

Sermon on the Mount 6 - Inductive Study Guide

Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5:17-20

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT An Outline

| Chapter | Subject |
|--------------|-----------|
| Mt 5:3-9 | Character |
| Mt 5:10-12 | Conflict |
| Mt 5:13-7:27 | Conduct |

First we'll look at how Mt 5:17-20 relates to verses before & after...this study of the purpose of the Law, its relationship to righteousness and a believer's relationship to it is a foundational study. It is vital for believers to be very familiar with the nature of the Law lest they fall into the subtle traps of legalism on one hand or licentiousness on the other.

Had Jesus even mentioned the Law in Mt 5:3-16? What might one begin to think?

He does not mention the Law.

The audience might begin to wonder if Jesus was going to do away with the Law. In fact they most likely hoped that that would be the case because as **Dwight Pentecost** explains...

The nation groaned under Pharisaic tradition and found itself incapable of measuring up even to Pharisaic interpretation of the Law. The people looked for someone to deliver them from the burden of Pharisaism. As they hung upon the words of Christ, they hoped He would sweep away their responsibility to measure up to the traditions of the Pharisees and to the inviolable demands of the Law so they could be accepted by God as they were. ([Pentecost, J. D. Design for living: Lessons in Holiness from the Sermon on the Mount. Kregel Publications](#))

What the **Pharisees** had done was...

"tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger." (Mt 23:4)

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others." (Mt 23:23)

What does Jesus begin to discuss in Mt 5:21-48?

"*You have heard*" = here He begins to mention what the audience had heard from their teachers the scribes and the Pharisees

So we see Jesus take a short "excursus" on the Law in Mt 5:17-20 as preparation for what will follow in Mt 5:21-48ff, where Jesus explains about the internal aspect of the Law rather than the external observances.

What are the Beatitudes? Way to be saved? (Mt 5:3-9)

Way saved live = be attitudes (**Character**)

When you let these attitudes be your lifestyle what will surely occur? (Mt 5:10-12)

Conflict

How are the Beatitude people to manifest themselves in World? (Mt 5:13-16)

SALT - Prevents Decay & Seasons (see notes Matthew 5:13)

LIGHT - exposes darkness (see notes Matthew 5:14-16)

All to bring glory to our Father who is in heaven

The beatitudes are a description of what a genuine believer's life should look like (ideally). It's a description of the man or woman who has truly entered into the Kingdom of Heaven.

It describes the character out of which or from which that person will live a righteous life, a life that is right in the eyes of the Lord and then also before men.

Such a life lived out before men will result in conflict for it is so radically different than what most think of as a true believer.

NOW LET'S LOOK AT MT 5:17-20

What did Jesus say that His relationship was to the Law and the Prophets (Mt 5:17)?

"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill."

As **Dwight Pentecost** notes...

When the Jews gave ear to the Words of the Lord Jesus, they came to Him as those who understood the demands of the Law. They stood condemned and convicted in the light of the requirement of the Law, and they sought a way of escape. They hoped He would set aside the Law, and the holiness and perfection the Law demanded, and that He would offer a substitute way, an easier way into the presence of God. Had He set aside that which they were unable to perform, and offered them an easier way into the presence of God, they would have accepted Him gladly. But our Lord said, "I have not come to set aside in any way that which the Law demands. I have come to demand that the Law be fulfilled in every respect." For our Lord said, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, until all be fulfilled." ([Pentecost, J. D. Design for living: Lessons in Holiness from the Sermon on the Mount. Kregel Publications](#))

How did Jesus fulfill the Law and the Prophets (Mt 5:17)?

- 1) He fulfilled every prophecy of the Messiah (see study on **Messianic Prophecy**).
- 2) He kept every law and commandment perfectly (cf Romans 8:3, 2Cor 5:21)
- 3) He was the substance of all the shadows of Messiah in the sacrificial system, the Tabernacle and its various parts and the Jewish feasts. (cf Col 2:17, Heb 10:1)

Background: The Old Testament Law can be thought of in three divisions:

- 1) **Moral Law** - as in the 10 Commandments (only the keeping of the Sabbath is not commanded in the NT)
- 2) **Ceremonial Law** - as seen in the shadows and types in the Tabernacle, the Jewish sacrificial system, the Feast days
- 3) **Civil Law** - the judicial laws that governed the nation of Israel in the OT - e.g., the cities of refuge, stoning for certain offenses, etc

Jesus fulfilled all of these aspects of the Law. In the NT, only the **moral law** remains applicable to the believer. The **ceremonial** and **civil law** are not abolished but as Jesus stated "**fulfilled**" in Him. And yet many Christians remain confused and uncertain about significance of the Law even after sitting in church for years. They have no firm grasp of what role the Law plays in their lives today. So that will be the thrust of this lesson. (**Click for more commentary on "Law and Believer"**)

Sinclair Ferguson explains that...

