now we don't have to, but that's missing what Jesus is saying.

You have to remember what this is speaking about. This Sermon on the Mount is not about justification. It's not teaching us that Jesus came to fulfill the law for us in our place.

Now that's true, He did that. Jesus is a substitute. He has merit, both in His life and in His death.

Imputed righteousness is a reality. Our sin is imputed to Him, but you need to recognize that is not what's being talked about. The Sermon on the Mount is about practical righteousness.

That's what verse 20 says, unless your righteousness exceeds that. Jesus is not even talking about He Himself coming to fulfill the law in our place. That's not what He's talking about at all.

He is talking about you and me living a life of the kind of righteousness that exceeds the scribes and the Pharisees. And then He dives right in, verse 21, you've heard it said, to those of old you shall not murder. Whoever murders will be liable to the judgment.

But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother, you see what he's doing? He's not talking about, oh, he's fulfilling it, and so now there's no obligation on our part. What he's saying here is this is how people in his kingdom live. They not only don't murder, they don't get unrighteously angry.

They don't hate. They don't insult. This is the point.

This is how our righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, because it's not just a veneer. It's not just the surface. It's not just an appearance.

We really are striving not to be angry, not to insult. And in fact, if we're offering our gift at the altar and we remember that our brother has something against us, we leave our gift there before the altar and we go and we seek to be reconciled. You see, this isn't you're just not getting angry.

This is you're doing everything possible to maintain good, solid, loving relationships. But you see what the point is when he says, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished. He's talking about until all of this world is accomplished and comes to an end.

That's the whole point of heaven and earth passing away. It's until this whole age is accomplished. Jesus is saying those laws given back there under Moses and under the prophets, he says, not a jot, not a tittle, not an iota, not any part of this is going to pass away.

And what you need to recognize is verse 19 says, 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. Now

notice this, the least commandment. I would ask you all this.

Under Moses, what are the greatest commandments? That shouldn't be hard. What are the greatest commandments? You shall love God your God and your neighbor next to it. So there, I mean, Jesus got asked that question.

What are the greatest commandments? He said, love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. What other commandments do we count as being great commandments? The 10 commandments. Who can list them off to me in order very quickly? Go for it, Sharif.

Your wife's laughing at you. Oh, I've got someone on the back, it was a coyote, sorry. No excuses.

Love neighbor. Love your neighbor? Sorry, it's like, sorry, love. 10 commandments.

So, love God with all your heart, mind, soul, strength first. Second. Okay, we're going to Tim Jones.

Tim Jones. 10 commandments in order. To have no other gods.

To honor your father and mother. In order, brother, in order. Okay, here's the first one, no other God.

Second one, we're to have no idols. Third commandment has to do with his name not being used in vain. Fourth commandment is the Sabbath.

Fifth commandment has to do with mother and father. Who can do sixth? Thou shalt not murder. Murder? Who can do seventh? Thou shalt not steal.

No. Thou shalt not covet. Seventh is adultery.

Covet is last. Covet is last. So, okay, well, we made a stab at it.

But here's the thing. Here's what you want to hear Jesus is saying. He says, 19, whoever relaxes one of the least, he's not even talking about the 10 commandments.

He's not talking about the two greatest commandments. He's talking even about the least of the commandments. Now, let me ask you something.

What would you say is one of the least of the commandments? Maybe don't muzzle your ox. See, something like that. You know, well, hold that thought just a second.

But he's concerned that we'd be meticulous when dealing with even the least commandments given in the Old Testament. So the reason I want to stress that is because there are people who very conveniently try to explain away certain commandments of the Old Testament. And you know how they do this? They basically break the commandments up into like judicial, moral, ceremonial.

See, you parse up the law into these different categories and you say, well, we only have to keep the moral law. Well, who decides what categories they get put in? Well, the theologians do or whoever's creating the categories. But you want to be very careful about doing that because Jesus says, if you relax one of the least and teach others to do the same, you're going to be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

What does he want us to do? Whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. See, this doesn't have to do with him accomplishing the law in our place. Not at all.

