

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

27- The Kingdom of Heaven and Its Citizens- Part 7
The King Fulfills the Law and Brings in The
Righteousness of Faith- Part 3

Church August 28, 2022

Matthew 5:17-20

17 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

18 "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

19 "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 "For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Now we are continuing to look closely at the Greatest Sermon ever Preached- which has come to be called, the "*Sermon on the Mount*". And there is no doubt that Jesus preached parts of this Sermon *many* times- during His 3-1/2-year earthly Ministry. Scholars believe that this Sermon was Jesus' primary Sermon that was preached often. And since it only takes about 10 minutes or so to read this Sermon- what we have here in Chapters 5-7 is the Apostle Matthew's inspired *Summary* of all the Subjects and Issues that this Sermon contained.

Now unlike what many Leaders in the modern church say- this Sermon is way MORE than a collection of random Topics that Jesus was interested in discussing. And that means if we don't get the correct Context about all that is going on here- this Sermon really doesn't make a lot of Sense. I mean everything Jesus is talking about here in this Sermon is true- but WHY is Jesus preaching this Sermon at this point in His earthly Ministry? And so, if we don't get the right

Context- all we have left is a Sermon containing a lot of true Issues- in no particular Order.

We need to remember that Matthew is very interested in helping the Jewish people get a correct Picture of Who Jesus is; and What He did while He was on the earth. So, as I have told you before- Matthew wrote this Gospel Record in such a way to attract the Jews to read it and believe it.

Remember, Matthew wants his fellow Jews in the 1st Century to believe that Jesus is:

- The long-awaited *Messiah* (many Old Testament verses)
- *Immanuel* (God with us- **Isaiah 7:14**)
- The 2nd and *final* Moses

And by including Jesus' Teaching as well as His Miracles in this Gospel Record- the Apostle Matthew is proving to his fellow-Jews that Jesus is:

- The 2nd and final "*Abraham*"- *fulfilling* the "*Abrahamic Covenant*"- by brining in the "*Righteousness of Faith*" that will identify who the *new* "*People of God*" are- who will inherit the *new* "Kingdom of Heaven"
- The 2nd and final "*David*"- *fulfilling* the "*Davidic Covenant*"- as the *new* King; over a *new* and final Kingdom; that will be occupied by a *new* "*People of God*"

So, the "*Age*" of the "*New Covenant*" that was promised by God (all through the Old Covenant)- has now come upon them. And that alone would be cause for celebration. But the New Covenant CANNOT come in and flourish- unless and until the "*Old Covenant*" is "*fulfilled*"; and made to be "*Obsolete*";- and made ready to completely "*disappear*." Look at how the writer of Hebrews describe this dynamic in **Hebrews 8:7-13**:

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.

8 For finding fault with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH;

9 NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD.

10 "FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

11 "AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,' FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.

12 "FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE."

13 When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

Now around 500-600 years before Jesus was born- the Prophet Jeremiah was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit to write down this Prophecy in Chapter 31 of the Book that bears his name- that the writer of **Hebrews** records for us here in verses 8-12. But notice this unknown writer’s inspired Commentary at the beginning of verse 8, where he said,

For finding fault with them, He says...

Now who is the “**them**” in this verse? In verse 7- the writer of **Hebrews** tells us that the First Covenant was NOT “*faultless*”- meaning it had “Fault”. In other words, it was NOT perfect; it was NOT complete. And that tells us that it was ALWAYS God’s Will for there to be another Covenant that would completely overshadow this one. So, the First Covenant that Almighty God sovereignly gave- had a severe “*Weakness*” built into it- from the very Beginning.

But then in verse 8- the writer of **Hebrews** said that God, speaking through Jeremiah, had found Fault with **THEM**. So, verse 7 talks about the Covenant *itself*- while verse 8 refers to the people to whom the First Covenant was given.

Now this is NOT a mistake. But if you don’t get this part- the rest will not make much sense to you. The “*Fault*” or the “*Weakness*” that was *inherent* or “built in” to the First Covenant- from the very Beginning- was explained later by the writer of **Hebrews** when he said this in **Hebrews 7:18&19:**

18 For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness

19 (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

... and by the Apostle Paul in **Romans 8:3&4**:

3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

So, the “Fault” of the First Covenant was the people. The First Covenant demanded *perfect* Obedience and the people simply were NOT able to accomplish that. So, the Law itself was “**holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good**” (**Romans 7:12**). There was absolutely NOTHING wrong with the Law of God-except one thing: the people couldn’t keep its Requirements.

