

I AM COME TO FULFILL THE LAW AND NOT TO DESTROY IT

TEXT: *Matthew 5:17: Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.*

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.

JESUS NEVER CONDEMNED the law and the prophets, but He did condemn those who did not obey them. Because He gave new commandments, it does not follow that He abolished the old. Christ's explanation of them made them all the more searching. In His Sermon on the Mount He carried the principles of the commandments beyond the mere letter. He unfolded them and showed that they embraced more, that they are positive as well as prohibitive.

The Old Testament closes with these words as recorded in:

Malachi 4:4-6: ⁴ Remember ye the Law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

⁶ And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Does that look as if the law of Moses was becoming obsolete?

To destroy was to proclaim men loosed from their obligation. Jesus puts Doing and Teaching as contrary to Destroying. The two-foldedness of truth is a barrier to its reception. Men are perversely one-sided; hence, they are victims to stumble again and again over God's Word. They will cut out, deny, and/or pervert anything in the Word of God that is contrary to their fleshly desires.

One can even glory in the law, whereby flesh can parade itself by outward observances to receive the praise of man.

Jesus came to fulfill — as when He came down from the mount and bid the cleansed leper to carry his gift to the priest as Moses commanded. But the law and the prophets were not perfect.

Hebrews 7:19: For the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

Hebrews 8:10: For this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people:

The law made nothing perfect.

Moses declared the coming of Jesus to Whom all were to heed under penalty of being destroyed from among the people.



Deuteronomy 18:15: The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto Me; unto Him ye shall hearken;

Deuteronomy 18:18-19:

¹⁸ I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My Words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him.

¹⁹ And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My Words which He shall speak in My Name, I will require it of Him.

Acts 3:22: For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

This was a time of reformation.

Hebrews 9:10: Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

Laws which rose from Israel's hardness of heart were to be swept away.

Mark 10:2-5:

² And the Pharisees came to Him, and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?" tempting Him.

3 And He answered and said unto them, "What did Moses command you?"

4 And they said, "Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away."

5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, "For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept."

Jesus opens a new and living way, for the old principles clash with His superior ones. He does not condemn the law, for it was a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ. Jesus obeyed the law by fulfilling it — suffering its penalty — when made a curse for us.

Now, Jesus sets forth a new principle in:

Matthew 6:6-13:

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.



7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name.

10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

It is far superior to law, harder for fleshly, unregenerate man to obey, unless born-again. The perfect law of liberty we see in:

James 1:25: But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Jesus so came to fulfill it, that He pronounces as future Judge to punish the smallest breach of the law.

What is the least commandment? It comes under the description of *Jot* or *Tittle*. The law was made of ceremonial and moral commandments. The Pharisees were rebuked for treading moral law, and for this He calls them **blind guides** and declares that justice, mercy, and the love of God are the chief things.

James 1:22-24:

²² But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

²³ For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

²⁴ For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

Jesus binds His disciples to ceremonial law. When the two clashed, Jesus said:

Matthew 9:13: But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.



Generally, our creed and doctrines descend to the level of our practice. Hence, because doctrine is the most easily altered, it is lowered to meet conduct. Jesus, therefore, says to destroy the law is to disobey it. Obedience is fulfilling it.

If we are led of the Spirit, we are not under law, but are under grace.

Romans 6:14-15:

¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the Law, but under grace.

¹⁵ What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Acts 15:1-11:

1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the Law of Moses.

6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the Word of the Gospel, and believe.

8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;

9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11 But we believe that through the grace of the LORD Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.



And Paul assures us that for us to receive circumcision or justification from law-keeping, we are fallen from grace.

Galatians 5:3-5:

³ For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

⁴ Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

⁵ For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

Galatians 4:4: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law . . .

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.

Righteousness is imparted by faith in Jesus.

What is our righteousness? What was the Scribes' and Pharisees' righteousness? How must ours exceed theirs? Righteousness is imparted by faith in Jesus. It is lived by this new life within, or the practical holiness of a sanctified life.