This has to do with us doing and teaching not just the greatest commandments, but even the least. Now, I hope some of you are feeling uncomfortable right now or even confused. You say, really? The teacher's hoping we're confused? Well, I'm hoping that something in this is problematic to you.

I'm hoping that because you know what? We want to take what Jesus says dead serious and we want to be right. We want to be biblical. We want to know how to live this Christian life.

We want to know how to do it right. And so what I don't want any of us to have happen is that we don't do and we don't teach even the least of his commandments. And we find that the curse, this is a curse.

I mean, to be called the least in the kingdom of heaven is not, I mean, I don't know what you take that to be, but I don't take it to be a good thing. I don't want to be that, especially being in a position where I'm a teacher. I don't want to be in that position.

So here's the question. As New Testament Christians, are we required to keep the Old Testament law and prophets? Well, according to Jesus, absolutely. And if you do anything contrary to that or teach anything contrary to that, you're going to be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

When is this in effect? When does this come into play as far as the people of God all the way until heaven and earth pass away? That's what he's teaching. To say anything other than that is to bring this upon yourself. So this is really serious.

We want to be very careful in how we talk about the law. We never want to limit this thing beyond what our Lord gives us license to do. Our Lord would have us to be meticulous to keep even the least of the commandments, not just the greatest of them.

So here's the thing. Our righteousness, verse 20, our righteousness has to exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees. And notice the four at the very beginning.

That four is a conjunction. That means it ties immediately back to 19. So when he says you need to do and teach them for I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Brethren, I'll tell you this, doing these and teaching these being counted least in the kingdom of heaven or greatest in the kingdom of heaven. I mean, it appears that this has to do with whether you even enter the kingdom of heaven. Verse 20.

That four ties it right together. It means that a conjunction indicates that he's going to further explain and enlarge on what he just previously got done saying. And what did he just get done saying? He just got done saying that to do and teach all the law and the prophets.

And then in verse 20, he shows us what this life looks like. He's developing it even further. This is what this looks like in real life.

It looks like a practical type of righteousness that you're excelling even beyond these guys that look very good on the outside. Did they pray? Yes, they prayed. Did they fast? Yes, they fasted.

But when it comes to our praying and fasting and our giving and the way we live our life, we need to go beyond what the Gentiles do and beyond what the hypocrites do, beyond what the scribes and the Pharisees do. Brethren, this is the emphasis of the entire sermon on the mount. Our Lord is giving us a

sermon about the character of the people who are in his kingdom.

So when Jesus says that our righteousness has to surpass that of the scribes and the Pharisees, we see he is plainly talking about our practical righteousness. This is how he's beginning chapter 5. If you go over to chapter 6, you can see it right at the beginning of 6 as well. Beware of practicing your righteousness.

See, it's yours. Nothing about imputed, nothing about the way Jesus lives. It doesn't even have to do with that.

It's about how you live and how I live. This is practical righteousness that's being talked about here. Practical righteousness.

This is something we practice. This is speaking to our life and to our obedience here. Righteousness.

So the question again, here's the question one more time. As New Testament Christians, are we required to keep God's law as expressed in the law and the prophets? And based on chapter 5, verses 17 through 20, we would have to say absolutely. And it's not just the Ten Commandments as important as they might be.

It's right down to the least commandment, not just the greatest. That's what he says. Now, let's look a bit further.

Again, I want to say to you all, I hope somebody out there is wrestling with this. I hope somebody's saying, really? I'm not supposed to wear a garment that has two different kinds of material mixed together? I'm not supposed to plant my fields with two different kinds of seeds? Is that what you're telling me? I mean, am I supposed to still observe the Passover and still observe Sabbaths and still observe the new moons? Am I supposed to do... I mean, seriously? You're telling me not to break this thing up into ceremonial laws and judicial laws and moral laws? But wait a second. I mean, what are you saying? Where does this start? Where does this stop? Well, we're moving somewhere with this.

But you all ought to be concerned when you hear this. Like, wait, what? I mean, something... How am I supposed to... I don't want to be counted least. And so, okay, what I want to do is I want to focus in on this idea of the law and the prophets.

