

The Law of the Kingdom

Ps. 122: 1, 3

Ps. 78: 3

Ps. 119: 1 - 3

Ps. 119: 6, 8, 9, 13, 27

Ps. 119: 33, 36, 42, 43, 66

Scripture reading: Mt. 5: 17 - 32

Text: Mt. 5: 17 - 20

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Sometimes you see a bumper sticker, or a T-shirt, with the slogan: “No rules!”. The guy who wears that T-shirt or drives that car tells everybody that he does not want any rules to restrain him - “No rules for me, thank you!”

Such a lawless spirit is well known in the society in which we live. It carries within itself the seed of destruction and death.

Unfortunately this spirit also sneaks into the church very easily. There are people who call themselves Christian, but who don't want to hear anything about the law. If you dare to confront them with the law, or exhort them to live according to God's law, they will tell you: “Don't be so legalistic! We are no longer under the law, are we?”

Such a lawless spirit sneaks into the church through false doctrine, destroying whole churches from within. The basic error of such false doctrine is usually this: it puts the New Testament over against the Old Testament as if the New Testament teaches something different from the Old Testament. It does not see the old and the new covenant as one covenant. The Old Testament is then portrayed as the dispensation of the Law, and the New Testament as the dispensation of the Gospel. Putting the old and the new covenant over against

each other in this way, people reckon that God's law was a burden in the Old Testament, and that we are now freed from the law in the New Testament.

It is a heresy and a false gospel that has popped up often in the history of the church and has become very popular in our own time.

Lately it also started to appear in reformed churches. It has been introduced by men who don't want to see God's law as the standard for Christian ethics. Instead they prefer to speak of "the style of the kingdom". And they reckon that the style of the kingdom is much broader than the righteousness which is described in God's law. According to that ethics a man who divorces his wife should not be put under church discipline as long as he continues to live in the *style* of the kingdom. Have you heard anything like that lately? They do not apply this mind frame to marriage only, but also to all the other commandments.

Dear congregation, we have to realise that this is an enormous shift away from the gospel. If we would adopt such ethics which describes itself as a life in the style of the kingdom - a style which doesn't want to restrict itself to the law of God as the only rule for right and wrong - then we also have to rewrite our confessions. Especially the Heidelberg Catechism will need a radical revision. For Lord's Days 32 - 44 present the Ten Commandments as the rule for thankfulness.

Shall we now replace this rule with a different style? Is there an obedience possible which is not according to the law? Or is there a righteousness higher or better than that which is described and demanded in the law?

Our Lord Jesus Christ answers all these questions here in our text. From these verses, Mt. 5: 17 - 20, I will preach God's Word to you with the theme:

There is only one rule for thankfulness

We will note...

1. That Christ confirms the law
2. That the law is eternal and unchangeable
3. That God's law is the only law of the kingdom

In the first place we note that...

Christ confirms the law

Of which law do we speak?

When we look at God's law as it was given through Moses, then we may discern between moral law, ceremonial law and civil law.

The moral law is summarised in the Ten Commandments.

The ceremonial law deals with all the shadows which pointed to Christ and which are fulfilled in Him. It is all the laws regarding the priests, the tabernacle, the sacrifices, the holy feasts of the Lord, and purification laws. All these laws, which we may call ceremonial laws, pointed to our salvation in Christ. We find a thorough exposition of that in the letter to the Hebrews.

Apart from the moral law and the ceremonial law, we find in the Old Testament also the civil law given to the people in Israel. The civil law prescribed the practical administration of the moral law. It described for example what punishment should be given for different transgressions.

“If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep” - Ex.22: 1

“If a man finds a young woman who is a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out, then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife because he has humbled her; he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days” - Deut.22: 28, 29.

“The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall

surely be put to death” - Lev.20: 10. They had to be stoned to death with stones - Deut.22: 24.

There you have a few examples of the civil law. It prescribed the practical administration of the moral law.

But, brothers and sisters, while we are allowed to discern between moral law, ceremonial law and civil law, Scripture presents the whole law to us as a unity.

Without any tension Scripture speaks of “the law”, singular, including all the laws as one.

Now, in our text verse 17 speaks of the Law and the Prophets. The Law and the Prophets refer to the whole Old Testament. In this case the Law refers to the five books of Moses; and the Prophets refer to all the prophetic writings.

You will note, however, that the rest of our text simply speaks of “the law” and “these commandments”. Thus Christ is speaking in our text of the law as given through Moses and of this same law as expounded and applied by the prophets. And He tells us that He did not come to abolish this law. God’s law will last for all eternity.