But that means that all that the Law was able to accomplish- was to *confirm* that every human on earth (Jew or Gentile) was a guilty Sinner, who deserved nothing but eternal Damnation. So, the Law proved beyond any doubt two things:

1. The Law itself CANNOT save anyone
2. Everybody NEEDS the New Covenant

Now there were many people back then as well as many people today, who think that this Reality *denigrates* the Law of God. They think and believe and teach that since God’s Law is “Holy”; “Righteous”; and “Good”- we just don’t try hard enough to keep it. And so, these people work out false and Man-made Teachings that twist the Scriptures- trying to uphold what God gave to Man- His Law.

But all they do- is ignore what is *abundantly* Self-evident: NO ONE can keep the Law- perfectly! NO ONE! Moses didn’t keep the Law perfectly and neither do they. And this Truth is Paramount if we hope to solve the Puzzle of *why* God gave a Law that had Fault in it.

But the Self-evident Reality; the unarguable Fact that no human being can keep the Requirements of the Law- *perfectly*- somehow escapes them. And in their Effort to *supposedly* uphold and defend the Law of God- they categorically reject the ONE and ONLY Solution to this Problem: the sinless Life of Jesus!

So, today most people, who lay claim to be Jewish (or those who think they are being faithful to the Old Testament), are outright *hostile* to Christianity in general; and Jesus in particular- because they think by “*fulfilling*” the Law of God- that Jesus was somehow trying to abolish it. And they ignore what Jesus said right here in **Matthew 5:7**:

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

Yet if Jesus had not come; had He NOT lived a sinless Life; and had He not fulfilled every single Requirement of the Law- *perfectly*- we would all be doomed! Because the Punishment from God for NOT fulfilling the Law perfectly- is eternal Damnation!

But if these people have a Problem with Jesus fulfilling the Law- they become almost catatonic when they read the last part of **Romans 8:3** and then verse 4 that says,

... God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

So, in, by, and through the New Covenant- which IS the Life; Ministry; Death; Resurrection; and Ascension of Jesus, the Messiah- the Requirements of God's Law (perfect Obedience) are now fulfilled in ALL of those, who put their Faith and Hope and Trust in Jesus and in His finished Work. In other words, precisely because Jesus fulfilled the Law (by His sinless Life)- those who have Faith in Jesus ALSO fulfill the Law- by being "in Christ"!

So, those who are trying so hard to hold on to the First or the Old Covenant (or at least hold on to *parts* of it) stumble; they trip and fall down at the very point of where Jesus did for them what they CANNOT do for themselves- keep the Law of God in every way- *perfectly*! And the Apostle Peter wrote about this in **1Peter 2:6-8**:

6 For this is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone,"

8 and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.

So, Faith in Jesus and in ALL that Jesus has accomplished by His Life; Ministry; Death; Resurrection; and Ascension- is what allows guilty rebels to be forgiven and made Righteous. And it doesn't matter whether they are Jews or Gentiles. Peter said,

This precious value [Salvation], then, is for you who believe...

So, *everyone* who believes in Jesus and in His finished Work will be saved. And it doesn't matter whether they are Jews or Gentiles. So, believing Jews will be joined together with believing Gentiles in Heaven. But then Peter also said,

but for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone," and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.

... and it doesn't matter whether they are Jews or Gentiles.

So, *disbelieving* Jews will be joined with *disbelieving* Gentiles as they perish eternally in a devil's Hell. And their Ethnicity; and Natural Origin; and Race; and Bloodline; and their fleshly Circumcision; and who their Parents were; and how much of the Bible they memorized will mean absolutely NOTHING on that day.

So, to every human on earth- who was raised in *any* Religion; and who has been taught *anything*: Jesus is either the "**Choice Stone and Precious Corner-stone**"; or He is "**A Stone of Stumbling and a Rock of Offense**"- and there is NO middle Ground. It is truly "*Either-Or*"; Jesus is One or He is the Other to every single human on earth.

So, everything that was once a "*Shadow*" under the Old Covenant- is now a "*Reality*" under the New. And what was just a "*Type*" or a "*Symbol*"- is now "*Substance*". And what was "*Visible*"; "*Earthly*"; and "*Temporary*" under the First Covenant- is now "*Invisible*"; "*Heavenly*"; and "*Eternal*".

