

Christ & the Law

Introduction:

One of the great realities of Christianity is that Jesus Christ did not come to do away with Scripture and bring his own message. Rather, he came to fulfill all of Scripture by living up to its standards in a way that only God, Himself, could ever do. All of us fall short of God's Law and therefore are guilty of breaking all of it (James 2:10). Once we encounter Jesus and receive His grace, we recognize that His grace does not free us *to* sin but frees us *from* sin. The life of a Christian is a life that seeks to honor God in thought, word, and deed through obedience to His commands, and relies on His grace and forgiveness when we do not match up. As Martin Luther put it, we are simultaneously sinner and saint. We will always be sinners as long as we are on earth, but when Jesus saves us, will no longer be condemned by our sins, for we have been made new creations through Christ who loved us. The perfect obedience of Jesus makes up for all the times we have fallen short in our obedience. Jesus levels the playing field and offers us a new way – the way of salvation.

Read Your Bible

- Romans 3:21-31
- Matthew 5:17-28

Apply God's Word to Your Life:

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word 'justify?'
2. Do you think it is possible to be 'justified' by the Law? Why or why not?
3. When Jesus says the Law and the Prophets, He is referring to the Old Testament. What do you think this passage tells us about Jesus' view of the Old Testament?

4. What do you think it means or looks like to be great in the kingdom of heaven?
5. In Mark 10:35-45, what does Jesus tell us about greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven?
6. What message do you think Jesus was trying to communicate when He said, "... unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven?"
7. If you were to have one take-away from this passage, what would it be?

Reflecting on the text:

1. What have you learned about God?
2. What have you learned about the world?
3. What have you learned about yourself?

Pray

Dear Lord, we acknowledge before you today that we have broken your commands and are in need of your forgiveness. Thank you for sending Jesus to fulfill the Law by His miracle birth, sinless life, guiltless death, and glorious resurrection. Please help us to trust in your perfect obedience to attain for us the righteousness that you require. And fill us with your Holy Spirit so that we may move forward in obedience to your will and ways. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.