

Title
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In verse 17 of Matthew chapter 5, Jesus began to speak about the law. Jesus said:

Matthew 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

Matthew 5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Matthew 5:19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said that he didn't come to destroy the law but to fulfill it. He then spoke of the seriousness of breaking of even the smallest commandments.

This passage is often a jumping off point for those that want to teach you that you must follow the commandments in order to be saved and stay saved.

It is also a point of contention for those who believe the Old Testament was for another time and place and that the Law has no place in the day of grace.

What Law was Jesus talking about?

How did Jesus mean for us to apply the Law?

What place does Old Testament law have in today's world? After all, didn't Jesus die so that we didn't have to follow the law?

I. The Old Testament Law

Jesus was talking about the Old Testament Law which consisted of rules that were handed down to the Israelites by God through Moses. They consisted not only of the ten commandments but rules regarding the keeping of Feasts, handling of the sacrifices, what to eat, what not to eat, and the punishment for breaking the law.

Located in Exodus chapter 20 are the most familiar of the laws.

A The Ten Commandments

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images
3. Thou shalt not take the Lord's name in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.
5. Honor thy Father and thy Mother.
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery
7. Thou shalt not kill
8. Thou shalt not steal
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, wife or possessions.

Nearly all of the other laws listed in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy were laws that were based on the the Ten Commandments.

God made promises to the Israelites based on the condition that they follow and keep the Law. He also promised curses and judgment on them if they didn't keep the law.

Anytime laws or rules are written down you will find people who have educated themselves about them and are able to find even the most obscure loopholes.

If a company has a written policy that says you can take up to 5 sick days a year, and you have one week of vacation a year. Their intention was for you to be able to call in sick if

you are actually sick and not have to use your vacation. There is always that person who automatically adds the two together and sees that he can call in sick for up to 5 days without a doctor's excuse and still have his one week vacation.

It doesn't take a highly educated individual to master the art of loopholes either. Even children begin to parse your words in order to avoid stopping or doing what you ask them.

"I'm not running, I'm skipping" or "I'm walking fast." "I'm not throwing the ball, I'm tossing the ball" or "I'm making the ball fly."

You've seen the same thing in our modern day legal system. A lawyer can get a murderer free on a technicality in his arrest.

By the time Jesus arrived on the scene in Israel, the Pharisees and Sadducees had become masters of avoiding the spirit of God's law while following it to the letter.

Jesus told the Pharisees who had complained about the disciples not following tradition in Mark 7.

Mark 7:9 And he said unto them, **Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.**

Mark 7:10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

Mark 7:11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is Corban*, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free*.

Mark 7:12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

Mark 7:13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

Jesus pointed out to the Pharisees how they used tradition to avoid the 5th commandment of honoring your father and your mother.

A Jewish tradition had formed known as “Corban”, which meant “given” or “dedicated”.

Suppose that certain Jewish parents were in great need. Their son had money to care for them, but didn’t want to do it. All he had to do was say “Corban,” implying that his money was dedicated to God or the temple.

This relieved him of any further responsibility to support his parents.

He might keep the money indefinitely and use it in business. Whether it ever was turned over to the temple or not didn’t matter.

II. Jesus Transition

In Matthew 5 verse 21 Jesus began to illustrate how God Judged the law.

He said:

Matthew 5:21 **Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:**

Matthew 5:22 **But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.**

Jesus shows that you may not have physically murdered someone but even if you have been angry without a cause you will be in danger of the judgment. If you call them a “fool”, that is to look down on them as the lowest of the low with hatred and disdain in your heart, you will be in danger of hell fire.

Now, you, as a man or woman may have never actually committed the physical act of adultery and your marriage may appear to be going just fine, but God looks at the heart. Have you even looked at someone else and admired them, or wondered what if?

In verse 27 Jesus addresses this 6th commandment.

Matthew 5:27 **Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:**

Matthew 5:28 **But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.**

1 Samuel 16:7 ... for *the LORD* seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

When a young lawyer came to ask Jesus what the great commandment was in the law Jesus was able to sum up all ten commandments in just two commandments.

Matthew 22:37 **Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.**

Matthew 22:38 **This is the first and great commandment.**

Matthew 22:39 **And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**

Matthew 22:40 **On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.**

Jesus was illustrating not only the letter but the spirit of God's law. If you love the Lord God with all of your heart, mind and soul, you will have no desire to

1. Worship other gods.
2. Make idols
3. Make a curse word out of god's name.
4. and you will want to be in church to hear and learn more about His word.

