

"The Sermon on the Mount"

Matthew 5:17-20

Part 3

Introduction: The past 2 weeks in our study of the Sermon on the Mount we have been looking at Matthew 5:17-18. Here in these verses Jesus has answered a question that was in the minds of those who heard His teaching. His teaching was far different from the Scribes and the Pharisees. They were placing people under the demands of legalism. They could not keep the Law so they needed some way to convince themselves they were righteous and so they took God's Law and added hundreds of small details to it which they could keep.

Example: They struggled with the commandment that no work was to be done on the Sabbath so they came up with rules that defined work. Work to them was to carry a burden so they wrote rules that defined a burden. Therefore there were thousands of rules and regulations they wrote in order to make themselves look and feel self righteous. So with all of the rules and the regulations they were enslaving the people of Israel.

Jesus came on the scene and His message was one of grace and forgiveness. He was setting people free from the legalism of the Scribes and the Pharisees. Therefore, His teaching completely turned the teaching of the religious leaders upside down and we must understand that the teaching of the religious leaders had poisoned the minds of the people in Jesus' day. Many of the people were wondering where Jesus stood when it came to the Law and the prophets.

So in **Matthew 5:17** Jesus addressed the question they had in their minds. The first words of the verse are "think not" and from those words we can see that in the minds of Jesus' followers they had questions.

Jesus explained to His followers in **5:17** that He had come to fulfill the Law and the prophets. Two weeks ago we looked at how Jesus was and is the fulfillment of the Law and the prophets and how He is the central focus of the entire Bible.

Last week in our study we looked at the words Jesus spoke in **5:18**. In this verse Jesus tells His followers the Word of God is the final Authority.

Notice **Matthew 5:19**

Jesus makes it very clear that every book, chapter, verse, word, and stroke of the pen in the Word of God is inspired and eternally important. It will all come to pass just as it is recorded and there will not be one prophecy or promise that is left unfulfilled. This is one of the most important statements in the Word of God for this verse tells us that we can hold on to all the Bible tells us and we will never be ashamed or disappointed.

So, let's put these thoughts together and keep them in context. In **Matthew 5:3-12** we find a description of the character of the person who is controlled by the Spirit of God. In **Matthew 5:13-16** we find how that Spirit controlled person is to live as he or she passes through this world of darkness. Then we come to **Matthew 5:17-20** where we find the Standard which the Spirit controlled person is to live by and that standard is the Word of God.

If we were to outline Matthew 5:17-20 it could be done in this way:

1. The Preeminence of the Word (:17)

The word "preeminent" means "to have first place". The Word of God is to have first place in our lives because it is God's Inspired Word.

2. The Permanence of the Word. (:18)

This means the Word of God is "permanent" and will stand through all ages and all of eternity. It is the absolute Truth and the final Authority.

3. The Importance of the Word. (:19)

Notice Matthew 5:19

When I read this verse there are several thoughts that come to my mind:

a. We are not to take any part of God's Word lightly.

When I read the verse I see that Jesus viewed the "least" of the commandments just as important as the "greatest" commandments. We must keep in mind that the entire Bible is the inspired Word of God and every Word is very important.

In the body of Christ today there is more emphasis placed upon certain commands than on others. Let me give you an example:

Notice the words of Jesus in Matthew 22:

Matthew 22:35-38

³⁵ Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,

³⁶ Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

³⁷ Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.

Here we see that Jesus placed great emphasis upon the first commandment. But that does not mean the other commandments in the Word are to be taken lightly.

Consider the 10th Commandment:

Exodus 20:17

¹⁷ Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

This commandment tells us we are to be content with what God has given to us and we are not to covet what those around us have. Now in our society where people are always reaching for more of this world's goods it is easy to push this commandment to the side. The majority of people in the church today would say the 10th commandment is not nearly as important as the first commandment. According to Jesus every commandment is very important and none are to be taken lightly.

James had great insight into what Jesus was saying here in Matthew 5:19.

