

John 6

Sermon: **The Law of Moses lives in Christ**

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THE LAW OF MOSES

1. While I was writing the words, *Jesus is the living Law of Moses*¹, I realized I owe you an explanation of exactly what I mean by that.

1.1. To understand the role of the Law of Moses in the life of the Israelites, we must go back — back to when Yahweh gave His Law to His chosen people through His prophet Moses. In Deuteronomy, Moses prepares the people to enter the Promised Land. And how does he prepare them? Before they set foot in it, he reminds them of what is important in the eyes of Yahweh, their God. In **Deuteronomy 5:1–2**, Moses says: “Hear, O Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb.”

1.2. Moses briefly tells them they must listen to Yahweh if they want to be blessed in the land He is giving them.

1.3. In chapter 6, we have the purpose of the Law. Moses says to his people: “These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all His decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life².”

1.4. Moses then explains in detail how the people should live and what they should look like if they lovingly carry out God’s commands in their lives.

¹ Sermon number 59, § 4.

² (Deuteronomy 6:1–3)

1.5. In chapter 13, Moses says something very interesting, which is deeply connected to the religious teachers who led the people in Jesus' day: **"Carefully observe everything I command you; do not add to it or take away from it³."**

DO NOT DISTORT GOD'S LAW, ISRAEL

2. This verse is our starting point. Sadly, the people back then — just like those listening to Jesus — always added something or changed something within the Law of Moses. And throughout their history, they were cursed because of it. By CURSED, I mean this: they never had a long and blessed life in the Promised Land — exactly as Moses told them they would if they obeyed (§1.3.).

2.1. They didn't listen to Yahweh, nor did they care about His promises. When they entered the Promised Land, they said: *"I planted these vineyards, I built these houses, I planted these olive groves."* In other words, they wanted to be their own gods, deciding how to live, whom to worship, and how to interpret the Law of Moses. They quickly forgot to listen to Yahweh.

2.2. The Law of Moses can be divided into three categories:

- a) Moral Law
- b) Ceremonial Law
- c) Civil Law

2.3. Its purpose was for the Israelites, once in the Promised Land, to be completely different in every way from the nations around them. Outwardly — in their clothing, their worship of Yahweh (ceremonial law) — and inwardly — in their good deeds (moral law). But if, in certain life situations, an Israelite had to choose which of the three was most important, the moral law always came first. In God's eyes, goodness, righteousness, mercy, humility, meekness, and the awareness that He is holy and they are not — these outweighed everything else.

2.3.1. Yahweh's statement in **Isaiah 1:11–17** proves this: **"The multitude of your sacrifices— what are they to me?" says the Lord. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations— I cannot bear your worthless assemblies... Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong. Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow."**

2.4. My short conclusion: through Moses, the Israelites received the very ESSENCE of their God engraved on stone tablets. God's purpose in giving the Law was for them to know Him intimately and, in the end, to fall in love with Him — because by studying and obeying the Law, they would come to understand His goodness, majesty, and righteousness, in contrast to their own condition.

³ (Deuteronomy 13:1)

THE LOVE OF KING DAVID FOR THE LAW OF GOD

2.5. Now that we better understand the relationship between the Law of Moses and the people of Israel, let's go back to **Deuteronomy 17:14-19**, where Yahweh foretells what the people will one day ask Him for—a KING—and He describes the main role of the king once He grants their request: **"When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left."**

2.6. The main role of the king was to lead God's people according to the instructions given in the Law of Moses. He was to be a light to the people—showing how to apply the Law of Moses in life. He was to be a righteous Israelite who would reign over God's people with the intention that they, too, would be righteous Israelites, that is, priests of God whose role was to present the image of their God to the rest of the world around them.

