

## Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry

### E. The Appointment of the Twelve Apostles and “Teaching on the Mount”

#### 3. Teaching on the Mount, Part II: Jesus Came to Fulfill the Law Through Love

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #069

Base Text: MT 5.13-20 (Parallel Text: None)

- 13 *“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and constantly trampled underfoot.*
- 14 *“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people keep a lamp burning and then set it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it keeps shining light upon everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, I command you to let your light shine before others in such a way that they see your good deeds, and glorify your Father in heaven.*
- 17 *“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.*
- 18 *“For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will ever, ever disappear from the Law--until everything has been fulfilled.*
- 19 *“Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*
- 20 *“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = <sup>MT</sup>, Mark = <sup>M</sup>, Luke = <sup>L</sup>, John = <sup>J</sup>, Acts = <sup>A</sup>. This “superscript ID” is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *the words of Jesus are italicized in red*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	On a Mountain in Galilee
Timeline	May, 31 AD (Month Sixteen)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage IV: The Great Galilean Ministry
	E. The Appointment of the Twelve Apostles and “Teaching on the Mount”
Title	3. Teaching on the Mount, Part II: Jesus Came to Fulfill the Law Through Love

#### COMMENT:

In verse 17 Jesus stated his thesis--the controlling central principle-- of his "Teaching on the Mount." Jesus came to ***“fulfill the law and prophets,”*** by establishing his own righteousness within each disciple--a righteousness that far exceeded mere outward obedience to the law, because it is rooted and grounded in God's kind of perfect love (5.43-48).

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The Kingdom of God is a fellowship of pure, unconditional love in constant exchange between each Person of the Trinity, and all who believe in Jesus and come under the reign of that love. God's love creates pure righteousness--for love only seeks after and gives the very best--what is supremely "right" in every situation, for everyone concerned.

Just as God's righteousness is rooted in the goodness of his love, so His love creates his righteousness within his disciples, and "fulfills" every requirement of the old covenant, and the new covenant as well. Let's think a bit more about the connection between love and righteousness, for this is what was in Jesus' mind when he spoke today's words.

Every command of the law was an expression of love--a practical application of what it means to love God, or others in real life. If people think that righteousness is merely obeying a list of 600 + rules (there were more than 600 commands in the old covenant law), then their "rightness" will only extend as far as the rules describe. A person can act like an angel in obeying every specific command, but as soon as they have choices outside the specific 600, they could act in a totally selfish, sinful way, and still maintain their "righteousness" regarding the rules. That is definitely NOT what God was seeking when he gave the law.

In fact, a major purpose of the law was to show people how bankrupt we are all in really fulfilling it from the heart. We may obey the letter, but our attitudes and nature remain self-centered and sinful. The Pharisees were the premier example of this kind of failed righteousness. They obeyed the man-made rules, but their attitudes were as far from God's kind of love as the devil himself.

The law was given by God to convince everyone who seeks to obey it how great HE is, and how sinful and morally bankrupt we really are. Failed attempts to obey the law should produce the poverty of spirit, mourning, hungering and thirsting after real righteousness, and pursuit of meekness that Jesus spoke of. If our so-called "obedience" to the law produces confidence in how successful we are, then we are missing the point altogether. This was the biggest problem Jesus saw in the Jewish society around him.

Outward obedience to the letter of the law had replaced heart attitudes of God's kind of love as the standard for righteousness. So, in this teaching Jesus would give example after example of how the law was actually calling for an inner attitude of love for God and people--a righteousness that he alone possessed, and then gave as a gift to those who believed in him.

When Jesus "fills us full" of God's kind of unconditional love ( or "fulfills" it), and then lives in our hearts to empower that love in our attitudes and behavior, a "new" thing happens, which is radical to the core. HE changes us to become like him--from the depths of our being. When that happens, we seek to do what is right because it is the loving thing to do, not because a specific rule compels us to do it. Like Jesus, our behavior will naturally go way beyond the requirements of the rules, because we are motivated by a love that never ends.

Here is an example. A legalist will stop giving financially when they reach the 10 percent requirement of the tithe. A lover and giver like Jesus will turn cartwheels when they are so blessed by God that they give 20, 40, 60, 90, or even 100% of what has been entrusted to them away--something a pharisee would NEVER do. There is no command to give more than the tithe in the law. So a legalist would never give more than 10%. On the other hand, Love, and true heart-righteousness know no limits to what they will give.

That is the kind of love that Jesus came to give us, and teach us to give away in fellowship with him. This love produces what is truly right and good within us when we receive it from Jesus and make it our home in it all the time, just as it is the basis of righteousness in the Trinity.

Because the righteousness that is produced by unconditional love is the goal of Jesus for every disciple, he also expected us to have a two-fold function in the a world that in unrighteous to the core: (1) to preserve it, like salt, and (1) to illuminate it with God's love, as light.

We preserve those in the world by serving them in ministry-- expressing the love in the actions that meet their needs, whether they receive it as such or not. Jesus will give several example of the way unconditional love preserves people and relationships later on in the teaching. Love expressed in action also shows the superiority of

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God's kind of righteousness over what society says is "right." Jesus expected his disciples to show the better way of love to a world that is incessantly motivated by self-interest. This is witnessing. Being different from the world because of the unconditional quality of God's love means we should be constantly ministering, and witnessing to the people around us, just as Jesus did.

### APPLICATION:

Jesus fulfilled the law perfectly in his own life, simply by loving others as his Father had first loved him. It was that simple, and that revolutionary.

Jesus set us free from the curse of failing to obey the law by giving his own life in exchange for ours, as the Lamb of God who bore our punishment (the death penalty) in our place. Jesus forgives and forgets all of our sin when we believe in him, and gives us his perfect righteousness as our eternal standing before the Trinity.

Then he gives us his Spirit to live in our hearts, and teaches us to love others as he has first loved us. That is the only kind of real righteousness in this world, because every person has failed to meet the standard of perfect righteousness already on our own.

When we consider the way Jesus **"fulfilled the law and prophets"** perfectly in his own life, we should likewise realize how far we have fallen short of his kind of love in our own puny attempts to be **"right."** Poverty of spirit, mourning, and intense hunger and thirst for what we lack is the only appropriate response to seeing HIS righteousness.

The journey through the rest of the Teaching on the Mount should humble and break us. It should fill us with despair in how far short we fall. This is the point! God is looking for perfect love. HE is the only one who is like that. That fact is the ground for a hope that will never disappoint us.

JESUS is the fulfillment of every requirement of the law, of civil society, of moral goodness, and heart righteousness. He calls us to follow him by faith, trusting that he will empower us to yield ourselves to him in such a way that HE will be able to live in and through us in true righteousness.

*Are you fully trusting in Jesus as the fulfillment of true righteousness in, and for, and through you?*

*How can you be "salt" by ministering God's love to those around you today?*

*How can you be "light" by witnessing to the greatness and glory of the Lord Jesus?*