

Series: Sermon on the Mount

Lesson: #14

Title: Breaking, Doing and Teaching

Scripture: Matthew 5: 19, 20

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Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, Princeton, NJ

We saw last time that the Lord Jesus Christ said that he came not to destroy the law or the prophets but to fulfill. The very fact that God sent his Son into the world to fulfill the law declares two things: 1) It declares the absolute inability of any sinner to fulfill the law by his own obedience; 2) It declares how absolutely necessary it is for the law of God to be fulfilled by each sinner who shall enter into his glorious presence.

The magnifying and honoring of God's law and the word of the prophets is of such utmost importance that the Lord Jesus Christ said,

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.

Now we come to our text for today:

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. 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.

Break

The word "break" means to loosen or to lessen in importance. Whosoever unlooses or unties himself from even one of God's commandments; whosoever shall teach men to loose themselves from even one of these least commandments shall have no place in the kingdom of Christ. God requires perfect obedience to every word he commands, without any distinctions, divisions, or lessening in any part. Perfect, righteous obedience in every part is what the thrice holy God requires. Those accepted of God must do this and teach this. But how can that be? The Lord declares how it is *not* done by using the Pharisees to make his point.

The Scribes and Pharisees

The scribes were those who interpreted the law of God. The Pharisees were the strictest followers of the law. They imagined that a sinner can actually keep the law, as God requires.

In order to teach that righteousness comes by the law, the Pharisees had to unloose themselves and others from certain commandments required by God's law. They had to make it so the law seemed as though a sinner had the ability to keep it.

The Pharisees and scribes made the whole law of God void by simply dividing the law of God into *greater* and *lesser* law. They only regarded the letter of the law with no regard that the law is spiritual, that the law requires heart obedience and condemns the hidden man of the heart. They could only enforce the law as long as murder was simply in the physical killing of another man; they could only appear to have kept the law by regarding murder to be a physical act; but they omitted the fact that the transgression of the law of murder has occurred when a sinner is angry with another in the heart (Mt 5: 21, 22.) So it is with all the law and all the law is required to be obeyed in heart obedience.

Galatians 3: 10: For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. 11: But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith. 12: And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. 13: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: 14: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The Pharisees broke the law themselves and taught others to break the law by lessening and omitting certain commandments. This is what all men do who teach sinners to trust in their obedience in any regard.

Illustration: I can jump over a barn, if you let me build the barn.

Let no one imagine that the gospel lowers either the law of God or the holiness of his saints.

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. 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.

Doing and teaching

Matthew 5: 19:...But whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Is the Lord implying in this verse that the believer can keep the law as God regards and requires the law be kept? Not unless we be found in Christ by faith. Those who are born of the Spirit of God perfectly establish the law through faith in Christ, by his doing, not our own.

Not only this, but only the believer understands how holy, just and good the law of God is. The believer is the only one who delights in the law of God in the heart and who has a God-wrought desire to honor the law in all areas of his life. God's true ambassadors are the only ones who truly teach others the necessity of perfect obedience which required God's Son living and dying as the Representative and Substitute of those given him before the foundation of the world.

When God gave the law to Moses, God knew when he said "this do and live" that not a sinner in time would ever do his law. But God was not unjust in saying it. The weakness was in us, not in the law. So it is in Matthew 5 that when our Lord says, "whosoever shall do and teach shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." It is not that there is a sinner, who himself, can do the law. But we "do the law" by trusting Christ who did it for us. We teach by declaring to others the demands of holy law, that others might trust Christ as well. Because when the Spirit of God makes a sinner to behold the spirituality of the law--that it condemns even the thoughts and intents of the heart--and that it must be upheld in absolute perfection, then the sinner is brought to cast all our care on Christ. This is what we do and what we teach.

Truly, there is but one who has done the law and who teaches others how to do the law. The Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God said, "I came not do destroy the law but to fulfill." Isaiah 54 says "They shall all be taught of the Lord." He is the doer. And he is the teacher. The same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

We teach that by faith in Christ the believer is dead to the law and married to Christ so that now the believer walks in newness of life. The law is not dead our old carnal man is dead. In our new resurrected nature we are married--ONE--with Christ. Therefore the fruit we bring forth is of Christ's production.

We are no longer under the law of Moses which condemns, binds, drives, and aggravates sin. We do not use the law of Moses in that regard but we use it to give the knowledge of sin to those who think they have a righteousness by the law. The believer is under the law of Christ, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ. Walking in newness of life consists of waling in the fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5: 22: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

The Christian position is in Christ before God; the Christian standard is therefore to walk as Christ walked; the Christian power is that of the indwelling Spirit of Christ. Through the Spirit of God, through the doing and dying of our Savior, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us and all our works are accepted of God as perfect righteousness.

