

Jesus and the Ten Commandments

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[0:00] And take your Bibles and turn to Matthew chapter 15. Matthew chapter 15. We'll be reading the first 20 verses.

! For God said, Honor your father and mother, and anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.

But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God. He is not to honor his father with it.

Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you.

These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain. Their teachings are but rules taught by men. Jesus called the crowd to him and said, Listen and understand.

[1:22] What goes into a man's mouth does not make him unclean, but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him unclean. Then the disciples came to him and asked, Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?

He replied, Every plant that my heavenly father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. Leave them. They are blind guides.

If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit. Peter said, Explain the parable to us. Are you still so dull?

Jesus asked them. Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man unclean.

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

[2:25] These are what make a man unclean. But eating with unwashed hands does not make him unclean. Well, if you're visiting with us today, we're getting ready to study the Ten Commandments that God spoke verbally from Mount Sinai to his people Israel, and that he engraved on tablets of stone with his own finger, as the scriptures record for us.

By way of introduction, we have been looking at ten points on the Ten Commandments. Introductory things for us to remember as we make our way through this study of these Ten Commandments.

Today, we're going to look at Jesus and the Ten Commandments. And Lord willing, when we return from vacation, we'll dig in then to the first of the Ten Commandments.

But today, Jesus and the Ten Commandments. Now, as Jesus began his public ministry at age 30, very early on, one of the big questions about him was, what is Jesus' view of the Old Testament law?

The Jewish and religious teachers of the law clearly saw that Jesus didn't kowtow to all their interpretations and applications of the Old Testament laws, that he didn't follow all of their traditions, that they had made law for Israel.

[3 : 59] And because of that, he was mistakenly accused of having a low view of the law. He and his disciples violated these traditions, even as we read this morning.

And so he was accused of having a light view of the law, of canceling it, of abolishing the law, of replacing it with something different.

Now, nothing could be further from the truth. And so early on in his ministry, here in the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew chapters 5 through 7, he makes it clear that the kingdom of God that he was bringing to earth had the same moral standard as the Old Testament, summarized in the Ten Commandments.

And to be sure, there were judicial laws, there were ceremonial laws that were temporary in purpose, and in being fulfilled in Jesus Christ, those laws were abrogated, were set aside, such as the animal sacrifices.

Since Jesus won and final sacrifice, they are no more. Like the temple sacrifice and the priesthood and all the rules of the tabernacle and the temple, the circumcision, the dietary laws and so on, the clean and unclean food.

[5 : 25] Yes, those were temporary laws, and upon their fulfillment in Christ were abrogated. But that's not the case of the moral laws that God gave to his people in the Old Testament, and especially its summary of the Ten Commandments.

These, the Lord Jesus made abundant use of and taught as being regulative for the kingdom of heaven that he was bringing to earth. So in that sermon on the mount, Matthew 5, he says to them in verse 17, Do not think, which is to say, some of you are thinking, due to the false accusations, 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. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear. Not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen.

And by the way, it still has not disappeared, has it? And so until the heavens 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.

Therefore, anyone who breaks, that is, abolishes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

[6 : 51] But whoever practices and teaches these commandments will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. And the commandments that he's referring to as the Sermon on the Mount unfolds are none other than the moral commandments of God.

He's not talking there about the ceremonial laws, the judicial laws. No, he's talking about the moral commandments, and especially those as summarized in the Ten Commandments, which he immediately starts to quote as he quotes the Sixth Commandment on murder, the Seventh on adultery, and by implication refers to the Third about misusing the Lord's name in their oath-taking, and the Ninth Commandment in keeping their word.

Jesus upholds the Old Testament moral law as the standard, the binding standard for the kingdom that he's come from heaven to establish.

You see, what he's taking issue at in the Sermon on the Mount is not the commandments themselves, but the Jewish leaders' interpretations and applications of those commandments, their faulty interpretations.

And in correcting them, he lays down their true meaning, which he, as the only lawgiver, knows perfectly. You see, the Lord Jesus is that God who, on Mount Sinai, spoke the Ten Words and engraved them on stone.

[8 : 20] He ought to know what he meant when he gave those Ten Words, and now here he is on earth expositing, explaining the true meaning of those words, those Ten Commandments.