Because it comes up again in the Sermon on the Mount. Let's look at the golden rule in Matthew 7. Matthew 7 verses 12, 13, and 14. I just want us to do a quick survey of this concept of the law and the prophets.

Because I think this will be helpful as it sheds some light on the whole thing. Verse 12. So whatever you wish that others would do to you... Now remember, this is the Sermon on the Mount again.

What this is, is Jesus is beginning to come to the end of this sermon, and He's really reiterating exactly what He has already said in verses 17 through 20 of chapter 5. Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them. For this is the law in the prophets. Wow.

So when we love others, we basically are fulfilling the law in the prophets. We don't need to look at 13 and 14, but there you have law in the prophets. That's whatever you would have somebody do to you, do also to them.

This is the law in the prophets. Okay, if we're really looking to sum it up, it sounds like our Lord... But we say, wait, isn't there more in the law in the prophets than just how I treat my neighbor? It feels like that. So what is Jesus actually saying? That when it comes to how I love my neighbor, I need to make sure that I give myself right down to the least commandments.

But if it has to do with other things, then maybe it's not included. I mean, how are we to take that? Let's go someplace else. Here in Matthew chapter 22.

Matthew 22, we're going to get this concept of the law in the prophets again. This is where that lawyer asked Jesus specifically about the greatest commandment. But I want you to see that.

Verse 34 of Matthew 22. But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.

Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law? And he said to him, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Now, here we go. Verse 40 is what you want to see.

On these two commandments depend all the law in the prophets. Well, that's interesting. When he brings up the golden rule, he said, whatever you want others to do to you, do to others.

That's all the law in the prophets. Here, it seems like he expands it. He takes it out to loving God is actually even the first.

And yet when he gives the golden rule, it doesn't seem like he touches on that even at all as far as loving God with all our heart, mind, soul. But then what he says is this, all the law in the prophets. I mean, every commandment that you can find in the law and the prophets, even down to the least of them, it seems what he's saying here is you can hang.

The ESV uses the term depend, but it's the word hang. Literally, he is saying that from those two commandments, all the law and the prophets flow. They all hang on those two hooks.

That's the issue. Love. Now think about it.

Love your neighbor. Love the Lord your God. All the law and the prophets hang on love.

We get theologians, we get reformed guys all the time. They want to talk about the moral law, the moral law, the moral law. That's interesting.

The Bible doesn't really talk about moral law, not in those terms. I'm not saying there isn't such a thing. I'm just saying that you get a lot of reformed guys that like to talk moral law, but you know what I find? I find the way that our Bible likes to talk is love.

It never specifically says moral law. It speaks about the law, the law and the prophets, but Jesus would have us see all the law and the prophets hang on two hooks and they're both love. Love is God's moral law.

Love is God's moral standard. True Christian righteousness begins and ends in our love for God and our love for man. Now, here's the question again.

Are we required to keep all the law and the prophets? Well, absolutely. And two great commandments capture the fullness of what all the law and the prophets is. So it begs, I guess it begs this question.

He wants to tie all the law and the prophets to loving God and loving our neighbor. Now, I guess I would ask you all this. Does, do our New Testaments talk about love? Does the New Testament command us to love? Yeah, Romans 13, it says that.

Well, I mean, let's look at it. Let's look at it. Romans 13, 8. Romans 13, 8. Tremendous place to go.

Romans 13, 8. No one, no, oh, no one anything except to love each other. Now notice this, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. You see, you see what's happening when Jesus comes along and he says, look, until heaven and earth pass away, your righteousness, it has to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, or you don't inherit the kingdom.

And he said, right down to the least of the commandments, you need to do them and you need to teach them. Well, if we have eyes to see, the whole Sermon on the Mount is how to love other people. That's really what it's talking about.

It's pointing us at what love does. Here in Romans 13, verse 8, oh, no one, anything except to love each other for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law, for the commandments. Now he's dealing with not the least.

He's dealing with the greatest here. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not murder.

You should not steal. You should not covet. And notice this, and any other commandment, you see, there it is.

That's our least commandments. He steps away from the ten and he said, it doesn't really matter if you can pull up any others because you know what? In the end, they're summed up. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. Tremendous.