So, by and through Matthew's Account of what Jesus TAUGHT; and What He DID- the Jews will understand that the Old Covenant is now being "**FULFILLED**"- so that it may finally disappear- *forever*! And then the New Covenant will come to the earth and *dominate*!

And this pertains to even the Way in which Matthew *physically* designed this Gospel Record. We have already gone through the "*Beginning*" in Chapters 1-4- where Jesus has been fully confirmed to be God the Son in whom God the Father is *perfectly* pleased. And now- Matthew is going to give the 1st Century

Jews and us, the first Section of anointed Teaching here is Chapters 5-8. So, Jesus is going to act now as the new and 2nd Moses- by teaching the people God's Law.

And as we come to the End of this inspired Record of the Life; Ministry; Birth; Death; Resurrection; and Ascension of Jesus, the Christ- we will see that Matthew gave us five Sections of Teachings- that represent the five Books of Moses.

And this correlates with what Jesus said here in verses 17&18:

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets... For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished

... which illustrates the Honor and Reverence that Jesus had for the "*Law of God*". But in these very *same* two verses- Jesus told us about the great Change that He was bringing in when He also said,

... I did not come to abolish but to fulfill... until all is accomplished.

So, Jesus is going to do something very Powerful and Wonderful- that will in no way *ignore* or *minimize* or *disrespect* the "*Law of God*"- but which will bring the Law of God to its *logical* and *pre-determined* "*Fulfillment*" and "*Accomplishment*".

In other words, the Sermon on the Mount is where Jesus describes for us what the Attributes and Characteristics of the *new* "*People of God*" will be- who will *enter* this *new* "*Kingdom of Heaven*".

And the *primary* Characteristic of the new People, who will enter in to this new Kingdom will be "*Righteousness*". Look again at what Jesus said in verse 20:

For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

... so, we can see that Righteousness is very important to God. And it is the End result of true Salvation.

Matthew 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Matthew 6:33

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Romans 10:4

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Now you would think that the Issue of Righteousness would be “*Cut and Dried*”. But in the Bible, God the Holy Spirit “moved” on various writers so they would pen down at least four DIFFERENT *kinds* of “*Righteousness*”:

1. Human Righteousness
2. The FALSE Righteousness of the Pharisees and Scribes
3. The Righteousness of Faith
4. The Righteousness of Obedience

... so, let’s look at each one:

1. Human Righteousness

This is the *kind* of Righteousness that every Human has at Birth- BEFORE he is saved. This is his own, *intrinsic* Righteousness that belongs to that individual- *personally*. But because we are all born as “*fallen Creatures*”- this Righteousness does NOT help us at all. And that is why the Prophet infallibly said this in **Isaiah 64:6**:

For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

So, those who trust in this personal, inherent Righteousness; or the supposed Value of their own righteous Deeds- for Salvation- are at war against the Grace of God. They have rejected Jesus and His finished Work; and have become the enemies of God.

But this Truth fools many people- because they can actually name their own righteous or religious Deeds they have done. And their faulty Reasoning says, “*Isn’t it better that I periodically do righteous Deeds rather than wicked Deeds? Doesn’t God see my Effort to be Righteous; and won’t He take that into Consideration when I stand before Him?*”

Well, what God “sees” is your Self-righteous Effort to try to *earn* or *deserve* Salvation by what you do for yourself- rather than run to Jesus for Grace and

Mercy. And what God takes into Consideration is that you *refused* to acknowledge that you were a wicked rebel, who *deserves* NOTHING but eternal Damnation.

And what God takes into Consideration is that you also *refused* to trust in Jesus; and in all that Jesus did- to purchase your Salvation for you. So, in effect, you told God, “*No, thank-You- I can earn my own Salvation by what I do for myself. I don’t need Your Grace, Mercy, or Jesus’ finished Work- I can do this myself.*” And you can’t get any more- Evil than that.

2. The FALSE Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees

Now this is a little tricky. But this is the *kind* of “righteousness” that the Pharisees and other religious Hypocrites were *trying* to *develop*- but never actually possessed. So, this is the kind of “righteousness” they *thought* they had. In other words, this “righteousness” doesn’t actually exist. It is merely a non-existing Figment in the Minds of the religious Frauds of the 1st Century Jewish Leadership.