If we look at the broader context we note that Christ is preaching the gospel.

“...Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching *the gospel of the kingdom*...” - 4: 23.

The gospel of the kingdom is the good news of Christ’s kingship and rule. Christ is the King of the kingdom and a king determines the laws. Will Christ now introduce a new law for the kingdom? He says: No.

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil” (:17).

The King of the kingdom says: I have not come to introduce a new constitution for the kingdom. Everything that I will teach you, and everything that I will do, and everything that I will command you to do, will be in full agreement with the law of Moses. The law of the kingdom has already been given at Mount Sinai. I have not come to abolish it, but to fulfil.

It is of the utmost importance to understand the relationship between the old and the new covenant. It is one covenant. The new covenant is not in tension with the old covenant. The Old Testament and the New Testament do not contradict each other - not on one single point. On the contrary, the New Testament is entirely built on the foundation of the Old Testament. Destroy the Old Testament and the New Testament collapses.

What then is the relation between the Old and the New Testaments? It is a relation of promise and fulfilment; a relation of shadow and reality.

Christ proclaims the gospel and He says: Everything that I will teach you will be in full agreement with the Law and the Prophets. There is nothing in the Law or in the Prophets that I will abolish.

It is now on this point that you will ask: "But what about all the ceremonial laws? What about all the laws concerning the priests, and the tabernacle service with all its sacrifices, the holy feasts, and so forth - are these laws still valid? We don't sacrifice bulls and rams anymore, do we?"

Yes, but the content of these laws are eternal. Christ is our High Priest forever. **He** is our tabernacle. He is the Lamb of God who took away our sins. The reality of these laws stands forever and is actively at work through our Mediator Jesus Christ.

The law that there can be no forgiveness of sins without shedding of blood has not changed. Our Lord Jesus Christ is forever the Lamb of God who has shed His blood for us, and through His blood we are actively reconciled to God also in the New Testament.

All these laws concerning the priesthood, the tabernacle and so forth, are thus not abolished by Christ; He has confirmed these laws and brought it to its full reality.

Those laws could not be satisfied by the blood of bulls and rams. If their blood could truly work the forgiveness of sins, then Christ's sacrifice would be off no purpose. Christ alone is their fulfilment. And by fulfilling those laws He did not abolish them, but in fulfilling them He has confirmed them forever.

If someone would ask the question if Christ has abolished the ceremonial laws, we should first clarify the question itself. If the question is whether Christ has abolished the outward administration of these laws, the answer is of course: Yes! Christ did abolish the shadows as the shadows were fulfilled in Him.

But if the question is whether Christ has abolished the ceremonial laws in its meaning and reality, the answer is: "No! Christ confirmed the ceremonial laws for all eternity".

Therefore we need the blood of the Lamb also today, in the New Testament, just as much as in the Old Testament. The true tabernacle stands forever, as we read in Hebrews:

"...this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of *the true tabernacle* which the Lord erected, and not man" - Hebr. 8: 1, 2.

And again:

"...Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered *the Most Holy Place* once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" - Hebr. 9: 11, 12.

And again we read:

“...according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, ***which are copies of the true***, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us...” - Hebr.9: 23, 24.

The tabernacle stands forever; not a tabernacle made with hands, but the true tabernacle in heaven, that is: Christ Himself, our High Priest, through whom we enter into the Most Holy Place in heaven, even the glory of God’s presence.

The true service of the tabernacle stands forever. Christ died only once, but He acts as our High Priest and Mediator forever in order that we may always go to God through Him, and so that we in the eternity that comes may always live in the presence of God Himself. That is the fulfilment of the covenant promise. And although Christ died only once, He does not cease to be our High Priest. To satisfy the ceremonial laws He acts as our Mediator forever. And what are these laws? They have as their foundation this: that God’s righteousness stands forever, that it cannot be broken and has to be perfectly satisfied. Therefore we need Christ as our eternal and heavenly High Priest.

The shadows were not abolished because they have no meaning anymore, instead Christ came to show their full meaning and the reality to which they were pointing - a reality that will last for all eternity; as we read of our Lord Jesus that He has become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Hebr. 6: 19, 20).

“...He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood...” - Hebr. 7: 24.

Now we understand what Christ means when He says in our text that He has not come to abolish or to destroy the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfil.

However, this does not only apply to the ceremonial laws. In fact, we will note shortly that in the whole context of this pronouncement Christ focuses in on our

obedience to the law and continues to expound in the following verses the Ten Commandments to illustrate what He is saying here in our text.

