



- Psalm 119 celebrates “*the law of the Lord*” as the most essential ingredient of life. Take on a challenge in reading the Scriptures, and keep growing closer to the Lord.
- As Jesus preached from the mountain, He introduced the standards of His kingdom to a people hungry for reality, and re-introduced OT Law, correcting their misunderstandings and abuses of the Law.

1. Christ as Object of the Law & Prophets. (v.17)

- The word “*fulfill*” in this passage means that Jesus is the end, the final result or culminating purpose of the OT.
- The ‘*Law*’ refers to the Torah, the first 5 books of the OT. The ‘*Prophets*’ refers to OT Scripture generally, which has the promised Messiah as its goal. Unashamedly Jesus tells them that “*the OT is about Me.*” (see Luke 24:25-27)
- Jesus declared that He is not the antithesis of the Law. He came to *fulfill* the foundations that had been laid.

2. Christ as Obedient to the Law. (v.18)

- Jesus transitions from speaking of the Law *generally* to His attitude toward the laws of God *specifically*. Christ, the Law Giver, was not above His Law.
- The Pentateuch records a long list of moral, social & ceremonial codes of conduct for the people in covenant rel’p with God.
- In *fulfilling the law*, Jesus was making a declaration about His own response to the Law. As part of the eternal Godhead, had inspired Scripture for instruction and revelation and had full intention of submitting to the Law.
- There were different categories of *laws*, which Jesus treated quite differently...
 - Ceremonial laws related to sacrifices, worship & service in the Temple. These Jesus fulfilled by completing them in His own sacrifice for sin. (See: Acts 15; Col.2:11-14)
 - Social laws: Jesus showed that not all of these were still applicable.: such as the *dietary laws*, and *cleansing laws* which Christ *fulfilled* as He touched, healed, and taught people the underlying principles of the law.

(turn over)

- Moral laws continued to be observed by Christ, who submitted obediently to the law of God. It would remain in force until the end of the world.
- It has always been *faith* that justifies...found complete in Christ. God’s Laws simply helped us—safeguarded us with protective fences to keep us from venturing into sin—if we would but allow them. The Law pointed to Christ, to the Deliverer sent from God who would redeem us from the curse of sin. (Gal.3:24; 4:4)

3. Christ as Implementer of the Law. (v.19-20)

- All of the Law was intended to guide people into a faith relationship with God. Jesus is showing that radical righteousness is not simply in keeping the *externals* of the law (v.20), but in a transformation of the heart that delights to practice and teach the commands of God.
- The Church has had interpretive problems concerning law and grace. Marcion (2nd Cent.) re-wrote the NT erasing every reference to the OT. J.N. Darby (1800s) believed that the OT was not applicable to the Church (*Dispensationalism*). But law and grace are not antithetical.
- Law has been fulfilled, not abolished in Christ. We are called to uphold the law (Rom 3:19-22a, 31).
- The examples that follow in Matthew 5 show us what radical righteousness looks like—demonstrating the standards of the Law worked out in a life that is transformed by Christ’s grace. It is impossible to implement God’s law without faith in Christ.

God has given us His *laws to live by*, and through Christ He gives us fresh, indwelling power—His *grace to live them*.

TAKE IT HOME...for personal reflection

1. How do we navigate the waters of Law and Grace without falling into the extremes of legalism (law without grace) or antinomianism (grace without law)?
2. What was the righteousness of the Pharisees (v.20)? What are some vivid examples—among them, among us?
3. How did the Law given to Israel serve as a witness to the pagan nations? (Deut.4:5-8). How can God’s Law lived among us do the same?
4. What parts of the Law did God set aside? Provide clear New Testament references to support your answer (eg.: Acts 10, 15; Heb.10, etc.)
5. What two things does Jesus say His disciples should do with the Old Testament (v.19)? How do you match up to His standards in this area?