



Jesus Teaches Fulfillment of God's Law Theme:  
The New Spirit and The Old Law

Matthew starts his Gospel with a major teaching segment: starting with the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7). Today's Gospel reading speaks of Jesus teaching about law, anger, adultery, divorce and oaths.

Jesus is showing us that in those times, events such as these were prevalent. However, the religious mindset of the law was focused on rules, rituals, and traditions. Jesus is guiding them towards a divine, inside-out look that alters a person's desires, character, and actions.

He wanted a more heart-centered that goes beyond the "so-called righteousness" of the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus explained and expected more true righteousness to those seeking to enter the kingdom of God.

Jesus knew that the Law was being broken by many, Jews included along with the Gentiles. Mostly known as the Galilee of Gentiles. (mostly descendants of Noah)

***Romans 2:14-15 14 For when the Gentiles who do not have the law by nature observe the prescriptions of the law, they are a law for themselves even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the demands of the law are written in their hearts.***

This explains that they knew right and wrong.

In the military, there is a term that goes like this; Ignorance is no excuse. Failure to Know Duties, in other words Dereliction of Duty. A service member is not only responsible for what they actually knew, but also for what they should have known. Meaning you are responsible for your actions regardless of your knowledge of the specific law. The rule prevents individuals from evading responsibility by pretending not to know the law, which would otherwise undermine the legal system. St. Paul says that people who never read the bible often naturally do what the law requires, a universal moral code implanted by God. You have heard let your conscience be your guide.

So, what was the Trouble in the Bible?

Fake obedience. What is fake obedience?

Remember in Luke 18:11-12; the Pharisee's "prayer" is a self-righteous boast rather than a request of forgiveness. He tells God, "I thank you that I am not like other people-robbers, evildoers, adulterers-or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get." This prayer highlights his pride, contrasting with the tax collector's humble plea for mercy.

The scribes and Pharisees dressed up the appearance of righteousness, not to please God but so that they may gain fame and glory and acquire earthly and material comforts.

But the Lord urges us to give priority to the works of heavenly righteousness and the merits of faith over that of human praise. There's a law "Thou shalt not Kill...In Matthew 5:21, Jesus says whoever kills will be liable to judgement, but Jesus says whoever is angry with your brother is liable to judgement. Jesus also knows that anger is one of the deadly sins. Small grievous items can turn into big ones. Just listen to Fox News at 9 pm. Man shoots and kills brother over 5 bucks. And on and on.

There's a law about working on the Sabbath. Jesus taught that it is lawful and permissible to do good, heal, and save lives on the Sabbath. In Matthew Chapter 12, Jesus was challenged about healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath and allowing his disciples to pluck grain on a Sabbath. This directly conflicted with the religious leaders' strict, traditional interpretations of working on the Sabbath.

The Lord urges us to give priority to the works of righteousness of faith over that of human praise. So, who is going to guide, teach and show the people the way, truth and the life? Turn to your neighbor and say JESUS WILL! He gave us a blueprint.

**Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.**

What are the laws? Do we know the Ten Commandments that govern our morals behavior?

1. I am the Lord thy God. Thou shall not have strange gods before Me.
2. Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

4. Honor thy father and mother.
5. Thou shall not kill.
6. Thou shall not commit adultery.
7. Thou shall not steal.
8. Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
9. Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife.
10. Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's goods.

### **Trouble in the World**

Do we have the same type of trouble in Our world? Yes. We have many Laws, regulations, ordinances, statutes, acts - it's hard to keep track of them all. Our leader put up signs all around us to remind us. Along with people who serve to protect.

“Violating the spirit of the law” means breaking the intended purpose, even if the “letter of the law” is technically followed. What if the hospitals were not allowed to be opened on Sundays? Blue Law in Memphis: “no Sunday shopping” continued through the 1960s and 70s, with many laws in the region ending in the early 1980s.

Exploiting loopholes, acting in bad faith, or cheating on the social objective of a rule, technically complies while still causing harm. Did you hear about the upscale senior living community, StoryPoint Collierville, the director faces accusations of exploiting the elderly in his care for his benefit. 57-year-old Timothy Johnson was arrested in December. Charged with stealing items from residents' rooms. The suit alleges 25 checks and cash withdrawals totaling roughly \$25,000. The complaint says another \$20,000 disappeared from a locked safe in Ford's apartment. He received a new Toyota Corolla from Ford worth \$40,000 and inherited \$435,000 after a client passed away in January 2025.

### ***Trouble in Our World***

The Catholic Church, through U.S. bishops and leaders, strongly opposes indiscriminate ICE arrests, mass deportations, and dehumanizing immigration enforcement, emphasizing the protection of human dignity for all, regardless of legal status. Church leaders have criticized ICE as a “lawless organization,” And this is currently lawful?

Oh my...but wait. Calling someone a fool is not one of the ten commandments. Have you heard someone being called something other than a fool. It represents a harsh judgment that attacks a person's inherent dignity and soul rather than just their actions. It equates to scornful, disdainful anger. In the Sermon on the Mount,

Jesus frequently used the phrase, “You have heard that it was said... But I say to you,” which sounded like he was replacing or overturning old commandments with higher, heart-focused requirements.

### **God’s Action in the Bible**

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. The Sermon on the Mount. He gave us the Beatitudes. He broke down the Spirit of the Law. Jesus started the Church; Go and announce the Good News. Better yet, Jesus broke down the ten commandments: what are two commandments which summarize all the laws and teachings of the prophets?

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind (the greatest and first commandment).

Love your neighbor as yourself. What you teach with your words, you practice with your works.

Anger and Murder (Matt 5:21-22): “You have heard that it was said... But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother... will be liable to judgment”.

Adultery and Lust (Matt 5:27-28): “You have heard that it was said... But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery”.

Divorce (Matt 5:31-32): “It was also said... But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife... makes her commit adultery”.

Oaths (Matt 5:33-34): “You have heard that it was said... But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all”.

Retaliation (Matt 5:38-39): “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye...’ But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil”.

Love for Enemies (Matt 5:43-44): “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies...”.

Jesus said, “not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.” Some perceived him as abolishing the Law, Jesus stated he came to “fulfill” it-meaning he came to reveal its true, original intent, obey it perfectly, and fulfill its prophecies. He fulfilled the law by living a

sinless life, fulfilling prophecy, and establishing a new covenant through his death and resurrection. The disciples were sent to cities where Jesus himself was planning to visit, spreading the message of the kingdom of God to a wider audience. The experience served as training for their eventual role in leading the Church, especially after Pentecost.

### **God's Action in the World**

The New Spirit, with the Old Law. His Bride is here; the Church, and we are to announce the Good News. Who are you teaching? These two commandments summarize all the laws and teachings of the prophets. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind (the greatest and first commandment). Love your neighbor as yourself (the second, which is like the first).

Martin Luther King Jr. modeled Jesus' teachings by using radical, sacrificial love and nonviolent resistance to injustice. He applied the Sermon on the Mount to the Civil Rights Movement, preaching love for enemies, and famously addressed the concept of loving neighbors and enemies in his sermon "Loving Your Enemies," delivered on November 17, 1957, at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. He argued that "love" is a powerful, nonviolent, and redemptive force that transforms opponents.

**In 1963, Jesse Turner, Jr. became the first African American to integrate a high school in Memphis by being accepted into Christian Brothers High School (CBHS). While the Catholic Diocese initially challenged the integration, Turner's father, a prominent NAACP figure, helped secure the placement.**

Rev. Mr. Henry Snowden, Deacon