



Mid-Week

Bible Study and Prayer
Wednesdays 6:45pm – 8pm



Good Hope Baptist Church

Pastor Josh Franklin

Jesus' Attitude Toward the Law (Sermon on the Mount studies)

Matthew 5:17-20 (NKJV)

¹⁷ "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

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.

¹⁹ Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

²⁰ For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Commentary Notes:

5:17 Do not think (lit. "stop thinking") – implies they were thinking this already.

5:17 Law or the Prophets - This is the way a first century Jew understood our current Old Testament. Sometimes it would be "The Law, the Prophets and the Writings", or the shortened form "Law and the Prophets". Our current Old Testament is broken down into 39 separate books, but the Jewish Bible is divided differently, though all of the information is the same. Jesus is referring to our Old Testament in its entirety.

5:18 The jot, or yod, is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet; the **tittle** is a small mark or projection that serves to distinguish one letter from another, much as the bottom stroke of a capital *E* distinguishes it from a capital *F*.

5:20 To gain entrance into the kingdom, our **righteousness** must surpass **the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees** (who were content with religious ceremonies which gave them an outward, ritual cleansing, but which never changed their hearts). Jesus uses hyperbole (exaggeration) to drive home the truth that external righteousness without internal reality will not gain entrance into the kingdom. The only righteousness that God will accept is the perfection that He imputes to those who accept His Son as Savior (2 Cor. 5:21). Of course, where there is true faith in Christ, there will also be the practical righteousness that Jesus describes in the remainder of the Sermon.

How Did Jesus "Fulfill" the Law [that is, the Old Testament Scriptures]?

- 1) He fulfilled all the OT Prophecies about the Messiah.
- 2) He fulfilled the Law by coming and dying on the cross. [The OT sacrifices prepared people for Jesus' sacrifice]
- 3) He fulfilled the Law by perfectly following all of the commands. [The only person to ever do this]
- 4) He fulfilled the Law by giving us the power of the Holy Spirit, so that we may have power to live holy. That is the argument of [Romans 8:2-4](#): *Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending*

*his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. We are able to fulfill the righteousness of the Law by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is what Ezekiel prophesied: *I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.* (11:19, 20)*

- 5) He fulfilled the Law by bringing clarity on Old Testament doctrines through teaching and his life. Bishop Ryle put it this way: **The Old Testament is the Gospel in the bud; the New Testament is the Gospel in full flavor. The Old Testament is the Gospel in the blade; the New Testament is the Gospel in full ear.**
- 6) He fulfilled the Law by coming in the flesh. Our Old Testament points to Jesus. It's all about Jesus. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and yet the Bible says that all things were made by Jesus. And you see it's all about the Lord Jesus Christ.

5:17-20 (Life Application Bible) If Jesus did not come to abolish the law, does that mean all the Old Testament laws still apply to us today? In the Old Testament, there were three categories of law: ceremonial, civil, and moral.

(1) The ceremonial law related specifically to Israel's worship (see [Leviticus 1:2,3](#), for example). Its primary purpose was to point forward to Jesus Christ; these laws, therefore, were no longer necessary after Jesus' death and resurrection. While we are no longer bound by ceremonial laws, the principles behind them — to worship and love a holy God- still apply. Jesus was often accused by the Pharisees of violating ceremonial law.

(2) The civil law applied to daily living in Israel (see [Deuteronomy 24:10,11](#), for example). Because modern society and culture are so radically different from that time and setting, all of these guidelines cannot be followed specifically. But the principles behind the commands are timeless and should guide our conduct. Jesus demonstrated these principles by example.

(3) The moral law (such as the Ten Commandments) is the direct command of God, and it requires strict obedience (see [Exodus 20:13](#), for example). The moral law reveals the nature and will of God, and it still applies today. Jesus obeyed the moral law completely.

"Should I obey the Ten Commandments?" The answer is that certain principles contained in the law are of lasting relevance. It is always wrong to steal, to covet, or to murder. Nine of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament, with an important distinction—they are not given as law (with penalty attached), but as training in righteousness for the people of God (2 Tim. 3:16b). The one commandment not repeated is the Sabbath law: Christians are *never* taught to keep the Sabbath (i.e., the seventh day of the week, Saturday).

The Law vs. the Gospel

The law says, "Do and you will live." The gospel says, "Live and you will do."

The law says, "Pay what you owe." Grace and the gospel says, "I forgive you all."

The law says, "Love God with all of your being." The gospel says, "Herein is love; not that we love God, but that He loved us and sent His Son."

The law says, "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." If you think that you're going to be saved by being a good boy or girl, and you break one of the smallest laws, there's a curse upon you. But the Bible says, and thank God for this, "Blessed is he whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered."

