

The Law

Read: Matthew 5:17-20

Summary:

“At first reading it might well be held that this is the most astonishing statement that Jesus made in the whole of the Sermon on the Mount.”

Christ & the Law

We know that Jesus and his disciples broke the law... his disciples did not wash their hands before eating and Jesus healed someone on the Sabbath. The Jews understand the law on many levels... the 10 commandments, the first 5 books of the Old Testament, the whole of the law and prophets, scribal law explaining the law. Yet Jesus came not to abolish this but fulfil it! He reveals the doctrine taught, he is the fulfilment of prophecy, he lived a perfect life under the law. The law is permanent and it points to Jesus

Christians & the Law

The Scribes and Pharisees were those committed to understanding and living the law. They had much discussion about the details and produced countless guide lines. Yet we know that the Early Church did not keep to these (abandoned food law in Acts 11). We must be different / better than the Pharisees: they made the law external and informal – not of the heart; they were more concerned about ceremony than morality; they were focused on the rules and not on God; they had lost the Spirit of the ‘beatitudes’. We know that we are acceptable to God because of grace and because we love Him we will want to do what he commands. We fulfil the law by being filled with the Holy Spirit!

Application:

Please select from the following questions and do not attempt them all. Try and encourage all to take part and be honest about how they will be different as a result. Make sure there is time to pray for one another

1. Was there anything shared that needs clarifying?
2. What did God say to you on Sunday and what are you going to do as a result?
3. How do you know which Old Testament laws are still helpful and which are not?
4. In what ways can you slip and become like a Pharisee? How do you overcome this?
5. *“Those who can do no more than simply keep the rules, however conscientiously, haven’t even started as far as the kingdom of heaven is concerned.”* In what way do you agree or disagree?
6. It is easier to read ‘actions’ than ‘motives’ (in ourselves and others) how can we get past this?