

Purpose of Law

July 26, 2020 ~ The Greatest Sermon (2 of 4) ~ Mat 5.17-48

Summary of Where We Are

- ❖ Today is 2nd part of 4-part series on the “**Sermon on the Mount**”
- ❖ Last week’s message was titled the “**Purpose of Man**”
 - ✧ Beatitudes are objective standards by which God blesses man
 - ✧ 7 beatitudes covered Character & Conduct / 8th a Consequence
- ❖ Christians have the privilege of suffering as a Christ follower
 - ✧ Sufferers will be greatly rewarded here and in the hereafter
 - This goes against our 1) culture, 2) values, and our 3) personal desires
 - We want to express moral indignation – yet we see Apostles as joyful
 - ✧ We must train our hearts and minds to experience joy in persecution
- ❖ Want to overcome fear of opposition & persecution? / Go pray & protest at PP

Today’s Title is “**Purpose of Law**”

- ❖ Law (*Authority*) serves a crucial role in our world of suppressing immorality
 - ✧ Living in a nation with “**bad law**” is far better than having “**no law**”
 - **Judges** – “*There was no king in Israel. Men did what was right in their own eyes.*”
 - **Q: James Madison** ~ “**If men were angels no government would be needed.**”
 - Men are not angels. Men get government they deserve to curb their evil.
- ❖ “**Even bad law is better than no law**” ~ **Ex:** Judah going into exile in Babylon
 - ✧ **OT:** Jeremiah instructed the exiles to accept the situation – thrive there
 - ✧ **NT:** Paul admonishes servants & wives to endure bad masters & bad husbands
- ❖ We are all under authority – Authority isn’t always godly or compassionate
 - ✧ Even Jesus said c/scribes and Pharisees “**do as they say – not as they do**”
 - ✧ We can’t expect perfection in society – to do so is to make it our god
- ❖ Let’s examine what Jesus said about law in remainder of chapter 5

v17 ~ “**Do not think that I came to destroy .. but to fulfill**”

- ❖ Christ’s first words concerning the law are entirely supportive of it
 - ✧ He hadn’t come to abolish oppressive laws or lawful authorities
 - ✧ On the contrary, He’s dedicated to fulfilling the law
 - ✧ Jesus was a law keeper – He even paid taxes that He didn’t owe

Xition: Here at Dominion most people should recognize the 2 next verses . . .

v18 ~ “For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth .. till all is fulfilled”

- ❖ Jesus fulfilled the law for Himself and for the elect
 - ✧ The Great Exchange ~ “**Our sins upon Him, His righteousness upon us**”
- ❖ But the law still applies to everyone on earth – elect included
- ❖ God’s Law not only for the Jews, not only for the Christians, but for everyone
- ❖ 10 Commandments didn’t begin with the Jews at Mt. Sinai
 - ✧ All 10 already existed in the Garden with Adam and Eve

v19 ~ “Whoever therefore breaks .. in the kingdom of heaven” (“least” ~ Dt 22.6)

- ❖ Many people today think this statement no longer applies
 - ✧ People think they’re free to structure society anyway they choose
 - ✧ They define marriage & family – murder – property rights and theft
 - Christians as well as non-Christians believe this statement no longer applies
 - Christians can be selective – want murder upheld, want marriage redefined
- ❖ The penalty for violating God’s Law still stands – even for Christians
 - ✧ Jesus refers to “**saved people**” disrespecting God’s law
 - **v19** ~ They will be called “**least in the kingdom of heaven**”
 - **III**: Kopecky – “**treasure in heaven**” vs tenements in heaven 😊
 - ✧ Theonomists have a high regard for God’s Law and know it will rule society
 - But many Christians despise this – they regard God’s Law as antiquated
 - Teachers of God’s Law “**shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven**”

v20 ~ “For I say to you .. the kingdom of heaven”