The law says, "The wages of sin is death," but the gospel says, "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The law says, "Do." The gospel says, "Done." The law says, "Run," but it gives us no legs. The gospel says, "Fly," and it gives us wings.

You see, I'm not saying that the Ten Commandments are not important. I try to live by the Ten Commandments.

But I know if I'm depending upon my living by the Ten Commandments to get me to heaven, I will never, no never, no never make it. Thank God for Jesus!! [Adrian Rogers]

DO ALL OF THE COMMANDS OF THE BIBLE APPLY TODAY?

Do we have a biblical basis for obeying some commands and neglecting others?

1) OLD COVENANT COMMANDS SUPERSEDED IN CHRIST: God's commandments in the Old Testament (OT) are divided into civil (social), ceremonial (religious), and moral (ethical) categories. The laws we relate to civil and ceremonial find their fulfillment in Christ and no longer apply. EX: food laws and sacrifices. The idea that Christians are not expected to obey the OT civil and ceremonial commands is found throughout the New Testament (NT). EX: Mark 7:14-23 which says, "Nothing enters a man from the outside to make him unclean for it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of the body." In saying this, Jesus was saying "All foods are clean." 1 Timothy 4:4-5 says, "For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."

2) GENTILES DID NOT NEED TO BE CIRCUMCIZED TO BE SAVED – Acts 15:6-11. This address by Peter says one thing: "We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that Gentiles are saved." The timeless moral commands find their fulfillment in Christ. These commands are fulfilled in the lives of all true believers (Romans 8:1-4).

3) THE QUESTION OF THE SABBATH: The 4th commandment says, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy." (Ex. 20:8) "The Sabbath was instituted by God the Father in the original creation. This was at least 2500 years before God gave Moses the 10 Commandments. Genesis 2:2 declares, "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done." Knowing the limitations of humankind, God in his great mercy gave us "the Sabbath" for our own good. The seventh day Sabbath was discarded following the resurrection of Christ on the first day to accord with the new creation. In its original form, the fourth commandment forbade the Hebrews to work and prescribed worship and rest on the seventh day or Saturday. Saturday was the day on which God finished the original creation (Genesis 2:2). However, Christ inaugurated the New Creation on Sunday with His resurrection from the dead. The early Christians for a time worshipped on Saturday and Sunday, but soon began to take the Day of Christ's resurrection as their day of rest and worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Revelation 1:10). Our Sunday, the first day of the week, is not the same day as Saturday, the seventh day. In our Christian vocabulary of hymns and poems, we can use the word "Sabbath" as a valid figure of speech when referring to Sunday. But we should understand the two are not the same. Note four supporting facts:

1. **The fourth commandment is the only commandment not repeated anywhere in the New Testament.**
2. **The first Church Council did not require Gentile Christians to keep the Sabbath (Acts 15: 19-31).**
3. **There is no record of Jesus or any apostle telling anyone to keep the Saturday Sabbath.**
4. **In all of the New Testament lists of sin, Sabbath-breaking is never mentioned."**^a

4) PRESCRIPTIVE OR DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS: Does the text prescribe a certain a certain action or just describe such an action. Luke, for example, describes Jesus praying while He was being baptized (Luke 3:21) but there is no command that all believers pray while being baptized. However, some descriptive passages of Jesus' praying are also exhortations to us to pray in the same manner or in the same spirit (Luke 11:2-13; 18:1-8; 22:40, 46).

5) COMMANDS WHICH APPLY IN A TIMELESS WAY ACROSS ALL CULTURES: "EX: Be not drunk which leads to debauchery, but be ye being filled with the Holy Spirit." It is always wrong to get drunk with any alcoholic beverage in any culture. It is always commanded that every believer be constantly filled with (controlled by) the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

^a Dr. Bill Bennett, *God Hasn't Changed His Mind* (North Carolina: L'Edge Press, 2012), 15-16.

6) COMMANDS TO BE OBEYED IN PRINCIPLE, BUT NOT LITERALLY: EX: 1 Cor. 11:5 commands a woman to wear a covering (hat) to cover her head. What was the purpose of Paul's command? Was this specifically placing a piece of cloth on a woman's head that concerned him? Was it not, rather a woman's submission to her husband as commanded in Eph. 5:22? "Two examples from the Southeastern United States are a woman's wearing of a wedding ring on her left finger and the taking of her husband's last name (without hyphenation). While a woman keeping her maiden name may not express an unbiblical independence in some cultures (China, for example), within the circles where I grew up, a woman keeping her last name after marriage was an implicit rejection of biblically defined gender roles."^b

7) FINALLY, THERE ARE SOME MORAL COMMANDS THAT ARE NOT APPLICABLE OR EVEN MORAL OUTSIDE OF THEIR ORIGINAL SETTING: EX: 1 Thess. 5:26 says, "Greet ALL the brothers with a holy kiss." This today might denote homo-sexuality which is definitely forbidden in Romans 1:18ff, and 1 Cor. 6:9-11. Prov. 27:1 says, "If given to gluttony, cut your throat." 2 Tim. 4:13, "Bring a cloak and the books I left at Troas." 2 Tim. 4:21, "Do thy diligence to come before winter."

