

Fulfilling the Law of Christ

Written by Dr. Harold R. Carpenter -



Dr. Harold & Myrna
Carpenter

TEXT: Galatians 6:1-5

1 Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load (Galatians 6:1-5).

Two important words in our text are:

Verse 2, "**Burdens**" is a translation of the Greek word *baros*; from *basis*, a word meaning "weight, asserted authority," therefore, "burden, burdens, weight."

Verse 5, "**Load**" is a translation of another Greek word, *phortion*, which is a diminutive of *phortos*, "a load, a burden" which is from another Greek word, *phero*, "to carry, to carry some burden," therefore, "burdens, cargo, load, loads."

An outline of the thoughts in the text:

1 Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass,
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□□□□ **restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness;**
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lest you too be tempted.

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and thus fulfill the law of Christ.

3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing,

he deceives himself.

4 But let each one examine his own work,

and then he will have [reason for] boasting in regard to himself alone,

and not in regard to another.

5 For each one shall bear his own load.

Introduction:

Here is a news release concerning Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore:

Saturday, August 23, 2003 Posted: 11:46 AM EDT (1546 GMT)

Judge suspended over Ten Commandments Ethics complaint:

Chief justice failed to respect, obey law

MONTGOMERY, Alabama (CNN) -- Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore was suspended Friday pending the outcome of an ethics complaint for defying a federal court order to move a Ten Commandments monument from the rotunda of the Alabama Supreme Court building.

Since last August our nation has been caught up in conflict and debate over the role of the Ten commandments in the social, political, and religious life of our nation. Whatever the outcome of the trial of Judge Roy Moore, there can be little doubt that the Ten Commandments have been the foundation stone for law and culture in all Western nations. (And I believe all other nations and cultures as well.)

This morning I want us to look again at this summary statement by God of how men should live with one another and with Him. In order to do this I want us to look at three distinct forms of God's Law as presented to men. Before doing so, however, a preliminary definition of "**law**" is in order.

Ethics is a theory or system of moral values dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation.

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Law, on the other hand, is a binding custom or practice of a community: a rule of conduct or action prescribed or formally recognized as binding or enforced by a controlling authority.

I. Moses and God's Law

A. Moral and ethical law has always existed.

1. Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3)
 2. God's judgment on the world of Noah's day (Genesis 6-9)
 3. God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah in Abraham's day (Genesis 19)
- B. God inscribes His Law in stone at Mount Sinai.

1. This is a pivotal point in human history:

- a. Thunder, lightening, earthquake, and the voice of God.
 - b. Tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.
 - c. The face of Moses radiated the glory of God.
2. Ten Commandments

[a.] **You shall have no other gods before Me.**

[b.] **You shall not make for yourselves an idol or any graven image.**

[c.] **You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.**

[d.] **You shall remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.**

[e.] **You shall honor your father and your mother.**

[f.] **You shall not murder.**

[g.] **You shall not commit adultery.**

[h.] **You shall not steal.**

[i.] **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.**

[j.] **You shall not covet (anything that belongs to your neighbor).**

2. Sundry ordinances:

- a. An ordinance is an instruction on how to put things in order.
- b. An ordinance is a lower form of law.
- c. An ordinance provides latitude for the implementation of a higher law.

II. The Pharisees and the Law of God

A. Over a period of time the Law of God became the "Law of Moses."

1. The focus was on the inferior ordinances rather than the higher laws.
2. God accuses Israel of violating His Law:

1 Listen to the word of the Lord, O sons of Israel, For the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land, Because there is no faithfulness or kindness Or knowledge of God in the land. 2 [There is] swearing, deception, murder, stealing, and adultery. They employ violence, so that bloodshed follows bloodshed (Hosea 4:1-2).

