

INTRODUCTION

- When I can fit it in, I really like podcasts. It is like reading an entire book in 30-60min.
 - Brandon and get all excited about the podcast called “more perfect” about the supreme court.
 - This season they have been going through the 27 Amendments to the Constitution and invited artist to write and preform songs about the amendments.
- One that struck me (other than the philosophical artistry of the first) is the 9th amendment.
- Who knows the 9th amendment?
 - “The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others (*other unwritten rights*) retained by the people.”
 - An obscure way of saying, these rights we have listed are not exhaustive. The people have more rights than just these.
- The countries founders understood the limitations of human governing. That is why they wrote into the system *balances* and planned non-violent *revolutions* (elections) and they had the foresight to leave doors open to changing culture and technology.
 - “... in order to form a more perfect Union...”
 - ❖ Donnie mentioned “politics not being perfect” a handful of very fortunate men attempt a government a little closer to perfection...
- In recognition of their own limitations in producing an exhaustive list of liberties and in recognition of the human tendency to be too literal or limit others freedoms.
 - The founders complete the Bill of Rights with these two amendments.
 - ❖ 9th this list does not exhaust the rights of people.
 - ❖ 10th limiting the powers federal government, reserving any powers not listed to the hands of the public and their local governments.
 - I guess what struck me was that here is a list of liberties written in to the foundation of the new government that no government had ever offered their citizens.
 - ❖ As the French revolution launches in the same year. The new U.S.A. very purposely launches their iconoclastic document with an open door woven into it.
- One of the reasons that the U.S. Constitution is such a revolutionary document is because it accepts the limitations of law (humanity) sets up a system that attempts to balance its failures
 - Machiavelli’s “The Prince” was probably the architect of government prior. (1532)
 - ❖ An analysis of governing styles and how to remain in power.
- But even this remarkable document, which has changed how the entire world sees government, has its limitations. It is under constant strain to be manipulated. (this week as an example)

The Limitations of Law

- Why? Why can’t laws work? Seems pretty straight forward, doesn’t it?
 - Hey – Do XYZ, don’t do PDQ – all will be well.
 - Then again, why have laws at all? Anarchy. Get big brother off my back!
- Heb 7:19** (for the law made nothing perfect)

- You have heard it said, “You can’t legislate morality”
- We have this problem; and it is at our core. It is a heart problem, actually it is an entire perspective problem.
- In Matthew’s Gospel, he tells of Jesus addressing this problem.
 - Today we are going to look into [Matt 5:17-20](#) where Jesus puts the Law into perspective.
 - As Donnie mentioned last week. Jesus reveals a reverse view of what we expect. Then we come to realize what we think is actually the upside down.
- This is week three in a series about the Sermon on the Mount.
 - In preparation Donnie suggested a book by [John Stott](#)

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

- [John Stott](#) points out something I found this really curious. Jesus addresses the crowd in third person – “**they** are blessed ...”
- Then in second person. – “**you** are salt and light...”
- And then finally his teaching from first person - “I did not come to abolish the Law...
 - Each a redefinition of righteousness.
- A literary style, I think, to bring perspective from broad (anonymity) to narrow (personal).
 - Story about manager making me name the people having challenges with.*
 - Too easy to anonymity to a group. (Manufacturing, Sales & Marketing)*
- **First** is a reversal of perspective
 - Beatitudes (The Blessed reversal). Jesus is refuting Jewish teaching of the time.
 - ❖ The discussion was around guilt.
 - ❖ Two schools Shammal and Hillel: guilt in thought vs. guilt in deed.
 - Jesus contrasts this teaching by focusing on *blessing* and *not guilt*
 - ❖ points to motive not deed.
 - ❖ presenting the blessed as situations of the heart and not tangible action.
 - Really quite brilliant. In the pattern of law (deeds) Jesus is really giving a **description of the kingdom**. Humble, caring, gentle, peaceful, with mercy and patience. [a state of being]
- **Second** is the individual call.
 - You be Salt and light: **be** the flavor to the world, **be** the truth :: **be** “the Kingdom”
 - Not just a story about the anonymous, but it is you. :: **be** “the Kingdom”
- **Then** a deep lesson from the messiah (God himself) turning all the teaching upside down.
- This is where we will spend our time. Here is what Jesus says,

Matt 5:17-20 "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. **18** For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. **19** 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. **20** For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Not Abolish - Fulfill

- This statement comes across clear at first, but as it is probed, I realized there is much more in there.