8) JESUS DID NOT COME TO CANCEL THE MORAL LAW OF THE OT, BUT HE CAME TO FILL IT TO THE BRIM: (Matt. 5:17 meaning to complete it by explaining its ultimate purpose from a spiritual standpoint; EX: Matt. 5:27-28, "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Meaning physical adultery (OT), but Jesus added "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matt. 5:28). See also Matt. 5:31-48.

9) THE APOSTLE PAUL DID NOT SET ASIDE OT LAW (TEN COMMANDMENTS) BUT SAID THAT "THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW WAS FULFILLED IN US WHO WALK NOT AFTER THE FLESH BUT AFTER THE HOLY SPIRIT (ROM. 8:4) "Love is the fulfilment of the Law" (Rom. 13:10). However, Paul commanded young Timothy "No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities." (1 Tim. 5:23). This command is "descriptive", not "prescriptive". Surely God does not command us to quit drinking water, nor does He condone a steady drinking of alcoholic beverages. All scholars agree that the water was so contaminated in Paul's day that it inflamed a weak stomach, but that is not the situation today.

10) HOW SHOULD WE INTERPRET HYPERBOLIC AND EXAGGERATED PASSAGES? My sons used to come from school and complain "I'm starving," but I didn't rush them to the hospital for emergency care. "I'm starving" is hyperbolic language to express strong emotion. Biblical characters used exaggerated language as well. "Exaggeration occurs within various literary genres in the Bible. It is especially common in poetry, proverbs, and the historical narratives of Jesus...For example, in teaching on lust, Jesus said, 'If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away' (Matt. 5:29). As Jesus' followers did not become known as 'The Assembly of the One-Eyed Disciples,' it is clear that Jesus meant this language hyperbolically."^c See also Luke 14:26 on hating our family which conflicts with the words and actions of Jesus elsewhere. Jesus is simply saying that our devotion to Him should far exceed any other relationship until our relations to human beings would look like hate in contrast to our love for Him.

11) CAN A CHRISTIAN KEEP THE 10 COMMANDMENTS? He can if he obeys the Greatest Commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength...and your neighbor as yourself." (Matt. 22:37, 39). And he can obey the great commandment through the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5; 8:2-4; 13:8b). However, a Christian does not keep the 10 Commandments in order to be saved, but to demonstrate that he is saved and is in fact "a partaker of the divine nature." (2 Pet. 1:4; 2 Cor. 5:17).

^b Robert L. Plummer, *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible* (Missouri: Kregal Publications, 2010), 171.

^c Robert L. Plummer, *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible* (Missouri: Kregal Publications, 2010), 219

EXTRA MATERIAL FOR TEACHING

Kent Hughes - It seems clear enough from Jesus' opening words that he came to fulfill the Law, not to annul it. However, some have actually taught that Christ came to destroy the Law. For example, the second-century heretic Marcion rewrote the New Testament by eliminating its Old Testament references and simply removed this passage. And some of his disciples even went further by exchanging the verbs in the sentence so it would read, "I have come not to fulfill the Law and the Prophets, but to abolish them!" Two centuries later Dr. Faustus, a leader of the Manichees who also repudiated the Old Testament and its God, attacked Augustine. Augustine's *Reply to Faustus* became the classic answer to such thinking. In a nutshell, the answer was this: **Jesus was not abolishing the Law when he countered the Pharisees saying, "You have heard it said... but I tell you." Rather, he was correcting the perversions that the scribes and Pharisees had made of the Law.**

There was a Russian psychologist that I studied about when I was in school, and I'm sure you did, his name was Pavlov. And Pavlov did experiments on what we call condition response. You remember that? What Pavlov did, he got some dogs and he put them in a pin. And before he would feed his dogs he would ring a bell, and then he would put down the dog food. Each day he'd come in and ring the bell and feed the dogs. Now the time came when all Pavlov had to do was just ring the bell and the dogs would begin to drool. They'd just salivate. He had built into those dogs what he called a conditioned response. And the ringing of the bell meant food.

