



**Jesus on Family, Relationships, and Possessions Pt 8 - Reexamining the Role of the Law**  
February 20, 2022

**Holy Text: Matthew 16-30 (emphasis on vv16-19)**

**Matthew 19:16 (KJV) And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?**

1. After laying hands on precious children, a young man comes up to Jesus with a very good question.
2. We know from the Text that he was 1) Influential (a “ruler,” Lk 18:18), 2) Young (Matt 19:22) and 3) Wealthy (Matt 19:22). In other words, he had all the things most people desire!
3. To his credit, somehow, whether totally genuine or not, he still managed to ask a great question. Is it possible that in a moment of clarity, he realized briefly that his youth and vitality would fade, his influence and notoriety was temporary, and his riches were fleeting?
4. Apparently, the man was passionate about his question as well. Well, either passionate OR vain, trying to make a show of it. Here is Mark’s account:

**Mark 10:17 (KJV) And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?**

5. He even attempted to be respectful, calling our LORD “good” and “Master.”
6. His question, again, is a worthy one: “What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”
7. Immediately however, we can see a problem, even with such a “mostly good” question. The issue is found in the word “do.”
  - Apparently, He thought he had to “do” works to gain eternal life. Sinful man always does!
  - In fact, every other faith system other than Christianity has some version of “man must save himself,” or salvation by works. What a futile endeavor!
  - For clarity, regenerate Man will “work,” but those works will be by faith. (Jam 2:18)
  - As we track through this Text we’ll see our LORD expose this belief as impossible. Until then, be exhorted in the truth of it: **Salvation is of the LORD! Man can “do” nothing to merit God’s forgiveness! Even the “doing” of repentance and faith come from God!**

**Romans 3:28 (KJV) Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.**

**Galatians 2:16 (KJV) Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.**

**2 Timothy 2:25 (KJV) In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;**

**Ephesians 2:8-9 (KJV) For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **9** Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

**Matthew 19:17 (KJV)** *And he said unto him, **Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.***

1. In His answer, the LORD Jesus first corrects the young man's understanding of "good."
2. Man can do "good" things in an ethical sense, but in the ultimate sense of the word, only God is good! Only God is perfectly holy, pure, and just; there is none good but One! Man on the other hand...

**Genesis 6:5 (KJV)** *And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

**Psalms 51:5 (KJV)** *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

**Jeremiah 17:9 (KJV)** *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

**Romans 3:23 (KJV)** *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

**Romans 5:12 (KJV)** *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

3. Now, Christ was in no way denying His own deity; the young man simply didn't understand the real truth of what he was saying and the One to whom he was talking. Remember that Jesus Christ is God the Son! We serve one God revealed in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and the three Persons are the one true God.
4. Then Jesus utters these words: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." What an initial answer! Think about what Jesus didn't say right away:
  - He didn't say, "Well, everyone has to find their own path."
  - He didn't say, "Swing by my house for a barbecue so we can get to know each other."
  - He didn't say, "Come and visit my church."
  - He didn't say, "Bow your head and repeat after me."
  - And perhaps the most surprising, He didn't say "repent and believe." Although He said that before (Mark 1:15), in this young man's case...
5. He gave him Law; He told him to keep the Commandments! More on this below.

**Matthew 19:18 (KJV)** *He saith unto him, **Which? Jesus said, **Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, 19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*****

In order, Jesus quotes the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and fifth Commandment (Exodus 20:3-17), and the second half of the Greatest Commandment from Leviticus:

1. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*
2. *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.*
3. *Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.*
4. *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*
5. *Honor thy father and thy mother.*

6. *Thou shalt not kill.*
7. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*
8. *Thou shalt not steal.*
9. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*
10. *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.*

**Leviticus 19:18 (KJV)** *Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.*

This brings about an interesting question: *“What is the role of God’s Law today? Is it still relevant?”*

### **The Role of the Law: Five Questions**

#### **1. What is the Law?**

- The Law is God’s holy standard for His creatures and creation. His Laws (also called Precepts, Commandments, Statutes, Decrees, and Judgments) are laid down for us in the Scriptures.
- It can be broken up into three parts: the Civil Law (societal laws that governed God’s people), the Ceremonial Law (having to do with God’s Worship), and the Moral Law (codes that address the basics about how to treat both God and man).
- Remember that the Law, although shadow of the things to come (Heb 10:1) and unable to effect our salvation, is still good!