But it also belongs to those in our day, who, for one reason or the other, have been deceived by the false Teaching of those 1st Century religious Frauds. So, whereas this kind of “righteousness” doesn’t actually exist- it is taught and believed in; it is worked for and hoped in- by many deceived people in our day.

But it was very “real” to those religious Hypocrites- in Jesus’ Day- who *thought* they had earned it through their fastidious Adherence to all their Man-made Rules; Ceremonies; and Rituals- that had NOTHING to do with the Old Testament. So, they taught it; believed in it; prayed for it; worked for it; struggled for it; and talked all the time about this “righteousness”- even though it doesn’t actually exist.

This “righteousness” has to do with cleaning the OUTSIDE of the vessel through all sorts of impressive religious Rituals and Ceremonies- while leaving the INSIDE of the vessel filthy.

But *why* does the false Doctrine of the Pharisees that produces this false, non-existing ‘righteousness’ only deal with the OUTSIDE of the human vessel? Why doesn’t it affect the INSIDE? Because ONLY Divine Truth can cleanse the INSIDE of the human vessel!

You see, dear friends, False Teaching- in ANY form- doesn’t have the Ability to change ANYTHING about the INSIDE of the human vessel. That which is False CANNOT forgive a single Sin or save a single soul. And that is precisely WHY ALL false Teachings have these very elaborate Ceremonies and these very specific and detailed Rituals. It is why they pay so much attention to things that don’t matter like the Time of the year; or the correct color of the garments; or all the details of their visions and dreams. They have NO Truth- so they make up for that lack- with things that don’t matter.

The Truth is that with every Effort these religious Hypocrites were putting forth to try to *earn* this kind of “righteousness”- they were getting *further* and *further* AWAY from *true* Righteousness. So, with each passing day- these men were becoming *less* Righteous; *less* Godly and *less* pleasing to God- while at the same time- they were becoming *more* Pagan; *more* Disobedient; and *more* Hypocritical. And this is why Jesus categorically condemned them with great Fierceness and with no Mercy.

3. The Righteousness of Faith

This is the ONLY *kind* of Righteousness that allows guilty sinners to enter into Heaven and be with God- forever. So, *this* Righteousness is the very HEART of the biblical Gospel. And that is ONLY true- because *this* Righteousness is *Perfect; Pure; Full; Spotless; Powerful; and Eternal*. So, this Righteousness is NOT ours. It NEVER belongs to us. This is the Righteousness of Jesus.

So, this is the Righteousness that Jesus *earned* through His *perfect* Obedience- during His 33-1/2- year earthly Life. And that shows us the great Importance of Jesus’ sinless Life. And so, this Righteousness is an “*Alien*” or “*External*,” or “*Forensic*” Righteousness that is sovereignly IMPUTED (credited) to us- by the Agency of Faith ALONE during the part of Salvation called, “*Justification*”.

Now many Churches and people *emphasize* the Death and Resurrection of Jesus- and rightly so. Jesus died on the Cross; and He rose again on the third day. And without that- we are all doomed. The Bible is crystal clear about this.

But in emphasizing the Death and Resurrection of Jesus- many either *minimize* or outright *ignore* Jesus’ Life. And that is a terrible Mistake. So, *why* did Jesus have to be “born”? And *why* did He have to live 30 years on earth- without Sin- BEFORE He began His Ministry? These are Questions that are very important and have to do with what Jesus meant when He said He came to “*fulfill*” the Law of God and that the Law would be in force until ALL was “*accomplished*”.

It is the sinless Life of Jesus that fulfilled the Law of God. It is the fact that Jesus NEVER sinned; that He NEVER transgressed against God in any way- that fulfilled the Law.

Remember, Jesus was “*fully God and fully Man- in the same Body; at the same Time- without Conflict or Contradiction.*” And that makes Jesus to be the single most *unique* Person, who ever lived. And as fully Man- Jesus HAD to obey the Law of God- just like everybody else. But as fully God- Jesus obeyed God’s Law- *perfectly*! And when Jesus fully obeyed God’s Law (in Thought, Word, and Deed- 24/7)- without ANY Sin or Flaw- He *fulfilled* the Law of God! In other

words, the Law of God was in force- *as a means of justifying the Guilty*- UNTIL somebody could actually obey it- without ever sinning. And so, it was NOT Jesus' Death and Resurrection that fulfilled the Law. It was Jesus' sinless Life that allowed for God's Law to finally be "*fulfilled*" after many Centuries.