3. In 2 Samuel we read about the life of King David, who was, of all kings, probably the closest to fulfilling the role Yahweh intended for him: **"Let him read the Law all his life so that he may learn to fear the LORD and not consider himself above his brothers."**

3.1. No one expressed such love for the Law of God as David did in his Psalms. Here are a few examples: **Psalms 1:1-3**: **"Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers."**

3.2. The next Psalm of David that I will mention is personally my favorite; here we can see David's genuine love for the Law of God. I assume that all of David's Psalms came from certain life experiences he personally had. That being said, just like the authors of the Bible, I believe our understanding of God is of a growing nature—it never stops as long as we are alive. In other words, I believe David's Psalm came from the realization that God had proven in his life that He would never abandon him, and that through His grace He would always lead him toward the light. Realizing this, David decided to dedicate his entire life to Yahweh—he finally trusted God rather than himself.

3.3. And **Psalms 19:8-15** proves this: **"The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward. But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless,**

innocent of great transgression. May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

THE LAW OF MOSES AS A CONDITION FOR SALVATION

3.4. King David DID fulfill the CONDITION of his salvation, which he received through keeping the Law of Moses in his heart. He acknowledged that before God’s Law, he was a sinful human being, incapable of meeting the standard of the Law itself. But that didn’t mean he didn’t want to. He wanted, with all his being, to follow the instructions of the Law, even though he knew he would never fully succeed. And why did he want to? Because he loved the Law with all his heart; he loved the IDEA that one day he would become a human being who would perfectly live out God’s Law. But not now—not in this life; now was the time to seek God’s grace and forgiveness, now was the time for battle, the battle against himself—King David understood this. He took this battle seriously. Every day, he kept the Law of the LORD in his heart, reminding himself who he was before God, who God was, and what God had promised him if he loved His Law with all his heart (§ 2.4.).

3.5. Likewise, the love David had for God’s Law proved that he took seriously the role God had intended for him (§ 2.6.). Throughout his entire life, David worked hard to pass on to the people that same love for the Law of God—the ESSENCE of their God⁴.

THE PRIEST’S LOVE FOR THE LAW OF GOD

4. Let’s move forward a thousand years to the time of a priest named Zechariah. Zechariah was the father of John the Baptist. In **Luke 1:6**, it says that the priest Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth were righteous before God: „Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord’s commands and decrees blamelessly.“ What does it mean to live blamelessly according to the Law of God? What is the author trying to say with those words? Did Zechariah and Elizabeth succeed where no one before them had—did they perfectly keep the Law of Moses? No. By “lived blamelessly,” I believe the author Luke means that the Law of God was EVERYTHING to them. They dedicated their lives to the Law, just as King David had done in his time. Zechariah’s song of praise proves this; in **Luke 1:69-70, 78-79**, through his song he showed that his heart was ready for the fulfillment of God’s promises:

“He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago⁵)... Because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace⁶.”

⁴ The Psalms, which King David wrote, are one of the greatest proofs of this—as is his life while he reigned over God’s people. Read (First Book of Samuel from chapter 16 all the way to the end of the Second Book of Samuel).

⁵ (Jeremiah 23:5–6)

⁶ These verses are proof that Zechariah, as a priest, knew firsthand that the religious leadership of Israel was rotten on the inside. He understood that without a king, the people—NOT EVEN WITH THE HELP OF RELIGIOUS SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP—would ever walk the path of righteousness.

4.1. Because of his love for the Law of God, Zechariah also loved God's promises. He understood them, connected them together, and knew what had to happen before all the promises could be fulfilled. Zechariah knew that first, the rising sun from above (the Messiah) had to come to lead the people to obedience to the Law of Moses (§ 2.5.).

