

Kingdom Morality: The Intent of the Law of God

Sunday, October 16/22 --- Matthew 5:17 - 48

Therefore, whoever relaxes 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 does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. – Mt. 5:19

There is no fulfillment of the Law apart from communion with God, and no communion with God apart from fulfillment of the Law. To forget the first condition was the mistake of the Jews, and to forget the second the temptation of the disciples... It is Jesus Himself who comes between the disciples and the Law, not the Law which comes between Jesus and the disciples.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

1. **Fulfillment:** Jesus came to Fulfill God's Law (5:17 – 18)

2. **Failure:** The Scribes and Pharisees Mishandled God's Law (5:19 – 20)

3. **Formula:** Jesus' Six Examples Illustrating the Mishandling of God's Law
(5:21,27,31,33,38,43)

4. **Features:** Jesus' Instructions on the Right Understanding of God's Law (5:21 – 48)
 - a. Intent on the Spirit of the Law, not merely Obedience to the Letter
 - b. Transformation of the Heart, not merely Outward Behaviour
 - c. Emphasis on Positive Affect of the Law, not merely the Negative
 - d. Viewing the Law as a Means to a Great End, not the End Itself

Discussion Questions:

The commands of the law were meant to be a blueprint for a life to be fully human. God knew that it was impossible for sinners to fulfill so He came and fulfilled the law's demands for us. In the six examples Jesus gives He shows the spirit of the law, not just the letter.

- *Which of the six do you most need 'Jesus in you' to live an obedient life? Discuss.*
- *What was the sin of the scribes and pharisees according to this passage?*
- *Are you ever guilty of this?*

Challenge:

Pick one of the examples Jesus gives (vs. 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43) and pray for grace to live out the spirit of the law in that area in relation to another person. Then do it, depending on Christ to give you the right attitude and words.