You see, if Jesus' Life was not Important- and the only thing that mattered was Jesus' Death and Resurrection- then Jesus *could* have come down here from Heaven as a full-grown Man on Friday morning; die on Friday afternoon; and go back into Heaven on Sunday. Yet God didn't set up Salvation like that. He allowed for Jesus to live around 30 years on earth as a Man- BEFORE He ever entered into His Ministry. And that means that Jesus' Life was just as Important as His Death and Resurrection. And this is what the writer of **Hebrews** meant when he wrote this in **Hebrews 4:15**:

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

And when Jesus obeyed His Father- perfectly- He literally *earned* His Own Righteousness. And it is that spotless Righteousness that God drapes over us when we are Justified.

4. The Righteousness of Obedience

But there is one more kind of Righteousness that is the Result of God's people- struggling to obey the Law of God- AFTER they have been saved. Now this is different from the Righteousness of Jesus that we just talked about. This is a Righteousness that comes from our Struggle to obey God's Word and Will as Believers. So, this is actually the Fruit of Sanctification.

Over the Centuries- there has been so much Teaching about the "*Righteousness of Faith*"- that is given to us by the Agency of Faith alone- which allows us to enter in Heaven- that there is hardly any mention of this "*Righteousness of Obedience*" that saved people are supposed to engage in.

And this is why we see so much blatant, public, and unrepentant Sin *inside* the modern Church- among those who lay claim to be saved. But the Bible is clear- *part* of the reason we have been saved is so we may obey God and *develop* this kind of Righteousness. And that is *why* the Apostle Paul wrote this in **Romans 10:9&10a**:

that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness ...

You see, the *Purpose* of Salvation is to so radically transform our Nature (through the Miracle of the New Birth) that we *enjoy* our “*Obedience*” to God’s Law. And it is that ongoing Struggle, that every born- again Believer has- to obey God’s *moral* Law¹ *joyfully*- that *causes* or *brings about*; or *reveals* this “*Righteousness of Obedience*”.

Now it is important to know that this Righteousness DOES NOT SAVE US. It *can’t* save us- because the underlying Obedience from which *this* kind of Righteousness flows- isn’t perfect; and will never be perfect- but it IS important.

This is a Righteousness that flows from our Struggle to obey and be faithful AFTER we have already been saved. So, this is the Product that flows out from our Love for God (that is itself a Gift); and the Desire to obey Him that ALL genuinely saved people have. And that means that this kind of Righteousness should be getting “measurably better” as we continue to follow Jesus; and are sanctified; and become more- godly; and as we grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Far too many people in the modern church genuinely think that after they are saved- they are free to “*do what is Right in their own eyes*”. They *correctly* believe that Salvation comes from sinners trusting in Jesus and in His finished Work. But then they *incorrectly* believe that since they are already saved- that Obedience is somehow Optional. But the Bible doesn’t teach that. This false Teaching (Heresy) is called, “*Antinomianism*” or “*Lawlessness*” and it is an *abuse* of God’s Grace.

The Truth is that ONLY people- who are saved and empowered by the Holy Spirit- are able to obey God to any great degree. God’s Commandments are very Grievous or Burdensome to those who are lost. And that is why the Apostle John wrote this in **1John 5:3**:

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

So, this is a *real, measurable* Righteousness- that has GREAT BENEFIT to those, who have already experienced the Miracle of the New Birth. This Righteousness is the “*By-Product*” of our Love for God- that God gave us in Salvation. So, this Righteousness flows out from our *loving* and *humble* and *joyful* Obedience. And Jesus commanded it:

Matthew 5:16

¹ I do NOT believe that Christians need to keep the Jewish Feats today. We do NOT need to gather together on Saturday (the Sabbath); and we do NOT need to learn to speak Hebrew. The Ceremonial and Dietary components of God’s Law- have been completely replaced by Jesus and His finished Work. The Moral component of God’s Law, however, are still in force- because they represent God’s Nature and Attributes- which are Eternal.

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Please allow me to suggest to you that, “letting your light shine before men” IS saved people struggling to obey God. The people of this world will see the Fruit of your redeemed Life (which IS your Struggle to Obey) and they will glorify God- on your behalf.