Matt 5:17 "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.

- Ok, so the law is not destroyed (Greek word "disintegrate or demolish) – it is ... uh fulfilled, completed, satisfied.
- What does that mean to me? How does one "complete the Law"
 - ❖ *Officer, I wore my seat on the way to church – so that was completed...*
 - ❖ Do the laws still stand? Do they change? How does that affect me?

SPIRIT - LETTER

- Well the next verse gives us some help.

Matt 5:18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

- Iota and tittle explained. [Yod]
 - (Gr) Iota // (Heb) YOD and Dot // Tittle
 - Meaning, not a letter or the littlest mark of Gods law is out of place.

Malachi 3:6 For I, the LORD, do not change

God's immutability is in His name:

Ex 3:14-15 "... you tell Israel **I AM** sent you ... tell them YWHY sent you..." (to be; self-existent; being itself)

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."

Luke 16:16 "The Law and the Prophets were until John; ...**17** But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void.

- Gods laws are unchanging, just like the natural law doesn't change.
 - Gravity doesn't go away and neither does Gods moral law.
 - *** They are a reflection of Gods character. His attributes. ***

- At this point some of you doing the reading plan (just finished Exodus/Lev) might ask, "then what happened to weird laws":

Lev 19:19 "... You shall not let your cattle breed with a different kind. You shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor shall you wear a garment of cloth made of two kinds of material.

- Or super harsh ones like, {+18 / -20}
- Ex 35:2** "on the seventh day you shall have a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death."?
- Do they expire? Is there is a statute of limitation on them? (some examples of stupid human laws)
- Sometimes there needs to be. Like human laws that linger around when they should expire.
 1. GEORGIA: *In the city of Quitman, chickens are not allowed to cross the road.*
(I guess it was too much of a philosophical conundrum)
 2. CALIFORNIA: *A frog that dies during a frog-jumping contest cannot be eaten.*
 3. FLORIDA: *Cannot participate in or permit any contest entailing dwarf-tossing.*
 4. WEST VIRGINIA: *Can't use a ferret as a hunting animal.*
 5. NEW MEXICO: *It is a fine for a woman to be in public unshaven in Carrizozo.*
(this almost made Marly an activist)
- All dumb laws are due to someone abusing the good ones.
- Point there is: There is purpose behind laws, or at least story behind each one.
- First week Donnie read an intro into his study of the "First Testament" Gods law is teleological
 - There is purpose and meaning behind Gods law.
- One of the ways you can categorize biblical law is Moral, Civil and Ceremonial
 - Some are specifically given to the nation of Israel, like "*to the sons of Israel*"
Some universal laws are called out as "*the sins of the nations*"
 - So, to answer part of the question, yes. Some laws for specific people for a specific time "*seem*" to expire. But... that doesn't really satisfy. – ["*seem*"] what exactly is Gods law there?
 - ❖ Why were they there in the first place?
Why did God find it important enough to have it written in the Bible?
- Just like any of those strange laws about frogs and ferrets, there is a story behind it.
 - There is a purpose to it.
 - Most of the obscure laws are about Gods protection to help the Israelites prosper.
 - ❖ No idea of pathogens, bacteria, best crop rotation, what cloth moths like to eat ...etc...
 - ❖ The purpose behind the Law still stands. God wants the Israelites to prosper.
 - That does not go away. How that is implemented may look different. ["*seem*"]
 - Civil: that is an example, Ceremonial: points to Christ and Heaven,
Moral: immutable **Gal 3:24** ...schoolmaster to *bring us unto* Christ, that we might be justified by faith
(this is a very big idea, we'll come back to that)
- There is a very helpful verse from the works of Paul. Romans

Rom 7:6 But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the **Spirit** and not in the old way of the **written code (letter)**.
- It is imperative to put the Law in the correct perspective.