Jesus fulfils the Law in His doctrine, or teaching. He brings out the real significance of God's commands. The Pharisees accused Jesus of 'abolishing' the law. But, in fact, they were the ones who were abolishing it. Their traditional interpretations of the law weakened its power to search the motives of men's hearts. It was only in the exposition of Jesus (in Matthew 5:21-48, for example) that the real power of God's law could be felt. Jesus did not weaken the law. On the contrary, **He let it out of the cage in which the Pharisees had imprisoned it, allowing it to pounce on our secret thoughts and motives, and tear to pieces our bland assumption that we are able to keep it in our own strength.** Jesus fulfils the law in His deeds and lifestyle. He shows the real meaning of the law. ([Ferguson, Sinclair: Sermon on the Mount :Banner of Truth](#)) (Bolding added)

How did Jesus amplify the truth that He did not come to abolish the Law but fulfill it (Mt 5:18)?

"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.

"**Smallest letter**" in KJV is "**jot**" which ISBE describes as follows...

"**Jot**" (Revised Version, later editions of the King James Version) is a corruption of iote (early editions of the King James Version, Geneva, Rheims, Bishops'--pronounced i-o'te), an English transliteration of **iota**, the 9th letter of the Greek alphabet ([Matthew 5:18](#) parallel). "iota," in turn, is the nearest Greek equivalent for the Hebrew **yodh** ("y"), the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, in New Testament times being little larger than an English accent ('). The **tittle** ("**stroke**" in NAS) is the smallest part of a letter (not part of a y, however). Consequently, thinking of the law as written out, the sense of [Matthew 5:17](#), is: "From this code, so written, not the smallest letter nor part of a letter--not an `i` nor the crossing of a `t`--shall be erased until all things come to pass." The reference is to the synagogue rolls, which were written in Hebrew, so that the passage has no bearing on the language used by Christ. ([Orr, J. et al: The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: 1915](#)) ([Click and scroll down to see what a "yod" looks like - it's the 10th letter of the Hebrew alphabet](#))

"**Stroke**" in the KJV is "**tittle**" which ISBE describes as follows...

A small stroke or mark, specifically on a letter to denote accent, or as a diacritical mark; used only in [Matthew 5:18](#) and [Luke 16:17](#). In the first passage it is used in connection with iota, or jot, i.e. the very smallest thing, and in both it refers to the minutiae of the Law. It is well known that the scribes paid the greatest attention to such marks attached to the letters in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Massoretic Text of which abounds in them. ([Orr, J. et al: The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: 1915](#))

What did Jesus emphasize about the Law with this declaration?

The Law is

Immutable - unchangeable, permanent

Inspired (inerrant, verbal inerrancy)- down to the very strokes of letters in the original manuscripts (See related study on the **Authority of God's Word**)

In parallel Scriptures we read Jesus' declaration that...

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away. Mt 24:35

John records a similar thought...

"If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), John 10:35

Inspiration includes even the smallest letter (There are approximately 66,420 **yods** in the Old Testament!) and the literal strokes on the letters. Jesus is saying that Lord said that not only will not one letter of the Law be relaxed, but also not even one almost indistinguishable portion of one letter will be relaxed! Those are His requirements.

Given the unchangeable nature of Law, what warning and what encouragement does Jesus give? (Mt 5:19)

Those who break or teach to break will be the "**Least**" in the Kingdom of Heaven

Keep and teach the Law will be **great** in the Kingdom of Heaven

Note: They both will be in the Kingdom of Heaven, even the "least". Jesus is not suggesting one will lose their salvation but "least" does indicate they will have a lesser "rank" in the Kingdom. What that means exactly is not readily apparent from the Scriptures. See the following passages...

John has a parallel warning in his second epistle writing...

Watch yourselves (present imperative demands a continual personal vigilance, not others but yourself!), that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward (knowledge that rewards worked for can be lost should promote faithful, loving obedience). (2John 1:8)

At the **Judgment Seat of Christ** (2Cor 5:10), every believer will receive praise for Paul writes...

Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to

light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts (This warning indicates that motives for service and ministry will be clear to God and a major factor in His judgment); and then **each man's praise** (literally "his praise") **will come to him from God.** (1Cor 4:5)

James gives a special warning to those who are formal teachers of God's Word...

"Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter (greater - this adjective supports the idea of degrees of treatment at the judgment) judgment" (the responsibility of teaching others the word of God is an awesome task that should not be accepted without prayerful consideration) (James 3:1)

John MacArthur comments that...

Greatness is not determined by gifts, success, popularity, reputation, or size of ministry-but by a believer's view of Scripture as revealed in his life and teaching. Jesus' promise is not simply to great teachers such as Paul or Augustine, Calvin, Luther, Wesley, or Spurgeon. His promise applies to every believer who teaches others to obey God's Word by faithfully, carefully, and lovingly living by and speaking of that Word. Every believer does not have the gift of teaching the deep doctrines of Scripture, but every believer is called and is able to teach the right attitude toward it. (MacArthur, J: [Matthew 1-7 Macarthur New Testament Commentary Chicago: Moody Press](#))

The **Wycliffe Bible Commentary** agrees writing that...

