

Matthew 5:17-48

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[0 : 00] I would like to look at this section that we have just read together, bearing in mind what we looked at this morning. For your own thoughts maybe later on throughout the week, if you get a chance, the sermon that Jesus preaches on the mount can be split into three parts.

We have the introduction that we looked at this morning, but then Jesus goes on to talk about the relationship of the disciple to the law in the rest of chapter 5. And then in chapter 6, the relationship of the disciple to God.

And then in the final chapter, the relationship of the disciple to others. So it's all about relationships and broad brushstrokes. So, in this section then, the disciple and his relationship to the law.

The Christian and the law is a subject over which much ink has been spilt. And we sung there two sections of Psalm 119. The psalmist sings of how he loves God's law.

And so we have here Jesus, verse 17. Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them.

[1 : 21] Do not think that I have come to abolish the law. First question we ask is, why were the disciples thinking that? What had Jesus been saying beforehand to make them think that perhaps, here's Jesus, come to abolish the law and the prophets?

Well, remember what we looked at this morning. We looked at the Christian being someone who is blessed. Someone who is a follower of Jesus. Someone who is light. Someone who is salt.

And all that that meant. Jesus didn't mention anything about the law in those sections. He didn't mention anything about ethnic origin. He didn't say a word about the Torah.

Or about being a good Pharisee. Or about where you're from. Or who you know. And of course that was the gospel that the church then, the Pharisees, the teachers of the law did teach.

That being a good Pharisee was all about your upbringing. Who you know. Your moral life. Your understanding of the law. Everyone was excluded.

[2 : 27] If you weren't a Jew, you were out. There was no chance. Jesus didn't mention that at all. He threw open wide the gates of God's kingdom. And said the kingdom is near. Repent and you can take part in God's kingdom.

It was quite a different message to what the disciples would have heard their whole life up until that point. So maybe by this stage they're thinking this is a new word.

This is a new gospel that Jesus is preaching. How can it be? What's Jesus talking about? And Jesus says this. Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.

I have not come to abolish them. Far from it. I have not come to abolish them. The law still stands. The prophets still stand. I have come instead to fulfill them.

So the next question is. How does Jesus fulfill the work, the law and the prophets? The word for fulfill is to bring to completion. How does Jesus complete the law and the prophets?

[3 : 32] What does he do to complete the law? And the prophets, to answer that we need to ask. What is the law? What was the law? The law was the revelation of God.

It was a grace that God gave his law to the world. To the people of Israel through Moses. God could have left them to their own devices.

Could have left the world altogether. But he didn't. He came into the world through Moses and through the law. And he said, this is what I am like. This is the way I want you to live.

So the law is a revelation of God. So how does Jesus bring to completion the law of God? By being the greatest fulfillment of the law.

By embodying the law in himself. By being the fullest revelation of God. The final word of God is Jesus Christ. He embodies the law in himself.

[4 : 31] What do we read in the gospel of John? The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory. The glory of the one and only. Who came from the Father full of grace and truth.

Jesus the revelation of God. He fulfills the law by being the greatest revelation of God. I and the Father are one. John chapter 10 verse 30.

John 14 verse 8. Philip said, Lord show us the Father and that will be enough for us. Jesus answered, don't you know me Philip? Even after I have been you. Been among you such a long time.

Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, show us the Father? Jesus fulfills the law by being the fullest revelation of God to the people, to the world, in himself.

More grace from God. Grace upon grace. The law given in grace. Jesus Christ given in grace.

Unmerited favor. God comes down and blesses us through the law.

[5 : 37] God comes down and blesses us through his Son. Didn't deserve it. Didn't earn it.

Unmerited favor. The grace of God. In Christ and in the law.

And so the psalmist can sing, I love the law. Because it is the grace of God. To live according to the law. And then the prophets. What are the prophets?

Well, the forth telling. They tell us about Jesus. They tell us about what is going to come. How does Jesus fulfill the prophets? Well, by fulfilling them. By coming.

By making them true. By completing them. Matthew's gospel. Shows us that in the early chapters.

Matthew chapter 2. Chapter 1. Sorry. Verse 22. All this took place.

