

Briefing Document: Matthew Lesson 60

March 15, 2026

Executive Summary

This document synthesizes the core themes of the sermon "The Sermon on the Mount - Christ and the Law," focusing on the Christian's relationship to God's divine law as outlined in Matthew 5:19. The analysis identifies a pervasive "spirit of lawlessness" (antinomianism) within both secular society and the contemporary church. The central argument posits that while believers are saved by faith, they remain obligated to obey and teach God's moral standards.

The document outlines the transition from the "preeminence" and "permanence" of the law to its "pertinence" in the life of the believer. Key takeaways include the distinction between "least" and "great" status in the kingdom of heaven based on one's adherence to and instruction of the commandments, and the rejection of the false "two-part man" theology that excuses personal sin.

The Cultural Context: The Rise of Antinomianism

The contemporary social landscape is characterized by an "anti-law" attitude, often referred to as antinomianism. This spirit is rooted in the "do your own thing" mentality that gained prominence in the 1960s and has since evolved into a rejection of objective moral authority.

The Legacy of "Doing Your Own Thing"

- **Personal Existentialism:** This philosophy encourages individuals to live entirely for the present moment, prioritizing immediate self-expression and gratification over future consequences or divine standards.
- **Subjective Morality:** By removing morality from the state and the Bible, society has empowered the individual to determine right and wrong. This reflects the biblical era of the Judges, where *In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6)*.
- **Institutional Lawlessness:** The document identifies an organized spirit of lawlessness manifesting in professional protests and government policies that promote behaviors contrary to biblical teaching, such as gender reassignment for children and the decriminalization of certain offenses.

The Infiltration of the Church

The church has not remained immune to these cultural shifts. Rather than impacting the culture, the culture has "infiltrated" the church, leading to several critical issues:

- **Amoral Leadership:** Instances of moral failure among church leadership, such as "wife-swapping" or the presence of practicing homosexuals in the pulpit, are cited as evidence of the church's inability to act on sin.
- **False Justification:** Some believers misinterpret "justification by faith" to mean that grace provides a license for lawlessness.
- **The "Old Man" Fallacy:** A prominent but unbiblical theology suggests that a Christian is two separate entities: a "new creature" and an "old man." This allows individuals to blame the "old man" for their sins while maintaining a sense of self-satisfaction as a "new man."

Christ's Perspective on the Law

Jesus presents a unique relationship to the Old Testament Mosaic law. While the Jews of His time may have expected Him to set the law aside, Jesus affirmed its continued relevance.

Preeminence, Permanence, and Pertinence

The sermon series defines three stages of understanding the law:

1. **Preeminence (v. 17):** The law's superior status.
2. **Permanence (v. 18):** The law's enduring nature (down to the "jot and tittle").
3. **Pertinence (v. 19):** The law's direct importance and applicability to the believer's daily life.

Internal vs. External Kingdoms

Unlike the Jewish expectation of a political king who would establish an external earthly kingdom, Jesus is a spiritual king establishing an **internal** kingdom. His goal is to change human character from the inside out. He asserts that the key to qualifying for and fulfilling responsibilities within this kingdom is the Word of God.

The Consequences of Obedience: Matthew 5:19

The core of the analysis rests on the instruction found in *Matthew 5:19*:

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, 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.

The Character and Consequence of the Law

- **Commands vs. Suggestions:** The Bible is not a manual of suggestions but a book of commands. Believers are responsible for listening to the law because of its divine character.
- **Direct Impact:** One's treatment of the moral law has a "consequence." It affects the individual, their family, their friends, and their work.

The Distinction of "Least" vs. "Great"

Jesus categorizes kingdom citizens based on their relationship to the commandments:

- **The Negative Consequence (The Least):** To "break" (Greek: *luo*) even the smallest command or to teach others to do so results in being called "least." This does not necessarily mean exclusion from the kingdom, but it indicates a loss of reward or standing.
- **The Positive Consequence (The Great):** Those who both practice ("do") and instruct others in the commandments are designated as "great."

The Nuance of Disobedience

The document notes a linguistic distinction in the Greek text between Jesus' mission and the believer's temptation:

- In verse 17, the word for "destroy" is *kataluo*, meaning to utterly nullify. Jesus did not come to do this.
- In verse 19, the word for "break" is *luo*^[1], meaning to loose or release oneself from an obligation.

The temptation for modern Christians is to "accommodate" the law to fit their personal sins, choosing which laws to follow based on their own "paradigms"—windows of life shaped by experience and emotion rather than scripture.

Conclusion

The Christian's relationship to the law is defined by the expectation of complete obedience. While the believer is free from the law as a means of salvation, they are not free from the responsibility to uphold God's divine standards. The document concludes that being an "obedient Christian" is the only path to being "great" in the kingdom of heaven. The goal is not to merely "crawl in" but to enter with the rewards of a life lived in alignment with God's commands.

Greek Terminology and Pronunciation Guide

Term	Phonetic Pronunciation	Definition
Antinomian	an-tee-NOH-mee-un	One who holds the view that under the gospel dispensation of grace, the moral law is of no use or obligation.
Luo	LOO-oh	To loose, release, dissolve, or break; specifically, to release oneself from the obligation of a command.
Kataluo	kat-al-OO-oh	To utterly destroy, demolish, or nullify; an intensified form of <i>luo</i> .

[^1]: The term *luo* is used in Matthew 5:19 to describe the act of breaking or loosening the least of the commandments, resulting in a diminished status within the kingdom.