Those who are not opposed in principle to God's law but have avoided its lesser requirements will not be cast out of the Kingdom but will have a lesser reward in the kingdom. (Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F. [Wycliffe Commentary](#) Chicago: Moody Press)

Now let's look at Scriptures that give us an brief overview of the Law...

Exodus 20: What is the Law? Why did God give Israel the Law?

Normally when one thinks of the "Law" they think of the "10 Commandments" (see Ex 20)

Note: The **Law** is synonymous with a **covenant** which in turn is synonymous with the the term "**Old Covenant**".

Exodus 20:20: Why did Moses state that God had given Israel the Law, the Old Covenant?

That they might fear God

That they might not sin

Ex 20:20 And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so **that you may not sin.**"

Exodus 24:3-8: How was the arrangement between God and Israel "ratified" (confirmed, given formal approval by the people) in Ex 24:3-8?

Israel entered into a covenant, the most solemn and binding arrangement known in the ancient world and in Scripture

Israel agreed to do all that the LORD had spoken

It was solemnly attested to by blood sprinkled on the people, "the blood of the covenant"

Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, "All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!" 4 And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. Then he arose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. 5 And he sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD. 6 And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. 7 Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" 8 So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

Deut 6:24-25: What would be the result if Israel obeyed God's Law?

Law was given for Israel's good and survival

If they kept it, this would be righteousness for them.

One can begin to understand how this verse might lead one to believe that obedience to the Law could bring righteousness.

Dt 6:24 "So the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God for our good always and for our survival, as it is today. 25 And it will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the LORD our God, just as He commanded us.

Psalm 19:7 How did David describe the Law and what it had potential to accomplish?

Ps 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

Law = perfect (Without blemish, whole, undefiled, of utmost integrity, sound, healthful, wholesome)

Restore one's soul - preserves the life of the one who studies it by making known God's will. Those who know God's will know how to please Him and can avoid offending Him. The Word converts the sinner from his ways and restores the saint when he wanders. It refreshes and heals.

Testimony = Sure (steadfast) = "trustworthy" in the sense that his statutes are true in principle and are verifiable in the situations of life. "Sure" is the Hebrew AMAN (from which comes "amen" ~ so be it, truly) & speaks of that which conveys the idea of CERTAINTY or of FIRMNESS (ie, cf firm foundation Mt 7:24). It is dependable. We can stake our present & our future on Jehovah's testimony or witness concerning Himself - His Self-disclosure. God's testimonies are so sure, so certain that one can stake his life on them and thus they prove a source of unshakable wisdom in a soon to be shaken world (cf our sure foundation Heb 12:28). God's Word contains a clear, reliable witness to his moral character and demands.

Makes simple wise - It is God's Word that makes us wise. Wisdom has nothing to do with intelligence. Wisdom is the ability to respond correctly to life's situations. Wisdom gives you the ability to solve problems and get results. Herbert Hoover defined wisdom as, "knowing what to do next." A wise person sees through the haze of the problem to the solution on the other side. There are times in life when the choice between right and wrong may not always be clear. There are times when the choice between good and best aren't clear, either. You need wisdom. You get it from reading the Bible.

Simple = from a root that mean "to open" describes one who is gullible, easily susceptible to good or bad influence, weak-willed, irresponsible, but still correctable.. In context this word appears to refer to "the [morally] naive," that is, the one who is young and still in the process of learning right from wrong and distinguishing wisdom from folly.

The revealed Word of God has the same dominant influence over humankind as the sun does over nature. Whereas the sun restores natural life, the Law restores the life of the human soul. The sun dispels physical darkness, but the Word of God removes the darkness of ignorance from our understanding. It is flawless and reliable.

Romans 7:7, 12: What did Paul teach regarding the Law and it's purpose? Why was the Law given?

Law taught us what sin was

Law = Holy, Righteous, Good (so it shows us what is holy and righteous and good!)

Ro 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET." (see note Romans 7:7)

Note: The law is like a x-ray machine; it reveals plainly what might have always been there, but hidden before; and you can't blame a x-ray for what it exposes. The law sets the "speed limit" so we know if we are going too fast; we might never know that we are sinning in many areas (such as covetousness) if the law did not spell this out to us specifically. Paul's aim in (Ro7:7-25) is to support the teaching, up to this point in the book, that the Law is powerless to declare us righteous before God and powerless to make us righteous before God (see also Ro 3:19-20 below). We are sinners by nature (note on Romans 5:12) and by action. Therefore the Law condemns us and stirs up rebellion within us. It doesn't justify and it doesn't sanctify. God, in his mercy, has

made His righteousness available for us another way, apart from the Law (see note Romans 3:21), through Jesus Christ the Righteous One Who took on Himself the curse we deserved (Gal 3:10) by becoming a curse for us (Gal 3:13). So to be declared righteous (to be justified) we must turn in faith from our law-keeping to Christ's Law-keeper, Christ Jesus. We must receive Christ as our treasure, and be declared righteous because of our union with Him, not because of any righteousness in us. That's how we are declared perfectly righteous before God. Then to become progressively righteous (sanctification - see the **Three Tenses of Salvation**) and we must turn from law-keeping, for as Paul says in (Ro 7:4), we have died to the Law and are united with Christ so that we might bear fruit for God. So justification (being declared righteous) is by faith in union with Christ, and sanctification is by faith in union with Christ. And both involve turning away from the Law as the decisive means of getting right with God and becoming like God (2Pe1:4).

