

[Mat 5:17-20 ESV] 17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Before I start, I want to mention another difference between the 4th command and the rest. I have been saying up to this point that Jesus fully and perfectly **kept** the 4th commandment. But I think I have been very wrong about that. Brad pointed it out to me last week but I never considered it any further. Then it came out in our discussion on Thursday and I remembered to consider it more later.

Jesus essentially confessed that He and His Father are always working.

[Jhn 5:15-17 ESV] 15 The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. 16 And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. 17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."

So the 11th difference is that Jesus **confessed** to breaking the Sabbath. He evidently did not consider **his own working** as a **sin**. And that might be a much more significant difference than I first thought. In fact, it could be the MOST significant difference. Jesus did not fulfill this command by perfectly keeping it. Thanks Brad, for bringing that out. Sorry it took me so long to think about it.

Next-

I have thought a great deal about our Galatians 3:24 text that told us that law was a schoolmaster leading us to faith in Christ. I was puzzled with the question, what actually **changes** when the schoolmaster has prepared us and sends us into adult life. I have seen that there are at least 2 things. First, the law no longer has an enforcer. And second, we are empowered by our new life in Christ to not only keep the letter of the law but to keep the actual spirit of the law. We will talk about that second point later in the sermon. But about the first-

When a pupil was under a schoolmaster, the schoolmaster had the **authority** over the student to reward or discipline the student's behavior. Jewish people were under the schoolmaster, they were held by Jewish authorities to **keep** the law. If a person committed adultery, the law had a penalty and it was to be enforced. A group of people were held in conformity to the law by the authority that oversees them.

But the schoolmaster's job is to make all that teaching **internal**. He, like any good parent, wants to train a child so that when the child is free to do what he pleases, he chooses the **noble things**, the **right things**.

It is the difference between a child when they **live under our roofs** and **when they leave**. After the point that they leave, we can only tell them **what they should do**. But we cannot **make them do it**.

If my understanding is correct then, to a person who has come to faith in Christ, the law becomes something the Christian relies upon to show us **more clearly** what pleases our Savior. It moves from a set of rules that will be enforced upon us, to a set of principles we choose to live by.

But at the same time, Christ brought about a significant **change** in the way New Testament believers think about the law. And this changes **how we apply** it. Both Sabbatarians and Non Sabbatarians agree with that.

I want to add an announcement here. It is like late breaking news.

Since the time I first prepared this study weeks ago, and now, I have learned of another view than the one I believed to be true. I will call the one I started with the **traditional view**. It is held by men like Martin Lloyd Jones and many other solid scholars. The view that I am unfamiliar with I will call the **New Covenant view**. It is held by men like D A Carson, a person I heavily depend on to help me with difficult passages. I think the **New Covenant view** might line up better with the whole Bible better than the **traditional view**. But I did not have enough time to fully understand it. So I will briefly present it later to show you the difference. And the big difference is how it understands that Christ fulfilled the Law and the Prophets.

OK so the **traditional view** goes like this.

Some things Christ has fulfilled in a way that we no longer need to obey them. Like circumcision and the sacrifices. We agree that those things have changed.

Some become **principles** we should live by.

There were also civil government laws that regulated how a specific people on a specific piece of real estate were to live together. Those laws are not so

much “fulfilled” as much as they are just no longer relevant, except possibly for Israel. They are not relevant for Gentile believers.

So right now I want to focus on the difference between the first two categories in the **traditional view**.

I will call these differences “predictions to be fulfilled” and “principles to be obeyed”. Those might not be the most accurate terms but I think they will suffice for our purposes.

The **predictions** are made up of all the **prophecies** about Christ. We have the thousands of Old Testament scriptures that predict Christ’s birth, life, death, resurrection and coming again. Those prophecies, Christ either **has** fulfilled or **will fulfill** in the future. Sabbatarians and non Sabbatarians agree on this for the most part. We both believe we are saved by the work of Christ on the Cross in our behalf. We receive a righteousness from Christ that we could never earn. We are justified based on what **He did**, not on what **we do**. Our good works primarily serve **to prove** that our salvation is real.

