

JESUS FULFILLED THE LAW - WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

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Many professed Christians today believe we don't need to keep God's ten commandments due to Jesus saying that he came to 'fulfil the law.' In Jesus fulfilling the law, they believe it is done away with and we need not keep it anymore. But is this what Jesus truly meant by saying He came to fulfil the law? This is what we are going to examine from God's Word.

Matthew 5:17 ... 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.'

What if Jesus said ... *"I have not come to destroy the **character** of God, but to fulfil."* Would Jesus fulfilling the character of God mean Jehovah's character is now done away with? What an absurdity that would be! Or how about when Jesus told John the Baptist at Jesus' baptism ... *"Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to **fulfil all righteousness**"* (Matthew 3:15). Does that mean righteousness came to an end because Jesus fulfilled it? What an an absurdity!

Think about it! God's moral law in the ten commandments are an expression of His character - LOVE. The first four dealing with our love to God and the last six dealing with our love to one another. So when Jesus said He came to fulfil the law, He was also saying that He came to fulfil the true character of God. Does that do away with God's character? Of course not, and neither does it do away with His commandments, as God's law and character cannot be separated.

Do you see the problem in applying this mentality of the commandments of God coming to an end with Jesus fulfilling them? You have to also apply it to other verses too, like Matthew 3:15, which makes a mockery of God's righteousness! So straight away we can see that Jesus wasn't meaning the law was going to be done away with, which Jesus confirmed Himself in the very same verse ...

*"think **NOT** that I am come to destroy the law."* So clearly, in 'fulfilling' the law Jesus was not doing away with the law. Do you see this? God even prophesied in Isaiah 42:21 that He would *"magnify the law, and make it honourable."*

Yes, Jesus also fulfilled the sacrificial laws of Moses by being our sacrifice and therefore we need not sacrifice animals anymore or practice the ordinances that were imposed upon Israel

pointing them to the work that Jesus was to fulfil. But let us apply this, as some do, to the ten commandments also. Jesus 'fulfilled' the ten commandments, therefore we no longer need to keep them and are now at liberty to break them and continue to live in sin? So we are now free to murder and steal etc., under grace? That goes against the very words Jesus said Himself in Matthew 5 if you read the context. He said in Matthew 5:19:

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

Which commandments was Jesus speaking of? Read on in chapter 5 and you will see He is speaking of the moral law contained in the ten commandments. And being "*called least in the kingdom*" **doesn't** mean you will still be in the kingdom, but be least in it. It means the kingdom of heaven itself will call you least and therefore be shut out, as we will see further in this study.

Now the second point concerning Matthew 5:17, which many Christians miss, is that Jesus also included the 'prophets.' Jesus said that He also came to 'fulfil' the prophets, and yet the Christians who want to do away with God's law would not say that the prophets are now done away with, because clearly there are writings of the prophets that have NOT YET come to pass. Yes, Jesus fulfilled what the prophets prophesied about HIM. But that does not do away with the prophets, because we still USE them to know what is to come in the end times. And the very next two verses in Matthew 5 should dispel the thought of Jesus doing away with God's commandments from every mind:

*Matthew 5:18-19 ...'For verily I say unto you, **till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law**, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.'*

Oh how many a professed Christian picks a verse and removes it from the context and does GREAT damage to the truth of God's Word! What did Jesus say in the very next verse? That '*one jot or one tittle shall **in no wise pass from the law***' until when? Until heaven and earth pass. Have they passed away yet? No. So clearly nothing has changed or passed in God's commandments. And which commandments was Jesus referring to? Again, you only need to read on in chapter 5 to see that Jesus was speaking of the MORAL law. As long as the canopy of heaven remains above us and the earth under our feet remains, we can be sure the law of Jehovah stands fast!

Why did we need a Saviour in the first place? Because we broke the law of God, and the fact that God sent His very own Son to take our punishment for breaking His law, proves that His law could never be changed, otherwise God would have just changed it or done away with it when we broke it. So what did Jesus do in 'fulfilling' the law? In humanity He came to fulfil the REQUIREMENTS of the law, in order to be able to save us. And what did the apostle Peter say in 1 Peter 2?

*"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, **leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.**" (1 Peter 2:21-22)*

To 'do no sin' is to do what? **FULFIL** the law - the requirements of God's holy moral law contained in the ten commandments. And what are we counselled to do? Follow in the steps of Jesus. In other words, we are also called to 'fulfil' the law in **doing no sin**. Do you see this? Jesus didn't 'fulfil' the law and then do away with it, just as He didn't 'fulfil all righteousness' and then do away with righteousness. The righteous requirements of the law are still valid and binding upon everyone. And the apostle Paul knew and proclaimed this truth:

*Romans 3:31 ... 'Do we then make void the law through faith? **God forbid**: yea, we **establish the law**' ... NOTE: This is exactly what God said He would do in Isaiah 42:21 - to '**magnify the law and make it honourable**.'*