And let's just back up because John, obviously, let's go back to John chapter 13. We know that John liked to talk about love. Brethren, for some reason, love sounds cheap.

There's a lot of Reformed people, they don't like the sounds of it. They want to talk moral law, you know, with a lot of times with these deep kind of reverent tones of moral law. And it's almost like love just sounds like it doesn't have a good sound in a lot of the theologians' ears.

They don't like it. And I think the reason why is because our culture cheapens it. It misuses it to the point that I think some Christians just don't like it.

But it's the biblical terminology and we don't want to shy away from it. Many who claim to be Christians, they speak about love, but their lives are full of sin and worldliness and unholiness. You know, all we just need to love each other.

And if you try to rebuke people over sin, you know, you get charged with that's not loving. And it's just love. Love so oftentimes becomes a cloak for ungodliness.

So certain Christians seem to despise the term, but we get some Christians that maybe they don't so much despise it, they're just afraid of it. So, but let's look at John 13. Our Lord Jesus Christ was not afraid of this term.

Verse 31. John 13, 31. When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him.

If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and glorify him at once. Little children, yet a little while I'm with you, you will seek me. And just as I said to the Jews, and now I say also to you, where I am going, you cannot come.

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you're my disciples if you have love for one another.

You see it again. I mean, he's like a new commandment. It's interesting when John tells us about this in his first epistle, he says it's a new commandment and yet it's not a new commandment, it's an old commandment.

Well, you know what? There's a way that love is an old commandment because we find it in the Old Testament. We find that loving our neighbor as ourself was an old commandment, but there's a newness to it. It's because Christ has come and he's made it new in so many ways, especially it's not just love your neighbor as yourself anymore.

Now Jesus is giving himself as the example. He wants us to love one another just as he has loved us. And not only that, he's given his spirit to us and there's just a whole newness among the people of God.

There's a new power to love the nations and take the gospel forth. But let's look at just a few other places. Go to Galatians.

Paul likes to talk about love here in Galatians 5. Of course, we have a chapter devoted to it in 1 Corinthians 13. But Galatians 5, and I just want you to see this. Galatians 5. We'll just start right in verse 1. For freedom, Christ has set us free.

Well, brethren, what are you free to do? Are you free just to go out and live it up? Christ has set us free. He set us for freedom. Christ has set us free.

I mean, don't you love that? It's almost like a redundant. For freedom, Christ has set us free. I mean, that's the purpose that he set us free so that we would be free.

Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Look, I, Paul, say to you that if anyone accepts circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. Well, see, you see right there.

But wait a second. Circumcision was commanded in the Old Testament. Now it sounds like I'm being told, wait a second, didn't Jesus say that all the law and the prophets right down to the least commandment I'm supposed to keep? Michael brought it up.

Circumcision. Christ will be of no advantage to you. Okay, we'll get to that in a second.

But just listen to what's said. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. Severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law, you've fallen away from grace.

For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything but only, watch this, faith, working through love. And you see what's happening.

Faith. We have faith in Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God empowers that because as we see when we get down here, the fruit of the Spirit, verse 22, the fruit of the Spirit is love.

You see, by faith, we live by faith in Christ. And what happens is the Spirit empowers love that flows out of our life. And what Paul is saying here is the thing that counts is that.

Circumcision, uncircumcision, that doesn't count for anything. No, Paul, what counts? Only this, faith, working through love. And he says down in verse 14, the whole law is fulfilled in one word.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Let's look at just a couple others. Colossians.

Go to Colossians. Colossians 3.14. He says, Colossians 3.14, above all these, put on love. So above everything else, this binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Or jump quickly to 1 Timothy. 1 Timothy 1, right at the beginning of the letter. So to the Colossians, Paul says, above everything, put on love.

Love just binds the whole thing together in perfect harmony. Here in 1 Timothy 1.5, the aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. What I'm trying to show you is the New Testament just resonates with this reality.

Think about what this means. This is what our Lord Jesus is talking about all through the Sermon on the Mount, how we are to truly love God and love our fellow man. Now just one more before we move on here.

James 2. Go to Hebrews. And after Hebrews, you've got James. James chapter 2. James says something interesting here.