But the predictions include more than just prophecies. They are also made up of all of the Old Testament clues, the **symbols** pointing to Christ. The sacrifices were part of that. A lamb whose blood was shed because of our sin. A scapegoat who had the sins of the people placed on him and he was sent outside of the city. The deliverance themes like coming out of Egypt. Those were all predictions of Christ. Both Sabbatarians and non Sabbatarians agree on this. They were a shadow of things to come. Hebrews 10 states this clearly.

Hebrews 10:8–16 (ESV)

8 When he (Christ) said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), 9 then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second. 10 And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, 13 waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. 14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. 15 And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, 16 “This is

the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,”

So the sacrifices were clearly a prediction that was **met by Christ**. And I think verse 16 explains a little bit more about the difference between the **schoolmaster** and the **adult student** in Galatians, about the **law** and our **relationship to it after Christ**. The law we keep now is part of us. We want to do it because God lays it in our minds in a way that we want to do them. We see them differently, more thoroughly, more expansively. We don't want to do **the least we can do** so we avoid punishment. We want to obey the law in the **fullest way we can** to most glorify our Savior and Lord.

Now, in the same way as the sacrifices, circumcision was a prediction, which pointed to a circumcision of the heart which Christ would enable in our lives. Feasts and festivals also were a prediction that pointed to Christ. I think it is safe to say that the keeping of the feasts and festivals is regarded as a **shadow of things to come** by Sabbatarians and non Sabbatarians alike. I believe the biggest difference between the Sabbatarians and the **traditional view** is this:

The **Sabbatarians** believe the Sabbath is a **principle to be obeyed**. I believe the New Testament teaches that it is a **prediction to be fulfilled**. And keep in mind, both the Sabbatarian and non Sabbatarian views are ok with principles to be obeyed and predictions to be fulfilled. We only differ at **which are which**. That is the core of our differences.

Now I think we are ready to look at our text this morning. You will see why it was important that we covered this information later on.

[Mat 5:17-20 ESV] 17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

In my dealing with the Sabbatarian position, this passage tends to be the core New Testament passage authorizing the **need to keep** the Sabbath. The reasoning goes like this.

Jesus says that the law stands.

If you relax or break the commandments you are the least in the Kingdom. If you do the commandments and teach others to do them you are great in the Kingdom.

The Sabbatarian argument continues that **it is safe to assume** that the commandments being mentioned include **at least** the 10 commandments. Therefore New Testament believers are required to keep the 4th commandment along with all the rest that need kept.

After all, Jesus said that if we love Him we will keep His commandments. If we won't keep the Sabbath, we must not love Jesus.

Since this Matthew 5 text was a core text for the Sabbatarian position, I was drawn to it over and over again. Let's see how we can best understand this text and see if it is safe to use the way commonly used by Sabbatharians.

In Matthew 5 there are 6 concepts.

- 1. Christ did not come to abolish the law.**
- 2. Christ came to fulfill the law.**
- 3. The law will not pass until all is accomplished**
- 4. Whoever relaxes/breaks the least commandment is the least**
- 5. Whoever keeps the commandments is the greatest**
- 6. Our righteousness must exceed the Pharisees**

We need to answer from scripture what each one means.

- 1. Christ did not come to abolish the law.**

There are many who teach that Christ **did** abolish the law. The word for abolish is used for destroying a house. Some read other New Testament passages and they say the law no longer has any bearing on the New Testament Christians. After all, Galatians tells us that we are no longer **under the law**. In fact we are under **the law of liberty** now. Romans says in 7:4 that we have **died to the law** through the body of Christ. We are released from the law. Hebrews 10:8 just told us He does away with the first in order to establish the second.