Romans 10 could be divided into doing and teaching. The first half deals with how a sinner establishes the law. The second half has to do with teaching. The last verse of the chapter says that Israel was a disobedient people and gainsaying people. They had a zeal and it looked as if they were doing but they were not doing because they believed not on Christ. And they were a gainsaying people. They taught others that gain with God came by obedience to the law, apart from Christ.

Doing

Now go to the first three verses of the chapter:

Romans 10: 1: Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2: For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3: For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

In verse three he speaks of a sinner's "own righteousness" and "the righteousness of God"

Mine own righteousness

Any righteousness a sinner claims in addition to or other than the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus is altogether his own righteousness. And it is of the law, not of faith. Paul desired not to have his own righteousness because he says such a righteousness if of the law and not of faith.

Philippians 3: 4: Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: 5: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; 6: Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 7: But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8: Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, 9: And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

It is not that Paul did not walk honorably before God. He did and he taught others to walk in love as Christ loved us, to mortify the deeds of the flesh, to walk in light, to follow after the Spirit. But by the Spirit of grace teaching him in the new man, Paul knows that the old man is a legalist by nature, the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God and it can not be. He knows he can not look to his own obedience to the law nor desires for any part of his obedience to be looked upon as his righteousness.

It is a subtlety of Satan but so often those who use the law to discipline believers, to threaten believers, to motivate believers are turning sinners back to their own righteousness which is of the law, which is no righteousness at all, but is the righteousness to which the scribes and Pharisees looked.

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.

The Righteousness of God

Again in Romans 10: 3 Paul also speaks of the "righteousness of God". The Lord declares what the righteousness of God is in our 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 fulfil.

Romans 10: 4: For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Righteousness is far more than being justified from my sin, righteousness is being as good as God. God requires it. God will accept nothing less.

Read what Paul declares concerning the law of Moses and the law of faith:

Romans 10: 5: For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. 6: But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise... 8: But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9: That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11: For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Teaching

Romans 10: 14: How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15: And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! 16: But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17: So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Faith establishes, not mine own righteousness which is by my doing the law, but the righteousness of God which is by Christ's doing the law. This righteousness comes through faith through the teaching or preaching of the truth of God's righteousness. It is important that we do believe, but also that we do and teach.

So what do we teach?

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.

Romans 10: 4: For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Romans 1: 16: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17: For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Romans 3: 20: Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. 21: But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22: Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

The Accusation

When Christ came declaring to the Pharisees and scribes that their zeal for God and their obedience to the law was hypocrisy and ignorance, those who truly put their trust in their own works accused Christ of being against the law. "Antinomian," was their cry. The same accusation was leveled against the apostle Paul. It is the same charge from those in our day. They profess Christ but are truly putting the emphasis on the sinner and the sinner's self-sanctifying works of obedience. The carnal heart desires a loop hole of any kind to continue glorying in the flesh. But Paul said we are not antinomians at all.

Romans 3: 31: Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

The believer is the only one who establishes *moral* law. It is confirmed and established through faith in Christ. The perfect righteousness of the law established by Christ is the believers by imputation. Not only this, but the believer is sanctified in the name of Christ Jesus and by the Spirit of God in the new birth so that now the believer understands the spiritual nature of the law and has a true hearts desire to honor the law in deed. We are not going about to establish our own righteousness, by faith we establish it in Christ. His righteousness is our righteousness. In ourselves, we keep the law imperfectly. But only those born of the Spirit of God hear the law, love the law of our Savior and desire to walk so as to outwardly manifest the delight we have of Christ in our hearts.

Still, we declare with utmost clarity that the law is in no regard lessened to any degree. Knowing this, our failures cause us to continually fall at the feet of Christ, thanking him that his righteous-doing has been made our righteous-doing, rather than looking to our own works or the works of our brethren. We do not use the law unlawfully to bind our brethren, motivate our brethren, to place the emphasis on morality or good works because the brethren are each constrained by the love of Christ through the gospel and not the law. Through the gospel of Christ of God's righteousness, Christ is able to bring every thought into obedience which the law of God never once did.

Therefore, exceedingly more than any zealous law-preaching, law-yoking, law-disciplining Pharisee, the believer establishes every commandment of the law by faith in Christ who established it for us. And we teach that every sinner must have a righteousness which excels any they may think they have worked out by their obedience to the law. Christ must be your Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption. You must turn from the immoral, lewd, covetous acts of self-righteousness and self-sanctification for they are as unlawful as the gnat you strain to keep from polluting your precious little mouth while you swallow the camel of self-righteousness. This we do and this we teach.

Romans 3: 31: Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.