He says, verse 8. James 2.8. If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. You're doing well. Notice that.

That is the royal law. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. You fulfill that, you're doing well.

See, we see this. We see this. We haven't even come close to exhausting the New Testament.

So what we have is this. Love is an expression of what God wills for us. Think about this.

What are God's commandments? It's what He wants us to do. It's what He's pleased with us doing. It's an expression of His will for us.

He wants us to love. Well, think about that. It isn't just random.

It flows from God's character. God's character is one of love. We know that John tells us in his first epistle that God is love.

God is love. When we think of love, we don't want to think about half-saved, unsaved church people who, in a shallow manner, throw around the term of love and then go out and live like the world. People want to say, well, you know, the church just needs to be loving.

But then you look at certain people's lives and it just looks cheap. Listen, this flows from the very character of God Himself. God is love.

We don't want to think about two homosexuals who live together down the street who talk about being in love with each other. When we think of love, we've got to keep in our minds one of the most essential characteristics that we find in God Himself. And true love, true love, you have to recognize.

Think with me here, brethren. What this is telling us is that in all the commandments, in all the law, in all the prophets, what God has done is you don't want to think rigidity. You don't want to think that way.

What God has done is He's basically created a network of love. That's what He's done. That's what all these are telling us.

That when you go back to these commandments, true love is not lawless. True love is not antinomian. It's not shallow.

It doesn't rejoice in sin. It's true love points us back to how God Himself is. And we never want the world, its cheap uses of it to stop us from using this biblical terminology.

So now I want you to see something. Go to Romans chapter 8. Again, I'm going to take you someplace that's not speaking about justification. It's speaking about actual practical righteousness.

Romans chapter 8. In Romans chapter 8, just read with me starting in verse 1. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Why? Now notice what he says. He's not going to talk about imputed righteousness as being the reason for no condemnation.

Why is there no condemnation for those in Christ? For the law of the spirit of life. A law, a principle, like the law of gravity. There is a law, there is a way.

When we're talking law here, we're not talking a commandment. We're talking more like a rule. We're talking about like a physical law.

Only this is a spiritual law. The law of the spirit of life. There's a way that the spirit acts upon people where he dwells.

That's what this law is. The law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. Now notice this.

Lost people are controlled by the law of sin and death. Sin is operative in them. Sin breaks the law.

Sin is when we don't love. We're selfish. We don't love God.

We don't love our neighbor. We love ourselves. We all try to set ourselves up as little gods.

And sin is operating within us. And the end of it is death. We're under the law, but we don't keep the law.

But the law just stirs up, it stirs up our passions, and the end of it is death. The law says don't do this, and there's native rebelliousness in us. We want to do just what God says not to do.

Tell a little child, don't touch that. First thing, they want to go over there and touch that. There's a law of sin and death that's operative in us.

And what he says is the law of the spirit of life sets you free. It breaks the power of that reigning sin and the resultant death. The spirit comes in and gives you the ability to love, and there's life.

And notice what he says in verse 3. God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. Well, see, the law doesn't help. The law can tell me what to do, but it never gives me help to do it.

The spirit gives me help to do it. And the spirit was given by way of the sending of his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, he condemns sin in the flesh. Now, notice this.

In order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us. When he talks about the righteous requirement of the law, he is not talking justification. He's talking about our practical righteousness.

He is saying this. This law of the spirit of life sets us free. This is what God has done that the law could never do, that God has accomplished in sending his son.

He sent his son. The spirit is given. The law of the spirit of life conquers this law of sin and death.

What happens, the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us. Notice, it's all practical, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. You see, there's the spirit, the law of the spirit of life.

We walk not in the flesh, but according to the spirit. And you can see this come to fruition down in verse 13. If you live according to the flesh, you die.

There's the law of sin and death. You die. But if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

My whole point is this. Christ came. He hung on that tree.

He gave himself. He died so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. I brought that text up to you from 1 Peter 2 a week or so ago.

But what I'm really wanting you to see is that God's goal is to create fulfillers of the law and to fulfill the laws to love. God's goal is to create lovers. I mean, God is love and God saves us to love him and to love each other.

