

Matthew 5:17-20
 Sermon on the Mount
 MT1013

June 6, 2010 am
 The Beatitudes

“TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS”

INTRODUCTION: The Sermon on the Mount, like any sermon, can be divided into sections...

1. These “sections” are the *main points* of the message.
2. Most Biblical scholars see at least five sections:
 - a. First: *The Beatitudes (5:1-16)*
 - b. Second: *The Corrections about the Law (5:17-48)*
 - c. Third: *Instructions about true religion (6:1-18)*
 - d. Fourth: *Kingdom Perspectives and Principles (6:19-7:12)*
 - e. Fifth: *A Conclusion (7:13-28)*
3. I would suggest to you that Jesus preaches a classic *three-point message* in His Sermon on the Mount:
 - a. Introduction: *The Beatitudes: invitation into the Kingdom of God (5:1-16)*
 - b. First Point: *The Ethics of the Kingdom (5:17-48)*
 - c. Second Point: *The Piety of the Kingdom (6:1-18)*
 - d. Third Point: *The Values of the Kingdom (6:19-7:12)*
 - e. Conclusion: *How to Enter the Kingdom of God: salvation (7:13-28)*
4. Like any good preacher, Jesus includes **transition statements** in His sermons that enable His hearers to move from point to point and to follow His train of thought...
5. **Matthew 5:13-20** is such a transition passage. Here is how it fits together...
 - a. The Beatitudes: **Who You Are Before God**
 - “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
 - “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
 - “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
 - “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.
 - “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
 - “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
 - “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:3-12)

b. Transition #1: **Whom Christ Will Help You Become**

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Mt. 5:13-16)

c. Transition #2: **What Jesus Demands From You**

i. A righteousness better than the Rabbis and the Pharisees...

ii. *“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. 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. 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. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:17-20)*

d. The Kingdom Law: **How Kingdom People keep God’s Law as Righteous People (Mt. 5:21-48)**

i. *“You have heard it said...but I say...”*

ii. Six key issues of ethics: Anger, Lust, Marriage, Integrity, Revenge, Your Enemies

iii. The spirit of the law, not just the letter of the law

6. We turn today to Matthew 5:17-20 where Jesus *introduces a new section of the Sermon on the Mount...*

a. *“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. 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. 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. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:17-20)*

b. Righteousness, the Law of God, Kingdom Ethics

c. **The moral demands of the Kingdom of God**

7. The Sermon on the Mount is a *radical message:*

a. It is **not** easy to preach or to hear.

- b. It does **not** leave us with warm, fuzzy feelings.
 - c. It will **not** reinforce our spiritual status quo.
 - d. It **will** turn your world upside down.
8. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is telling us what *God demands from the world*.
- a. This is what makes the Sermon seem so *radical*.
 - b. The Sermon on the Mount is not about us in the world but about worldlings entering the Kingdom of God.
 - c. This is Jesus Christ's self-professed mission which now becomes our great *commission*.
And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Mt. 28:18-20)
 - d. *"All authority...go...make disciples...baptize...teach...observe (obey) all I have commanded you..."*
 - e. **These are the orders of King Jesus, the King of the Kingdom of God.**
9. And there **is** a kingdom way to live, a kingdom holiness, a kingdom righteousness, a kingdom law-keeping that...
- a. We must *preach* and *explain* as ministers.
 - b. We must *learn* and *practice* as believers.
 - c. We must *teach* and *pass on* to the world.
10. **Here is where we modern Americans get anxious about, uncomfortable with, and even resistant to what Jesus is saying:** *Should we be forcing Jesus' Law upon other people like a group of fundamentalist extremists?*
- a. Simple answer: No!
 - b. But we do need to note
 - i. First: these demands are **not** ours but those of God in Christ, therefore...
 - ii. Second: this is **not** fundamentalism of men but rather the good and holy will of God, and
...
 - iii. Third: we do **not** force the kingdom on anyone; we live it out before others.
11. We are **not** like Muslim extremists and terrorists. We are not called to a *Christian Jihad*.
- a. Our role is not to force the Kingdom on anyone and conquer the world...
 - b. Our calling is not to kill but to *die*
 - c. *Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.* (Matthew 10:37-39)

- d. We are called to the **Cross** along with Christ; to the **Kingdom** of Jesus Christ, and to the **holiness** (righteousness) of Jesus Christ...
- e. All of which calls us to *die to self and the world*: sin, selfish ambition and self-rule.
- f. **We live by dying and living in Christ**

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

- g. **This** is what makes the Sermon on the Mount such a radical message.