Well, Jesus made heavy use of the Ten Commandments. When evangelizing, when teaching, he often quoted the Ten Commandments, or from them, I should say, to show the righteousness that God requires of men.

What is it that we owe to God? To bring people to an awareness of their sin? For by the law is the knowledge of sin. To bring people to see, I'm a sinner and I need to be saved.

I need mercy. Jesus used the law to teach the people that they needed him and the salvation that he was bringing to earth.

Well, it's Jesus' concern then for the importance of the moral law of God that makes him speak out against the many abuses and distortions of God's commandments in his day.

[9 : 25] And that's why we need to consider Jesus and the Ten Commandments. Because these distortions and abuses are still with us today. One day, in Matthew chapter 16, we read of it, Jesus was with his disciples and he said, Watch out and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

They thought he was referring to the yeast in bread that they had forgotten to bring along with them. And Jesus corrects them and says, How is it you don't understand?

I was not talking to you about bread, but be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

You see, it's the teaching of these religious leaders that is dangerous. It spreads like yeast and it adversely affects those who listened to them.

So Jesus' greatest criticism of these religious leaders had to do with their twisting of God's commandments. It's what they did with God's commands that he is often found at odds with them.

[10 : 44] Indeed, many of these religious leaders and Pharisees were teachers of the law. That was their occupation. And they enjoyed the esteem of the people who thought they were so holy and thought they were so careful to obey God's commands.

In fact, the people thought so highly of the Pharisees that there was a common saying among them that if only two people get into heaven in the end, surely one will be a Pharisee.

Well, Jesus had a different opinion of them, didn't he? He said, I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

They're not entering and neither will you unless your righteousness surpasses theirs. You see, Jesus is not impressed with them at all. He's not impressed at all with their righteousness, their law-keeping, their professed obedience to the commands.

In fact, he calls them blind guides and says, if you follow them, they will fall into the pit and you along with them. In Matthew 23, he calls them out as hypocrites with an outward show of holiness, but evil on the inside, who shut the kingdom of God in men's faces.

[12 : 06] He says, you yourselves don't enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites, you travel land and sea to win a single convert.

And when he becomes a convert, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are. There's no question about Jesus' view of these religious leaders of the Jews.

Though the people thought of them as very holy, Jesus knew what they were, and no wonder he warned the people, beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and scribes.

If you follow their teaching, you'll end up in hell with them. Now, that was 2,000 years ago. Here we are, you and I, in the year 2017.

And it might be easy for us to read a warning like this, beware of the yeast of the scribes, the Pharisees and Sadducees, and to assume that this is not a serious threat for us, since after all, there are no Pharisees and Sadducees roaming the earth today.

[13:14] We might brush it off, as we would a warning about some extinct animal. So you're walking one of the remote trails at Potato Creek.

And there, as you're walking along, you come upon a sign saying, Danger! Beware of Tyrannosaurus Rex! And right away, you conclude, either this is an old, old, outdated sign from way back when, or you brush it off as a joke.

Someone's having a little fun here. But either way, there's certainly no danger, right? Because we all know there's no Tyrannorexes living anymore on earth.

Now, that's my concern this morning, that we may hear a warning from Jesus, Beware! Watch out! For the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and just conclude, Well, that's 2,000 years ago, but there's no more any danger here, since these religious groups are extinct.

That's a fatal mistake to make, because their teaching is still alive and well on the earth today. And that's what's dangerous to your eternal soul.

[14:38] And especially it is their teaching on the commandments of God. So we're coming in this message today to the one lawgiver, the one who knows the meaning of the law, to have him expose the faulty and dangerous teachings that are still there concerning God's law.

Our text in Matthew 15 hits many of these faults. The first is that they added their own man-made laws to God's laws. You see that, don't you? They took their ideas, their traditions and customs, and they imposed them on the people as if they were God's laws.

You must do this. Now that was evil on many levels. But consider first, it's a repudiation of God as the only lawgiver. Isaiah 33 made it clear.

The Lord is our judge. The Lord is our lawgiver. The Lord is our king. He only is lord of the conscience.