- ❖ This verse doesn’t lower the bar of the Law / That’s what people do
 - ✧ **III**: Capt Kirk did this at Starfleet Academy in the Kobayashi Maru challenge
- ❖ Jesus raised the bar so high to force people to see that it was impossible

Five (5) Sections Correcting Misconceptions

1. **vss 21-26** ~ (6) Murder & Hate
 2. **vss 27-32** ~ (6) Adultery & Lust
 3. **vss 33-37** ~ (5) Oaths & Human Limitations
 4. **vss 38-42** ~ (5) Pride & Individualism
 5. **vss 43-48** ~ (6) Love & Hate
- ❖ Each section corrects mischaracterization of law ~ “**You have heard .. But I say**”

Xition: First we’ll address “murder of the heart”

1. Murder & Hate

v21 ~ “You have heard .. You shall not murder”

- ❖ “You have heard” ~ The Jews had limited the 6th commandment to act of murder
- ❖ “But I say to you” ~ Jesus reveals root of murder – evil, angry, sin-filled heart of man
 - ✧ James expands upon this beautifully but awfully (**Read James 4.1-2c**)
- ❖ Jesus in v22 contrasts “danger of the council” to “danger of hell fire”
 - ✧ Jesus contrasts earthly courts & punishments with heavenly ones
- ❖ v23-26 ~ “**Christians not only forgiven but forgiving”**
 - ✧ Christians are God’s children and are to behave like God
 - ✧ God forgives us ~ We must forgive others ~ This is non-negotiable
 - **Q: “Hard-hearted people are headed to hell”**
- ❖ Our behavior doesn’t dictate our state / Behavior reflects state of the heart

2. Adultery & Lust

v27 ~ “You have heard .. You shall not commit adultery”

- ❖ “But I say to you” ~ “looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery”
- ❖ Jesus implies the Jews tolerated lustful looks (*that it wasn’t wrong*)
 - ✧ Some husbands insist to their wives, “I’m allowed to look”
- ❖ Job said “I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?”
 - ✧ “look” = “**gaze intently – stare, ogle**”) (**Job 31.1**)
 - ✧ **III: Target B-Day shopping** ~ Every aisle I turned down had young women in it
 - ✧ A “**glance**” can become a “**stare or ogle**” very quickly
- ❖ In v22 Jesus contrasted earthly courts and punishments to heavenly ones
 - ✧ Some Christian wives cite “**adultery of the heart**” as grounds for divorce
 - ✧ But that’s to conflate sins of heart & mind with sins of flesh & body

v31 ~ “Furthermore .. certificate of divorce”

- ❖ “God hates divorce” ~ But He instituted rules to control it – hardness of heart
- ❖ But the Jews had exploited those rules to do anything they wanted
 - ✧ They divorced their wives for many things other than infidelity
 - ✧ Jesus called all people involved in unlawful divorces adulterers – serious

Xition: The 3rd topic is that of oaths – swearing falsely or at all . . .

3. Oaths & Human Limitations

v33 ~ “Again you have heard .. You shall not swear falsely”

- ❖ “But I say to you” ~ “Do not swear at all”
 - ✧ Some refuse to take any earthly oaths because of this text
 - ✧ Though I don’t hold view I can understand it – But many miss Jesus’ point

Swearing Oaths

- ❖ Examples from culture
 - ✧ “I swear to God” ~ Response to incredulous look / Often raising right hand
 - ✧ “I’ll be there come hell or high water” ~ light-hearted comical
 - ✧ “I swear on my mama’s grave” ~ But your mama’s not dead
 - ✧ “By God ..” ~ Said while raising voice and promising some action in anger
- ❖ No coincidence that “swear words” are synonymous with anger
- ❖ 2 important aspects on the making or swearing oaths
 - ✧ 1st – they ought not be needed – Your word should be true “Yes yes, No no”
 - ✧ 2nd – regarding future actions you cannot guarantee it – said in pride/arrogance
- ❖ The Jews had a hierarchy of seriousness in oath taking
 - ✧ Jesus rebukes them for swearing by “gold” of Temple / not Temple itself
- ❖ Jesus said, “do not swear at all” and He gave 4 examples
 - ✧ Reread vss 34-36 ~ “heaven”, “earth”, “Jerusalem, or “head”
 - ✧ God is omnipotent and can fulfill all His oaths
 - ✧ Man is impotent and can only fulfill oaths by God’s grace

