

## THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Sunday, April 19, 2026

*"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*

*Matthew 5:17-20 ESV*

*"Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. "But I warn you--unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!*

*Matthew 5:17-20 NLT*

### **1. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. I came to accomplish their purpose.**

*Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe **all** that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?" Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and **all** the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things **concerning himself**.*

*Luke 24:25-27*

- 2. He says that until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved.**

*19 Why, then, was the law given? It was given alongside the promise **to show people their sins**. But the law was designed to last only until the coming of the child who was promised. God gave his law through angels to Moses, who was the mediator between God and the people... 23 Before the way of faith in Christ was available to us, we were placed under guard by the law. We were kept in protective custody, so to speak, until the way of faith was revealed. 24 Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith. 25 And now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian. 26 For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

*Galatians 3:19, 23-26 NLT*

- 3. If you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.**
- 4. Anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.**

*For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body.*

*2 Corinthians 5:10 NLT*

*For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have-- Jesus Christ. 12 Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials--gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. 13 But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. 14 If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. 15 But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.*

*1 Corinthians 3:11-15 NLT*

**5. I tell you (I warn you) – unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!**

*Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, "The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the law of Moses. So practice and obey whatever they tell you, but don't follow their example. For they don't practice what they teach. They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden. "Everything they do is for show..." "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you **ignore the more important aspects of the law--justice, mercy, and faith.** You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. Blind guides! You strain your water so you won't accidentally swallow a gnat, but you swallow a camel! "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are so **careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy--full of greed and self-indulgence!** You blind Pharisee! First wash the inside of the cup and the dish, and then the outside will become clean, too. "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs--**beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity. Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness.***  
*Matthew 23 (selected verses)*

- \* They taught the truth but didn't practice it
- \* They did not love and care for the people they taught
- \* Everything they did was for show
- \* Strained at gnats and swallowed camels - nitpickers
- \* Made sure they looked good but inside their hearts were filthy

*Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: "Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: 'I thank you, God, that I am not like other people--cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I'm certainly not like that tax collector! I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.' "But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.' I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."*

*Luke 18:9-14 NLT*

*"You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.' But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell. "So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.*

*Matthew 5:21-24*

*"The day is coming," says the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife," says the LORD. "But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel after those days," says the LORD. "I will put my instructions deep within them, and **I will write them on their hearts.** I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

*Jeremiah 31:31-33 NLT*

*And I will give you a **new heart**, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your **stony, stubborn heart** and give you **a tender, responsive heart.** And I will put **my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees** and be careful to obey my regulations.*

*Ezekiel 36:26-27 NLT*

Jesus says

*“If you love me you will obey me.”  
John 14:15*

The Scripture also says:

*“We love because He first loved us.”  
1 John 4:19*

***So** if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, 24 leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.  
Matthew 5:23-24*