James says there is only one lawgiver and judge, the one who's able to save and to destroy. And the Pharisees were saying, not so. We too can make religious laws binding upon men.

[15:54] Now when they took to themselves that which is the prerogative of God alone, they were playing God, weren't they? They were acting as God, putting themselves in his place as if they had authority to bind men's consciences.

Now, that's one reason it's wrong, but according to what we read in Matthew 15, not only did they add their own man-made laws to God's laws, many times their man-made laws were in violation of God's laws.

So here come the Pharisees, the teachers of the law, the moral policemen in Israel, ever looking for something to condemn in Jesus of Nazareth.

And they say, why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat. Now kids, this is not like you when you're playing outdoors and you're all muddy and dirty and sweaty and mom calls you in for supper and says, wash up and get to the table and you throw a little water and maybe some soap if she's lucky and then you come to the table with washed hands.

That's not it at all. This washing. Matthew doesn't explain because he's writing primarily to Jews. Mark's writing to Gentiles and he explains it for us. The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders.

[17:22] You see, this was not at all a hygienic thing. It was no concern at all for harmful bacteria on their hands that might get in and infect their gut.

No, it was a religious thing. This was something that they did lest they should become spiritually contaminated. And that because of contact with certain people or animals or other unclean objects.

and so it was, they were to wash. And so Mark goes on to explain when they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions such as the washing of cups, pitchers, and kettles.

But Jesus and his disciples rejected these man-made laws and their supposed authority. They didn't give any attention to them whatsoever. So they come, Jesus, why do your disciples break the traditions of the elders?

And don't you just love Jesus' response? And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your traditions? You see? So you're all huffy-puffy about us not keeping your traditions.

[18:38] Say, what about you breaking God's commands because of holding to your traditions that are contrary to God's commands? And he gives an example. Could have given many, as we'll see.

He just gives them one. What's the example? It's the fifth commandment. For God said, honor your father and mother.

And, by the way, kids, that not only means obey them while you're living in their home, but it also means when you're long gone from their home and they are in need of help that you honor them by taking care of them.

seeing to it that they have what they need. And so, there's the command of God. God said, honor your father and mother. But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God.

He's not to honor his father with it. So this guy has the money to help his needy parents, but he worms his way out of his obligation to honor them with it.

[19:49] And how does he do it? Well, he makes a vow and he says, this money is a gift devoted to God. Didn't even have to necessarily give it to the temple, but just to make the vow that it is a gift devoted to God, therefore, would bind his conscience.

So whatever help you might have got from this money, you can't have. It's now God's. Jesus says, you've got a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions as if your word trumps God's word.

And this example of the fifth commandment is not a rare one. In Mark 7, he says, you do many things like that. There are many other commands of God that you violate by the keeping of some tradition that you've established as a law of God.

You hypocrites. Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you. These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain. Their teachings are but rules taught by men.

Homemade teachings, homemade rules, not God's. Though they trafficked in the Holy Scriptures, they had so twisted its true meaning that in the end it amounted to replacing of God's law with their own ideas, which was miles away from what God originally had intended by the commands that he gave.

[21:16] And though supposedly many of these traditions of the elders were set up as fences to guard them from violating God's commands, in fact, they had a negative effect upon God's commandments and often missed the very heart of God in giving his commands.

You see, man's additions are always a distortion and diminishing of God's laws.

When man adds something to God's laws, it diminishes God's law. It's a reduction by addition. Man's additions reduce the law of God and that's what had happened.

What had happened to the fifth commandment? It had been reduced by what? By man's tradition that was added to it. Now just consider the effect of the sheer number of their traditions and rules.

What effect does that have upon God's commands? God summarized his moral law with ten words, ten very brief commandments and they added to those ten hundreds of laws that left God's commandments like needles in a haystack.

[22 : 30] Where are those commands of God? Well, they were buried, you see, and neglected because of all that man had added to them.

Furthermore, God's laws are good, aren't they? Isn't that what Romans 7, 12 tells us? They're good. They flow from God's own goodness and they are good for man.

They are for his benefit, his advantage, a blessing to him. But by adding so many of their laws to God's law, they missed the entire heart of God's law and they turned what was a blessing into a burden for man.