Ro 7:12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. (see note Romans 7:12)

Note: The law is holy because it comes from a holy God and searches out sin. It is righteous in view of the just requirements it lays upon men, righteous also because it forbids and condemns sin. It is good (beneficent) because its aim is life. The law is good: it shows man how to live and tells him when he fails to live that way. It exposes his sin and demonstrates his desperate need for a Savior. The law tells man the truth about the nature of man in a most explicit way, and it points him toward the need for outside help in order to be saved. The misuse of the law at the hands of sin has not altered its own essential character.

1 John 3:4: How does John explain sin?

Sin = lawlessness (breaking God's law)

The one who habitually practices sin also habitually practices lawlessness

1Jo 3:4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

Note: Sin is most concisely defined by the middle letter of the word itself (ἁ). Whenever "I" becomes more important than God, sin has moved in. The results of sin are physical death (separation of the soul from the body), spiritual death (separation of the soul from God) and ultimately eternal death (the permanent state of spiritual death).

James 2:10 What happens when we are lawless or break God's Law?

Even if we just break one part, we are guilty of all

Ja 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

Note: "Lawlessness" conveys more than transgressing God's law. It conveys the ultimate sense of rebellion, i.e., living as if there was no law or ignoring what laws exist. As this verse explains sin is anything that is contrary to what the Word of God commands or forbids. 1John 5:17 adds that "All unrighteousness is sin...."

As **Dwight Pentecost** states...

The Law demanded absolute, perfect obedience. If a man kept the entire Law, but violated one minute point, in the eyes of the Law he was a law breaker, and the sentence of guilt had to be passed upon him. The Law demanded absolute perfection. ([Pentecost, J. D. Design for living: Lessons in Holiness from the Sermon on the Mount. Kregel Publications](#))

Galatians 3:10: What does Paul explain our guilty condition?

We are under a curse

We must abide by and perform all of the works of the Law in order to escape the curse.

Gal 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM."

Note: All men were already under God's universal curse because of sin (Genesis 3:17-20), but now the curse becomes more explicit because the definition of sin has become more explicit. No one in Israel could any longer offer the excuse that they did not know what sin was because the law as given to Moses had spelled it out quite clearly. If you're under the law, then there's a curse on you, because you've got to keep the whole

law. You're not going to be able to do it, because you're a sinner with your "father's" (Adam's) sin nature which makes you prone to commit sins (see note Romans 5:12)

Galatians 3:16-19, 24: Why was the Law given?

To show Israel what transgression was (Gal 3:19)

To be a tutor (Gal 3:24)

To lead us to Christ

Ultimately to lead us to be justified by faith

Note: When Israel entered into the covenant with God to keep His Law (circa 1440BC, at Mt Sinai when they agreed to keep all of the commandments, see Exodus 24:3-8), they agreed to keep the Law but learned that they could not. This should have forced them to seek God and His righteousness so that they could stand holy and righteous before God.

Galatians 3:16-19 tells us that the Law (the Old Covenant, the "first covenant" of Heb 8:7) was added after the Abrahamic Covenant (also initiated by God with Abraham circa 1900 BC, in which He promised Abraham a "seed", Jesus Christ). The Law was added "*because of transgressions. . . until the seed [Jesus Christ] would come.*" If the Law was given for defining transgressions so that if I broke a law then I would know what sin was (cf 1Jo 3:4), then the Law must show me God's holiness. The Law is holy (cf Ro 7:12), and God is holy (1 Pe 1:16). Therefore, the Law reveals God's holiness and the demands that a holy God makes upon His people. His people are to be holy even as He is holy (1 Pe 1:15-16). (for more discussion see study of **Covenant: Abrahamic versus Mosaic**)

Constable has an excellent note on this Galatians 3:19 writing that...

"In view of the foregoing argument, did the Law have any value? Yes, God had several purposes in it. Purpose, not cause, is in view, as is clear in the Greek text. There have been four primary interpretations of what "because of transgressions" means. First, some take it to mean "to restrain transgressions." This seems legitimate since all law has a restraining effect. Second, some understand the phrase to mean "to reveal transgressions." This seems valid in view of other statements that Paul made (cf. Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 5:13). Third, it may mean "to provoke transgressions." This, too, seems legitimate. A "Do not touch. Wet paint!" sign on a bench tempts people to touch the bench to see if the paint really is wet. Fourth, some have understood that Paul meant "to awaken a conviction of transgressions." This seems less likely in this context since Paul showed more concern with the objective facts of salvation history than he did with the subjective development of faith in the individual.

"Just as it [the Law] had a point of origin on Mount Sinai, so also it had a point of termination—Mount Calvary."

