

KJW15 to Apr 15

April 9 Su Reading 99 — Matthew 5:17-20 — Fulfilling the Law

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 ^[fn]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 ^[fn]others [to do] the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does 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.

LSB Footnotes

(5:18) Or *one projection of a letter* (serif); lit *one iota* (Heb yodh)

(5:19) Gr *anthropoi*

High Priority — This is a very important statement regarding the value Jesus placed on the content of Scripture. He included *all* of Scripture, "*the Law*" (the first five books of Moses) and "*the Prophets*" (the rest of the Old Testament). I have heard some people depreciate the value of certain parts of the Bible, like the negativity of Lamentations or the idealism of Proverbs. Even Martin Luther called the letter of James, "an epistle of straw." Jesus said that all of it was important, not only in whole, but also in part. The "*smallest letter or stroke*" (v. 18) might be called the minutiae of Scripture. The Hebrew *yod* was "*the smallest letter*" (like an English apostrophe) and the "stroke" was the tiny tail on a letter that differentiated it from another letter. Scripture details were important to Jesus, and they should be important to us as well. Then Jesus moved from a letter-level view of Scripture to a commandment-level view. He said that not even "*one of the least of these commandments*" should be "annulled" (or "relaxed," ESV). Paul put the current wide acceptance of a "little white lie" in its proper place with the command, "*Do not lie to one another, since you put off the old man with its evil practices*" (Col. 3:9). It is not acceptable by God in any situation. It is not a "*least commandment*." Jesus said that this "high view" of Scripture should last "*until heaven and earth pass away*" (Matt. 5:18). The Bible we have is not just a collection of godly suggestions; it is the very Word of God.

I could not find a video for this hymn, but it reflects Jesus' emphasis on the importance of God's Word.

The Word of God shall ever stand,
Though stormed by every foe;
Upheld by His almighty hand,
No powers can overthrow.
Though all the powers of hell engage,
And hosts of sin assail,
God's wondrous might, His changeless Word
Shall evermore prevail.

The Word of God shall stand,
Shall stand unchanged forever;
In every clime and land
The world shall own its sway.
The Word of God shall stand,
Its foes can change it never;
Though heav'n and earth may pass away,
God's Word shall stand forever.

— Frank C. Huston (b. 1871)

²¹ "You have heard that ^[fn]the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT MURDER' and 'Whoever murders shall be guilty before the court.'²² "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ^[fn]'Raca,' shall be guilty before the ^[fn]Sanhedrin; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty [enough to go] into the ^[fn]fiery hell.²³ "Therefore if you are presenting your ^[fn]offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,²⁴ leave your ^[fn]offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your ^[fn]offering.²⁵ "Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.²⁶ "Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last ^[fn]quadrans.

²⁷ "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY';²⁸ but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.²⁹ "But if your right eye makes you ^[fn]stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you ^[fn]to lose one of the parts of your body, ^[fn]than for your whole body to be thrown into ^[fn]hell.³⁰ "And if your right hand makes you ^[fn]stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you ^[fn]to lose one of the parts of your body, ^[fn]than for your whole body to go into ^[fn]hell.

³¹ "Now 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 ^[fn]divorces his wife, except for the reason of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a ^[fn]divorced woman commits adultery.

³³ "Again, you have heard that the ^[fn]ancients were told, ^[fn]YOU SHALL NOT ^[fn]MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR ^[fn]VOWS TO THE ^[fn]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 ^[fn]by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING.³⁶ "Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.³⁷ "But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' [or] 'No, no'; anything beyond these is ^[fn]of the evil one.

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 an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.⁴⁰ "And if anyone wants to sue you and take your ^[fn]tunic, let him have your ^[fn]garment also.⁴¹ "And whoever ^[fn]forces you to go one mile, go with him two.⁴² "Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