*Romans 2:13 ... 'For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the **doers of the law shall be justified**.'*

*Romans 6:1-2 ... 'What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? **God forbid**. How shall we, that are **dead to sin**, live any longer therein?'*

*Romans 6:15-16 ... 'What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? **God forbid**. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of **obedience unto righteousness**?'*

How can the apostle Paul say these things if Jesus did away with God's commandments? You here LITTLE of the above verses from Paul in Evangelical circles. Instead, all you here is ...'we are no longer under the law, but under grace.' And this is true, but what does it REALLY mean to not be under the law? It simply means we are no longer under the **condemnation** of the law through faith in Jesus Christ. God said that "*the soul that sinneth, it shall DIE*" (Ezekiel 18:20). The law of God is so holy that if it is transgressed, death is the result. But praise be to God that He sent His own Son to take the penalty of our transgression, so that through faith in Him we are no longer under the condemnation of the law, but under grace. **BUT!** This in no way does away with the law as you can see from the above verses of Paul. Through faith we **ESTABLISH the law** in our lives.

An important part of the gospel message which so many professed Christians miss, is the part where Jesus IMPARTS His righteousness to us, ENABLING us to KEEP the commandments of God. The apostle John said in 1 John 3:4 that '*sin is the transgression of the law*.' So if we are DEAD to sin (no longer transgressing the law) as Paul said above, then what are we doing? KEEPING ('fulfilling') the law, just as Jesus did. So how can God's commandments be done away with? It's not possible! Now pay careful attention to the next two verses from Paul:

*Romans 7:12-13 ... 'Wherefore **the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good**. Was then that which is good made death unto me? **God forbid**. **But sin**, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; **that SIN by the commandment might become exceeding sinful**.'*

*Romans 8:3-4 ... 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: **That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit**.'*

Let me repeat that ... *"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us."*

Does that sound like the commandments of God have been done away with? God forbid! Did you see what Paul said? It's not the commandments that were made death unto us, but that sin through the commandments may appear exceeding sinful, which sends us to Jesus to CLEANSE us of all sin. Why did God send His Son to live a perfect life in humanity and condemn sin in the flesh, die for us and then be raised to life again? So that we could just live as we please and continue to sin? God forbid! No! **So that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.** YES! IN US ... through the indwelling Spirit of Christ in our lives. This is the goal - to RESTORE us back into a right relationship with Jehovah, being what? KEEPERS of His commandments, look:

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

Having the faith of Jesus and KEEPING the commandments of God go hand in hand. You CANNOT separate them. Jesus didn't fulfil the law so that we could continue living in sin. Jesus fulfilled the law so that He could give us His Spirit, His victorious life experience in humanity so that the righteousness of the law can be fulfilled in our lives too. Thus we become KEEPERS of God's commandments.

*Revelation 22:14-15 ... 'Blessed are they that **DO his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.**'*

Which class of people gain a right to the heavenly city and tree of life to live forever? Those who DO the commandments of God. But notice who are the ones outside the city, in other words, those who lose their lives and are destroyed in the lake of fire. It is those who hold onto SIN and think that God's commandments are done away with and teach others so. Those who are regarded as 'least' in the kingdom just as Jesus said! Oh how many professed Christians need to understand this truth. Jesus didn't come to save us IN sin. He came to save us FROM sin. The apostles never said that sin is no longer to reign over us because the commandments have become null and void. God forbid! But that sin is to no longer reign over us because the righteousness of Christ is to be imparted to our lives, so that we no longer walk in the flesh, but in the Spirit, **that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us.**

The 'gospel' that is preached in many churches today is NOT the gospel of Jesus Christ, but 'another gospel' that keeps people IN their sins. Whereas the true gospel of Christ DELIVERS us FROM sin, into holy commandment keeping lives. But sadly, many professed Christians are going to hear the following words from Jesus when He returns and realise they are shut out of the kingdom and lost:

*"I never knew you, depart from me, ye that **work iniquity**" (Matthew 7:23)*

Oh that we would understand the importance of these words and search our lives to see if there still be any sin in us. Not one jot or tittle has passed from the commandments of God. Yes, those ceremonial laws which contained sacrifices and pointed to the sacrifice of Christ were 'nailed to the cross.' But those moral precepts contained in the ten commandments, which are an expression of God's character can NEVER be done away with. So are we

allowing the commandments of God, as the apostle Paul said, to make sin appear '*exceeding sinful*'? (Romans 7:12-13). Which then sends us to Jesus, allowing Him to CLEANSE us from all sin? Not one of those ten commandments have changed one jot or tittle, **including the 4th commandment**. And God is seeking a people, a remnant, who will be KEEPERS of His commandments through faith in Christ. A people who are following in the footsteps of Christ, "*who did no sin*"! (1 Peter 2:21-22).

1 John 2:4 ...'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.'