In Matthew 23, 4, Jesus says that the teachers of the law and the Pharisees tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

So by adding all their rules and traditions and laws to God's laws, they were binding these heavy burdens on men. This is most easily seen by what they did to the fourth commandment.

[23 : 40] Remember the Sabbath date by keeping it holy. And they loaded down this fourth commandment with hundreds of their own additional rules of what's forbidden and allowed on this day, often missing the whole spirit of the law.

So, for instance, there was to be no healing on the Sabbath. You remember, you see that in their rule in the Gospels. Jesus violated that rule often.

And for that, they wanted to kill him. And for that, they said, he's no Messiah. He doesn't keep God's commands. There was to be no grabbing of a handful of grain as you were walking through a field on the Sabbath day and popped some grains of...

No, no. That's harvesting. Mustn't do it. Jesus and his disciples paid no attention to their application of the law. They even came up with a precise distance that people were allowed to walk on the Sabbath.

So you can read in the Gospels about a Sabbath day's journey. That wasn't God's rule. That was these religious leaders. They had come up with 3,000 feet. That's how far you could walk.

[24 : 49] Not 3,000. One. No, no, no. That's sinful. But you could go 3,000 feet. 2,000... What was it? 2,000 cubits.

That was the distance that was kept between Israel and the Ark when they crossed the Jordan River. And don't you realize that means, therefore, that you can only walk 2,000 meters or 2,000 cubits on the Sabbath day.

As the Lord of the Sabbath, you see, the multiplication of such laws... What did it do? Now you've got people counting their steps on the Sabbath day.

Is that really what God intended for this day? To be counting our steps? It made it a burden. And as Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus corrected them, saying, The Sabbath was made for man, for his good, for his benefit, not man for the Sabbath.

And Jesus said, My yoke is easy and my burden is light, not like their heavy burdens that they tie up on men's shoulders.

[25 : 53] What's more, all their man-made rules took the focus off the real purpose of the day then. It was rest from their work and labor in order to worship. There's the positive side of it, to worship God.

And their treatment of the law tended to focus on the prohibitions, the negatives, can't do this, can't do that, leaving people so concerned with what they couldn't do that they hardly had time to even think about what they should be doing.

What is this day for in the first place? What is its blessing for us? Yes, this is the first thing Jesus exposes in these leading teachers of the law.

There are many additions to the law, but notice secondly, they externalize God's law. They externalize God's law, ignoring its demands upon their hearts.

And this too was one of the things that made their worship to be in vain. It made everything they did in worship worthless. Isaiah said, these people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

[27 : 00] They worship me in vain. Now, if you just listen to their lips, you would think they were the most holy people on the planet. There they are singing the praises of Jesus or singing the praises of God, not Jesus, but of God.

And in their praying, they're calling on his name and they're even taking up his scriptures upon their lips. But that's the fatal flaw in all that they do in worship.

It's only lip religion. It's not heart religion. And so they worship in vain. Matthew Henry concludes, the distance between heaven and hell is about 12 inches.

The distance between the lip and the heart. What do you have? Lip religion or heart religion? These people honored God with their lips, their outward being, but their inner being was far from God.

Far from the love and devotion that he requires for indeed to love God from the heart with all the heart is the very heart of true religion.

[28 : 22] So they majored on external things. Not the heart. External things like washing your hands. Not washing their hearts.

Ceremonial washing of pots and pans and kettles. Outward things. Jesus goes on to condemn this whole external emphasis of their law keeping. He says, what goes into a man with his unwashed hands is not what makes him unclean.

It's what comes out of a man that makes him unclean, unfit for God. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

Those are violations of the Ten Commandments. These are what make a man unclean, but eating with unwashed hands does not make him unclean. You're so scrupulous about your outward religion, washing of hands and pots and pans.

Meanwhile, your inward heart defiles everything you are and do. No wonder in Matthew 23 he heaps up woe upon woe, judgment upon judgment.

[29 : 32] Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees. You clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you're full of greed and self-indulgence. You're like whitewashed tombs which look beautiful on the outside, but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean.

And in the same way on the outside you appear to people as righteous, but on the inside you're full of hypocrisy and wickedness. No wonder Jesus told the masses unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law, you will in no way enter the kingdom of heaven.