- Fortunate for me, men’s bible study just went through Romans 7 and we have had a few discussions about the law.
- One thing that really stuck out last week (Jay)
 - ❖ “There is no power to the law. The law in-and-of-itself is not actionable.”
- It is only a dumb tool. It does not “do” it only “shows”.
 - ❖ A window into what God sees.
 - ❖ It makes me think of Looney Toons ACME x-ray / reveals. [x-ray]
- Through chapter 6&7 or Romans Paul reviews parts of his own experience, where he thought he was righteous by following the law in action, but then realized the purpose of the law.
 - It was not to make him righteous, it was to show his sin.
 - He finds himself a hypocrite – and worse yet, bathing in the sewage of sin all the while singing of his cleanliness. [The emperor’s new suit]
 - It is like saying we are the land of the free and actually being the land of the free.

Guy, I use to work with from Norway. Asked him what was the most shocking thing about US culture. He said so many &#! rules.
- I hope this is helping you see the difference between human laws and Gods laws.
 - Human laws are intrinsically set up as a deterrent. A task master. The intent of the law is quickly put to test and twisted. The authority behind it dissipates as the ink dries.
 - ❖ *Even with* the most thin traces of selfish intent. Eventually the spirit evaporates and becomes entirely tangible. Disputable, Measurable, Corporeal (fleshy)
 - Gods laws are in a sense, His character woven into creation. They are spiritual.
 - ❖ When they are communicated to us and interpreted, we tend to see them as corporeal.
 - ❖ But there are no ulterior motives as in human law. They are good - as God is good.
 - God is the definition of good - as are His laws.
 - Like the Tasmanian Devil. The law reveals the dynamite in our belly.
 - Presented to us *in letter* for our protection. (ie: *rules for our kids*)
- What Jesus is doing here - is directing us to a deeper understanding of Gods law. It is not a law *by-the-letter* as much as it is a look into His *Kingdom*.
 - Jesus isn’t setting up a “7 step how be successful in this weird creation I made” to program.
 - ❖ He is showing us the window into what His Kingdom looks like.
 - ❖ Showing us what His character is like.
- We tend to drift to legalism. All human systems eventually bend this direction.
- You cannot build a tower to heaven because it puts you as the creator.
 - Just as Jesus asked: **Matt 16:26** For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

- That paints a troubled picture though. Fine the Law is a window: revealing sin, showing us His character and Kingdom. The law is good.
 - What do I do with that? How can we be right in God’s eyes?
 - As Bildad asked in Job:

Job 25:4 How then can man be in the right before God? How can he who is born of woman be pure?

- There is a linkage between faith and righteousness.
 - Our faith is the righteousness God recognizes. Not the works of the Law.

Why? Because **Isa 64:6** “[our] most righteous acts are like dirty rags” (polluted garments)
Heb 10:4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.
 - But the point here is not the action - it is what is in the heart.
 The exact same action can be a worship of God or a disrespect of God.
 - Spirit vs. Flesh :: Kingdom or World :: it is seeking the riches of earth or those of Heaven
Earth, I think, will not be found by anyone to be in the end very distinct place. I think earth if chosen instead of Heaven, will turn out to have been all along, only a region in Hell: and earth, if put second to Heaven, to have been from the beginning a part of Heaven itself. -- C.S. Lewis

- Look at it this way; God’s desire, His purpose for creation, is for love.

Jn 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

 - Sacrificial Love – not Ice cream love. A love of ...