LSB Footnotes

(5:21) Lit <i>it was said to the ancients</i>	(5:30) Lit <i>that one...be lost</i>
(5:22) Or <i>empty-head</i> ; from Aram <i>reqa</i>	(5:30) Lit <i>not your whole body</i>
(5:22) Or <i>Council</i>	(5:30) Gr <i>Gehenna</i>
(5:22) Lit <i>Gehenna of fire</i>	(5:32) Or <i>sends away</i>
(5:23) Or <i>gift</i>	(5:32) Or <i>sent away</i>
(5:24) Or <i>gift</i>	(5:33) Lit <i>it was said to the ancients</i>
(5:24) Or <i>gift</i>	(5:33) <i>you and your</i> are singular here
(5:26) A Roman copper coin, approx. 1/64 of a laborer's daily wage	(5:33) Or <i>break your vows</i>
(5:29) Sin	(5:33) Lit <i>oaths</i>
(5:29) Lit <i>that one...be lost</i>	(5:33) In OT, <i>Yahweh</i> , cf. Deut 23:21
(5:29) Lit <i>not your whole body</i>	(5:35) Or <i>toward</i>
(5:29) Gr <i>Gehenna</i>	(5:37) Or <i>from evil</i>
(5:30) Sin	(5:40) A garment worn next to the body
	(5:40) An outer garment
	(5:41) Lit <i>will force</i>

The Heart of the Law — In yesterday’s reading, we saw the high view of Scripture that Jesus showed, and it continues in today’s passage. Here, He points out the contrast between obeying the *letter* of the law versus catching the *intent* of the law. Five times He said, “*But I say to you...*” (vv. 22, 28, 32, 34, 39), each time emphasizing God’s purpose for the OT commands He mentioned. At the heart of murder is anger (vv. 21-22); at the heart of adultery is lust (vv. 27-28); at the heart of divorce is a lack of love (vv. 31-32); at the heart of a promise is integrity (vv. 33, 37); and at the heart of revenge is a lack of caring (vv. 38-42). Jesus opposed the Pharisees, who placed a high value on outward obedience in religious practices but missed the moral purposes of God’s commands. Jesus wants to see not only our obedience but our motives behind obeying Him. Why do we obey God’s commands? Is it only out of fear for what might happen if we don’t, or is it also out of love for the One who saved us? Let’s concentrate today on our reasons for doing the good things we do. Obey from the heart!

[Change My Heart, Oh God - YouTube](#)

You are the potter, I am the clay,
Mold me and make me; this is what I pray.
Change my heart, Oh God; make it ever true.
Change my heart, Oh God; may I be like You.
— John Wimber, Eddie Espinoza (1982)

April 11 Tu Reading 101 — Matthew 6:7-15 — The Lord’s Prayer

⁷ “*And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.* ⁸ *Therefore, do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.*

⁹ “*Pray, then, in this way:
'Our Father who is in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.*

¹⁰ *Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.*

¹¹ *Give us this day ^[fn]our daily bread.*

¹² *And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

¹³ *And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from ^[fn]the evil one. ^[fn][For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]*

¹⁴ *For if you forgive ^[fn]others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive ^[fn]others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.*

LSB Footnotes

(6:11) Or *our bread for tomorrow*

(6:13) Or *evil*

(6:13) Early mss omit bracketed portion

(6:14) Gr *anthropoi*

(6:15) Gr *anthropoid*

Meaningful Prayer — What an opportunity! Jesus taught us how to pray. Prayer should always be meaningful. We should guard against praying repetitiously, so that the words don’t become routine,

habitual, and unthinking. That is how people pray who do not have a personal relationship with God. Our prayers should begin by honoring God, instead of getting right to the list of things we want Him to take care of. He is our heavenly Father and He is to be hallowed, i.e., to be highly esteemed and respected. Think about your prayer times; do you begin with expressions of appreciation for who God is? We are intimately related to Him (“*our Father*”), but He is infinitely above us—our Creator and our Savior. Before we get to what we want Him to do for us, we should express our desire that we want His will to be accomplished in our lives: “*Your will be done on earth...*” (v. 10)—what *He* wants before what *we* want. If we are honest, many of our requests are more like, “*My will be done on earth...*” Notice that there is only one personal, material request here: “*Give us this day our daily bread*” (v. 11). The rest is spiritually oriented. “*Forgive our debts*” is a conditional request; it comes “*as we also have forgiven our debtors*” (v. 12). That conditional idea is amplified in verse 14 with the statements, “*if you forgive...*” and “*if you do not forgive...*” We need God’s forgiveness because we fail, but we must also have God’s forgiving attitude toward other people. This model prayer closes with the recognition of our struggle with temptation and sin. It is a request to be protected from falling into Satan’s traps of succumbing to sin when we are burdened with trials. Our prayers should reflect high honor to God, a desire for what He wants, satisfaction for our material needs, acknowledgement of our failures, and our need for God’s protection against temptations to sin.

