

Law and Grace
Matthew 5:17-20

- I. Jesus did not come to abolish the Law.
 - A. Nothing will disappear from the Law.
 1. “until everything is accomplished” (the end of time).
 2. “not the smallest letter...the least stroke of a pen.”
 - (a) KJV: “not one jot or tittle.”
 - (b) Jots and tittles were little parts of letters in Hebrew alphabet.
 - (c) Jesus is saying, not only will the Law not go away...
 - (d) Not even a portion of a letter will go away.
 - (e) That’s how strongly Jesus believed in inerrancy.
 3. Inerrancy of the Word of God.
 - (a) There are no errors in the original manuscripts.
 - (b) It is possible to have errors in interpretations to languages.
 - (c) Beware of teachers who say there are errors in original manuscripts.
 - B. Jesus came to fulfill the Law in two ways.
 1. With his life. He never broke the Law.
 2. With his death. “The wages of sin are death.”
 - (a) To be our Redeemer, he had to do both.
 - (b) If he was a law breaker, he couldn’t have paid for our sin.
 - C. The New Testament tells us that we are not under law.
 1. Is that a contradiction?
 2. The Old Covenant was a covenant of law.
 - (a) Covenants had “stipulations.”
 - (b) Stipulations were the requirements of the covenant.
 - (c) The stipulations for the covenant were the Law of Moses.
 - (d) The Law governed the behavior of God’s people.
 3. The New Covenant is a covenant of grace.
 - (a) The covenant has been fulfilled by Jesus.
 - (b) People of the covenant receive forgiveness by grace through faith in Jesus.
 - (c) The number one stipulation is that one must believe.
 - (d) A second stipulation: “As I have loved, so you must love...”
 4. Salvation was never gained by merit through the Law.
 - (a) God’s standard was impossible to achieve (James 2:10).
 - (b) Even if you could keep the Law perfectly, (which you couldn’t), you still had a fallen nature.
 - (c) Paul explained that the Law was to lead us to Christ.
 - (d) The Law was like a flashing neon sign: “You’re a sinner!”
 - (e) Salvation was always connected to faith!
 - (f) Old Covenant people looked forward in faith to Messiah.
 - II. How does the Law apply to us as God’s New Covenant people?
 - A. The Law is a reflection of God’s values, so the Law is good.
 1. Jesus said the Law is summarized by two things.
 - (a) Love the Lord your God with all your heart...
 - (b) Love your neighbor as yourself.
 2. As Christians we are still called to follow the “Great Commandment” and the “Second Commandment.”
 - (a) So, there are many aspects of the Law that we are still called to follow, such as the Ten Commandments.
 - (b) However, our righteousness is not from law following.
 - (c) Righteousness “apart from Law” (Romans 3:21-24).
- B. We need to understand the different parts of the Law.
 1. Ceremonial Law (sacrificial system)
 - (a) These were temporary, prophetic, and symbolic
 - (b) They were a shadow (Hebrews 10:1-4).
 - (c) When the reality comes, the shadow goes away.
 - (d) Jesus was the real sacrifice, prophetically pictured in the shadow of the sacrificial system.
 - (e) The sacrificial system is obsolete.
 2. Dietary Laws (a shadow representing clean and unclean)
 - (a) In Acts 10, Peter’s vision and the Gospel to Gentiles.
 - (b) The dietary laws no longer apply.
 3. Civil Law (including penalties).
 - (a) Now replaced by the laws of our government.
 4. The moral laws (no murder, no adultery) are still to be followed.
 - (a) But, again, our righteousness is not based on morality.
 - (b) Our righteousness is based on grace.
 5. So, if many laws are obsolete, why did Jesus say that not even a letter of the Law will go away?
 - (a) Even laws about sacrificial system are still God’s Word.
 - (b) We still learn from them (about God’s justice and the need for the true sacrifice).
- III. Jesus was not rewriting the Law in the Sermon on the Mount.
 - A. He was reinterpreting the Law.
 1. “You have heard that it was said...” He says this six times.
 - (a) Then he gives a new interpretation of the law.
 - (b) He is correcting the legalistic interpretations of the Pharisees, priests, and rabbis.
 - (c) Legalism was by the letter of the Law (and by adding laws).
 2. Jesus not only speaks to the act, but also to the heart.
 - (a) Why? Because sin begins in the heart before we act on it.
 - (b) Our thoughts of judgment before we gossip are sin.
 - (c) Much of our sin happens in our thoughts (judgment, lust, greed, hatred, etc.).
 - (d) So, we need to be bringing our thoughts under Christ.
 - (e) Paul said, “we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”
 - B. God’s acceptance of us is not based on morality or law following.
 1. Live free, but also remember we are called to love.
 - (a) We are called to be like Jesus.
 - (b) Just as sin begins in the heart, so does love.
 - (c) God desires mercy, not sacrifice.
 - (d) Think like Jesus. Act like Jesus. Love like Jesus.