4.2. We probably won't have time to interpret John 6 further; I will do so in the next sermon.

PARTIALLY FULFILLED LAW AND PROPHETS

5. Before the end of this sermon, I want to take you to **Matthew 5:17**, where Jesus says: **"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them⁷."**

5.1. Jesus tells His people that He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. What exactly does that mean? I believe it means several things, but to understand how, we must first understand the truth that Paul understood and stated in **Colossians 1:15**: **"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation."**

5.2. Paul understood one of the great truths about God, which is ultimately also recorded in **Jeremiah 1:4-5**: **"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."**

5.3. In other words, Paul knew that God assigns a role to a human being within His reality—He decides who he or she will be, how long they will live, and when they will die. Knowing this truth, Paul writes the Letter to the Colossians and tells us, the readers, that Jesus Christ was "created" before any other created being—not literally, but in the mind of God. And why was He "created"? Primarily to rule over God's reality: He is the promised Messiah, the final prophet, the perfect priest who perfectly carried out and interpreted God's Law in His life. He is the main character in God's story, for whom everything else that exists was created.

5.4. When we understand the truth about God that Paul understood—and ultimately believed—then Jesus' words in Matthew confirm Paul's statement, don't they? Jesus is telling His people only what they should have already known from the time they began studying the Torah in the synagogues as children with their parents.

5.5. Maybe not everything Paul believed after the death of Jesus, but one thing they certainly knew was this: every Jew in the time of Christ knew from the accounts in the Torah that without the Messiah, there would be no establishment of God's kingdom in Israel. Every Jew knew that without the Messiah, the people as a whole would never be able to freely and without fear of oppressors carry out the Law of Moses in the promised land.

⁷ In sermon number 37, from § 3.1. to the very end, I explain why Jesus decided to say that statement to His people and what He meant by it.

THE PHARISEES BELIEVED THE MESSIAH WOULD APPROVE THEIR INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW

6. But what the people did not know was that the Pharisees had lowered the standard of the Law of Moses. That is why Jesus says in **Matthew 5:20**:

“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

The word “heaven,” as I have said before, does not literally mean a location in the skies; it is a synonym for “God’s”—nothing less, nothing more.

6.1. So, how exactly did Jesus fulfill the Law and the Prophets? He fulfilled them in that, for the first time in Israel’s history, one of their own was perfectly good in His very being. This can only mean one thing: He alone had the authority to interpret the perfect Law of God because He Himself was perfect. The Law of God (the ESSENCE of their God) was no longer just instructions written in the Torah—now the Law of God (the ESSENCE of their God) was alive in Jesus Christ.

6.2. That means all the righteous people from the Torah—Moses, Joshua, King David, Job, Abraham, Ruth, Jeremiah, Ezekiel—were UNRIGHTEOUS people who loved the RIGHTEOUS Law of God with all their hearts. Yes, they were a light to the people, showing how to view the Law of God and how to apply it in life. But their examples were always intertwined with their sin; none of them could perfectly interpret the Law of Moses (Moral, Civil, and Ceremonial).

6.3. Only a perfect man can perfectly interpret God’s Law. And now He had come onto the scene—He came to fulfill God’s expectations, the first king in Israel’s history to fulfill to the letter all of God’s expectations (§ 2.5.)—a king who would lead (teach) God’s people how to correctly interpret and ultimately live according to God’s Law. He was not just a bearer of light, as the righteous of the Torah had been—He IS the light, the rising star from above, as the priest Zechariah (father of John the Baptist) had said.

6.4. The Law of God does not contain within itself only the instructions God gave the people with the intention that they carry them out. The Law also contains all the promises God gave to the people through the fathers in faith (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). The prophets, throughout history, reminded the people of these promises, but sadly, they never cared for them, and they showed that by their actions:

“This is what the LORD says: Your ancestors forsook me,” declares the LORD, “and followed other gods and served and worshiped them. They forsook me and did not keep my law. But you have behaved more wickedly than your ancestors. See how all of you are following the stubbornness of your evil hearts instead of obeying me⁸.”

6.5. The warning God sends through His prophets—in this case the prophet Jeremiah—proves my statements above: not believing in the promises means living however you think you should, and that is what the Israelites did in their lives—their way of life proved they did not care about God’s promises.

⁸ (Jeremiah 16:11–12)

6.6. But now a righteous Israelite had come onto the scene—one who truly believed in God's promises—and His very coming was the greatest proof to the people that God had not abandoned His promises. So, when Jesus tells His people that He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets, He is telling them that God's plan is surely moving forward, toward the fulfillment of everything He promised—and Jesus Himself is the greatest proof that the words of God's prophets have been fulfilled.