3. God explains the proper attitude toward His Law and its fulfillment:

6 For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings (Hosea 6:6).

4. God emphasizes the moral nature of His Law:

8 He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love kindness (Micah 6:8). B. The "Law of Moses" evolved into the traditions of the Scribes and the Pharisees:

1. God's moral law was ignored by the Scribes and Pharisees in the case of the Good Samaritan.
2. God's moral and written law was misinterpreted in the case of the adulterous woman.
3. God's holy ordinances were violated by the money changers and the merchants in God's holy temple. C. Jesus refocused the emphasis of the Law on the moral and ethical rather than the legalistic in His discourse in Matthew 23:

1. **"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. . .,"** (Matthew 23:13) (a repeated refrain that heaped scorn on the self-righteous).

[a.] **...you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men;...**

[b.] **...you devour widows' houses,...**

[c.] **...you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves...**

[d.] **...you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness...**

[e.] **...you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence...**

[f.] **...you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness...**

[g.] **...you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in [shedding] the blood of the prophets'** (Matthew 23:13-23). 2.

Jesus issued His judgment of those who sought to justify themselves by works:

48 "But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' 49 and shall begin to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; 50 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect [him] and at an hour which he does not know, 51 and shall cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; weeping shall be there and the gnashing of teeth (Matthew 24:48-51).

III. JESUS AND THE LAW OF GOD

A. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7):

1. **21 "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court'** (Matthew 5:21).

2. **27 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; 28 but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart** (Matthew 5:27-28).

3. **31 "And it was said, 'Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce'; 32 but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for [the] cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery;** (Matthew 5:31-32).

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4. **33 "Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.' 34 "But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King (Matthew 5:33-35).**

5. **38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 "But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also (Matthew 5:38).**

6. **43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.' 44 "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you 45 in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; (Matthew 5:43-44).**

B. The Upper Room Discourse (John 13-17):

1. **34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13:34-35)."**

2. **12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends (John 15:12-13).**

3. **17 "This I command you, that you love one another" (John 15:17). C. The Law of Christ (Galatians 5 and 6)**

1. Paul proclaims the Law of Christ:

a. **14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Galatians 5:14).**

b. **2 Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).** 2. Paul was not belittling the Law of God:

a. **3 So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. 4 But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons (Galatians 4:3-5).**

b. **9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? (Galatians 4:9).**

c. **1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. 2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. 4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace (Galatians 5:1-4).** 3. Compare this to Romans 7:

7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about

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coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet." 8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin [is] dead. 9 And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died; 10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; 11 for sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me. 12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good (Romans 7:7-12).

4. What Paul is condemning in Galatians is the distortion and misinterpretation of the Law in the traditions of the Scribes and the Pharisees.

5. The Law of Christ is the Law of love which brings us back to the ethical worship of God rather than the legalistic observances of ordinances elaborated by man rather than God.

C. The Law of Christ is

1. Based on love, not fear of retribution.
2. Causes us to forgive, rather than get even.
3. Causes us to care, rather than condemn.
4. Causes us to see the beam in our own eye, rather than the straw in our brother's eye.
5. Causes us to bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2):

- a. The heavy things of life.
- b. Sin.
- c. Sickness.
- d. Sorrow.
- e. Suffering. 6. Causes us to pray for one another (James 5):

13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; 15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much (James 5:13-16).

- a. Verses 1-6 describe the pharisaical practice of the Law.
- b. Verses 7-12 describe the practice of the Law of Christ.
- c. Verses 13-20 are the practical application of the Law of Christ which is the Law of Love.

Conclusion:

Paul describes the believer as a member of the body in 1 Cor. 12:12-27.

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If one member of the body hurts the entire body hurts. If we are to practice the Law of Christ we will lay aside criticism, fault finding, condemnation, and judgment. We will demonstrate the love of Christ through:

- Loving.
- Caring.
- Praying.
- Sharing.

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This is the outline of the sermon Dr. Harold Carpenter preached 26 October 2003 in the morning service. Dr. Carpenter and his wife served as missionaries for twenty years. Dr. Carpenter also taught missions for twenty years at Central Bible College. He now serves as Pastor of Fair Grove Assembly of God, Fair Grove MO.

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