4. Pride & Individualism

v38 ~ “You have heard .. tooth for a tooth”

- ❖ “But I tell you not to resist an evil person”
- ❖ Jesus quotes directly from the Bible but says it’s wrong – “How possible?”
 - ✧ In context this phrase refers to punishment meted out by a court
 - Jesus not opposing lawful punishment / but its use between individuals
 - Jews advocated living by this principle in personal interactions / grudges
 - I.e., With everyone we maintain a ledger balance – list of offenses / wrongs
 - ✧ Jesus declared it wrong even with enemies – let alone acquaintances & friends
- ❖ Read 1 Cor 13.4-5 ~ Paul says “thinks no evil” / NIV – “keeps no record of wrongs”

Xition: The 5th (last) is most difficult (just as with 8th beatitude)

5. Love & Hate

v38 ~ “You have heard .. and hate your enemy”

- ❖ v44 “But I say to you, love your enemies, .. and persecute you”
- ❖ All of these commands of Christ are difficult to embrace / to do
 - ✧ But this one is probably the most difficult for us to obey
 - 1. “love your enemies” ~ begins in the heart
 - 2. “bless those who curse you” ~ speak words of kindness c/them
 - 3. “do good to those who hate you” ~ escalated to actions now
 - 4. “pray for those who .. persecute you” ~ ask God to favor them
- ❖ Jesus commands us to do such things / But our flesh doesn’t want to
- ❖ “Is this a New Testament thing only?”
 - ✧ III: Phil’s Jewish neighbor ~ insisted Jews didn’t have to love enemies
 - ✧ **Read Prov 25.21-22** ~ “If your enemy .. will reward you” (*qtd in Rom 12*)
 - ✧ Story of blinding of Aramean army (**2 Kings 6**)
 - Elisha foretold attacks upon Israel – warned king repeatedly
 - King of Aram angry – sent army to capture Elisha
 - Gehazi’s eyes are opened to see “horses and chariots of fire”
 - Elisha asks God to blind Arameans
 - **Read 2 Kings 6.19-23** ~ “Elisha told them .. raiding Israel’s territory”

- Peace can result from our responding to enemies with kindness
- But whether they respond with peace or persecution is not our concern
- Either way we are doing the needful ~ And for that God promises us blessing
 - Law is under attack in our culture / Rebels hate law with all of their being
 - But we need not fear . . . Our God is always in control and will restore order

➤ Prayer and Song

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,
To God our Savior, who alone is wise,
Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen ***pause*** Go in peace . . .

Purpose of Law

July 26, 2020 ~ Sermon Handout ~ Mat 5.17-48

1. What are the titles of parts 1 and 2 of the present sermon series?
a) _____ and b) _____.
2. What is the quote by James Madison? _____

3. If we expect or require perfection from government what have we made it? _____
4. What did Jesus come to do concerning the Law? _____
5. To whom on earth does God's moral Law apply? _____
6. What law was considered the "least" by Jewish teachers? _____

7. Does the penalty for violating God's Law still stand – even for Christians? _____
8. When Jesus said, "You have heard it said" what was he going to share next? _____

9. Upon what 5 topics did Jesus correct misconceptions and what were they?
 - a. _____,
 - b. _____,
 - c. _____,
 - d. _____, and
 - e. _____.
10. The 5th topic is for many of us very difficult to obey. What are the 4 things we're to do?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____, and
 - d. _____.