**Romans 7:9 (KJV)** *For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*

**Romans 7:12 (KJV)** *Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*

#### **2. Why did God give the Law? In summary...**

- To show Man God’s Holiness.  
The Law lifts up Holiness. Yes, God is merciful and loving. We see this beautifully revealed in many places, culminating in the life, ministry, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ our LORD! But the Law highlights a significant attribute of the God we serve: His uncompromising **purity**. Hence the need to Israel to “sanctify” and “set bounds about the mount” (Ex 19:22-23) before God have the Ten Commandments.

The Law literally reminds us all: *“Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you. (Lev 20:7-8)”*

- To give the knowledge of sin.  
**Romans 3:20 (KJV)** *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

**Romans 5:20 (KJV)** *Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*

**Romans 7:7 (KJV)** *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.*

- To stop mouths and hold the whole world accountable to God.

**Romans 3:19 (KJV)** *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

**Romans 2:14-15 (KJV)** *For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: **15** Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)*

- To show our great need for a Savior!

**Galatians 3:21-26 (KJV)** *Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. **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. **25** But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. **26** For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

To show us how to endure and live!

**Revelation 14:12 (KJV)** *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

### 3. Why do we struggle so much with the thought of “Law?”

- Because we think all talk of “Law” is anti-grace. It isn’t. All true love is lawful.
- Because of its clarity. It doesn’t care about feelings!
- Because of the temptations of world, the flesh, and the devil.

### 4. How should Christians view Law today?

- This is what we said while working through Matthew 5:17-18 in 2017:

“The *Ceremonial portion of Old Testament Law* (Temple worship and sacrifices, priesthood rituals, feasts and various offerings) have been totally fulfilled in Christ. There is much we can and should learn from the Ceremonial Law, but no Christian is in sin for not keeping it. Indeed, we cannot keep it. The Temple has been destroyed and the Levitical priesthood superseded. For example, some feasts (Lev 23) require animal sacrifices and burnt offerings; the Day of Atonement requires a standing Temple and the Ark of the Covenant! Thankfully, the Passover (which required a burnt offering!) has given way to the LORD’s Table! (Matt 26:17-27)

The *Civil portion of Old Testament Law* remains our greatest model for interacting with one another, ordering societies, and regulating man's sin. However, one must view the punitive portions of this part of Law through the lens of the Gospel.

The *Moral codes of Old Testament Law* remains in effect, much of it repeated and even magnified in the New Testament! Adultery is still wrong, as is lying, idolatry, and taking the LORD's Name in vain. Indeed, as we'll see, our LORD teaches the *Moral Law* in Matthew 5!

The Christian **must not** attempt to keep the law to be saved. He is not "under the law, but under grace." (Rom 6:14) Let us be mindful of the constant temptation to add to the finished work of Christ or be deceived into going backwards. This temptation has been common since the birth of the Church...

**Gal 3:1** *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?*

**Gal 3:10-13** *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. 11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. 12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. 13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."*<sup>1</sup>

## 5. How should Christians utilize the Law today?

- Concerning the Moral Law, Christians should keep them to both love God (Commandments 1-4, and one another (Commandments 5-10). Every tenant of the Moral Codes are applicable for us and repeated in the NT. This is consistent with the Law of Christ, which is love:

**John 13:34 (KJV)** *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

**Galatians 6:2 (KJV)** *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

**1 John 4:21 (KJV)** *And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.*

In other words, we are commanded to love God and one another. The Moral Law of God gives us the basics in doing so, and again, these truths are repeated in the NT.

- Christians can and should glean principles of worship from the Ceremonial Law and societal governance from the Civil Law, careful to always view those things in Christ.
- Christians can and probably should also utilize the Moral Law in evangelism.

**1 Timothy 1:8-11 (KJV)** *But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; 9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://calvaryreformationchurch.org/sermons/2017/10/exploring-the-kingdom-in-matthew-how-did-jesus-feel-about-the-law>

*disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; 11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.*

**Final Thoughts:**

As we'll see, Christ used perfection and humanly impossible standard of the Law to show the young man his great need for a perfect High Priest, a Savior. He foolishly thought he kept the Law according to God's standards (perfectly, James 2:10) since his youth. Let us never be so foolish!

Yet the Law of God remains valuable for us...not for salvation, but for living a holy life. Let us never forget:

***Psalms 19:7-11 (KJV)** The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.*

Amen.