So, as we struggle to obey- we are bringing God Glory and Honor because the Reason behind our Obedience- is a God-given desire to see God alone glorified and made much of. So, even if our Obedience is NOT perfect; or even if it isn’t very Good at all- it still brings God Glory- because the Struggle to obey illustrates the great Value we have assigned to God.

You see, God gave us His Word and His Commandments and His Law- so that we would obey. Law is worthless without Obedience. A Hammer is useful- but ONLY if we use it to put nails in the boards. A car is useful- but ONLY if we get in and actually drive it. A car may be great; and it may have all the latest bells and whistles in it. But the car is completely *useless*- and all those bells and whistles are completely *worthless*- unless we actually get in the car; and drive the car; and use the various additions.

So, if all we do is talk about how great the car is- but we never actually use the car for the reason it was made- all we are talking about is Theory. We are simply repeating something we have read or that others have told us. But we are NOT talking about Reality; we are NOT talking about personal experience- unless we actually drive the car.

And the same is true about God. The Bible says, “**Great is the Lord and highly to be praised**” (Psalm 145:3). And the Bible says that loving and obeying God will bring to us a measure of Righteousness and the fullness of Joy. And that is either true or it isn’t. But if all we do is say we believe that- and then repeat what we have read; or rehash what other people have told us- we are NOT actually glorifying God. We can tell people all day long that we believe what the Bible says about God- but the ONLY way we can actually glorify God ourselves is by personally *experiencing* what the Bible says we are supposed to experience. Other than that- it’s just Theory.

But I would suggest to you that are three different ways that saved people can struggle to obey God:

1. *Fearful* Obedience
2. *Forced* Obedience
3. *Joyful* Obedience

Obedying God out of Fear (*Fearful Obedience*) that if we don't obey- God will send us to Hell- does NOT accurately or fully display the Greatness and Beauty and Magnificence of God. All it proves to the world- is that we are scared of Hell.

But obeying God because we have a sense of "*Obligation*" or "*Duty*" to obey Him (*Forced Obedience*)- does NOT bring God much Glory either. All that tells the world is that the Reason we should all obey God is because He told us to and so, we are supposed to. And look, God DID tell us to. And we DO have an Obligation and a Duty to obey Him. And we ARE "supposed to".

But we must press into something better than a "*Forced or Fearful Obedience*"- because the Bible talks about something much better than that.

All through the Bible we see something that I call, a "*Joyful Obedience*"; a "*Glad Obedience*". The Bible clearly and repeatedly reveals an Obedience to God's Word; and God's Will; and God's Law; and God's Commandments that causes the "*obedient ones*" to be *happier* than if they had NOT obeyed. Loving and following Jesus should make us the happiest people on earth. And that is what is missing in far too many Lives today.

The false gods of the Hindus and Buddhists are vicious and mean gods that don't love the people. The various Man-made deities illustrated in the *Bhagavad-Gita* care NOTHING for the people who follow them. The false god of the Muslims expects ten year- old girls to strap bombs to their bodies to blow up a bus or a train so they can kill as many Jews as possible. I have no respect for an evil deity like that. None.

But the 66 Books of the Holy Bible reveals a Good and Kind and Merciful God, Who not only *demands* Obedience- but also promises a Joy that the world can't give or take away. So, the ONLY way to display or show the entire world how glorious our God really is- is for us to ENJOY obeying Him. And that is a "*Joyful Obedience*". Five hundred years ago- at the height of the Protestant Reformation- godly men got together to pen down the Westminster Confession of Faith. And the very first Question and Answer is:

Q: What is the chief Duty of Man?

A: The chief Duty of Man is to know God; love God; and enjoy Him forever.

... and in 2022, I would edit the Answer to say,

The chief Duty of Man is to know God; love God; BY enjoying Him forever.

... because the ONLY correct Way to *know* and *love* God- is BY *enjoying* Him!

So, in reality- the ONLY way for saved people to actually obey God is by us receiving the *fullness* of our own JOY by and through our Obedience to Him.

Other than that- we really aren't obeying Him as much as we *ought* to- in the first place. And Joyful Obedience is measured when we can truly say, "NOTHING MAKES US HAPPIER THAN TO OBEY GOD!"

Amen. Let's pray

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.