God in the Old Testament was building into His people a conditioned response. And every time one of those animals was slain and the blood was poured out, and that animal was offered on a smoking Jewish altar, what was God doing? God was building into His people a conditioned response. God was teaching them that sin means death. The wages of sin is death. The soul that sinneth it must surely die. And the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ was the answer to the conditioned response that God had been building through the centuries. Every Old Testament sacrifice, every Old Testament ritual was God's bell ringing, teaching that sin meant death, and man needs a redeemer.

"I am not coming to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. I am not seeking to weaken it, but to establish it."

Galatians 3:24-26 - Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

People think, "Well, I'm pretty good."

"Oh?" says the Law. "Here's your standard."

And suddenly, as they read through the Law, they realize they're sinners in need of a Savior.

1. How would you define "fulfillment"?
2. In your own words, what does Jesus mean when He says that He has not come to destroy the prophets, but to fulfill them?
3. How could He be charged with destroying the prophets?
4. How did the Old Testament sacrifices point toward Jesus?
5. How did the Passover point to Jesus?
6. What do the following passages prophesy about the coming Messiah?
Psalm 22:14-18; Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:2; Isaiah 53:3-6; Hosea 11:1; Micah 5:2
7. What does Hebrews 5:9 teach us about Christ's obedience to the moral law?
8. How does Hebrews 7:11-28 describe Jesus' fulfillment of the ceremonial law?
9. What do Galatians 3:13-14 and Romans 10:4 reveal about Christ's fulfillment of the judicial law?

We are children of God and citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Because of that, we have to manifest the characteristics of such people. We do this in order to manifest His glory, and so that others may be brought to glorify Him. – Martyn Lloyd-Jones

CHRIST CONFIRMED WHAT THE CRITICS DENY

- 1) Daniel was a prophet** [Matthew 24:15] – Critics say Daniel was a historian.
- 2) God Created Adam and Eve** [Matthew 19:4] – Critics say they evolved.
- 3) Jonah was swallowed by a Great Fish** [Matthew 12:40] – Critics say it didn't happen.
- 4) World was drowned in a flood** [Matthew 24:37] – Critics say it was local, not global.
- 5) One prophet wrote Isaiah** [John 12:38-39] – Critics say there were multiple Isaiahs.

In GENESIS He's the seed of the woman.

In EXODUS He's the Passover Lamb.

In LEVITICUS He is our atoning sacrifice.

In NUMBERS He is the smitten rock.

In DEUTERONOMY He is that prophet who is to come.

In JOSHUA He is the Captain of the Lord's hosts.

In JUDGES He is the deliverer of God's people.

In RUTH He is our kinsmen redeemer.

In 1 SAMUEL He is the anointed one.

In 2 SAMUEL He is the king enthroned.

In 1 KINGS He is the glory of the Lord filling the Temple.

In 2 KINGS He is the royal seed.

In 1 CHRONICLES He is the glorious king.

In 2 CHRONICLES He is the Lord who appears to Solomon.

In EZRA He is the Lord God of our Fathers.

In NEHEMIAH He is the restorer of Israel.

In ESTHER He is the advocate who pleads for His people.

In JOB He is my Redeemer that I know that lives and shall stand upon the earth.

In the book of PSALMS He is the Shepherd, He is the King of Glory.

In ECCLESIASTES He is the significance of life.

In SONG OF SOLOMON the Lord Jesus Christ is the heavenly bridegroom.

In ISAIAH He is Immanuel, God with us. He is Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the

Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. The virgin-born Son of God.

In JEREMIAH He is the divine potter who is molding and making our lives.

In LAMENTATIONS He is the broken hearted Jehovah who weeps over us.

In EZEKIEL He is the glory of God.

In DANIEL He is that stone cut out of a mountain without hands that will smite the image of this ungodly world upon its feet and then become a kingdom that will fill this earth.

In HOSEA the Lord Jesus is the child called out of Egypt.

In JOEL He is the Lord that roars out of Zion.

In AMOS, Jesus is the judge of the nations.

In OBADIAH He is the Lord of the coming Kingdom.

In JONAH He is God's messenger to the Gentiles.

In MICAH, He is Bethlehem's baby, the one who is going to be the ruler of Israel.

In NAHUM He is a stronghold in the day of trouble.

In HABAKKUK He is the Lord in His holy temple.

In ZEPHANIAH, He is the King of Israel.

In HAGGAI He is the Lord of Hosts.

In ZECHARIAH He is the Lord coming into Jerusalem riding upon a colt.

In MALACHI, He is the coming messenger, the Son of righteousness, with healing His wings.

- Author Unknown