

SERMON ON MT #5 THE CHRISTIAN AND MORAL LAW

Matthew 5:17-20

Continuing our series on the Sermon on the Mount
 We're looking at the DNA of Christian conduct and the law.
 Would anyone deny that our culture and world is in a moral crises?
 Its like our country has an attack of laryngitis
 and were rewriting the rules of communications.
 One young husband lost his voice completely for two days.
 He set up a new communication system with his wife:
 One tap meant, "Give me a kiss," two taps meant "Yes,"
 seven taps meant "No," and 95 taps meant "Take out the garbage."

Are we tapping out the correct message to our youth about morality?
 Last year there were over 1.66 million juvenile crime cases in America
 Which including robbery, assault, homicide, rape, sexual offence, and property damage.
 And it has been increasing every year.

Defiance to moral laws can lead to death
 Whether it is the speeding drunk, who kills a mother on her way to the store,
 the drug addict who spreads Aids, or a terrorist attack.
 No transgression of moral law is without painful consequences.

Immorality which is the breaking of moral standard?
 Or **amorality which says:** there is no such thing as a moral standard.
 What should we be more concerned about?

Our battle in the cultural war is not just about abortion, homosexual rights,
 or the decline of public education, or war in Iraq.
 The real war is a cosmic struggle between worldviews.
 Between the Christian worldview and the varied secular worldviews.
 Which are in total opposition to the teachings of the Scriptures.

God is the author of morality.
 He is a moral being,
 And his word has legislated certain moral standards
 Without which no society can exist in right relationship with Him or each other.
 The Pharisees put so much value on protecting the laws they forgot about people.
 They thought Jesus was destroying the law by overvaluing people.

Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount because he believed that the moral laws were
I. ENACTED BY GOD HIMSELF and ENFORCED BY THE PROPHETS
¹⁷**"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not
 come to abolish them but to fulfill them. Matthew 5:17**

First of all no one misunderstands what Law Jesus or the Pharisees were talking about.
 It's recorded in Exodus 20 and is called the Ten Commandments
 This will always be the Moral law of God.

You may say “well but that is Old Testament.”

Nine of the Ten Commandment are repeated in the New Test. Epistles

The exception is the Sabbath commandment,
which was given as a sign to Israel. Nehemiah 9:14

The importance of the moral law lies in the fact that it was **Enacted** by God.

And God spoke all these words: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. Exodus 20:1-2

God starts by establishing who he is:

I am the Lord your God....

And you shall have no others gods before me. Exodus 20:3

You may not like the lawgiver,
But that doesn't mean you can still break his law.

Once God is introduced
He gives us the core of his moral law.
Because two things are unchanging in our world
Human nature and God's word.
Truth remains truth.
And sinful man remains sinful man.
And he continues to interpret our world
Through his eyes, his will, and his way.

A bus driver was conducting a tour of famous Civil War battle sites in the south. He point at one spot and said: “Here, is where the Southern rebel troops routed a whole regiment of Yankees northerners. Over there, the Rebs wiped out a whole platoon of Yanks. Down about a mile, there's another valley where the Rebs captured a thousand Union soldiers.” A tourist asked, “Didn't the North ever win a battle?”
“Yes, ma'am. But not while I'm driving this bus.”

We may not like God's moral law
But no matter how we interpret it, it won't change.
God is a moral being who requires his people to live moral lives.

Jesus then enforced it by linking the law with the Prophets.

¹⁷“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. Matthew 5:17

Not only was the law enacted by God,
But down through Israel's history
it has been enforced by the prophets.
One after another they reiterated God's message,
Reinforcing it by their teaching and example.
Maybe we ought to have a visit from Moses or Elijah.

¹⁶ For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws;...¹⁹ This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live. Deut 30:16,19

Note two words stand out in these verses.

Commands

Choose.

God has given us his moral standards which are his **commands**

He has also given us the will to **choose** to obey Him.

Western culture is fast dominating the globe.

People in Pakistan can get on line with people in Pennsylvania,

China, Japan, Philippines, even Africa, even North Korea,

Are moving to accept the influx of Western books, movies,

television programs, the internet, pornography.

A Missionary in Singapore said because Asians associate the West with Christianity,

The flood of smut from the west is making his Christian witness difficult.

We are living in a Post Christian era

By "Post Christian" we mean that Americans

profess to be Christians and even attend church.

But it has absolutely no affect to their actions or attitudes Monday thru Saturday.

No longer obey and live by Judeo-Christian truths

But instead base their lives and morality on their own moral choice or lifestyles.

Are we Christians guilty of laying the Law of the Lord aside,

are we also guilty of rejecting the divine rulebook.

That is what the Prophets were warning us against.

Every time we say "no" to the temptation to lie, steal, or commit adultery,

To cheat on a test, look at porn,

We are pleasing The Father.

We do it to show God that we love Him more than the sin we are tempted to commit.