James 2:10

¹⁰ For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

b. God's Word is to be held out as the standard for gaining entrance into heaven.

Notice Matthew 5:19

We are not to break God's commandments nor are we to teach others to do so. You see we are to hold God's Word out as a measuring tool to measure the self righteousness of people and we are to hold it high as the standard which we are to live by.

People today are much like the people of Jesus day who had been poisoned with the teaching of the religious leaders. Today there are people who "profess" to be believers and they live in a way that their lifestyle teaches people around them it is ok to lie or steal or covet or commit adultery. You see they not only practice these things but they also laugh or joke when they hear of others who are practicing these things. Therefore through their lifestyle or their acceptance of what others do they are teaching people that God's commandments are not relevant today. As believers we are to hold God's Word high as the standard for our lives. We are also to hold forth the Word to the unsaved so they might see their true condition.

Now Jesus here was speaking of the Old Testament so with that in mind there is a question that I want to consider.

Why was the Law so important? There are 2 answers to this question:

- 1. It is the Word of God. This is supported by verse 18.**
- 2. It is the "schoolmaster" that brings people to Jesus Christ for salvation.**

Galatians 3:22-24

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

A schoolmaster was someone who made sure the student came to the teacher. The schoolmaster was in charge of delivering the student to the teacher. In the same way when the Law of God is proclaimed people are made aware of their true spiritual condition and are able to see their need of a Savior.

Notice the testimony of the apostle Paul:

Romans 7:7

7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

As believers we are to use the Law as a way to help the lost see their true spiritual condition. Now if we were to live in disobedience to the Law (The Ten Commandments) or if we accept those who do then we are guilty of dulling the edge of the Sword (The Word) and therefore the Word is not held high and the lost do not see their true spiritual condition all because of the way we suppress the Word. For a believer to live this way is very dangerous and damaging.

Ezekiel 3:17-19

17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

Ezekiel had the responsibility of warning the wicked of God's coming judgment and if he neglected to do so their blood would be on his hands. In the same way we are to warn the lost of God's coming judgment on all the unsaved and in order to do that effectively we are to hold high the Truth of God's Word and especially God's moral Law and if we don't their blood will be on our hands.

Romans 10:17

17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Let's get back to the text again.

Jesus teaching here was in complete contrast to that of the Scribes and the Pharisees. They were more focused upon their traditions which were developed to get around the Law. They knew they could not keep the Law so they developed their own rules to justify their inability to keep the Law.

But what they were doing was extremely damaging:

1. They were deceiving themselves with their rules and their legalism.
2. They were not allowing the Law to do its work in the lives of those who looked up to them. (Remember the Law was for the purpose of revealing a person's true spiritual condition.)

Those same dangers are possible in our lives also if we are not careful. We must be careful not to allow the world to pollute our minds with its acceptance and promotion of sin. Remember when we do not stand up against sin it is the same as standing for sin. When we accept people that practice sin and support them and encourage them we too are guilty of the very same sin.

2 John :9-11

⁹ Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

¹⁰ If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

¹¹ For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

To bid someone "God speed" is to encourage them or support them in the direction they are going.

Conclusion:

We have seen:

1. **The Preeminence of the Word of God. It is to have first place.**
2. **The Permanence of the Word of God. It is eternal.**

3. The Importance of the Word of God. It is to be lived and taught.

Now let me finish with a challenge. Let us all stand up for the Truth of God's Word. Let us defend the Word when it is attacked through sin or compromise. Let us be willing to suffer for the Truth of God's Word for it is the absolute Authority. Let us hold the Word of God high as we march through this world of darkness. Let us not be ashamed of the Word of God. Let us live in obedience to the Word of God so as to honor the Lord with our lives. Let us present our bodies as living sacrifices to our God.

Notice the words of David.

2 Samuel 24:21-24

²¹ And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people.

²² And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood.

²³ All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee.

²⁴ And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

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