

Providence Reformed Baptist Church - Sunday, April 25, 2021

Sermon Series: The Gospel of the Kingdom – Matthew

Message 30. The Law: Spirit and Letter – Matthew 5:21-48

Pastor Phillip M Way

Introduction: “Righteousness, the one word that sums up Christian living.” (MLJ) Righteousness is defined as “a state that is in accord with standards for acceptable and anticipated behavior, upright, to carry out a total obligation.” In Matthew 5:21-48, Jesus uses 6 illustrations that demonstrate common principles in the midst of particular commandments that prove that He did not come to give a new law, but new life!

- I. “You have heard that it was said to those of old” – Six Statements
 - A. You shall not Murder – vs. 21
 - B. You shall not Commit Adultery – vs. 27
 - C. Whoever Divorces His Wife – vs. 31
 - D. You shall not Swear Falsely – vs. 33
 - E. An Eye for an Eye – vs. 38
 - F. You shall Love Your Neighbor – vs. 43
- II. “I Say Unto You”
 - A. Traditions Attached to God’s Law – Mark 7:9
 - B. Christ is the Authority on God’s Law – Deut. 18:15; Matt. 17:5
 - C. Christ is the Author of God’s Law – John 14:23-24; 15:10
- III. The Spirit and the Letter of the Law Matters
 - A. New Law or New Life
 1. Reducing Law to External Obedience – 2 Cor. 3:5-11
 2. What Leads to Action? – James 1:14-15; Rom. 1:28-32; Mark 7:21
 - B. The Law – Negative and Positive – James 4:17
 1. Prevention vs. Provision – 1 Tim. 1:5-7
 2. Avoid Sin – Psa. 119:9, 11
 3. Love Righteousness and Pursue It – 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22
 - C. Oppressive Obedience vs. the Law of Liberty
 1. As long as I don’t _____, I’m good/holy/righteous
 2. The Gospel includes Liberty and Law – Luke 4:18; Heb. 8:10; Matt. 28:19-20
 3. Promoting free development of spiritual character (growth in grace) – 2 Peter 3:17-18
 - a. Room to grow within boundaries
 - b. Not mere restrictions, but protection
 4. Glorious Liberty – Rom. 8:21; James 1:25; 2:8-13
- IV. The Law is not an End in Itself
 - A. Knowing God – John 7:25-29; 12:49-50
 - B. The Pharisee – “I’m not guilty of_____.”
 - C. Illustrations and Intentions
 1. The Letter Matters – Matt. 5:18
 2. The Spirit Matters More – Rom. 3:31
 - a. The Third Use of the Law – knowing how to please God
 - b. Obedience to the Law, empowered by Grace, produces righteousness
 - c. This is the desire and ability to walk in the good works prepared for us
 3. Through the Law we come to know God better

Cross References

Matthew 5:21

21 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’

Matthew 5:27

27 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’

Matthew 5:31

31 “Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’

Matthew 5:33

33 “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’

Matthew 5:38

38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’

Matthew 5:43

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’

Mark 7:9

9 He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.

Deuteronomy 18:15

15 “The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear,

Matthew 17:5

5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”

John 14:23-24

23 Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. 24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.

John 15:10

10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

2 Corinthians 3:5-11

5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 7 But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, 8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? 9 For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. 10 For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. 11 For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious.

Romans 1:28-32

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; 32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

Mark 7:21

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

James 4:17

17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

1 Timothy 1:5-7

5 Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, 6 from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.

Psalms 119:9

9 How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.

Psalms 119:11

11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.

1 Timothy 6:11

11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

2 Timothy 2:22

22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Luke 4:18

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;

Hebrews 8:10

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Matthew 28:19-20

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

2 Peter 3:17-18

17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

Romans 8:21

21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

James 1:25

25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

James 2:8-13

8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; 9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so do as those who will be judged

by the law of liberty. 13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

John 7:25-29

25 Now some of them from Jerusalem said, “Is this not He whom they seek to kill? 26 But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ? 27 However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from.” 28 Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, “You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. 29 But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me.”

John 12:49-50

49 For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. 50 And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”

Matthew 5:18

18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

Romans 3:31

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

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