1 Cor 13:4 Love is **patient** and **kind**; love does **not envy** or boast; it is **not arrogant** or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is **not irritable** or resentful; **6** it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the **truth**. **7** Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things

 - ❖ There was no self in there. All sacrificial.
 - ❖ Love is altruistic. **1 Jn 4:8** “God is love”
 - But every human act is tainted with selfishness.
 - ❖ The philosopher Thomas Hobbes “*every human being is capable of killing any other human being*” In other words, at the core of every one of us is self-preservation and self-promotion.
 - ❖ No act can be completely pure. “most righteous acts are like dirty (polluted) rags”
 - Always a stain of our desires. The slightest of ulterior motives at its root.
 - Following the law to the letter can’t be trusted. Because, what is true is in the heart
 - That address the spirit of the law. – the intention (desire to) serve our creator.
 - Not a measurement of getting our chores done. I can get my chores done with **hate** and **distain**. (*that is how I use to do the dishes*)

- Now (if you can see it this way) do you notice how freeing it is? How honest and true?
 - My actions come from reciprocating Gods love. I serve because I am so thankful in recognizing what He has done. What He has given. What His desires are.
 - I am not burdened by past failures or present failures - by constant concern if I am good enough. Salvation is a gift to those who believe Jesus words - that **He is** the savior.
 - Without knowing, I would not accept sin (which is the job of the law) and in turn I would not accept Gods grace and subsequently I cannot accept His salvation.

*** **Gal 3:24** ... the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

- Jesus fulfills the requirements of the Law with a pure untainted heart, sacrificial love.

Rom 13:8 Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. **9** For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." **10** Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore **love is the fulfilling of the law.**
- Here is an example: {40}

Jn 4:19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. **20** Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." **21** Jesus said to her, "**Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."** **25** The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." **26** Jesus said to her, "I - who speak to you - am he."
- The woman asks about the physical, where to worship, what pleases God?
 - Though based on her history in the previous verses, I don't think that is her real interest.
 - If I may, I think she has been ostracized for her sins of adultery and struck up conversation that had depth that stirred her spirit. So, she was soliciting a question to stay engaged.
 - But what happens turns everything upside-down.
- Jesus responds with the spiritual. Then outright tells her – you are a part of history!
- The problem all along; with you, your sin, the Samaritan, Jewish people; the Sanhedrin ... is that you all seek a physical completion. IT IS NOT PHYSICAL.

"...true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth... God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

 - For I am the Messiah, I am God.
- You see what happened there? Jesus (God) tells us – I don't care where you worship, just worship for real. Worship with your whole spirit. I am done with all this silly mountain stuff.

MORE Than Law

- That is why Jesus can say:

Matt 5:19 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.

- Because He isn't saying slack off and party hard. He is saying God's character doesn't change.
- Don't take your eyes off that window, because that is actually what is real.
 - This new perspective is actually a deeper revelation into His character.
 - Reiterating to us that He is not a task master.
 - Revealing to us what His Kingdom looks like. There is no letter of the law in heaven. There is no need. The Law is His nature, His character manifest; it is peace, joy, fulfillment ...

- That is why Jesus can say:

Matt 5:20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

- Because they were not righteous at all! They were just stuffed shirt lawyers. (sorry-literal)
- Jesus flipped the peoples understanding of righteousness on its head.
- Because it is not a law that puts you right in front of the creator of the Universe.
 - It is more than a law, it is His kingdom. We are His Kingdom.
 - "He came to make us what He teaches us we should be." -- Oswald Chambers
- The next few weeks we will see Jesus giving example after example of this.
 - Jesus challenges the letter-of-the-law in revealing the heart the "spirit" of the law
 - "You have heard [letter of the law] – But I tell you [the spirit of the law]"

Rom 10:4 Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

LAWS OF LOVE

- Golden rule: **Mat 7:12** "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets
- Seek First: **Matt 6:33** But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you
- Greatest Commandment:
Matt 22:37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. **38** This is the great and first commandment.
- Be His Kingdom (minded): Be Salt and light, flavor the earth. Love His gift and shine truth.