

Sunday Service Sermons

16 May 2021

A Reliable Guide for Successful Living

What guides your life?

For far too many people, especially in this country, it is the TV.

And it does not matter your political position, we all get way to much information from a source that does not necessarily have our best interest in mind.

Who does have our best interest in mind?

The Lord God Jehovah, that's who!

Do you believe that?

Do you act as if you believe that?

That is, do you start each day in communication with God?

Do you study his informational guide Book for living?

How can we live for Him if we do not include him in all that we do?

Text for today: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill". *Matt. 5:17*

Full text is *Matt. 5:17-20*

This is rather early in the ministry of Jesus.

It is part of the Sermon on the Mount.

After saying who all is blessed, then how we are salt and light, Jesus transitions into how important it is not only what you do but how you think about others.

In this transition Jesus says that he is the fulfillment of the law and that the law and the Prophets will be fulfilled before the end of time on earth.

He is saying the Word of God is true and reliable.

Know it and do it.

Everything God has communicated will come to fulfillment exactly as it has been said.

The law and commandments of God are binding.

Know them, live them and teach them to others for they are the essence of life.

Then Jesus tells those listening, to live a true life or Heaven will not be in their future.

It must have been common knowledge that the religious leaders were not ringing true.

For he uses them as an example of who will not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

They might have had the power but they did not have the life that God would honor and reward.

After this transition Jesus speaks of murder, including thinking hateful thoughts; adultery, including thinking lustful thoughts; divorce, marriage is for keeps and should not be dissolved for connivance; the taking of oaths, speak truth, always; and it goes on and on as to how to live your life in order for God to approve of it.

Today we are focusing on Jesus as the fulfillment of the law.

Are you successful in life?

If you are, it did not happen by accident.

We must intend to live successfully, but even strong intentions are not enough.

We need a reliable guide that we can safely follow.

Such a guide is offered in this portion of the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus contended that the law is nothing less than a reliable guide for successful living.

When Jesus spoke of the law he did not include all that the scribes had added.

He was speaking of the heart and essence of the law itself.

Jesus simplified what others had complicated when he made love central to the law.

The law is all about loving God and mankind.

Jesus reduced the 613 laws of the scribes to the law of love for The Lord and neighbor.

In so doing, he retained the real meaning of the law, which was reverence for God and respect for others.

In this sense Jesus offered the law as a reliable guide for successful living.

First Jesus stated a fact: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets."

Can we say that the law, as taught at this time, had little life in it.

It was burdensome and heavy overwhelming the average person.

Jesus is preparing the way for life and joy to once again enter into the life of the believer.

Once he dies and raises from the dead, He will become the way to life in and for God.

Jesus was getting bad press to discount his effectiveness.

He is stating here that he has not come to undo what has gone before but to offer a way of living that might fulfill what has gone before.

His coming, his life, his healing, then his death and resurrection, would provide a way to live the life God wants His people to live.

Jesus was not here to offer a way around the law and commandments of God but a way to fulfill them in our daily living.

Jesus did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

Before coming to Jesus people can see him as destroying what they do have instead of one who makes what they have worth having.

In Jesus we have what it takes to live a life that fulfills God's requirements for living as His person.

Jesus came to save the law from its oral distortions, to clarify its purpose, and to redefine its application.

Jesus is building upon the law as a person builds upon the previous education to go on to higher education.

It advances on what has been learned to date.

Jesus is building on the law and moving on to a more advanced way of living.

The old law was good, but it was not perfect.

It had value, but was not complete.

He came to complete what was started by the law.

He is the fulfillment of the law in his own person.

He lived a life that showed what it was to live for God and others.

It is expressed not in sacrifice but in mercy, its pattern was not legalism but love.

Jesus fulfilled the law by giving it inward meaning.

Jesus expanded the law to cover our thoughts as well as our actions.

Jesus knew that people are more than their actions.

To know people as they really are, we must visit the inner chambers of their thoughts and imagination.

Jesus fulfilled the law by giving it a positive application.

Jesus made the law constructive.

Before Jesus the theme of the law was "Thou shalt not".

There were so many rules that people had little chance to do good and feel good about themselves.

Jesus changed this dramatically as he turned our attention from what not to do to what to do to please God.

He defined goodness, not so much in terms of abstaining from vices, as in obtaining virtues.

Much of what Jesus asked his followers to do seemed impossible.

To exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees and Scribes and to be perfect as he is perfect.

The Scribes and Pharisees had removed the heart of the law.

Jesus wanted people to keep the heart of the law.

God gave principles that had been interpreted to explicit rules of conduct.

God gave ten simple guidelines for successful living.

Jesus claimed that the law would endure for all time.

That it was more absolute than the existence of the earth.

Not a punctuation will change before it is fulfilled.

The law is so sacred that not even the smallest detail of it will ever pass away for it is immutable.

The Ten Commandments are the permanent stuff on which our relation to God is built. If we are to experience successful living, we must adopt these as our guide. There are several reasons why the law is immutable. God does not change, He is the Lord and changes not. He is perfect and does not need to change. The law was given not to restrict us but to free us to become the best we are capable of being. Not only does God not change but the character of people does not change. Mankind will always be in need of God to help us be what He created us to be. And right and wrong do not change. The law of the Lord is perfect and it is valuable because it is right and it gives life. Right and wrong do not change, people either obey it and have a good life or they ignore it and have great difficulty. Jesus said that we are measured by the law, we do not measure the law. We are judged by the law we do not judge the law. People do not break the law they are broken by the law when they violate it. We should not go against the law or encourage anyone else to do so. The law serves as a reliable point of reference from which we get the direction and proper course for our lives. The law is the only reliable measure for what we do. As light of the world we are to guide others toward obedience not away from it. It is bad to do wrong but it is worse to lead others to do wrong by our actions or words. The law measures us on the basis of what we are. What we do and what we teach reveals what we are. We are called to be salt of the earth and the light of the world. How we handle the Word of God and his commandments reveals the genuineness of our Christian character. The circuit-riding preachers in the Old West would swim their horses across the rivers. When they were crossing an overflowing river, if they watched the swirling water around them, they could become dizzy, fall into the water and be swept away by the current. On the other hand, if they kept their eyes fixed on a tree or rock or hill on the other side of the stream, they could ride through safely. In the storms of life, it is the law of God that gives us calm and safety and balance. As we fix our eyes, not on the swirling water around us, but on God's eternal laws, we too, shall ford the rivers of this life undisturbed by the water around us.