They have no heart religion. It's just all external, outward religion. Everything they do is done for men to see. As if God had no eyes to see in secret and to see into the secret places of their hearts what's going on there.

As if his laws make no demands upon their inner being. As if he should be satisfied with outward obedience and not care about their hearts that may be far from him.

As long as their feet carry them into the place of worship and their hands put their tithes into the offerings and their lips sing God's praise and their ears hear God's word then all's good.

[30:52] Me and God are good. Jesus says no. It's all from the lip. It's all outside. Your hearts are nowhere near God.

He's not within a million miles of you. There's no devotion for him. No fear of him. No trust in him. No gratitude toward him.

No love and commitment of the heart to him. You see in short they had separated the law of God from the person of God. Instead of having dealings with the living heart searching author of the law they were just dealing with a lifeless document.

And so they served in the legal spirit of the letter. Concerned only with the outward behavior not with the God who is alive as we just sang and worshipped and sees our hearts.

And so can you not see that this yeast of the Pharisees is still with us? This is not some danger of 2,000 years that has nothing to do with us today. No there is a very real danger even in worship to be satisfied with just having our body in the right place.

[32:09] At the right time with the right people doing the right things. God ought to be happy. No, no, no. God is spirit. And they that worship him must worship him in spirit.

There must be a connection being made not of body but of spirit with the spirit of the living God. There must be a spiritual connection. Your heart must be having dealings with God not just your body in the right place doing the right things.

Yes, this is very much the yeast of the Pharisees and sadly it's pervading many a church and many a heart. Now it's true that God's laws make demands on our bodies.

Many demands as we'll see in the Ten Commandments themselves. Oh, but don't stop there because his commands don't just deal with the body.

They go right on through right into the heart. And that's the trouble Jesus had with these religious leaders interpretation of the law. They just stopped at the body.

[33:12] And Jesus says, no, no. My commandments make demands on your heart. So they thought as long as they hadn't killed somebody they'd kept the Sixth Commandment you shall not murder. They hadn't put a knife in someone's heart so they were good with the Sixth Commandment Jesus.

The one and only lawgiver says in the Sermon on the Mount I say to you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. And anyone who says you fool will be in danger of the fire of hell.

Those are Jesus' words the lawgiver's words. That according to Jesus inward anger and bitterness is murder of the heart and violates the Sixth Commandment.

The Apostle John learned from Jesus that day and he wrote anyone who hates his brother is a murderer. Anyone who hates what did the commandment say?

It said you shall not murder. Jesus had taught the true meaning of that. Condemns not only bloodshed but hatred of the heart.

[34:19] Anger bitterness you can break the Sixth Commandment as you sit alone in your easy chair at home. And a bitter unforgiving anger will damn you as much as shedding someone's blood.

That's Jesus on the Sixth Commandment. And you remember what he did with the Seventh. You guys you think when the Seventh says you shall not commit adultery well as long as you've not gone to bed with another woman that you fulfilled all that's required of you.

but I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. And so serious is Jesus about this that he says if your right eye causes you to sin gouge it out and throw it away it's better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

Lust will damn you as much as the outward act of adultery says the lawgiver. And you see these aren't just peculiarities about the sixth and the seventh it's true of all the commands.

They not only make demands of our outward behavior our bodies they make demands of our attitude our thoughts our motivations the intentions of our heart our desires our lusts our affections our wills they probe us and search us inside and out Jesus is teaching what David knew a thousand years earlier when he said in Psalm 119 96 to all perfection I see a limit but your commandment is exceedingly broad broad doesn't just make demands of my body but it searches my desires exceedingly broad my attitudes my words my thoughts and as Jesus goes on further in the Sermon on the Mount he does the same thing with other commands of God that they had completely misunderstood and twisted and limited and each time they were lessening the requirement of the commandment they were lowering the bar the requirements of God just to a few outward actions that they could handle so by externalizing the law they were bringing the bar down to things that they could do they made God's law doable in the flesh