So one last thing, maybe this will take us through to 830. I would just ask this. Where does it stop? I mean, how do we fulfill the least commandments? And what about circumcision? What about many of these things? Well, I want to show you something.

Go to 1 Corinthians 9. This is so helpful. What we want to do is we want to watch how Jesus and his apostles, the authors of Scripture, we want to watch how they handle Moses. We don't want to write off even the least of the commandments.

Jesus didn't come to abolish even the least of the commandments. We want to do them and we want to teach them. But brethren, we need to recognize how to do that in a way that's consistent with Scripture.

Now, notice 1 Corinthians 9. Jump down to verse 6. Paul is defending his ministry here and he's defending himself basically saying, hey, we gave up our rights for the sake of the Gospel. You see this in verse 3. This is my defense. See, this is the defense of himself to those who would examine him.

Do we not have the right to eat and drink? Well, certainly he did. But what he's saying is, I gave it up for the sake of the Gospel. I had a right to do it.

Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Certainly he did. Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Now, notice what he's saying there. You know what? Me, Barnabas, we had a right to be supported by you Corinthians.

But he said we didn't take our right. We worked with our own hands. And he says, look, who serves as a soldier at his own expense? But we did.

It's basically what he's saying. Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? But he's saying, but we did. Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? You see, his whole point is the Corinthian church didn't give anything to him.

Now notice what he says next. Verse 8. Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the law say the same? I love that. It is written in the law of Moses, you shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.

Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. Now I want you to see something. Here is Paul.

He's speaking to a Gentile church. And he tells them this. He says, verse 8, am I saying these things on human authority? No, he's not.

He says, I'm saying this on the authority of the law. You can see, verse 8 is an authority issue. He's saying the authority does not come from humans, it comes from the law.

What law? The law of Moses. What law of Moses? Well specifically, he's referring to Deuteronomy 25.4. Would you count this one of the least of the commandments? Certainly this is. One of the least of the commandments is what? You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.

Now here's what we want to watch. How should we handle the authority of the law of Moses right at this point? You see, apostolic teaching shows us how we want to deal with the law. It's spiritualized.

There's no getting around that. He totally spiritualizes it. He says, does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake.

He says, was God concerned for oxen? He said, no, He wasn't. That's how you want to handle even down to some of the least of the commandments. You know what Paul doesn't do? He does not say that the commandment to muzzle the ox no longer has authority.

He does not say that. He says, no, it has authority when understood properly. Really? How are we supposed to understand it properly? Well, it's got to do with love.

It's got to do with loving men who are in the ministry and taking care of them. You know, also to the Corinthians, he says that we're not supposed to be unequally yoked. Where does that come from? Again, that comes from the law of Moses.

Don't be unequally yoked. But you see, he spiritualizes it. I might say this.

Jump to Romans 2. Romans 2 right at the end. Should we ignore circumcision? No, not at all. We might go to Colossians with this too, but both Colossians and Romans are very plain with their teaching about circumcision.

Do we just write circumcision off? No. Do we still need to be circumcised? Yes. But again, it's spiritualized.

It's not dismissed. We don't look at it as though it has no authority, but it's spiritualized. And you'll notice that in Romans 2 verse 29, a Jew is one inwardly and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the spirit, not by the letter.

So we see circumcision is not gotten rid of. It's simply spiritualized. I mean, go to Colossians.

Sometimes the question comes up with regards to, well, let's just look at circumcision again here, Colossians chapter 2 and verse 11. In Christ also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands by putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. You see, there's a reality.

We don't dismiss it, but we have to recognize that it's spiritualized. Again, if you look at Colossians 2 and verse 16, what about the festivals? What about the new moons? What about the Sabbath day? Well, you know what? We don't dismiss them, but what we recognize is this, there's a fulfillment. We don't get rid of them.

We observe them in the fullness. What's the fullness? Verse 17. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

I might have you turn back to 1 Corinthians chapter 5. In 1 Corinthians chapter 5, that's that chapter that has to do with handing somebody over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. 1 Corinthians chapter 5, but here we have the Passover. Do we just get rid of the Passover? That's not what Paul says here.