Jesus is not speaking of imparted righteousness, nor calling unbelievers to live the Gospel standard. He is telling His followers, already saved, to have actions of living the life that is absolutely necessary to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

This threatening by our Lord is the immediate consequences of the elevation of the standard of grace. The disciples' righteousness, then, differs from that of the Scribes and Pharisees in its standard. Theirs was lip service, but not in their daily life. Jesus is giving us this law, for He is the Law Giver of the new dispensation and will be the Judge of all of us. We shall give account to Him as to what we do with His Words.

Hebrews 12:25-29:

²⁵ See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from Heaven:

26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also Heaven.

27 And this Word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

29 For our God is a consuming fire.

Matthew 7:21, 24:

21 Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the Will of My Father which is in Heaven.

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

Christians! Eternal life is yours by redemption which is in Christ Jesus. He expects you to live this new-creature life. Eternal life is a gift to you, not to cuddle, but to obey. Christ purchased you, and you are His to do as He says. You are not your own. Remember the words of:

Eternal life is yours by redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Revelation 22:14: Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

Under ceremonial law they were required to observe the laws of circumcision, divers washings, Sabbath keeping, sin offerings, and the observance of days, months, years.

Jesus deals with the effect of different offences: barriers between saints demands forgiveness be sought and unity restored. The church is to agree in prayer for God to work. The Church is to be united in faith and love for the Lord to be there. He does not work where people are divided. ***“Father, I pray that they may be one, as We are One.” John 17:22***



There was only one obstacle to acceptable worship: friction with another child of God. It cannot not be left unreconciled. Love is to be our constant spirit toward each other.

1 John 4:16: And he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

1 Corinthians 10:17: For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

If trouble comes, we are not to retain any anger of spirit. The contrary tempers grieve the Holy Spirit and hinder the work of the Spirit in the service. It is the devil's work to keep the Lord's sheep divided and to bring division. Are you going to let the devil use you??

These words are based upon the offenses between brethren, as found in :

1 Corinthians 10:21-23:

²¹ Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

²² Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

²³ All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

Anger arising in the heart is dangerous if not confessed.

Anger arising in the heart is dangerous if not confessed. Anger rises to words — to name calling.

But now He proceeds to cases in which angry words display the feelings within, wherein words are used to destroy another, to run him down. Calling him a good-for-nothing is a false witness, as applied to a Christian brother whom God was pleased to make His child. How can he be good for nothing, whom Christ has purchased with His Own Blood? This heavier offense entails heavier punishment. Judges, as in:

Deuteronomy 16:18: Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment.

Judges in the lower order counsel the 70 elders in the higher court that were appointed by Moses.

Deuteronomy 17:8-10:

⁸ If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the LORD thy God shall choose;

⁹ And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment:

¹⁰ And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the LORD shall choose shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee:

Now, if anyone lets his spirit get so far away to the point of calling a person crazy, it is slander, and the name caller is in danger of hell fire or the final judgment of the Lake of Fire.

What do you mean, Jesus? Is a child of God in danger of hell fire? Jesus meant just what He said. It does not take a Philadelphia Lawyer to explain! How cautious we must be, then, in speaking against professed believers, especially in a fit of anger. These words are addressed by Jesus to believers.

The next two verses show us God's mercy to provide escape from Judgment by repentance and making things right with our brother. "Our adversary" — be agreeable with him. He has a complaint against you, a debt to be paid. Jesus says you must suffer jail sentence and beg, cry and pray to get out — and you shall not be let out until you have paid the last penny. Jesus shows the effects of quarrels between believers. He warns them to settle out of court.

Jesus tells us to agree quickly. Life is short. We are not to let anything linger in our spirit against another. The coming of Jesus Christ may be at any moment!

We are not to let anything linger in our spirit against another.

Matthew 5:25:

Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the

judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

Romans 14:10-12:

¹⁰ But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

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

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

2 Corinthians 5:9-10:

⁹ Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him.

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.



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