

Extra Teaching Points

Chapter 4

[Matt. 5:17](#)

Q: What did Jesus mean when He said He did not come to abolish or destroy the Law, but rather to fulfill it?

- Jesus did bring about the end of some things (if not everything) in the Old Covenant when He fulfilled its requirements... namely, a perfect sacrifice for sins.
 - In [Jer. 3:16](#) Jeremiah prophesied that the Ark of the Covenant, which represented the entire covenantal system, **would be replaced**.
 - [Heb. 8:13](#) says the New Covenant has made the Old one obsolete.
- To answer this we probably need to ask a few other questions first.

Q: What was the Law for?

- Read [Gal. 3:19-29](#)
 - Vs. 19 It was added because of the people's transgressions of the covenant God made with them.
 - Vs. 21 The law couldn't give life... life comes from faith.
 - We couldn't relate to God on the basis of the law because we weren't good enough.
 - We can only relate to God on the basis of Faith.
 - Vs. 24 *"Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith."*
 - In [Rom. 3:31](#) Paul says faith doesn't nullify the law, but rather it establishes and upholds the law.
- The Law was to teach about who God is and what He is like; but Faith is the only way to really know God!

Q: If Jesus hasn't done away with the Law, how does the Law apply to Christians?

- [Romans 8:4](#) We still define righteousness in terms of the Law, so the law hasn't gone away.
- The Law still teaches us about God... who he is and what He is like.
 - God has not changed!
- The Law reveals God's heart.

In each of the statements where Jesus quotes what they have heard about the law, He doesn't say they can disregard or ignore what was said. He says it must go deeper... not in a different direction.

- Almost everything Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount had been said earlier, usually in the Psalms or the Prophets; so He wasn't just making up new standards.
- Jesus just brought out of the law the emphasis that was lacking in His day, and clarifies that their thinking about the law was inadequate.

I think Jesus is saying He has come to explain the Law more fully--Not just tell us what is right or wrong, but why it is right or wrong.

[Matt. 5:20](#)

If the outward keeping of the law was the way to keep the law, then it would be impossible to ask anyone to do more than the Pharisees. They were heroes of the Law.

- Jesus was saying that our righteousness has to exceed theirs in terms of depth or sincerity.
 - The disciples were required to go deeper than rule keeping; their righteousness had to come from the heart.
- Jesus says the law needs to be a spiritual thing, not just a legal thing.
- Jesus' appeal is for disciples not just to obey a standard in a visible way, but to obey it in an internal, heart-level way.

More Explanation:

In [Matt. 23:23](#) Jesus tells the Pharisees that they were good at keeping an eye on the details of the law, but they were neglecting the “weightier matters” of the law--namely justice, mercy, and faith.

- This is similar to the description of true religion found in [Micah 6:8](#).

Jesus said love is the fulfillment of the law ([Matt. 22:37-40](#)); and Justice, Mercy and Faithfulness are what love is.

- **Fulfilling the law is not about “feelings”; it’s about treating others right--the way you want to be treated.**
 - Justice, Mercy, and Faithfulness are about treating people the way you want to be treated ([Matt. 7:12](#)).
 - Justice is not cheating someone or violating his or her rights.
 - Mercy is not demanding your rights.
 - Faithfulness is being honest and keeping your word.

The remainder of Matt. 5 contains 6 illustrations of what the law was trying to get across to us, which is how to love.

The law was commonly explained in ways that were not loving, that’s why Jesus kept saying, “You have heard it said, but I say...”

- Just because you don’t commit murder, doesn’t mean you are being loving.
- Just because you don’t commit adultery, doesn’t mean you are being loving.

Love goes beyond the outside “forms” of the law.

- **When you pour concrete, you set up forms to mark the edges.**
 - **The Law showed us the edges of God’s heart.**
- **Jesus came to fill-in what was supposed to be inside those forms.**

To exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees, we have to move beyond meticulous rules and focus on what really matters.

In [John 4:24](#) Jesus tells the woman at the well that God wants people to worship Him in spirit and in truth; and in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus illustrates how that is done.

- Jesus tells us in His first 6 illustrations how to worship in spirit (by faith, not legalism).
- The first 3 illustrations in chapter 6 are about how to worship in truth (with the right motive).

Chapter 4 Follow Up Assignment

Q: How well do you know God?

- a. What sin(s) do you struggle with the most?
- b. Why does God call it (or them) a sin?
- c. What does God's reason for calling it (or them) a sin tell you about who He is and what He is like?
- d. If these questions are hard to answer, what does that say about how well you really know God?

Q: Do you tend to focus more on trying not to sin, or do you focus more on doing justice, loving mercy, and being faithful?

- a. What is the difference between these two approaches?