Now then, we said that the moral law and the ceremonial law and the civil law are all together one law, and that although we discern between them, they cannot be separated from each other. It has become clear to us that Christ has not come to destroy the ceremonial laws but to fulfil their requirements which last forever.

The next question then would be: “What about the civil law, does that still apply to us? Those laws which deal with Israel as a covenant people, and which deal with legal cases between people determining the punishments that apply to all the different transgressions - are these laws still valid for us? We don’t stone someone to death with stones who commits adultery, do we? Has Jesus not abolished that law when He sent away the woman who was caught in adultery, without stoning her (John 8: 1 - 11)?

No, once more we have to understand that, just as in the case of the ceremonial laws, the underlying principles of the civil law are eternal. In the administration of the law in the Old Testament an adulterer was excommunicated by stoning him. In the New Testament the adulterer is removed from the communion of the covenant people through church discipline and excommunication - 1 Cor. 5.

And, in the final judgement, the adulterer will be excommunicated forever. The civil law given to Israel will be fully satisfied when the adulterer is excommunicated forever by throwing Him into the fire of hell, as the apostle Paul has written:

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers...will inherit the kingdom of God” - 1 Cor. 6: 9, 10.

The underlying principle of each of the civil laws in Israel stands forever, although the outward administration thereof differs in the Old and New Testament. Stoning someone to death was only a shadow of the final judgement to come. It was not really the execution of the full punishment, but only a shadow of the punishment to come. And so were all the other punishments prescribed.

The civil law does not speak about punishments only, but prescribes all aspects of the practical administration of the moral law.

If we compare the old and the new covenant, the difference is not in doctrine, but in glory. For in the New Testament we see the full reality of that which was still veiled in the Old Testament.

The New Covenant is the same covenant which was made with Abraham, but now, after Pentecost, it is administered to us in much greater glory as ever before. Thus the old and the new do not differ in doctrine, but in glory. Now we see the glory of God's salvation much clearer than in the Old Testament.

Dear congregation, when our Lord says: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil", then He includes *all* the teaching of the Old Testament.

He did not come to destroy *any* teaching of the Old Testament. Instead He confirmed those laws for all eternity and made us to see and to enjoy its full reality in Him.

The word "fulfil" is set over against "destroy". By fulfilling the law He has not abolished it, but confirmed it for all eternity.

Before we look at the rest of our text, we still have to note something else with regard to verse 17. Why does Christ say to the Jews that He did not come to destroy the Law or the Prophets? Why was it necessary to say this? Why would anyone think that He came to destroy the law? Does He not address people who had a very high view of the law? What on earth could possibly make them to think that He came to destroy the law?

In our text Christ corrects the false teaching of the scribes and Pharisees. He accuses them of breaking the law. They were concerned about their outward appearance only. Only the external matters of the law counted for them, while they were despising and trespassing the law in their hearts. The Pharisees did not keep the law at all; they were in fact the most detestable transgressors of the law. And therefore Christ says that if our righteousness - that is: our obedience to the law - do not exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, then we will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

But the people thought that the lives of the Pharisees and scribes were an example of obedience to the law. In fact, they identified the lifestyles of the Pharisees with obedience to the law - just as some people still think today.

When Christ then fiercely attacks the Pharisees and condemns their error, many could think - as indeed many do foolishly think today - that Christ is against obedience to the law.

But no, Christ exposes the shameful disobedience of the Pharisees, who shamelessly disobeyed the law, and teaches us to obey the law not outwardly only but from the heart in truth and in spirit.

Later on, in chapter 23, Jesus says of the Pharisees:

“...all their works they do to be seen by men...Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you give a tenth of your spices - mint, dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out the gnat and swallow the camel! Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence” - Mt.23: 5, 23 - 25.

Over against the outward show of the Pharisees, Christ puts true obedience to the law - obedience from the heart.

Our text is preceded by the beatitudes. Now, in the beatitudes we see that the citizens of the kingdom are indeed new people, created into the image of God. They hunger and thirst for righteousness, they are pure in heart, they are merciful and peaceful people. Their good works are no hypocrisy but a light in a dark world glorifying God.

That is what precedes our text. Their new obedience to the law is from the heart. Yes, the law truly finds expression in their lives, as the apostle Paul says that God sent His own Son in the flesh to condemn sin in the flesh, in order that:

“...the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit - Rom. 8: 4.

He says that through Christ's redemption the requirement of the law is fulfilled also in our lives. Through Christ we too become obedient to the law so that the requirements of the law start to find fulfilment in our lives. Inwardly we are renewed in order that the Father is glorified by us. That is how the citizens of the kingdom are described.