Paul says this, verse 6 of chapter 5. He says, your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Well, that leaven is a picture of the Passover. They were supposed to have only unleavened bread.

It was called the feast of unleavened bread. He says, cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump as you really are unleavened for Christ. Our Passover lamb has been sacrificed.

Do we give up the Passover? No, but what we recognize is that our observance of it is done in our seeing Christ as the Passover lamb and believing on him and eating of him. Let us therefore celebrate the festival. You see, does Paul tell us not to celebrate it? No.

He says celebrate it. What festival is he talking about? Obviously the Passover, but not with old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. You see, he's not even

speaking about actual bread.

He's speaking about sincerity and truth. He's spiritualizing the whole thing again. And so, brethren, what we need to do is recognize that we don't want to put away even one of the least of the law and the prophets.

What we want to strive to do is understand all 613 commandments given in the law, the things that were said all through the Old Testament, the law and the prophets. But we come back to this. We know that hanging on those two chief commandments, the greatest commandments, loving God and loving our neighbor, all the law and the prophet hangs.

And so what we really need to think about is how do all these commandments, like if you take the commandment of the Passover, well, we would come back to loving Christ and eating Him and drinking of Him. That's all these feasts that they had, or the Sabbath. The Sabbath is about a rest.

Jesus said, come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. You see, we don't dismiss them. We find the fullness.

We find the reality. We want to get past the shadows and we want to embrace the fullness and the reality of what all these mean as far as our love for God and our love for one another. And so, brethren, that is the long way to try to explain.

What does it mean when it says that, don't think I've come to abolish the law or the prophets. I've not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot.

Listen, what you have to recognize is this. When it says that He's come to fulfill them, you need to recognize this. What He's really saying is I have come to redeem a people whose lives are going to be filled with obedience to all these things that come from the law and the prophets because they're going to be empowered by my spirit to love, to love God, to love me, to love each other.

And He said, that's what I'm coming to do. That's what's going to be fulfilled. He says, I've not come to abolish.

I have come to fulfill. I have come to unleash such power upon my people through going to the cross and through my rising again and the giving of the spirit to the church. I have come to set such things in motion that I am going to create an army of men and women who are lovers of God and lovers of one another.

That's what this is all about. Until heaven and earth pass away, none of it's going to pass from the law until all is accomplished. 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.

But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. I'll tell you this. You want to be great in the kingdom of heaven? Really strive to figure out what all of these things mean, what their present application is, and strive to live your life.

Faith working through love. Keep your eyes set on Christ. Be empowered by faith in him.

Walk in the power of the spirit. The law of the spirit of life will set you free from the law of sin and death. God has done what the law could never do.

He, all the law can do is tell us what's right and what's wrong. It never gives us any ability to help. In fact, when you couple the law with the flesh, all it does is bring the rebellion out of us.

But when Christ comes in and he sets the prisoner free, for freedom you've been set free. Don't you recognize what freedom means? Freedom means you're no longer in bondage to sin. You're free to love.

And that's what the Sermon on the Mount is all about. Well, any comments or questions or observations? That was very good. It puts a lot of healthy fear and weight on how to read the Bible and how to interpret and a really strong understanding of what true love is.

Thank you. No, you're welcome, brother. Anything else? Daddy's trying to get in.

Papa, are you trying to say something? Can't hear you. You're muted. There you go.

Okay. That was all very thorough. The old law of Moses, very well explained.

But we know that salvation is only in the law of Christ. As much as valuable as the old law is, only in the law of Christ is there salvation. Is that right? Well, Papa, you don't want to say it like that.

The reality is this, that law keeping and loving never save us. We're not saved by works. We're saved by grace through faith.

We're saved by faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. But faith works out in love. That's what Galatians 5, 6 says.

Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing but faith working through love. And so what Christ recognizes is that when somebody is truly born again, they're a new creation. And what the Sermon on the Mount is, it's a picture of what that new creation looks like.

We don't ever want to try to think, oh, I've got to do the Sermon on the Mount to get saved. No, the Sermon on the Mount is what flows out of people who are saved. What we want to do is we want to go to Christ broken and empty and bankrupt and sick.