12. Listen, please, to **John Piper** as he says the same thing I am saying...

- a. *What Jesus Demands from the World* (pp. 26-27)
- b. Piper states...

He does not send His people to make disciples with a sword. His Kingdom does not come by force, but by truth and love and sacrifice and the power of God. "My Kingdom is not of this world. If My Kingdom were of this world, My servants would have been fighting" (John 18:36). Jesus' followers do not kill to extend His Kingdom. They die. "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his Cross and follow Me" (Mark 8:34). "Some of you they will put to death" (Luke 21:16). Not only will they put the followers of Jesus to death, but they will do it in the name of their religion. "The hour is coming," Jesus says, "when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God" (John 16:2).

13. Jesus is concerned with *real religion*, not the comfortable, smug, self-righteous religiosity of the Old Testament Rabbis, the New Testament Pharisees, the Greek philosophers or Roman civil religion, Medieval Christendom, Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy, Liberal Enlightenment, Fundamentalism, worldly Evangelicalism or our own version of such in the *Presbyterian Church of America*.

14. So...He calls us to His Kingdom standards for moral and ethical living: **The Kingdom Ethics...**

"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. 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. 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. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:17-20)

15. **D. A. Carson:** *The Sermon on the Mount*; p. 36.

- a. *Matthew 5:17-20 are among the most difficult verses in all the Bible. Superficially it is clear what they are about. Jesus again picks up the theme of the Kingdom (mentioned three times in 5:19f.) and now relates it to the Law and the Prophets. These verses then serve as the introduction to the five blocks of material which make up the rest of the chapter.*
- b. Jesus is telling us **Four Truths** about the Christian, the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Law of God.

c. Here they are...

I. JESUS HAS A HIGH VIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT (Matthew 5:17-18)

“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. 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. (Matthew 5:17-18)

1. Jesus is saying: *“Don’t think that I have come to get rid of the Old Testament Law. Get rid of this sappy, silly and sentimental view that you are in the ‘age of grace’ and therefore, not under God’s Law. Abraham, Moses, David and the Prophets were all saved by grace, but they kept the Law. So it will be with you. Everything God wants from you, in relation to the Law, I have come to see He gets it.”*
2. Jesus says three straightforward things here:
 - a. First: I am not abolishing the Old Testament law
 - b. Second: I am fulfilling the Old Testament law
 - c. Third: I will see that every minute detail of God’s Law is done...
 - d. ...even the *iotas and the dots* (“jots and tittles”), the Hebrew vowel marks on the Old Testament pages of Scripture.
3. Jesus said, *“I am the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets.”*
 - a. Remember: *“The Law and the Prophets”* was the Hebrew way of saying “The Scriptures” (the OT)
 - i. *So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)*
 - ii. *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. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40)*
 - iii. *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:27)*
 - b. Hebrew Old Testament was divided in three parts:
 - i. Law, prophets, sacred writings
 - ii. *Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” (Luke 24:44)*
 - c. Jesus is **the New Moses**: The Lawgiver & Prophets
The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— (Deuteronomy 18:15)

- d. Jesus identifies Himself as one with Moses and all the Old Testament prophets.
4. Jesus *fulfills* (completes) all that the Law and the Prophets spoke concerning the person, work and will of God.
 - a. *For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John...* (Matthew 11:13)
 - b. **Both** the Prophets and the Law prophesied of Christ.
 - c. How? In 10 ways –
 - i. *Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”* (Luke 24:44)
 - ii. History: Old Testament history builds to the climax in Jesus Christ
 - iii. Promises: All God’s Old Testament Promises come true in Christ
For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. (2 Corinthians 1:20)
 - iv. Predictions: Over 300 prophecies about the Messiah are fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth
 - v. Types: All the symbolism of the Levitical sacrifices, ritual cleansings, holy days, etc. point to the atoning and sanctifying work of Christ.
 - vi. Praise: The worship of God in the Psalms is arrived at by faith in and following after Jesus.
 - vii. **Augustine:** *“Christ is Himself the singer of the Psalms”*
 - viii. Wisdom: The Proverbs and Wisdom of the Old Testament is fleshed out in the life of Christ.
 - ix. Precepts: How the Law expects us to live is practiced to perfection by the sinless life of Christ.
 - x. Punishment: The penalty for law-breaking (death) is paid in full by Christ on the Cross.
5. Jesus takes the Law seriously: *He came to keep the demands of the Law in His active obedience and to pay the penalty of the Law in His passive obedience.*
 - a. Jesus became incarnate to fulfill all of the Law.
 - b. **Louis Berkhof** speaks of Christ's active and passive obedience: *Systematic Theology: pp. 380-381*