It is the gospel of Christ's dominion; the gospel of His kingdom. The Law and the Prophets, that is: the teaching of the whole Old Testament, is in the first place confirmed and fulfilled by Christ Himself; but as we are engrafted into Him it starts to have its fulfilment also in us and in our lives. It is the gospel of His life-giving dominion in our lives.

Thus the word "fulfil" does not mean "destroy"! Instead, fulfil means that the Law and the Prophets have now come to their fullness in Christ. In Him their teaching is confirmed, and in Him the requirement of the law is satisfied, and starts to have its fulfilment also in our lives.

The law has not changed; only its outward administration. The shadows made room for its reality - a glorious reality of life in communion with God. That is the fulfilment of the covenant promise. That is the end and purpose of our salvation.

This new life in fellowship with God is based on the fulfilment of the law - a law that will last forever.

We note that in the second place, that...

The law is eternal and unchangeable

In verse 16 the Lord commands us to do good works. In the next verse, verse 17, He begins to explain what good works are. Good works are determined by the law. The law is our only rule to discern between righteousness and unrighteousness; the only rule to discern between good works and bad works. The law tells us what is good and what is bad.

Without a law there can be no sin, for sin is defined by Scripture as the transgression of the law.

“Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness - 1 John 3:4 (NIV).

But without a law there can also be no righteousness, for righteousness is determined by the law. The law says what is right.

Will the King of the kingdom introduce another law? Christ says: No, there is only one law, the one which was given through Moses and expounded by the Prophets.

Thus verse 18 follows logically when He says:

“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 all is fulfilled”.

We find these words also in Luke, but Luke puts it a bit differently. He says:

“...it is *easier* for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail” - Luke 16: 17.

He says it is *easier* for heaven and earth to pass away than for one letter of the law to pass away. The meaning then is that the law stands more firm than heaven and earth. The law will last longer than heaven and earth will last.

This is confirmed even more clearly when Christ says:

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” - Mark 13:31.

His Word, also His Word in the Old Testament, is eternal; it stands more firm than heaven and earth. Heaven and earth will indeed pass away, but not the words once spoken by God.

But there are a few words at the end of verse 18 that still need clarification, the words: "...till all is fulfilled". What does that mean?

Does it mean that the law will pass away *after* everything has been fulfilled? Surely not! For then Christ would indeed be a destroyer of the law, if the law would be destroyed by its fulfilment. But He says: No, I did *not* come to abolish the law.

That Christ is not at all thinking of *ever* abolishing the law, becomes even more clear when He adds in verse 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".

Note that He doesn't speak of the kingdom of Israel in the Old Testament; no, He speaks about the kingdom of heaven - that is: the eternal kingdom which He has come to establish. The heavenly kingdom, He says, is a kingdom where this law will be honoured and obeyed. Which law? The law which He mentioned in verses 17 and 18 which God has given through Moses, even the Ten Commandments. You shall not murder - verse 21. You shall not commit adultery - verse 27. This is the law which He upholds and teaches. This is the law that will be honoured and obeyed in the eternal kingdom which He came to establish.

Who shall obey this law? All who enter into His kingdom.

Heaven and earth will pass away but not even one letter of the law will ever pass away. The words "till all is fulfilled" means that there will come a time when the righteous requirements of the law *will* be fully obeyed by all in the kingdom of heaven. It will be on the new earth where righteousness dwells, that righteousness which is prescribed by the law. Then we will be perfectly righteous and live in unbroken communion with God according to His law. That will be the final fulfilment of the law. And for *that* purpose Christ has come. But it is a

reality even now in this life, that all who enter the kingdom of heaven starts to live according to this law.

In the last place we note that...

God's law is the only law of the kingdom

“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. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (verses 19 and 20).

These verses follow logically. The law will never change or pass away. It is valid also for the kingdom of heaven. Therefore it shall be obeyed by all who enter the kingdom of heaven. This is the law of the kingdom; there is no other.

Christ's kingdom and His dominion stand on this foundation.

When He says in the following verses “You have heard that it was said...But I say to you...”, then He is not making corrections on the law of Moses, no, He is correcting the error of the scribes and the Pharisees. They were only concerned about their outward appearance, while they hated God's law in their hearts. Now, Christ is rebuking the scribes and Pharisees for their disobedience to the law. And over against their foolish show of outward religion He states that the law is spiritual, judging first of all our hearts and minds - when you are angry with your brother, or look at a woman.

In these verses Christ acts as a faithful interpreter of the law, restoring the true meaning of the law. After the Pharisees have mutilated the law over many years and limited its meaning to the performance of outward duties, Christ shows us the depth and the spiritual nature of the law, as it requires of us to be inwardly conformed to the holiness and righteousness of God.