Paul clarified that the Law was only a temporary measure designed to function until Christ came.

"The function of the law was to point people to Christ, not to provide for all time the way the people of God should live."

Gal 3:24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.

Galatians 3:16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. 17 What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. 18 For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise. 19 Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made ([Matthew](#))

1 Pet 1:15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." (see notes 1 Peter 1:15-16)

Note: Holiness is not, as is so often thought, adherence to a set of rules. It is conformity to the character of God—nothing more, nothing less. It is God's plan for us (cf note Romans 8:29, 2Cor 3:18).

Mt 5:17-18: In the light of the above truth that the Law is good and that it had purpose, what would Jesus, Who is God, do with the Law?

He fulfilled it:

He fulfilled all the Messianic Prophecies

He fulfilled the keeping of the Law perfectly

Not a jot or tittle will pass away until all is accomplished

The Law is holy, righteous, and good. The Law defines sin because transgression of the Law is sin. Sin is sin because it is unlike the holiness of God.

What is the problem with the Law?

Romans 3:19-20: How does the Law which is holy, make a person holy? Can we keep the Law and thereby be justified or declared righteous?

By works of Law no flesh will be justified

Law comes the knowledge of sin

Ro 3:19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; 20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

Romans 8:3-4: How does this verse explain why the Law cannot justify us? What did God do for us?

The problem is our flesh, the fallen nature inherited from Adam (see study of the flesh)

God did for man what He could never do for himself by sending His Son to be our substitute, to take the curse we deserved so that the requirement of the Law (death for sins) might be satisfied.

God fulfilled the requirement - not for those who walk according to flesh (this is their lifestyle and reflects their unregenerate condition) but only for those who walk according to the Spirit (all believers have the Spirit and although we may not always walk according to the Spirit, He does indwell us and urges us toward holiness).

Note: Romans 8:3 is one of the most definitive and succinct statements in all of Scripture regarding the substitutionary atonement and it expresses the heart of the gospel message - the wondrous truth that Jesus Christ paid the penalty on behalf of every person who would turn from sin and trust in Him as Lord and Savior.

So the reason Law could not save or sanctify was because of the flesh - the mind of the person **"in the flesh"** (when we were in Adam) was hostile toward God and even though the Law is good it only provokes the flesh to disobey it (cf Ro 7:5 "*For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which **were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.***"). The Law is good but it could not change man's basic problem in Adam. The Law could tell man what he needed to be (Ro 3:20) but it could not help man become what he needed to be. So the Law was powerless to save. Man was hopelessly lost in Adam (Ro 5:6 "helpless") and his rebellious flesh was stirred up by the Law. God's Law demands righteousness but it cannot provide the means to achieve that righteousness. So what the Law could not do, God Himself did, sending Jesus. Notice carefully the term "*likeness of sinful flesh*" which means is that Jesus was physical flesh and blood like all men, fully man but without the inherent sin of the first Adam.

Note on Romans 8:4: "Requirement" is the Greek word *diakoioma* which has the idea of the acts of righteousness that the Law demands. In other words the character of God that is demanded in us now can be fulfilled in every one of us because the Holy Spirit of God has come to live in our body, His temple. On one hand the Law shouts at us "Thou shalt not, Thou shalt not". We say "Come on flesh, we've got to do this thing. And the flesh says "No" we can't." And then you say "Well how am I going to do this Lord?" And the Lord says

"I fulfilled all of that already and I am in you. Now obey the Spirit. Walk in the Spirit. Be led by the Spirit. Keep in step with the Spirit. In you is the fulfillment of everything I require and which is made possible by the Spirit's power Who will work it out of you." It is the character of God in us that is now being worked out in and through our lives in our daily experience -- it is His righteousness not ours. Practical righteousness is what God demands and is the only thing which God can approve. Remember that we can never produce "righteous acts" in our own power. We could not justify ourselves by works so why do we somehow think now that we are saved we can sanctify ourselves by our efforts (a subtle form of legalism, of seeking to please God by doing or not doing certain things). God is in us and He is for us. He God can accomplish through us the righteousness He requires as we learn to listen to and submit to (obey) the Holy Spirit's leading (cf Ro 8:14 Gal 5:16,18,25). Don't become discouraged. He Who began this good work in you will bring it to pass. His desire for you is abundant life now. The character and righteousness (right motives leading to right actions) that God requires is now fulfilled or accomplished in us by the power of His Spirit.