This constitutes the active obedience of Christ, consisting in all that Christ did to observe the law in its federal aspect, as the condition for obtaining eternal life. The active obedience of Christ was necessary to make His passive obedience acceptable with God, that is, to make it an object of God’s good pleasure. His passive obedience consisted in His paying the penalty of sin by His sufferings and death, and thus discharging the debt of all His people.
 - c. **Jesus went to the Cross to fulfill all God’s Law.**
6. His Point: **The Permanence of God’s Moral Law**

II. JESUS EXPECTS US TO TAKE SERIOUSLY THE LAW OF GOD (Matthew 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. (Matthew 5:19)

1. Jesus tells us, “*Because I take the Law seriously, so will you. Don’t relax the demands of the Law.*”
 - a. **Note carefully** Jesus’ words
 - b. “*Therefore*” introduces the consequences of the permanence of God’s moral law.
 - c. “*Whoever*” makes the application general; for all of us over all of time.
 - d. The verb “*relax*” is really the Greek verb *luo* (to loose or untie).
 - e. Here *luo* would mean to repeal, annul, abolish, nullify.

2. **Leon Morris:** *Gospel of Matthew: Pillar NTC; p. 110.*

The rabbis distinguished between “light” and “heavy” commandments, but it is unlikely that Jesus is accepting such a distinction. He simply refers to the fact that some of the commandments are not as weighty as others, and He selects the least of them for notice. Even this one is to be kept. No commandment is to be taken lightly.

3. Notice that there is a *ranking* in the Kingdom of God –
 - a. The *greatest* are those who diligently keep God’s Law, set a model for doing so, and teach others how important obedience really is.
 - b. The *least* are those who do not take the Law seriously, set a lawless example, and teach antinomianism.
 - c. *Antinomianism:* being lawless or against the Law
 - i. *Anti* (another) *nomos* (law)
 - ii. Against God’s Law (lawless)
 - iii. Advocating another (different) law (legalism)
4. **We usually don’t realize this truth:** *Lawlessness and legalism are two sides to the same sin: another law opposed to God’s Laws offered in place of the Law.*
5. Jesus’ main point here is this: *Christ expects some real and practical expression of obedience to God’s Law.*
 - a. Not just lip service
 - b. Not cheap substitutes
 - c. Not arguments and excuses
 - d. *But visible, measurable, practical obedience*

- e. *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’ (Matthew 7:21-23)*
- f. *“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (Matthew 25:41-46)*
- g. *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. (John 3:36)*

6. Obedience to the Law of God is proof that one possesses the grace of God. Keeping the Law validates believing the Gospel.

For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law. (Romans 3:28-31)

Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 5:20-21)

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:1-4)

What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. (Romans 7:7-12)

- 7. *Jesus is saying, “Do not pit law against Gospel; they belong together as My two gifts of grace. The Law convicts you of sin and drives you to the Gospel and Christ. When Christ lays hold of you through the Gospel, His grace enables you to keep the Law. Both Law and Gospel are for your benefit and are good for you.”*

8. **Sinclair B. Ferguson:** *The Sermon on the Mount*; p. 77.

With these words, is Jesus reversing His earlier teaching that we enter the Kingdom of God through grace? Surely not. Rather, He is saying that our attitude to the law of God is an index of our attitude to God Himself. If we treat the law lightly and encourage others to do so (if we have a settled and consistent attitude of antagonism toward it), we show that we are strangers to the promise of the new covenant in Christ. But if we love and keep even the least of the Lord's commandments, and we encourage others to do so as well (if we have a settled attitude of obedience), that is a sure mark that we love Christ and belong to His Kingdom.