If you love your neighbor as yourself, you will naturally put others before or equal to yourself. You will:

5. honor your father and your mother
6. Be faithful to your wife
7. you won't kill or curse people in your heart
8. you won't steal from others

because it will matter to you that they worked to get what they have.

9. You won't lie to or about other people

because you know how hurtful it can be.

10. You won't lust after anything that your neighbor has,

You wouldn't want him lusting after yours.

It is when we begin to look at the law through God's eyes that we begin to see how weak our rationalizations are.

So...

III. What Does This Means to Us

Well in order to see what this means to us, let me ask you a simple question...

“Do you consider yourself to be a good person?”

Think about that question...

“Do...You...consider...yourself...to be...a good person?”

You may say...

“Well, I think I'm a pretty good person, I try to help others, I give to charity.”

“Have you ever told a lie, even a small one?”

“Well who hasn't told some kind of lie in their life? Of course I have at some point.”

James tells us

James 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

James 2:11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

You can't break just one law, because, if you do, you are guilty of every other law in the process.

Have you ever put something else before God?
Did you honor him every Sabbath of your life?
Have you ever told even the smallest lie?
Have you ever lusted after a man or woman that wasn't your husband or wife?
Have you ever stolen anything?
Have you ever blasphemed or used God's name as a curse word?
Ever looked at something of your neighbors and wish that was yours?

Even one violation is a violation of the whole law.

Now that we've determined that you probably have broken one or more of God's laws, even if it was unintentional, you still broke it, let me ask you another question.

When you stand before God on the Day of Judgment will you be guilty or innocent?

The book of Revelation speaks of that day:

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

You see the Bible says that there will come a day when everyone will have to confess to God.

Rom 14:11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

Rom 14:12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

According to the Bible, everyone of us will have to give an account for the things we have done or neglected to do.

If you have broken God's law, the very law that God himself will judge you by, what argument can you make?

Paul said in Galatians that the law was our schoolmaster. It is there to show us what sin is. It teaches us what God looks at.

The law is a mirror that causes us to look at ourselves and see the way we really look in God's eyes.

It is also the law that condemns us before God and if we are condemned then what will be the punishment?

Revelation 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

It is important to realize the consequences of breaking God's law, no matter what understanding you may think you have with the "Man upstairs" if you have no relationship with Him now, you won't have a chance to make up for lost time later.

All your charity work will count for nothing, all the times you helped people will mean nothing. God is Holy and Righteous and can't have sin in heaven.

The Bible says that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God did make a way through His Son.
IV

Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

The reason that Jesus died on the cross was to pay the penalty for our sins.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

God offers you a gift. He offers you a relationship with Him through His Son Jesus Christ.

That gift isn't yours unless you take it.

You say, I believe that there was a Jesus, the Bible says that the Devil's believe and tremble.

You take that gift by placing your trust in Him.

You can do that now, right where you are.

Some churches say that looking at the Old Testament law is a form of legalism, that your trying to bind people up and imprison them in rules that they have to follow.

People outside the church, that have no relationship with God, say that Christians are

judgmental and want to impose their morals on people.

I would be lying to you if I said that I want see more people killing other people. That I want to see more families ripped apart by adultery.

I wouldn't be telling the truth if I said that I wanted to see more people lose the things they work hard for just because someone else saw what they had and decided to steal it.

Without God, that is what we see more and more of. As the Ten Commandments, Bibles, and prayers are removed from the classroom we see the crime, we see the callousness of people's souls, and we see people hurt for the sake of a video, a laugh, and a game.

I've done nothing more here than show you how you look in God's eyes by showing you how you stand up to His law.

Jesus said that he came to fulfil the law not to destroy it.

When we put our trust in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice as payment for our sins, we are saved by the grace of God. We don't deserve it, we have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory.

There is no way you can follow the law well enough to get to heaven. Jesus said that your righteousness must exceed that of the scribes

and Pharisees. But the law teaches us what pleases God, the law is our measuring stick.

It is when you realize that you are not the policeman for everyone else's sins that you understand that balance.

The Bible tells me,

Romans 14:4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth.

You are accountable to God just as I am accountable to God and just as every other person in here has to give their own account to God.

In Conclusion:

As we look at the world around us there is a visible open hostility toward the things of God and His people. While I'm not going to try to set a date, I see a pattern emerging both in this country and in the world.

For too long, American's have taken for granted that they have religious freedom. Daily organizations like Freedom from Religion are using the court system to limit the freedom's of the majority with a stated goal of removing religion from the public forum.