

Howards Corner

Part two of Law and Grace

If we still are on the fence and think we can live by law and not by grace I offer some input about how far short, we have come in living by the law. If you have been reading my other articles on Law and Grace, you may remember that in Matthew 5 I discussed how Jesus fulfilled the Law and the Prophets and that He had gone on to say, “unless you are more righteous than the Pharisees you would in no way enter the kingdom of God”. Now we know the Pharisees were strict keeper of the law and considered themselves judges of who was keeping the law.

The Pharisees were strict keeper of the letter of the law as defined in their Mishnah which was not the written word, but oral traditions passed down from many generations. They were basically rulings and interpretation by Rabbis and then added to by other rabbis. They were written to provide fences to ensure that Israel would never disobey the law again and be sent back into exile. This is what the people had been taught and they thought what the pharisees taught was the law which none could keep.

So, it was the setting as Jesus began teaching the Jews when He began His ministry. He started out with what we call the beatitudes. He gives us some surprising statements to start out with. The blessed are the **poor in spirit** for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. He did not say blessed are those that keep the law. But rather those that have a broken spirit in themselves knowing they cannot save themselves but need a redeemer. He goes on to say blessed are **those who mourn** for they will be comforted. My question is, have we mourned for our sins and separation from God, or do we think we have been justified by our keeping the law? Blessed are **the**

meek for they will inherit the earth. The humble will not puff themselves up with pride but be teachable and yield to God's teaching.

So, we now see starting out it is the broken spirited and the mournful and the meek that are to receive rewards of blessing. Jesus continues to teach that Blessed are those **hunger and thirst for righteousness** for they will be filled. They are not filled with the Holy Spirit because they kept the law but because they wanted righteousness like they wanted food and water. Blessed are **the merciful** for they will receive mercy. So, if we are to receive mercy, we must first have mercy. If we show mercy and compassion, we will receive likewise. We are not seeing a mention of keeping the law so far. Blessed are the **pure in heart** for they will see God. How do we then get to be pure in heart? It is only when we get a new heart from God the Father when He sends the Holy Spirit into our hearts. We do not get this new heart by keeping the law but by faith in the works of Jesus on the cross.

Blessed are **the peacemakers** for they will be called sons of God. To be a peacemaker you first must have peace in your heart which you do not get by obeying the law. I can not find anywhere that it is promised that if you keep the law, you will be called sons of God. Blessed are those **who are persecuted for righteousness** for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Now we get to the result of following Jesus and walking in righteousness. The World will not understand, and you may be persecuted if you stand for God's word. Blessed are **you when people insult you, persecute you and say all manner of evil against you because of me**. Rejoice and be glad because great is your reward in heaven for in the same way they persecuted the prophets before you. This is another result of following Jesus. You may be insulted for being a fanatic or for really believing what the bible teaches. You may be physically persecuted but in our country it most likely be made an outcast from your social groups for they do not understand. Don't try to please them however but only please the Father.

Therefore, none of these things mentioned say anything about obeying the law of the law of the Old Testament because that is not what gives life but is total faith in

Jesus' work on the cross to bring righteousness into our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Abide in the Holy Spirit at all times and do not trust in your own works.

Your brother in Christ Jesus

Howard