III. JESUS CALLS FOR A DEEPER APPLICATION OF THE LAW (Matthew 5:20)

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

1. In the six paragraphs and 28 verses that follow, Jesus does an amazing thing: *He interprets the Law for us...*
2. ...and He does so in a **bold** manner: Contradicting the popular Rabbinical interpretations...
 - a. *"you have heard it said...but I say..."*
 - b. **Not:** God's Old Testament law says _____, but I say differently.
 - c. **Rather:** "You have 'heard it said' by your Rabbis, but I say differently."
 - d. Jesus, the Great Rabbi, corrects the teachings of men.
 - e. **John Stott:** *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount; BST; p. 79.*

What, then, were the scribes and Pharisees doing? What were the 'tortuous methods', as Calvin called them, by which they debased the law? In general, they were trying to reduce the challenge of the law, to 'relax' (19) the commandments of God, and so make His moral demands more manageable and less exacting.

3. One thing we'll notice as we look at anger, lust, divorce, oaths, revenge and dealing with your enemies...
 - a. We think in a *minimalistic* manner: What's the *least* I have to do to stay out of trouble?
 - b. Jesus thinks in a *maximum* manner: What can I do to glorify God and love others?
4. So, Jesus strikes at the *heart* of each Law: What is God really after in each commandment?
5. **If we do not think this way about the Law, then we will soon manipulate the Law, as hypocrites do, feigning external obedience while our hearts are set on rebellion. God and Jesus are not fooled by external actions.**
6. **Illustration:** Look at Matthew 5:31-33:
 - a. *It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.*

Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' (Matthew 5:31-33)

- b. The *minimalistic approach*? The Letter of the Law.
 - i. Don't commit physical adultery.
 - ii. Don't permanently and physically desert the home.
 - c. So...we begin to play games with our spouse, pretend with the church, and work the legal aspect of the Law to our benefit. How?
 - i. *We are cold, critical and mean-spirited to our husbands, denying him our bed, until his lusts drive him into another woman's arms. Then we cry, "Adultery! I've been wronged!"*
 - ii. *We live in the house but we are harsh and cruel, won't pay the bills, disengaged from the kids, until the wife leaves in anger and frustration, then we cry, "Desertion! I've been wronged!"*
 - iii. *We spend years with other women, in pornography, on the laptop screen. But we say, "I've never been with another woman!" Really?*
 - iv. *We battle with, resist and resent our husbands until they either give in to us in bitterness or react in anger. Then we play the victim – pastors and elders always sympathize with weeping women!*
 - d. **But the spirit of the Law says:** Do everything you can to make your marriage work. Hang in there. Don't let anything ruin your marriage. Stay and work earnestly at your marriage until he/she leaves and marries someone else.
7. **I recently told the pastoral staff:** *We can be fooled by lots of people with marital problems. But Jesus isn't fooled. We'll do the best we can, but there are limits for us:*
- a. We can't *make* anybody do anything. Our powers are ministerial not magisterial: teach, advise, pray and counsel.
 - b. If two people play the minimum law game, we don't have to side with either one or declare anyone "innocent" or "guilty."
 - c. When someone threatens to sue us for our counseling, discipleship or discipline – game over. We wash our hands of them and their affairs. (1 Corinthians 6)
 - d. If people get an unbiblical divorce in an unbiblical manner, we do not need to clean up the mess or certify who's wrong or right.
 - e. *We are expecting self-professed Christians to try to keep the spirit of the law, not just the letter.*
 - f. **We are not legalists here; we are people of the Kingdom, of grace, of Gospel obedience; people of true love.**
8. **Let the listener beware:** *You have all been duly notified...*

- a. *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. (Matthew 5:19)*
- b. Radical obedience is Gospel obedience
- c. To keep the law is to love God, family, others
- d. *If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (John 14:15)*

Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 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." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:8-10)

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love. For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. (Gal. 5:6, 13)

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:34-35)

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:37-39)