In Romans 8:4 the word for "**fulfilled**" is pleroo, the idea of filling full, supplying fully, or filling up what was otherwise empty. In Adam we were "empty" without the Spirit of God and we were unable in our own strength to do anything that God requires. Man might see certain actions or deeds and think they are "righteous", but God sees the heart and the motives for men's actions (see 1Cor 4:5 when the "*Lord comes [He] will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts*") and knows that if they originate from an unregenerate heart, they do not meet His requirements for what is eternally righteous. On the contrary, any thought, word or deed that originates from a believer and conveys a picture of the inherent holiness of God (i.e., the thought, word or deed is genuinely righteous), has to come from God's Spirit Who lives within me. All the righteous character of God can now be supplied fully in us because the Holy Spirit lives in us to produce conformity to the image of Christ as we "walk according to the Spirit". Therefore we are forever free from the condemnation of the Law because what the Law requires can now be produced in me because (and only because!) the Holy Spirit lives in me. This is the message of the so-called "Exchanged Life". In short, the message is "You can't do righteous deeds in your strength, the strength of the old nature, the flesh, the old Man, the Sin nature we all inherited from Adam (which is still latent even in believers albeit it is now "dethroned" so to speak). God never said you produce righteousness in your strength. But the good news is He can and He always said He would. Go all the way back to the beginning and you see this contrast - Cain sought to please God in the flesh. Abel pleased God by faith. Now, under the New Covenant, in Christ believers are free from the control (bondage) of the of the **flesh** (unless we choose to go back under it by "doing it our way" like the television commercials encourage us to do). We need to not forget that when we were "in Adam" (in the flesh, unregenerate, not redeemed, not born again, not justified, etc) we were totally under the control of the Sin nature we inherited from Adam and that nature was weak and could never produce righteous thoughts, words or deeds that would be holy and acceptable to God..

Romans 8:3: For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, (**notes** on Romans 8:3)

What Galatians 2:16, 3:11: What does Paul say about the ability of the Law to justify sinners?

By our works of the Law we cannot be justified

Righteous man shall live by faith (a quote from the OT indicating that God's way of salvation has always been by faith and never by keeping the Law).

Gal 2:16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.

Gal 3:11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." (quoting Habakkuk 2:4, which is also quoted in Romans 1:17, Hebrews 10:38)

Note: "The righteous (just) shall live by faith". Sola Fide (faith alone). Martin Luther made this great verse, with its doctrine of justification by faith, the watchword of the Reformation. Paul's use of the quotation from Habakkuk 2:4 is to stress that one can be justified (declared righteous) in God's sight only by faith and never by works. This is the one who shall really live life as God intended it to be lived.

Galatians 3:13: What did Christ do so for us when He fulfilled the Law?

Redeemed us from the curse of the Law

Gal 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"

Now let's look at the Law as it relates to the Jews

How did the majority of the Jews try to keep the Law?

The Pharisees developed their own system of law designed to circumvent the requirements of the holiness of God and the demands of the Law as God intended it to be kept. And so they codified the Scriptures into 365 negative commandments and 248 positive commandments, and taught that if men kept all 613, they would be righteous and acceptable in the sight of God. Their system produced only self-righteousness, for as we have seen the Scriptures repeatedly (many times and in many places) declare that by trying to keep the Law, no one can achieve perfect righteousness, which is the only righteousness that is acceptable to God.

As Jesus explains in Mt 5:21-48, the system the Pharisees had developed focused on **external** obedience and left out the heart of the matter. They forgot (or ignored) the eternal truth Jehovah spoke to Samuel that...

"God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but **the LORD looks at the heart**"
(1 Samuel 16:7)

The heart of the problem has always been man's heart .

Jeremiah 17:9: How does Jeremiah explain the problem of the scribes and the Pharisees (and by extension of every man born in Adam, cf Ro 5:12)?

They were attempting to keep the law externally.

In Mt 5:21-48, Jesus explained that genuine righteousness proceeds from the heart.

Jehovah made a similar assessment of man's **heart** in Genesis, Moses recording...

And the LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's **heart** is evil from his youth (cf Psalm 51:5 "*Behold I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin my mother conceived me*" = refers to the sin nature we all inherit from Adam, Ro 5:12); and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. (Genesis 8:21)

Mt 5:20: If this is the condition of a man's heart, what is our dilemma according to Jesus' statement regarding the righteousness necessary in order for one to gain entry into the Kingdom of Heaven?

How could one ever obtain a righteousness that surpassed that of the scrupulously (self) righteous Scribes and Pharisees? It was clearly not humanly possible.

Who provides the solution?

God, the Great Physician.

The Jews as well as all mankind has a terminal heart condition which only the Great Physician can cure with spiritual "heart transplant".

Jeremiah 31:31-34, 32:39: What's the solution? What did God promise in the OT to heal man's diseased, deceptive heart? What would happen to the Law - would it be abolished?

And everlasting New Covenant with Israel and Judah (specifically given to the Jews)

Not like the Old Covenant

God would put His Law within their heart - now the Law is not external but internal

He would fear of Him in their hearts (so they would not turn away)

He would be their God and they His people

He would forgive their iniquity

He would not remember their sin forever

Jeremiah 31:31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a **new covenant** with the

house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.

33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will **put My law within** them, and on their **heart** I will write it; and **I will be their God, and they shall be My people.**

34 "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for **they shall all know Me**, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will **forgive** their iniquity, and **their sin I will remember no more.**" (See **Covenant: New Covenant in the Old Testament**)

Jeremiah 32:39 and I will give them **one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always**, for their own good, and for the good of their children after them.