[36 : 58] I can keep my body from outward adultery and that's manageable but how do I keep my heart from lusting that's another thing altogether I can avoid outward murder but how do I keep my heart from sinful anger and hatred oh wretched man that I am who will deliver me you see the law leaves me looking for help doesn't it outside of myself it searches me and tries me and it says John there's no hope in yourself so look outside yourself to Jesus that's where there's hope and that's part of the purpose of the law and why it's so important to Jesus but when they lowered the bar you see what were they left with a few outward doable things such as fasting and tithing remember the Pharisee in the temple praying to God thank you I'm not like this man or other men but I fast and pray as if God should be impressed these are two external things aren't they they had spiritual meanings but they just had the outside trappings

I fast twice a week anybody can shut their mouth and not eat a meal or two and then pig out after sundown anybody can tithe if they can count to ten nine for me one for you nine for me one for you and that's what they had done even down to the tithing of their garden herbs their mint their dill their cumin and Jesus condemned them for tithing their spices but neglecting the more important matters of the law things of the heart like justice and mercy and faithfulness you strain out a gnat but swallow a camel so there's your tea and you're all bothered about that gnat in there and you strain it out and be sure not to swallow that gnat and meanwhile you're swallowing camels you're majoring on minors and minoring on the majors!

You see that's what that's what happens when you externalize the law you major on all the external things and you ignore the big things the camels of the heart scrupulous about one mint leaf but neglecting to show mercy to another to pity them to love them to be faithful to them those are issues of the heart they're teaching on the law focused on the doable externals rather than the things that would confront their fleshly desires head on and make demands that they could not keep the demands of the heart so why is Jesus so hard on these Pharisees and teachers of the law why such withering words we hear them spoken of no other group of people as we do of these what's so important Jesus well several reasons why this is so important we've seen haven't we the law that law giving is part of the glory of God alone it's the creator's right to give commandments to his creatures it's to his glory to be the only law giver in the universe and that is a glory he will not share with another that's one reason

Jesus speaks such withering words secondly they were tampering with the law of God they were twisting and perverting its meaning weren't they and all in the name of God these are the religious leaders of the Jews these are the guides these are the shepherds of Israel so if you want to know God and his will just listen to us and when they spoke they tampered with and changed the law of God twisted it thirdly they were perverting the goodness of God in his law God is good his law is good it is good for man but their multitude of human additions made God's law a miserable bondage and made God himself to be the cruel taskmaster they turned the perfect law that gives freedom James 1 25 into a burdensome bondage that too is robbing God of his glory the glory of his goodness of his loving kindness for men and giving them his laws his good laws and Jesus won't have it you see fourth they were perverting the holiness and righteousness of God

God is holy and righteous and his commandment is holy and righteous but by externalizing the law they lowered its demands they made loopholes for their sins they treated God as less than the holy holy holy one of Israel that he is they lowered the requirements that God demands of men and fifthly their teaching on the law had a damning effect on people let me say that again their teaching on the law had a damning effect on people and that's why Jesus was hot and bothered about it Jesus had made this clear if you follow their teaching you'll become twice the child of hell that they are they're blind guides and if you follow them you'll both fall into the pit their righteousness is mere external obedience to a few external rules and regulations it's not from the heart so if your righteousness doesn't exceed theirs you'll never get in to the kingdom of heaven because the final judgment is not going to proceed on their view of the law but on my view of the law that's what

[42 : 47] Jesus is saying it was not only Jesus zeal for God's glory that moved him to speak out against the Pharisees it was his love for lost sinners because you see the law has a gospel serving ministry to it it serves the gospel because what does it do it shuts us up to Jesus it makes us see I'm a sinner oh what a sinner not just of external things I've done but things I've thought and things I want to do and all these other ways that I am a lawbreaker where is there help there is no help in here that's the purpose of the law to lead us to Christ to say that's the savior it's outside of yourself so you must look away from self with nothing good to say of yourself and to put all your hopes on him the law serves that purpose but a truncated law a diminished law diminishes the gospel it diminishes the work of Christ