To fulfill what the Lord had said. Through the prophet. The virgin will be with child. And will give birth to a son. And they will call him Emmanuel. Which means God. With us.

[6 : 33] Then Matthew chapter 2. Verse 14. So he got up. And took the child and his mother.

During the night. And left for Egypt. Where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled.

What the Lord had said. Through the prophet. Out of Egypt. I will call my son. And again later on.

Verse 23. And he went out. And lived in a town called Nazareth.

So was fulfilled. What was said through the prophet. He will be called. A Nazarene. So Jesus fulfills the prophecies. By completing them. By bringing them to an end.

Hundreds of years. Beforehand. It was prophesied. That the virgin would be with child. And so it happened. In Christ. He fulfilled it. He came from Egypt. He fulfilled it. He came from Nazarene.

He completed it. Fulfilled it. In Christ. He fulfills the law. And the prophets. He doesn't come to abolish them. But to fulfill them. And then we ask.

[7 : 30] What place now. Does the law. And the prophets have. Well an even greater place.

Because they're complete. Because they're accomplished. They're no longer a work.

In process. The house is now. Finished. We can live in it. The work is over. Fulfilled. Complete. We can live. Now. In a way that pleases God.

Even more. Through Jesus Christ. In verse 18. I tell you the truth. Until heaven and earth disappear. Not the smallest letter.

Not the least stroke of a pen. Will by any means. Disappear from the law. Until everything. Is accomplished. Not only does he complete.

The law. Fulfill the law. But he ensures them. Forever. Jesus is adamant. That nothing. Will be lost. From the law. And the prophets.

[8 : 25] This is a promise. Why is it so important? Why is Jesus. Adamant about it? We know he's adamant. Because there's a phrase there. I tell you the truth. Verily. Verily.

I tell you the truth. Jesus is making a strong. Point here. Why is it so important? Why is it so important? Because it's a promise. The promise is. That the law will never disappear.

Why is that important? Because it's the grace of God. God's grace. Will never disappear. We can always rely on God. To treat us. With unmerited favor.

And as we live. As a Christian. We don't need less grace. We need more grace. The holier we become. The more. We are dependent upon God.

So we can take this promise. We can rely upon it. Because Jesus has completed. And accomplished. Everything. Yet.

[9 : 23] At some point. We will no longer need. Scripture. Because of course. There will be an even greater. Fulfillment. An even greater. Accomplishment. Till everything is accomplished.

The word for accomplish. There is. Has the same meaning. As fulfill. In verse 17. So there is a double. Accomplishment. Or a double completion.

Spoken of. There is the completion. In Christ. And then there is the completion. Of the end of the ages. When Christ. Comes again. To fulfill. Everything.

An even greater. Accomplishment. Than before. And this is something too. That we can look forward to. With great hope. And have great encouragement.

About. One day. Everything. The word. Everything. Will be. Complete. And accomplished. And finished. Nothing left. Undone.

[10:18] No loose ends. Nothing left over. Everything accomplished. Don't know what kind of person you are. Maybe you can happily live. With a bit of mess.

A bit of loose end. A bit of things. Not quite finished. Properly. Not perfected. But God is not like that. God will one day. See. Everything. Completed.

Perfected. Brought. To full. Accomplishment. And perfection. One day. And we live in hope. Of that. Great day. What then.

Are we to do. With the law. Until that time. When everything. Is accomplished. Verse 19. Anyone who breaks. 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 practices. And teaches. These commandments. Will be called great. In the kingdom. Of heaven. What are we to do?

[11:17] We are to obey. We are to practice. We are to teach. And this highlights. An interesting thing. For us. What do we think. Greatness.

In the kingdom. Of God. Consists of. Who do you think. Are the great people. In the church. Do you look up. To the people. With the great gifts. The great talents. The ministers.

The elders. The deacons. Who is it? Who is great. Amongst us. Who is great. In the church history. Who do we look to. As our heroes. Why do we look. To these people. Because greatness.

Here. Jesus says. Is based on. Practical. Obedience. That is all. That really matters. That is all. That counts. In the kingdom.

Of God. And the encouraging. Thing about that. Is then. That greatness. Is open. To every single. One of us. Because we can all.