40 "And I will make an **everlasting covenant** with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts **so that they will not turn away from Me.**

Note: Remember that the church did not exist at the time of Jeremiah's prophecy. It was not until the NT that Jew and Gentile became one, both made part of His body, the church, after Jesus' death and resurrection (Ephesians 2:11-22, see especially Eph 2:14-15). Therefore, what was promised to Israel and Judah has also been made available to the Gentiles

Hebrews 8:6-13: What does Hebrews explain about the need for a new covenant? What was the problem of with the Old Covenant? (See study on **Why the New is Better**)

The New was **better** with **better promises**

Old covenant was not **faultless** - the fault was with the people

Hebrews 8:13: The Old Covenant is made **obsolete, growing old and ready to disappear**

Note: Here is one example of the fulfillment of Hebrews 8:13. Jesus the Lamb of God was the perfect Sacrifice and when He was sacrificed on the Cross once and for all time (Mt 5:17 states He fulfilled the Law, here specifically the ceremonial Law). It follows that there was therefore no longer a need for the Temple sacrifices. They were in effect "**obsolete**" and in fact they did "**disappear**" in 70AD when the Roman general Titus destroyed the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem so that they longer had a place to perform their sacrifices.

Hebrews 8:6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a **better covenant**, which has been enacted on **better promises.**

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.

8 For finding fault with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH;

9 NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD.

10 "FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS **INTO THEIR MINDS** (note this additional fact compared to Jeremiah 31:31-34), AND I WILL WRITE THEM **UPON THEIR HEARTS.** AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

11 "AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,' FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.

12 "FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE."

13 When He said, "A **new covenant**," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

Hebrews 9:11-15: What does this passage explain about all the people who lived before the New Covenant (see Hebrews 9:15)? How were they saved since Christ had not yet come?

Christ's death provides redemption (payment price to liberate or set free) of those under the Old Covenant (who had placed their faith in the Messiah Who was promised in the OT beginning in Genesis 3:15. Salvation by faith was always taught in the OT and Abraham, the father of Jews and Muslims was the "test case". In Genesis 15:6 he was accounted as righteous before God on the basis of His faith in God's promise of a "seed", a "seed" promised first in Genesis 3:15. In Galatians 3:16, Paul explained that this "Seed" was "Christ". In Galatians 3:8 he further explained that what Abraham believed was the "gospel". In summary, salvation is by faith in Christ ("the gospel" of Christ) and when any Jew or Gentile in the Old Testament "placed their weight fully" so to speak (believed or placed their faith) in whatever vestigial, albeit sufficient knowledge they had about the Christ, the Messiah, they were reckoned as righteous even as "father Abraham". In Romans 3:25 Paul explains that even though Christ's sacrifice had not yet been performed, "the forbearance of God (caused Him to pass) over the sins previously committed" (previous to the Cross). (**Covenant: Why the New is Better**)

Hebrews 9:11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;

12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh,

14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this reason He is the mediator of a **new covenant**, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the **first covenant**, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Note: From Adam to Christ, God saved those who put their faith in Him on the basis of whatever revelation He gave them. Abraham, for example, believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness (Genesis 15:6). But how could God do this righteously? A sinless Substitute had not been slain. The blood of a perfect Sacrifice had not been shed. In a word, Christ had not died. The debt had not been paid. God's righteous claims had not been met. How then could God save believing sinners in the OT period? The answer is that although Christ had not yet died, God knew that He would die, and He saved men on the basis of the still-future work of Christ. Even if OT saints didn't know about Calvary, God knew about it, and He put all the value of Christ's work on the Cross to their account when they believed in Messiah. In a very sense, Old Testament believers were "*saved on credit*". They were saved on the basis of a price still to be paid. They looked forward to Calvary. New Testament believers look back to Calvary.

The OT period was a time of the forbearance of God. For at least 4000 years He held back His judgment on sin. Yes, He brought a worldwide flood and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah but He held back from totally annihilating mankind which was certainly His just and holy prerogative, had He chosen to do so. Then in the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4) He sent His Son to be the Sin-bearer. When the Lord Jesus took our sins upon Himself, God unleashed the full fury of His righteous, holy wrath on the Son of His love, the Son Who bore all the sins, past, present and future. The whole OT is a testimony to the truth that God is "slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Exodus 34:6-7).

Mt 5:48: What was the impossible command Jesus made in this verse?

Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect

Hebrews 10:1-10: How does Hebrews (especially Hebrews 10:1) help us understand how we can be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect? What was one purpose of the OT sacrifices? What could the OT sacrifices never do? What then was the solution (Hebrews 10:5-10)?

The Law was a shadow and the OT sacrifices could never make one perfect

They did serve as a reminder of sins

It was impossible for blood of bulls and goats to take away sins

Jesus presented Himself as the offering - so that we might be sanctified

Heb 10:1 For the **Law**, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, **make perfect** those who draw near.

2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.

4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING THOU HAST NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY THOU HAST PREPARED FOR ME;

6 IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN THOU HAST TAKEN NO PLEASURE.

7 "THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE ROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO THY WILL, O GOD.'"