Jesus magnified the law how did he magnify it by obeying its every precept upon his body and upon his soul never once a wrong thought motive desire attitude as well as behavior and word and then he went to the cross and he died for all the breaches of the law that I've committed not just my outward ones my inward ones but if we lower the bar you see we diminish and we lower the work of Jesus for our salvation and we lower and we diminish the very usefulness of the law to drive men to salvation in Jesus that's why he's bothered about this issue he's here to seek and to save sinners he delights to save sinners but what happens when you have a law that's lowered it's hard to find a sinner hard to find someone say I'm in trouble I've sinned against

God and I can't stop it I don't know how to stop lusting I don't know how to stop hating I don't know how to stop being bitter to have this revenge in my I can't stop it precisely you know Jesus law is like a high jumping bar at 10 feet that's impossible for men they can't do that so what did the Pharisees do they brought it right down here where we could handle it there I've kept the seventh command I've not been to bed with my neighbor's wife there I've not killed anybody I've kept the sixth command Jesus says no if you've lusted you've come short of what my law requires if you've hated and bitter and angry you've broken the law they made it doable manageable I can handle that no no you can't you can't handle the laws

God you see if we have complaints about how high God sets the standard how high is the standard for heaven it's cursed is everyone who does not continue to to keep all of the commands will you say John that damns us all that's right and God in mercy sent a savior who did keep the law perfectly and died on the cross for lawbreakers run to him and be saved isn't God good isn't God loving to have such a law he's perfect and he he he requires perfection and if we've got a complaint about how high his demands of the law are it only shows that we don't have a clue how holy he is we think he's like us well I'm happy if if he tries a little bit if you you're doing your best okay I'm good with that not God who has ever done their best who's ever loved God with all your heart no you see God is holy and that's why the standard is holy he cannot dwell with sin he cannot look upon sin he he cannot excuse the guilty and so the law serves the gospel it says give up hope sinner in yourself and all your religious doing and come to me and I will save you that's not what the

Pharisees message was the Pharisees were saying try harder come on it's not that bad just got to do that just just count make sure you don't go over three thousand steps worship God from the heart with all that I am I'm helpless I'm hopeless I don't have that righteousness I have it says Jesus I kept every command from the heart come and receive me and righteousness in me I'll make you right with God isn't God good isn't he good to give us his law isn't he good to give us his law that that that shows us how good he is and isn't it good because it shows us his goodness in sending Jesus to save us poor lawbreakers by his blood blood and righteousness will come to him today glorify the Lord Jesus he magnified the law by keeping it and by dying for our breaches of it now

[48 : 37] Christian he didn't do that in order for you to continue breaking it did he that's to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness no Jesus Jesus came from heaven to keep every commandment of God and then to die and suffer damnation for our breaches of the law in order that we might yes be saved from condemnation but also be saved from the rule of sin and to have the Holy Spirit put into our hearts to write his law upon our desires and upon our minds to give us a desire to keep those commandments so we magnify the law we magnify Christ by magnifying his law by trusting in him alone for righteousness but by keeping his laws well to his glory and praise he puts his spirit in us and enables us to do what he calls us to do so let our prayer be that of the psalmist teach me oh Lord to follow your decrees and I will keep them to the end give me understanding and and I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart make me to go in the path of your commands for there I find delight turn my heart my heart Lord turn my heart toward your statutes not toward selfish gain turn my eyes away from worthless things renew my life according to your word fulfill your promise to your servant that you may be feared Lord write that law upon my heart deeper move me today to keep your commands out of love for you who kept them for me and died for all my violations of them beware of the yeast of the

Pharisees and Sadducees be sure you're holding to the view of the law by the law giver the only law giver let's pray Lord we entered this world in darkness as blind and we preferred blind guides to yourself you were the truth Lord Jesus you came to teach us the truth and and we liked the lies of Satan in the mouths of men better than your truth such was our hearts we had we'd all gone astray we've turned each one to our own way but we thank you for sending Jesus and laying on him the iniquities of us all here is our salvation it's found in our Savior in his blood and righteousness so thank you for him thank you Jesus that you obeyed from the heart every single command thank you for no unholy thought attitude word or action thank you for dying for all my sinful ones and thank you for putting your spirit in the hearts of your followers that we too could walk in your footsteps and learn to obey you

Lord come and make us to go in the path of your commands for there we find a light thank you for the gospel thank you for the law thank you father for sending Jesus we pray in his name amen