

Briefing Document-Matthew Lesson 54: Christ and the Law

January 25, 2026

Executive Summary

This briefing document synthesizes the theological and community-focused insights from the discourse on Matthew 5:17-20. The central theme is the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Old Testament Law. The source posits that Jesus did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it, positioning Himself as the consummation of all Old Testament prophecies, types, and symbols.

A critical distinction is drawn between "God's Law," which is internal and character-based, and "Human Tradition," which is external and legalistic. The document outlines the tripartite structure of the Law—Moral, Judicial, and Ceremonial—and asserts that Christ's fulfillment of these provides the true source of joy and the standard for Christian holiness. Additionally, the document highlights the mission of the Weare Pregnancy Center as a practical application of the sanctity of life and Christ-centered support.

Community Outreach and Announcements

The We Care Pregnancy Center

The We Care Pregnancy Center is a Christ-based ministry in Benson that has operated for nine years. Its mission is to provide compassionate guidance to men and women facing unplanned pregnancies by offering realistic alternatives and Christ-centered support.

- **Core Beliefs:** The ministry acknowledges that every human life begins at conception and is worthy of protection.
- **Free Services:** All services are 100% free, including pregnancy and parenting classes, and car seat safety training.
- **Material Support:** The center provides baby clothes, swings, strollers, and other nursery essentials. Recently, the ministry helped 35 families in a single day.
- **Growth:** The center was recently gifted a new building and an ultrasound machine, allowing for expanded medical services.
- **Funding:** A "Baby Bottle Drive" is currently active through March 1st to defray costs. The 9th annual "Walk for Life" is scheduled for May 16th.
- **Scriptural Basis:** *Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward (Psalm 127:3).*

Church Fellowship and Events

- **Fundamentals of Faith:** A class held following the morning service.

- **Outreach Team:** Active on Fridays and Saturdays at 10:00 a.m.
- **Women's Fellowship:** Scheduled for January 31st; participants are encouraged to bring a favorite devotional book.
- **Community Movie:** A group outing to see "I Can Only Imagine 2" on January 21st.

The Sermon on the Mount: Christ and the Law

Rightly Dividing the Word

The discourse emphasizes the necessity of "rightly dividing" the Word of God. Drawing from 2 Timothy 2, the speaker notes that this requires cutting a straight line—being accurate, finite, and precise in interpreting God's message.

The Fulfillment of the Old Testament

Jesus explicitly defines His relationship to the Hebrew Scriptures in Matthew 5:17: *Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.*

- **Definition of "The Law and the Prophets":** This phrase appears 12 times in the New Testament and serves as a collective reference to the entire Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi.
- **The Object of Scripture:** Every element of the Old Testament—principles, patterns, prophecies, and symbols—points toward Jesus Christ. He is the theme and the fulfillment of the entire record.
- **Endurance of the Law:** *For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till it is all fulfilled (Matthew 5:18).*

Internal Law vs. External Legalism

A primary conflict during Christ's ministry was the tension between God's internal requirements and the scribal traditions of the time.

Feature	God's Law	Human Tradition (Scribes/Pharisees)
Nature	Internal and heart-focused	External and ritualistic
Requirement	Righteous character (Beatitudes)	Adherence to hundreds of minuscule rules
Motivation	Obedience to God	Self-congratulation and appearance of holiness
Definition of Work	Resting in the Lord	Calculating the weight of a "dry fig" or "ink for two letters"

The Jewish leadership had substituted the traditions of men for the Law of God. Jesus' mission was not to remove the burden of the Law so that people could be "free and easy," but to lift the Law higher, revealing that true holiness is a matter of the heart rather than external compliance.

Structural Framework of the Law

The Old Testament Law is categorized into three distinct parts, all of which find their fulfillment in Christ:

1. **Moral Law:** Based on the Ten Commandments, these are permanent moral principles applicable to all humanity.
2. **Judicial Law:** The specific laws given to Israel to govern their conduct as a unique nation set apart from the world.
3. **Ceremonial Law:** The regulations governing Israel's worship of God.

The source argues that while some categorize Christ's fulfillment as only applying to the Moral Law, He actually fulfilled every aspect, including the Judicial and Ceremonial systems.

Spiritual Imperatives for the Believer

The Necessity of Superior Righteousness

Jesus warns that entrance into the kingdom of heaven requires a righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees. This is not achieved through personal merit, as "no one is worthy," but through the transformation of the heart.

The Purpose of Salvation

The source identifies a singular purpose for the salvation of the believer:

- **Not for self-glorification:** Salvation is intended for the glorification of God.
- **Evangelical Mission:** Believers are saved specifically to help others find salvation.

The Call to Holiness

True holiness involves recognizing one's own sinfulness in light of God's perfect standard. The speaker posits that the closer one gets to God, the more they realize how far they fall short of His standard.

- **Repentance:** A recurring theme across the prophets and the New Testament.
- **Recognition:** The world may not recognize Christ today, just as it failed to recognize Him in the past, because He attracts followers through spiritual being rather than physical persona.
- **The Narrow Way:** The path to the kingdom is described as "mikro" [^2]—very narrow—and many may never find the gate or step through it due to a lack of belief.

Glossary of Greek Terms

Greek Word	Phonetic Pronunciation	Brief Definition
Chiso [^1]	KEE-so	To divide or cut a straight line; to be finite and accurate in accounting or interpretation.
Mikro [^2]	MEE-kro	Small, little, or narrow; used to describe the gate and the road to life.

[^1]: Used in the context of "rightly dividing" the word of God (2 Timothy 2:15). [^2]: Used to describe the narrowness of the way and the gate mentioned in the Gospels.