Jesus affirmed that the moral laws were

I. ENACTED BY GOD HIMSELF and ENFORCED BY THE PROPHETS

Jesus affirmed that the moral laws

II. GIVE PERMANENCE IN THE WORLD WE LIVE.

Matthew 5:18

¹⁸I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Matthew 5:18

There is a difference between permanent markers and erasable markers.

Every mother here today knows the difference.

Because most of us have had our share of trying to rub

Permanent Marks off our walls and halls.

Permanent sticks,
 It stays.
 I use it to mark my vacuum-sealed packages of fish and pheasant, deer, and beef.
 One time I couldn't find the permanent marker
 So I used the erasable.
 Were adults in our family right?
 Well in the process of moving things around in the freezer
 Somebody rubbed off the markings.
 I'm not pointing any fingers,
 Let me tell you that made for some surprises.

Jesus was saying that the law of God is totally and utterly permanent.
 There are no surprises.
 He starts with an authoritative statement.
I TELL YOU THE TRUTH.

If we work on marble it will perish.
 If we work on brass, time will efface it.
 If we build Twin Towers we see them crumble to dust.
 But if we work on men's immortal minds,
 if we imbue them with high principles,
 with just fear of God and love of their fellow-men,
 we engrave on those tablets something which time cannot efface,
 and which will brighten and brighten to all eternity."

Jesus authority to teach did not come from any recognized leaders or schools.
 He didn't have any license or degree, no pedigree..
 He taught with the authority of the Son of God.

I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, Not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Matthew 5:18

The world is full of changing truth.
 Confusing truths of relativism, or situation ethics,
 What is wrong today could be right tomorrow.

Was Joseph wrong when he did not give to the temptation of Potiphar's wife?
His master wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!" Genesis 39:7
 After all she was his master's wife?
 Circumstances had changed.
 Now his job and his life depended upon her.
 But, Joseph did not fall into the trap.
 He followed an absolute Standard. – God's law.
 Not one letter or stroke of the pen would disappear from the law
 He chose to obey God rather than follow the route of expediency.

The question for us today is:
 Are your beliefs and lifestyle in conflict with God's moral law and Holy Word?

Friends, it will hurt more to have a belief pulled than to have a tooth pulled,
It hurts us to change even when we know were wrong.
And there is no spiritual Novocain available.

You can trust the moral laws of God to be permanent and true
Jesus affirmed the moral laws

III. REQUIRED AND RECEIVED CONSEQUENCES

¹⁹Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:19

God was saying that there are results to our behavior, our obedience.
If you're a Christian and you break God's law in the least area and
Teach other to break the moral law as well,
by your words and actions,
You will be least in the kingdom.
There are consequences when we break the law of God.

I like the story of a mother who walked into the principle's office of her son's high school. She had curlers in her hair, booties on her feet, and was wearing pajamas. The principle asked: "Why are you dressed like that?" She said: "I told my son, that if he ever did anything to embarrass me, I would embarrass him back. He was caught cutting school. So now I've come to spend the day with him!"

Cutting school has consequence,
Life has consequences
Did you know last year 14 of the Cincinnati Bengals Football team were arrested for illegal activity.
The Law has consequences and
So does breaking the law of God.

¹⁹Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven,
Does your living grace you in God's eyes, or disgrace you?

Tancredo Neves (President of Brazil): During the Presidential campaign, he said if he got 500,000 votes from his party, not even God would remove him from Presidency. Sure he got the votes, but he got sick a day before being made President, then he died .

Dr. B.J. Miller once said, "It is a great deal easier to do that which God gives us to do, no matter how hard it is, than to face the responsibilities of not doing it." *Today In The Word*, November, 1989, p.11.

Then Jesus pushes us over the limits of our understanding when he says:

²⁰For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:19-20

When he said that the common folks must have sagged in despair.
The Scribes and Pharisees were the holiest men in the community!
And to exceed their obedience would be beyond reach.
If they had not attained, what hope was there for anybody else?

Imagine a beginning piano student struggling to plink out the notes to "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Then imagine this student's piano teacher suddenly announcing, "Joey, unless your abilities to play the piano exceed that of Vladimir Horowitz, you can no longer be in my class!"
The child would quit in despair.
How could he ever get that good unless his teacher stuck with him!
He'd never make it to that level on his own!
The bar is set impossibly high.

So Jesus took a law that was impossible to fulfill
²⁰... unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:19-20

Jesus fulfilled it for us.
Jesus did not destroy the Law by fighting it, but by fulfilling it.
Take an acorn. I can destroy it in one of two way.
I can put it on a rock and smash it to bits with a hammer.
Or, I can plant it in the ground and let it fulfill itself by becoming an oak tree.

Jesus took the curse of the law and died on the cross of our sins.
But he took it further than that,
Like an Acorn we buried him in the ground
He fulfilled the law of sin and death
But he rose in the beauty of the tree of grace and glory.
and opened the way forever into the Father's presence.

Today when we come to communion.
We admit our brokenness
And come and repent
And ask God for forgiveness
No matter what my sin,
I am forgiven.
God's law is justified in Christ.
Because the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free.