IV. JESUS UNDERSTANDS THAT WE NEED HIS HELP IN KEEPING GOD'S LAW

- 1. Jesus is **not** saying anything opposite of what He has said in the Gospel.
 - a. Saved by grace, through faith, in Christ's work alone. (*Gospel*)
 - b. Saved for good works in order to love God, bless others, grow in grace (*law*)
 - c. *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)*
- 2. But Jesus knows three things about us...
 - a. **First:** *We will fail to keep the Law and will sin again and again and again...*
 - i. So, He offers us *His own righteousness* to offset our own unrighteousness.
 - ii. *Imputed righteousness (justification)*
 - iii. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. (Romans 10:4)*

And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption. (1 Corinthians 1:30)

- b. **Second:** *We need the Holy Spirit to live in us and empower and energize us to keep God's Law*
- i. The *filling* of the Holy Spirit – day in and day out, hour by hour
 - ii. What Paul calls “walking in the Spirit”
 - iii. *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:16-24)*
 - iv. We “put on” Jesus Christ in faith, prayer, grace and obedience, in order to obey...
 - v. *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Romans 13:14)*
- c. **Third:** *We need to be taught a new way of living and loving; a mind recalibrated by the Gospel...*
- i. *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1-2)*
 - ii. Learning to obey not out of fear...
 - iii. ...but obeying out of love – for God, Christ and others
 - iv. *By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:13-19)*

3. It will take much grace, much patience and much time for us to learn this *Gospel obedience* to God's Law, but Jesus is a kind and forbearing Pastor, who will work in us, with us and for us until we love enough to obey.
4. **All we need to do, for a start, is to take seriously the radical demands of the Sermon on the Mount!**

CONCLUSION: These radical demands of the Sermon on the Mount changed the life and destiny of a young German man...

1. ...a man named **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**
2. In 1931, he traveled to America to study at the *Union Theological Seminary* in New York City...
 - a. Steeped in liberal theology and social Gospel
 - b. Attended the *Riverside Church* and listened to America's leading liberal preacher: **Henry Emerson Fosdick**
 - c. Felt empty. Lonely. Frustrated. Not alive.
 - d. Then he began to go to the *Abyssinian Baptist Church* in Harlem, New York
 - e. Heard Gospel-preaching by **Adam Clayton Powell, Senior**
 - f. Worshipped with the African Americans, saw how they suffered oppression and prejudice, and experienced their love, faith and spiritual courage.
 - g. It was then that Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born again and became a Christian.
3. Years later, he wrote to his sister and his brother-in-law and he gave this testimony...(Bonhoeffer, Eric Mataxas; pp. 123-124, 137)

I plunged into work in a very unchristian way. An...ambition that many noticed in me made my life difficult...then something happened, something that has changed and transformed my life to the present day. For the first time I discovered the Bible...I had often preached. I had seen a great deal of the Church, and talked and preached about it—but I had not yet become a Christian...I know that at that time I turned the doctrine of Jesus Christ into something of personal advantage for myself...I pray to God that that will never happen again. Also I had never prayed, or prayed only very little. For all my loneliness, I was quite pleased with myself. Then the Bible, and in particular the Sermon on the Mount, freed me from that. Since then everything has changed. I have felt this plainly, and so have other people about me. It was a great liberation. Only if we will venture to enter into the words of the Bible, as though in them this God were speaking to us who loves us and does not will to leave us alone with our questions, only so shall we learn to rejoice in the Bible. If it is I who determine where God is to be found, then I shall always find a God who corresponds to me in some way, who is obliging, who is connected with my own nature. But if God determines where he is to be found, then it will be in a place which is not immediately pleasing to my nature and which is not at all congenial to me. This place is the Cross of Christ. And whoever would find Him must go to the foot of the Cross, as the Sermon on the Mount commands. This is not according to our nature at all, it is entirely contrary to it. But this is the message of the Bible, not only in the New but also in the Old Testament... And I would like to tell you

now quite personally: since I have learnt to read the Bible in this way—and this has not been for so very long—it becomes every day more wonderful to me. I read it in the morning and the evening, often during the day as well, and every day I consider a text which I have chosen for the whole week, and try to sink deeply into it, so as really to hear what it is saying. I know that without this I could not live properly any longer.

4. That is what Jesus and His Sermon on the Mount will do to you: *take you into the way of the Cross and into the Kingdom of God, on the most exhilarating journey of your life!*