[12:13] Obey. In. Christ. Christ. We will have no excuse. At the end of the day. For not obeying. The responsibility.

Is ours. To obey. And to practice. What we are taught here. Beware. Of coming last. In the kingdom. Jesus says.

Anyone. Who breaks. One of the least. Of these commandments. And teaches others. To do the same. Will be called least. In the kingdom. Of heaven. How do we become least.

Not that we are aiming. For that. But it is not simply. By breaking a command. Jesus says there. But by teaching others. How do we teach others. It is not through the words.

That we speak. But it is through the example. That we give. Statistics show. In the analysis. That have been made. That people. Generally. Don't remember.

[13:09] What you say. 90% of your words. Are completely forgotten. Not very encouraging. If you are. In the. Ministry. That 90% of what you say.

Is forgotten. Or maybe it should be encouraging. But people do remember. The kind of person. You are. And that. Is what teaches others.

Are you a loving. Compassionate. Gracious person. That is what rubs off. Not what you say. You can say one thing. And do another. Completely. Who are you.

Are you least in the kingdom. Is your lifestyle. Showing. You breaking. God's commands. Living in a way. That doesn't stand up. To the profession.

That you have made. In Christ. What type. Of person are you. How will people. Remember you. Sobering thought. How will people.

[14:03] Remember you. When you are gone. And let's not think. That small matters. Don't really count. Anyone who breaks.

One of the. Least. Of these commandments. Will be called. Least. In the kingdom. So often. It's in the small details. Of our lives. That we're really challenged.

To be faithful. To make a stand. For God. When nobody sees us. When we think. We can get away with it. What does Jesus say.

The least. Anyone who breaks. One of the least. Of these commandments. So why. Is obedience. So important. Why does Jesus.

Make. Such a pivotal point. Here. Verse 20. For I tell you. That unless. Your righteousness. Surpasses. That of the Pharisees. And the teachers. Of the law. You will certainly.

[14:58] Not. Enter. The kingdom. Of heaven. Why is it so important. Because without. This obedience. This righteousness. We will not. Enter.

The kingdom. Of heaven. But then we ask. Well how can we have a righteousness. That is greater. Than the Pharisees. Surely. They were moral. They were upright. Yes they were.

They were very good people. If we had a society. Full of. Pharisees. There would be no room. There would be no need. For prisons. Or anything like that. Morally.

Outwardly. They were upright. They were good. But Jesus says. I tell you. That unless. Your righteousness. Surpasses that. Of the Pharisees. And the teachers. Of the law. You will certainly. Not. Enter. The kingdom. Of heaven. So how. Can our righteousness. Surpass. The righteousness. Of the Pharisees. Well by following.

[15:52] The true. Way. Of the law. Donald Hagner. Writes this. Jesus clearly. Calls his disciples. To a way. Of righteousness. But it is a new.

Way. That rests upon. The true meaning. Of the Torah. Now delivered. By the Messiah. And the true meaning. Is brought out. Through the rest. Of chapter 5. Where Jesus.

Looks at. The heart. Rather than. The outward action. The Pharisees. Looked at. The outward action. Remember. The rich young ruler. He came to Jesus. Saying.

How can I enter. The kingdom of God. Jesus said. To challenge him. Obey the commands. He answered. I have. Which ones. Jesus ran through. A list of the commandments. And he said.

Well I have obeyed them all. And he thought. That he had obeyed them all. Because outwardly. He had. Obeyed all the commands. He hadn't. Broke the commands. By an action.

[16:44] That was verifiable. On the outside. And that was what the Pharisees. Were all about. The outward. View. Cleaning the cup. From the outside.

Whitewashed tombs. From the outside. Look beautiful. But inside. Nothing but dirt. And death. That was the religion. Of the Pharisees. Jesus points here.

Instead. Of the outside. Of the outside. The inside. The inside. The heart. The attitude. Rather. Than the actions. We can see that. Quite simply.

When he gives us. The example of murder. You have heard it. It was said. Do not murder. And anyone who murders. Will be subject to judgment. That was the action. The Pharisees thought. Well if they didn't murder. Then they've completed.