CONCLUSIONS

7. Let's move toward the end—what is the main point of this sermon? The Pharisees believed that if they perfectly carried out the Law of Moses, they would inherit the kingdom of God. To them, the Messiah was merely a tool through whom they would get everything they wanted in this life—and above all, they wanted the Messiah to destroy their oppressors (Rome) so that they could freely spread the message of their distorted Law of Moses (§ 1.4.). In other words, they believed that the Messiah would come after the entire nation, including Israel's religious leadership, perfectly observed the Law of Moses in their lives for at least one day.

7.1. The priest Zechariah would have had something to say about that—his song of praise is proof that he understood how destructive that way of thinking was for his people. He knew that the Pharisees had completely distorted the message of the Law itself. He understood that God's promises would be fulfilled despite the disobedience of His people. In other words, while the Pharisees believed that God's kingdom would be established because of their own merit (perfect observance of the distorted Law of Moses), the priest Zechariah believed that by God's grace the Messiah would come and establish God's kingdom.

7.2. Before the very end, I want to say this: both Moses and King David and the prophets would have accepted Jesus as the Messiah if they had had the opportunity to meet Him. And why would they have accepted Him? Because by witnessing His life, they would have realized that among them now stood the perfectly righteous Israelite in whom the perfect Law of God lived. And that is what I meant when I said that the Law of Moses lives in Christ.

7.3. Likewise, the Law and the Prophets were partially fulfilled in Christ's first coming, but for them to be completely fulfilled, the kingdom of God must be established—where for the first time ever, God's chosen people will be a righteous people. This will happen at Jesus' second coming to earth. In the Book of Revelation, we have a description of the coming of Jesus Christ and what God's kingdom will look like when it is established. Only then will all of God's promises finally be fulfilled in their entirety.

7.4. History repeats itself; in (§ 2.3.) Yahweh expressed His dissatisfaction toward His people—do not think that it is any different today. Yahweh still shows His dissatisfaction toward the church whose foundation of belief is in offering sacrifices and celebrating festivals. Sadly, history always repeats itself: for the church, attending mass, venerating saints, water baptism, confirmations, communion, choirs, repeating the same words in prayer, sacraments, praying to icons, believing in certain doctrines—all these rules that in themselves contain the concept of offering a sacrifice—are more important. Knowing many people from different

Christian denominations, I can confidently say that their ways are not God's ways. To truly know God is to love God. Not knowing God, they hate Him by their offering of sacrifices.

7.5. A tragedy—as I said—history repeats itself, and that is why you should hear God's call, which in Isaiah He also speaks to us (the church): **"Remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; stop doing wrong! Learn to do good; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow."** In other words, let us stop distorting the Gospel and adding to it—dear church, you have lowered the standard of Jesus' commandments (§ 6.)—let us return to the apostolic teaching, and then we will know what God truly wants from us.

7.6. In conclusion, I am a Gentile who, two thousand years later, loves the commandments of Jesus more and more in my life—all of God's promises that He gave to His people are also personally very important to me. The establishment of His kingdom in Israel will one day have a tremendous impact on all nations, and on every individual who will live to see that day (the Day of the Lord). What am I trying to say by that? To truly love God means: to know His promises, to know the role His Son, Jesus Christ, has in all of this, the role of His chosen people, and the role we as Gentiles have in the whole story. When we know all this, then the idea will gradually take root that loving Christ also means loving the Moral Law of Moses—which further means that we love the history of the people of Israel, told through the lives of King David, Moses, Jeremiah, Zechariah, and many others—who also loved God with all their heart, all their soul, all their mind... Do you see where I am going with this? If we do not love the entire Bible, if we separate it into truths that apply only to some and not to others, then we do not understand the depth, width, and height of God's plan. And in the end, we do not love God as He truly deserves.