The Pharisees were only concerned about their own honour and prestige, what people would think of them, they were therefore very concerned about outward duties and traditions of men, while they were murderers and adulterers with hate in their hearts and eyes full of adultery.

Over against their shameful transgression of the law, our Lord Jesus puts the true obedience to the law that will find its fulfilment in the life of each believer.

Dear brothers and sisters, the whole New Testament confirms this teaching of Christ. The whole New Testament repeats and confirms the law of God.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour your father and mother...” - Eph.6: 1, 2.

To whom does the apostle teach that? To a New Testament congregation. Where does he get this from? From the law of Moses.

“If you really fulfil the royal law according to Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’, you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors” - James 2: 8, 9.

The Scripture to which the apostle refers is Lev. 19: 18. He teaches them to obey this law which is found in Leviticus in the Old Testament. And he teaches this to believers in the New Testament.

“Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law” - Rom.3:31.

Or think of the command to love God and your neighbour. This is often repeated in the New Testament as a summary of the law. But where does that come from? It comes from the law of Moses and were taught by the Prophets. When Christ teaches the same He says: This is the Law and the Prophets!

Let me mention just one last example. The apostle Paul says:

“...neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God” - 1 Cor. 6: 9, 10.

Now, this is teaching to a congregation in the New Testament. But, “fornicators” and “adulterers” - does that not refer to the seventh commandment?

“Idolaters” - does that not refer to the first commandment?

“Homosexuals” and “sodomites” - are they not transgressors of the seventh commandment?

“Thieves” - are they not judged by the eighth commandment?

“Covetous” - does that not refer to the tenth commandment?

“Slanderers” - are they not transgressors of the ninth commandment?

“Swindlers” - they transgress the eighth commandment.

Drunkards are judged by several of the commandments - they dishonour the name of God, they are unchaste, they destroy both their own life and the life of their neighbour.

Which command do we find in the New Testament that cannot be traced back to the law of Moses? The teaching of the New Testament is firmly build on everything the Old Testament has taught. Wherever the apostle Paul speaks about the Christian life and ethics, he clearly confirms and expounds the law, applying it to the lives of all believers (Rom. 12 - 15; Eph. 4: 17 - 6: 9; etc.).

There is not one God for the Old Testament, and another God for the New Testament. God has not changed, His righteousness as described in the law did not change, His words and His will have not changed. May we now murder, commit adultery or steal? May we now bear false witness against our neighbour? Which one of the commandments has been abolished?

Christ did not come to introduce a new rule for right and wrong, or a different rule for thankfulness.

Brothers and sisters, Christ saved us, not by breaking the law, but by keeping it.

The *law* is not the curse; *sin* is our curse. The curse of the law means: the curse which the law pronounce on our sin. We are no longer under the curse of the law, for Christ has taken our curse on Him and paid the ransom. The law can no longer condemn us, for in Christ we are perfect. We now find our delight in the law, for we know our Mediator. He will continue to sanctify us until we will finally, after this life, reach the goal of perfection. That is our glory and our hope - to be fully united to God in perfect and holy communion. That is the fulfilment of the covenant promise.

Yes, there is no higher perfection or righteousness that we can desire. That which the law demands of us, has now become our highest delight - holy fellowship with God and our neighbour. This is what God has given us in Christ. This is the purpose and end of our salvation - a new life of obedience to the glory of God.

Shall we now replace this rule of thankfulness with any other kind of obedience?

There is no other!

Dear brother, sister, do you know the sweetness and the riches of God's law? Do you study it with diligence in order to direct your whole life according to it?

How do you react when someone admonishes you and teaches you to obey the law? Do you push it away from you and tag such teaching to be legalistic?

No, let us not serve the Lord our own way. Christ has taught as no other rule of thankfulness. Let us not be deceived by a false and lawless gospel. Let us not follow a "style" invented by men.

The Lord will never change His law or reduce its authority. He does something infinitely better. In Christ He removes our sin from us and sanctify us. He unites us to Himself in holy communion. He gives us new hearts to love and obey Him.

Hear the gospel of Christ's kingdom. This is the salvation in Christ, and this is the righteousness unto which He saved us. If anyone follows Christ, this is the style of the kingdom - a new life in obedience to God according to His law.

In this life even the holiest have only a small beginning of this obedience. Nevertheless, with earnest purpose we do begin to live not only according to some but to all the commandments of God...until after this life we reach the goal of perfection - LD 44.

Therefore, whoever 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.

Amen.