

Panthers:

Did your parents ever say, “Do as I say, not as I do?” Our parents knew what was right and yet realized that they would fall short. Aware that we would not only listen to their words but also watch their behavior, they couched their inevitable disparity in word and deed with “Do as I say, not as I do.” In Christ, we have a Lord and Savior who says “Do as I say, and as I do.” His teachings are perfectly aligned with His heart and life. Consequently, He calls the fully surrendered to be obedient from the inside-out (Matt. 5:17-20).

Jesus fulfilled the Law and the Prophets (Matt. 5:17-18). “Fulfill” means more than “complete.” It means “to clarify the intent of.” Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament (the Law and the Prophets) including its 613 laws.

Jesus fulfilled the ceremonial law, the sacrificial system which the blood of animals could not satisfy (Heb. 10:4). Jesus died once and for all for sin (Heb. 10:10), and there is no longer any need for sacrifice (Heb. 10:18).

Jesus fulfilled the civil law, also known as the judicial law (Jn. 3:18; 16:11). The civil law brought order to the Israelites leaving Egypt. Its purpose was to keep harmony and health among the civilization. In the United States today, we live in a culture of civil laws based on those laws found in the Old Testament. Inheritance, health, and equity laws are based on these commands. Because of the ultimate clarity of God’s life in Christ, civil judgment has appeared to all men. Those who do not fully surrender their lives to Christ stand condemned.

Jesus fulfilled the moral law (Heb. 4:15). Though He was tempted in every way, He did not sin. He kept the 10 Commandments and loved the Father and His neighbors during His entire life on earth. Jesus did not abolish these laws. Jewish teachers said that one abolished the law by disobeying it (Deut. 27:26). Jesus did not disobey the law.

The Law and the Prophets testified, or pointed, to Jesus (John 5:39; Lk. 24:44). Before He went to the cross, Jesus said that He had completed (fulfilled) His mission from the Father (Jn 17:4). On the cross, He said, “It is finished” (Jn. 19:30). The Greek word for the phrase meant “paid in full,” the same word that appeared at the top of a paid bill of sale 2,000 years ago. Jesus did what the Law was powerless to do—provide righteousness (Gal. 2:21). The purpose of the Law was to point us to Christ so that we might be justified—just as if we had never sinned—through faith in Him (Gal. 3:24; Lk. 16:16). Faith in Christ makes us no longer under the supervision of the Law (Gal. 3:25).

Now, we must obey Him from the heart to experience inside-out righteousness (Matt. 5:19-20). Obey means “to listen.” Jesus said that anyone who would break the least of these commandments and teach others to do the same would be called the least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever would practice and teach these commands would be called great in the kingdom of heaven. He went on to say that our righteousness must surpass that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. That was a radical statement to His listeners because the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were thought to be the most righteous of all in keeping their commands.

Unfortunately, the Pharisees and teachers of the law practiced outside-in righteousness (Matt. 23:25-28). They thought that righteous acts performed on the outside where others could see justified them before God. This had never been the case. After sinning with Bathsheba, King David lamented that God had never been satisfied

with burnt offerings but always attributed His righteousness to a contrite heart (Ps. 51:16-17). Paul said that in Christ, we are the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21), the living, breathing righteousness of God in-the-flesh, or actually in-the-Spirit.

Obedience from the heart occurs from the inside-out because it comes from the Spirit of Christ in us (Rom. 8:1-4). If we do not have the Spirit of Christ, then we do not belong to Christ (Rom. 8:9). We obey and live only by faith—Christ in us (Gal. 2:20). Our ticket to enter the kingdom of heaven is righteousness that comes from another—Christ (Rom. 3:21-22). He is the “Do as I say and as I do” Savior.

This week, when tempted to disobey, listen and look to Christ in you, and obey Him from your heart. He fulfilled the law, and He will empower you to obey, experiencing His inside-out righteousness.

Called to obedience,
Mitch