And we want to go to Him to heal us and make us into that kind of person. But the truth is genuine salvation will turn us into people whose righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees. It unleashes a power.

It unleashes the power of the Spirit in the life of God's people. And the Spirit is very powerful. The Spirit will put sin to death and give us the fruit of love and joy and peace and gentleness and patience and kindness.

But as Christians, we want to be very careful. We don't want to dismiss the law and the prophets. What we want to recognize is that really, even in what God gave us in the Old Testament, there's a lot of types and shadows, things that point us to the realities.

But we don't want to miss that loving God and loving our fellow men is very much, oh, if we only have eyes to see. I mean, I even think about the commandments with regards to divorce. You know, giving a bill of divorce.

We talked about this. But even doing that, you think about God protecting the women, giving them a bill of divorce so that some evil husband could never come back and say, well, my wife has just been an

adulteress and she's run off with another man. Nope.

She can produce that bill of divorce in a day and age when women were abused, treated as property, often divorced very quickly. There's no question about it. Before the gospel came, the gospel is really freeing for women.

And even in something like that, it's like you just see God's kindness. He was seeking to protect women. And if we have eyes to see some of those commandments, they may seem strange.

I'll tell you what's very interesting. If you listen or read an unabridged Pilgrim's Progress, there's a place where I think it's faithful and Christian. They have a long discussion back and forth.

And they're talking about what some of these laws in Deuteronomy, what some of the gospel meaning to them actually is, like eating unclean meat. It had to chew the cud and have a cloven hoof. And faithful was describing what all that meant in a spiritual reality.

And Christian said, you know, brother, I think you hit the gospel meaning of those things. It's kind of like the parables. Some parables are defined for us and some aren't.

And so we're left prayerfully to try to figure out the parables that are not defined and explained by the ones that are. And it's the same with the law. Some of the laws are explained for us and some of them are not.

And so we have to try prayerfully with the Spirit's guidance to figure out the ones that are not from the ones that are. Is it a bit like saying we've got 613 spiritual laws on how to love God and our fellow man? That's right. If all the law and the prophets hang on those two commandments, you can be certain that those 613 hang on those two commandments.

And so, you know, brethren, rather than trying to figure out about what all those 613 actually mean, if you just seek to love other people genuinely, you're in the right place. But to truly love other people, it takes sacrifice. I mean, you know what it says there in James and in John.

It's like if you see a brother or sister in need. We talked about this last week or last Sunday, I guess. We don't want to just love in word, but we need to love in deed.

I mean, we actually need to be people who are doing, not just talking. And so brethren, for freedom, you've been set free. And so don't feel condemned.

Don't feel bad. You know what? Whatever ways you've messed up in the past, it's under the blood. You can't change it.

You can't fix it. But you're free. That means you're free to go figure out creative ways to love people.

I mean, in the end, that's what it's going to... I keep taking it Isaiah 58 and Matthew 25. And in the end, if you visit people in prison and you visit people that are sick and you feed the hungry and you take the gospel to those who are destitute and sitting in darkness and you're seeking to help widows and orphans in their affliction, brethren, and you love one another, you're mindful of each other's needs, and you pour out your whole life doing that, in the end, you're going to hear, well done, good and faithful servant. And you know what? Like I say, there's no sense crying over spilled milk.

We can apologize to the Lord. We can confess it. But the reality is we're free because Jesus has paid the price.

And so no accusation can be held against us. All our sin debt has been cast behind his back. It's not held against us.

Nobody can bring an accusation against us. So we're free people. The law doesn't have any say so on us.

We're free. Christ died in our place. Christ did what the law demanded.

So we're free. I mean, the thing is, we can seek to love people and mess up and go back to seeking to love people again. And even if we don't do it perfectly, we can keep doing it and we don't have to drown ourselves in sorrow or in woe or in depression or in discouragement.

Why? Because Jesus' blood covers all the blemishes. And so we can get really creative and we can use our money and use our effort and use our time and pour out our lives. And who knows, we don't have much time left.

But let's avail ourselves of what we have. That's very encouraging to hear. That's beautiful.

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