8 After saying above, "SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN THOU HAST NOT DESIRED, NOR HAST THOU TAKEN PLEASURE in them" (which are offered according to the Law),

9 then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO THY WILL." He takes away the first in order to establish the second.

10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (**Covenant: Why the New is Better**)

Ezekiel 36:26-27: What detail did God add that would enable men to keep the Law?

He would give them a new heart (flesh for stone)

He would put His Spirit within

His Spirit would cause them to walk in His Statutes

They on the other hand would be careful to observe His ordinances (a new heart)

Ezekiel 36:26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 "And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. (See **Covenant: New Covenant in the Old Testament**)

1Corinthians 6:19, Colossians 1:27, Ephesians 1:13-14: How can we walk according to the Spirit? When you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and are saved, where is Jesus Christ? Where is the Holy Spirit?

Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit

Christ is in us

His Spirit is our seal and pledge of future inheritance

1Cor 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?

Col 1:27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (see note)

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were **sealed** (official mark of identification that placed on an important document usually made from hot wax and impressed with a signet ring which officially identified the document with and under the authority of the person to whom the signet belonged. God owns the signet which sealed believers!) in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a **pledge** ("earnest" = a down-payment guaranteeing full payment ~ God's Spirit is the down-payment giving us a foretaste and guarantee of the coming glory of heaven. In Greek today this word is used for an engagement ring!) of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory. (sermon on Ephesians 1:13-14)

Matthew 26:26-28: What did Jesus initiate on the night He celebrated the Passover Meal with His disciples, the same night that He was betrayed? Why?

He inaugurated the New Covenant that had been promised some 600 years earlier in Jeremiah 31:31-34. It was for many for the forgiveness of sins

Mt 26:26 And while they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

1Cor 11:23-26: What did Paul explain to the predominantly Gentile church at Corinth?

In remembrance to Jesus they were to celebrate the New Covenant in His blood

This would proclaim the Lord's death (look back) until He comes (look forward).

1Cor 11:23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

What are the two potential dangers in our understanding and practice under the New Covenant of grace?

Legalism or Licentiousness

How might one practice legalism?

By seeking to follow a list of do's and don'ts

By keeping rules and regulations in an attempt to please God

Colossians 2:6-3:4: How does Paul address the problem of legalism in his letter to the saints at Colossae?

He reminds them to continue to walk in Christ in the same way they received Him (by faith)

He warns them to beware of some who would try to take them captive to false teachings such as legalism

He reminds them that they are complete in Christ the One Who is the fulness of Deity

He reiterates how they were made complete in Christ and that the debts were taken away at the Cross

He admonishes them not to be duped or bribed into legalistic observations or experiences (food, drink, festival, Sabbath) because these are only shadows of which Christ is the substance

He warns against those who say you won't get a prize unless you abase yourself or have experiences with angels or visions - those things inflate the fleshly mind & show they are not holding fast to the Head Christ

He repeats that their old self has died with Christ to the world's way of looking at externalism - they have no need therefore to follow these tenets

He explains that the basic problem with all these external practices is that they are of no value against fleshly indulgence

Note: If you wrestle with legalism in subtle or the more blatant manifestations, and you desire to be free than one suggestion is to begin a deliberate, meditative study verse by verse through the book of Galatians which was written to believers who were saved by grace but attempting to "become better Christians" by works of the flesh (and Law). Before we were born again we were all under the Law but now in Christ we are free, not free to be lawless but free to fulfill the Law which is now on our hearts. The Spirit is our source of strength to obey God out of a reverential awe (fear of displeasing our Father) and love, not out of legalism or quaking fear. Several passages accentuate our position and relationship to the Law...

For sin shall not be master over you, for **you are not under law**, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace (this should quiet the argument that grace leads to licentiousness!)? May it never be! (see note Romans 6:14,

6:15)

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, **you are not under the Law.** (Galatians 5:16-18)

Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God. For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter. (see notes Romans 7:4-6)

What is Paul's solution for legalism and seeking of religious experiences?

Seek the things above

Set your mind on these things

Again remember you have died to them and your life is now safely hidden with Christ in God

Now Christ within you is your life, not external or experiential practices

He is returning and you will be revealed with Him in glory

Romans 6:1-4: How does Paul address the problem of licentiousness (anti-nomian)?

Paul explains that sinning to increase grace is absurd

He explains as in Colossians that they had died to the ruling power of sin and therefore they were not to live continually committing sins as their lifestyle.

He reminds them of what happened to them when they believed on Christ - they were identified with Christ death, burial and resurrection. In some way difficult for our human minds to comprehend, every believer has been truly crucified with Christ, buried with Him and resurrected with Him.

They now can walk in a brand new manner of life - but it is not a life that is free to commit sins with abandon.

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase?

2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (see notes on Romans 6:1-3, Romans 6:4-5)

Now armed with the foundational truth about the Law and your relationship to the Law as a believer...

**Walk in a manner worthy of the calling
with which you have been called
for you were called to freedom in Christ!**