[Lord, Teach Us How to Pray Aright - YouTube](#)

Lord, teach us how to pray aright
With rev'ence and with fear.
Though dust and ashes in Your sight,
We may, we must draw near.
— James Montgomery (b. 1771)

April 12 W Reading 102 — Matthew 7:21-23 — I Never Knew You

²¹ *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven [will enter].* ²² *Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, in Your name did we not prophesy, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name do many [miracles?]'* ²³ *And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'*

LSB Footnote

(7:22) Or *works of power*

Empty Words and Works — Jesus is all-knowing, whereas mankind can be self-deceiving. Jesus knows what is behind a person’s words in calling Him “*Lord*” (meaning “*master*”). Jesus said that His true servant “*does the will of My Father who is in heaven*” (v. 21). It is more than just doing the *deeds* of the Father, but also doing His *will*. Strangely, verse 22 seems to imply that some lost people could accomplish miraculous things in the name of Jesus. That could emphasize just how powerful the name of Jesus is, or it might suggest that there was some human deception involved. The seven Jewish sons of Sceva were comically unsuccessful in attempting to cast out a demon in the name of Jesus (Acts 19:13-17). At the end, the bottom line will show that entering heaven is not based on words or works, but rather on relationship (“*I never knew you*”—v. 23). It is only after one personally surrenders to Jesus, having His Spirit dwell in the heart, that the words and the works can be meaningful and effective. That is why we Christians can experience a bit of heaven here on earth.

Lord, We Hear Your Word with Gladness - YouTube

May we hear with understanding,
By Your Spirit taught and led;
May the springs of all our being
By Your living Word be fed;
May our hearts accept with meekness
All the grace Your light makes known;
May obedience mark our footsteps
Till we make each word our own!

— E. Margaret Clarkson (b. 1915)

April 13 Th Reading 103 — Matt. 7:24-29; Luke 6:46-49 — Foundation of Application

Matthew 7

²⁴ "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and does them, ^[fn] may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain descended, and the rivers came, and the winds blew and fell against that house; and [yet] it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone hearing these words of Mine and not doing them, may be compared to a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ And the rain descended, and the ^[fn] floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall."

²⁸ ^[fn] Now it happened that when Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were astonished at His teaching; ²⁹ for He was teaching them as [one] having authority, and not as their scribes.

LSB Footnotes

(7:24) Lit will

(7:27) Lit rivers

(7:28) Lit And

Luke 6

⁴⁶ Now why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷ Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and does them, I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸ he is like a man building a house, who dug and went deep, and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the river burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who heard and did not do [accordingly], is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the river burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great."

Hearing and Doing — There is only one variable in this comparative story. The words of Jesus were the same and the threat of the storm was the same. The only difference was application—some only heard the words, while others applied them to their lives in obedience. Hearing the words of Jesus was superficial—everyone heard them. Believing and applying them were actions of a wise man or woman who recognized that the foundation of their life must be set on something solid. Jesus' teaching was very different from what the crowd was used to hearing. The scribes taught by quoting what previous rabbis had said about certain passages of Scripture. When Jesus taught, He offered only His own opinion about what the Law and the Prophets had said. He was the authority. Although "the crowds were astonished at His teaching" (Matt. 7:28), only some of them were willing to believe and obey the words they heard. When we read these passages every day, let's ask ourselves, "How can I apply this to my life today?" That is foundation-thinking.

How Firm a Foundation - YouTube

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!
What more can be said than to you God hath said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

— "K." (1787; either Robt. Keene or Geo. Keith)

April 14 F Reading 104 — Luke 7:1-10 — Remote Healing of Centurion's Slave

¹ *When He had completed all His words in the hearing of the people, He went to Capernaum.*

² *And a centurion's slave, ^[fn]who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. ³ Now when he heard about Jesus, he sent some ^[fn]Jewish elders asking Him to come and ^[fn]save the life of his slave. ⁴ And when they came to Jesus, they were earnestly pleading with Him, saying, "He is worthy for You to grant this to him; ⁵ for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue." ⁶ Now Jesus was going on His way with them; and when He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "^[fn]Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not good enough for You to come under my roof. ⁷ For this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but [just] ^[fn]say the word, and my ^[fn]servant will be healed. ⁸ For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it." ⁹ Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him. And He turned to the crowd that was following Him and said, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." ¹⁰ And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.*

