



Sunday, January 16, 2011: Christ and the Law

Scripture: Matt. 5:17-20; Ps. 119:1-40

Speaker: Joe Boot

Sermon Notes:

1. Psalm 119 is a celebration of the law of God.
2. In Matthew 5:17-20, Jesus is making an introduction to His exposition of the Law of God.
3. Jesus begins by telling us that He is not the antithesis of the Law; He has not come to abolish everything that came before.
4. The word “fulfill” in this passage denotes that Jesus is the end or the culminating purpose of the Law. Jesus is the Lord and Giver of the Law. He has come to fulfill, to implement, to enforce His Law.
5. The two extremes which many people fall into when considering the relationship of Law and Grace are: 1) legalism, and 2) antinomianism (“anti-law”, or license).
6. The Scripture says that both the legalist and antinomian are coming to God in their own self-righteousness. They are not coming in the righteousness of Christ.
7. In Romans 3:31, Paul says “we uphold the Law.” The Law has not been dispensed with.
8. In the first century, Greek philosophy crept in and people tried to do away with the Old Testament because it was considered “too earthy”, “not spiritual enough” (e.g. Gnosticism, Monism).
9. When the church rejects the Old Testament, it falls into many errors.
10. We set the Law and Gospel against each other. Any reference to the Law is seen as legalism, and license is called “love.”
11. Love is considered a “higher way,” and any application of God’s law is seen as judgmental. Love is used to justify everything and trump every kind of moral objection.
12. All immoral activity is increasingly tolerated in the name of “love,” including criminal activity.

13. Today, Justice and Law are seen as inferior to Love. Salvation is seen as an abstracted spiritual love instead of God’s work of righteousness.
14. 1 Corinthians 13: “Love does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.”
15. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says if you want to be great in the kingdom of heaven, you need to love His law and teach others to do the same.
16. The ambivalence we see towards the law today stems in part from J. N. Darby’s hermeneutical scheme of dispensationalism, which considered the Old Testament and the Law to be written for the Jews only.
17. The Ten Commandments are reduced to the “Ten Suggestions.”
18. David said in Psalm 19: “The Law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul.”
19. Jesus attacked the Pharisees’ faulty interpretation of the Law; He did not attack the Law. Jesus said the Pharisees did not even know the Law or read it right.
20. Jesus said that if the Pharisees believed in Moses, they would believe in Jesus, because Moses wrote about Jesus.
21. The Law was meant to be a witness to the pagan nations around Israel of the justice and wisdom of Jehovah God.
22. Not all of the law is still applicable. Passages in the New Testament tell us which aspects God has set aside, such as the dietary laws, sacrificial laws, etc. (e.g. Acts 10, Hebrews 10). Other aspects of the law are taken in principle.
23. The whole message of the New Testament is that we are condemned by the law, but the righteousness of Christ is fulfilled in and through us by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Application Questions:

1. How do we navigate the waters of Law and Grace without falling into the extremes of legalism or antinomianism?
2. What does Jesus mean when He says He came to fulfill the Law?
3. How is Gnosticism creeping back into the church today?
4. How did the Law given to Israel serve as a witness to the pagan nations? See Deuteronomy 4:5-8.
5. What parts of the Law did God set aside? Provide clear New Testament references to support your answer.
6. How can we address the prevalence of antinomianism (anti-law) in the church today? What can I do personally to serve as an example to others in this regard?