The command. And they're perfect. Jesus says. But I tell you. Anyone who is angry. With his brother. Will be subject to judgment. That is the attitude. Of the heart. That is where the law.

[17:41] Really lies. In the heart. What lies in there. Are you breaking the command. In there. The heart is what counts.

Jesus says. From the inside. Out. We need to be perfect. Not from the outside. In. And it is through the heart. That our righteousness. Is greater. Than that of the Pharisees.

Remember what the Christian is. We looked at this morning. The Christian is someone. Who has a new heart. Someone who is in the kingdom of God. Who has moved. From darkness. Into light. Someone who does have that new creation. Who does please God. In her heart. Who does follow God. From her heart. Who can follow God.

Because of Christ. From her heart. That is the Christian. Changed from within. Through the rest of the chapter. Jesus then deals with.

[18:38] Outward action. And internal. Heart. Attitude. The Pharisees. Got the outward action. Right. But they forgot. All about the heart. Where it really.

Counted. In chapter 6. Jesus highlights this. For us even more. When he. Shows quite clearly. The attitude of the Pharisees. Was to please. People outside. Their motivation.

Was so that people. Would think. They were good. Chapter 6. Be careful. Not to do your acts. Of righteousness. Before men. To be seen. By them. If you do.

You'll have no reward. From your father. In heaven. Why did the Pharisees. Do what they did. To be seen. By men. Again. The outward action. That.

That. Is what they lived for. To be seen by men. To look good. Outwardly. Jesus points instead. To the heart. Our.

[19 : 32] Obedience. Has to be motivated. Not. By. What people think of us. But by what God. Thinks of us. Why do we live? What is your reason.

For being a disciple. Today. Why are you a disciple. Today. Why do you get out. Of bed. In the morning. Why do you go to work. Why do you study.

Why do you live life. The way that you do. Live life. Is it. Because. You want. Other people. To think. Of you. In a certain way. Or is it because.

You want to. Please. God. Is that. Your heart. Motivation. I will live. This day. I will get out of my bed. This day. To please God. I don't care.

What other people. Think about me. There. Is freedom. When we're living. Only. To please God. And we don't care. What people. Think of us. What our neighbors.

[20 : 26] Think of us. What the people. In church. Think of us. We know. We are living. Simply. To please God. When our motivation. And our desires.

And our attitudes. Are right. Then nothing else. Matters. We won't care. About another thing. If we are living. With that attitude. We'll simply trust God.

He'll take care of it all. If we're misunderstood. God. Will take care of it all. Our. Image. Doesn't matter. God. Is all that counts.

He loves me. I will love him. I will live. For him. Finally. Then. Does Jesus. Call us. Through this passage.

To be. Perfect. Perfect. Well. Thankfully. He doesn't. What does the. Righteousness. And greatness. In the kingdom. Consist of. Those who practice.

[21 : 23] And teach. These commands. Verse 19. Whoever practices. And teaches. These commands. Will be called great. In the kingdom. Of heaven. We are to aim.

For perfection. Jesus says. At the end of the chapter. Be perfect. Therefore. As your heavenly father. Is perfect. Perfect. That's our aim. That's our goal. And in Christ.

Of course. We are perfect. But we have to live. Aiming. For that perfection. And our actions. From day to day. We are learners. We practice.

We follow Jesus. We make many mistakes. What do we do. When we make a mistake. When we really. Stuff things up. When you're witnessing.

To someone. And you know. You've just something. Done something. Completely wrong. That might turn that person. Away from Christ. What do you do? You simply. Say I'm sorry.

[22 : 18] You go to that person. You apologize. And you're honest. You're practicing. At the moment. You're teaching. These commands. You're practicing.

Your life. And you will make mistakes. But we can rely upon God. One day. To fulfill. And accomplish. Everything. To perfection.

To perfection. And that is what. We live for. Our aim should be then. To follow Jesus. Verse one. The disciples. Came to him. And in following Jesus.

Living for him. Practicing these commands. Obeying him. From our changed hearts. Loving him. With all our heart. Soul. Mind. And strength. And leading others.

To Christ. Through the way. That we live. The example. That we set. Thank you. Thank you.