LSB Footnotes

(7:2) Lit to whom he was honorable

(7:3) Lit elders of the Jews

(7:3) Or cure

(7:6) Or Sir

(7:7) Lit say with a word

(7:7) Or boy

Worthy Faith — I was struck by the difference between the centurion's humility and the Jewish leader's evaluation of him. The Jewish elders said, "*He is worthy ... he loves our nation and ... built us our synagogue*" (vv. 4-5). The basis of their plea for Jesus' help was the centurion's value—He deserved it! On the other hand, the centurion showed great humility, saying, "*I am not good enough ... I did not even consider myself worthy...*" (vv. 6-7). The centurion was right and the elders wrong: He wasn't worthy—He didn't deserve Jesus' help—he needed grace. Jesus responded positively to humility. When we pray, asking for divine help, we need to remember humility. Secondly, Jesus responded to faith. The centurion understood authority and the chain of command in the military. Somehow, he also seemed to know that the same structure existed in the spiritual realm: Jesus had been sent by the Father and was under His authority, but He also had authority over other things, like sickness. It was a remarkable expression of faith, and Jesus "*marveled at him*" and called it "*great faith*" (v. 9). The Gentile centurion wasn't worthy, but he had worthy faith.

My Faith Looks Up To Thee - YouTube

My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Savior divine!
Now hear me while I pray;
Take all my guilt away;
O let me from this day
Be wholly thine!
— Ray Palmer (1830)

April 15 Sa Reading 105 — Luke 7:11-17 — Raising a Widow's Son

¹¹ *And it happened that soon afterwards He went to a city called Nain, and His disciples were going along with Him, ^[fn]accompanied by a large crowd.* ¹² *Now as He approached the gate of the city, behold, ^[fn]a dead man was being carried out, the ^[fn]only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a sizeable crowd from the city was with her.* ¹³ *And when the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her and said to her, "Do not cry."* ¹⁴ *And He came up and touched the coffin, and the bearers came to a halt. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise!"* ¹⁵ *And the ^[fn]dead man sat up and began to speak. And [Jesus] gave him back to his mother.* ¹⁶ *And fear gripped them all, and they [began] glorifying God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and, "God has ^[fn]visited His people!"* ¹⁷ *And this report concerning Him went out all over Judea and in all the surrounding district.*

LSB Footnotes

(7:11) Lit *and*

(7:12) Lit *one who had died*

(7:12) Or *only begotten*

(7:15) Or *corpse*

(7:16) Or *cared for*

Feeling Compassion — This is the second of six encounters Jesus had with people in which it is recorded that a miracle was motivated by His compassion. The first one was the ceremonially unclean leper who came to ask Jesus to heal him (Mark 1:41). Jesus didn't become unclean when He touched him, but He made it possible for him to be clean through healing. In today's reading, Jesus also touched something ceremonially unclean—the coffin of a dead man being carried out of a city for burial (Luke 7:14). Again, Jesus was not negatively affected by the touch, but a dead man was given life. In the case of the leper, Jesus seemed to have been moved with compassion because of the man's physical hopelessness and his expressed faith. With the dead man, however, Jesus seemed to be moved only with compassion for the need of the mother. This mother had a great emotional need; she had lost her only son and was understandably crying (v. 13). There was also a great economic need—she was a widow, with no husband to support her, and her only son had been her sole hope for future financial support. Jesus cares! He cares about both our emotional and economic needs. This is the first of only a few records we have of Jesus raising a dead person to life again, and many people witnessed it. There was "*a large crowd*" (v. 11) with Jesus, and there was "*a sizeable crowd*" (v. 12) in the funeral procession leaving the city. When they saw the miracle, "*fear gripped them all*" (v. 16a), which was a positive fear in the sense of awe because their response was that of "*glorifying God.*" They were right when they said, "*A great prophet has arisen among us!*" and "*God has visited His people!*" (v. 16b). God is still visiting people in spiritual ways in our time, too, as probably thousands of people are being raised to new life every day through being born again.

[Saved, Saved! - YouTube](#)

Saved by His pow'r divine,
Saved to new life sublime!
Life now is sweet and my joy is complete,
For I'm saved, saved, saved.

— Jack P. Scholfield (1911)