

## SOTM pt7 – Structured to Win – Least vs Great

[Mat 5:17-20 NASB95] 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.

- Shocker: The law of God is still in effect, and we are commanded to do it and teach it.
- To the nominal Christian, this statement will get pushback. Jesus' words are perfect theology.

How does this jive with “not under the law”? What could this mean for us?

Let's look at the verses one by one and then give some application.

- I. **17 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.**
  - a. He came to correct its interpretation.
  - b. To the Jews, the Law and the Prophets is another of saying the Scriptures.
  - c. [Rom 7:25 NASB95] 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.
  - d. The law is meant to be internally fulfilled.
- II. **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.**
  - a. God's plan will never be set aside until all things are fulfilled at the end of the age.
  - b. [1Pe 1:24-25 NASB95] 24 For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, 25 BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER." And this is the word which was preached to you.
  - c. Those who truly follow Jesus will do what the Torah and the Prophets say.
  - d. The Word is the authority of God for settling all disputes of doctrine and practice.
- III. **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**
  - a. Annuls, loosen, until
  - b. Jesus fulfilled the sacrificial portion of the Law
  - c. The law stands as an expression of God's ethical character.
  - d. The law sends us to Jesus to be justified. It shows us our inability to fully please God apart from Jesus.
  - e. [1Jo 5:2-3 NASB95] 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.
- IV. **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.**

## **SOTM pt7 – Structured to Win – Least vs Great**

- a. Their righteousness was outside only. Correct righteousness is from inside to the outside.
- b. The only way to exceed is through faith in Jesus.

### **V. Application**

- a. We are still responsible for the ethical and moral principles of the Law, the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles.
  - b. The sacrificial, ceremonial, social, and civil law are no longer binding. [Heb 10:1-4 NASB95] 1 For the Law, since it has [only] a shadow of the good things to come [and] not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? 3 But in those [sacrifices] there is a reminder of sins year by year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.
  - c. We do not earn forgiveness and salvation. Obedience shows genuine faith. Strive to live for God. The right kind of faith is one that produces obedience. [Rom 6:15-22 NASB95] 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! 16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone [as] slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. 19 I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in [further] lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. 20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. 22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.
  - d. Faith in Jesus is the starting point to fulfill the law of God.
  - e. Because of faith in and love for Christ, we chose to live by His standards. We put to death the deeds of the flesh. [Rom 8:13 NASB95] 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.
  - f. Obedience is an ongoing symptom of salvation.
- **Let us seek to love God and continue to put our faith in Him as we strive to live in obedience to His standards as found in His Word.**