It is easy to get the wrong impression that Christ actually came **to** abolish the law. But that is not the point. He came so that we could, **at least**, become free of its **condemnation**. Because no one under the law can keep the law so they are condemned by its very goodness. The law brought us to Christ and now, having come to Christ, the law has a **different** ministry to us. How it is different is often debated.

Think about it. How could Christ abolish the commandments to **love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength** and **love your neighbor as you**

love yourself? That is part of the law. Abolishing the law would be like abolishing descriptions of the **Holiness of God**. The New Testament believer's relationship to the law is tricky. But we don't want to fall off on either side of that path. On one side of the path, we fall off by saying that the law just like it was in the Old Testament. We must rigidly demand that we keep everything it says. But on the other side of the path, we fall off by saying the law is irrelevant. It is abolished. So we must be very careful here. How the law applies to the New Testament Christian has been argued about by believers since the first century. We must let the New Testament tell us how to regard the law. Christ's quote is one of several we must refer to.

2. Christ came to fulfill the law.

This is where our introduction to this text comes in. How does Christ fulfill the law. Remember the two categories we talked about earlier. I called them **Principles** and **Predictions**. Christ came to fulfill it all.

What is next is the **traditional view**.

Now normally the word **fulfill** is used in regard to fulfilling prophecies. For example Christ **fulfilled** all the prophecies about how He was going to die. He **fulfilled** the sacrifices. He **fulfilled** the feasts. He **fulfilled** all the Predictive law. That is easy to understand. The Old Testament pictures pointed to something more complete in the future. Christ was that thing that they **pointed to**.

But what about the **principles**? How in the world would Christ possibly **fulfill** those. How do you **fulfill** the command, "don't commit adultery"?

Well the traditional view says that Christ fulfilled the principles of the law by completely and perfectly keeping them. He fulfilled the righteous requirements of the law by being perfect.

We see two other places this principle of the law being fulfilled by keeping it. So this is not an imaginary idea. The principle is in scripture.

Romans 13:10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

This verse uses the word, "fulfill" in regard to keeping the principle side of the law. So when we love, we are **fulfilling** the law. Logically then, when Christ loved, He was **fulfilling** the law.

And Romans 8:4

4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

The point here is that the commandments that are principles can be fulfilled. And they are fulfilled by keeping the commandments by the spirit. **Fulfilling** means keeping the very spirit of the law by the Spirit's power that granted the law. It means meeting the laws **rigorous demands**, meeting its righteous requirements. For Christ it would mean that He, in His Godhood and Manhood kept the principle laws perfectly and fulfilled every one that needed to be met in that way. For us it means when we walk by the Spirit, we **too** can keep the law in such a way we **fulfill the righteous requirements of the law**. I think this too explains a little more about our attitude to the law. When it is in our heart, and when we walk in the Spirit of Christ, we are enabled to obey the laws in the very spirit they were given. We don't just meet the minimum external requirements. We pour ourselves into fully doing the right thing for the right reasons because we love Christ. We do not continually live in that state. But Christ provides that opportunity for us. Living like this is available to us. We do not depend upon keeping the law for our salvation. That was accomplished in our justification that was fully provided by Christ. But He has given us a new spirit whereby we can live by these principles from the inside out.

But what about those who do not know Christ?

Vs 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Christians walk from faith to faith. Whatever is not of faith is sin. Without faith it is impossible to please God. A person outside of faith cannot fulfill any righteous requirements of the law. They live in a condemned state. There are non righteous, no not one.

So Christ fulfilled the "**principle laws**" by fully **keeping** them. He fulfilled the "**prediction laws**" by **being** them, by **being** that which was being pointed to. The New Covenant view sees this differently. This view does not break up the commands into principles and predictions and civil law. It treats them as a whole.

They use passages like this one.

[Mat 11:12-13 ESV] 12 From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 **For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John,**
It holds-

Not only do the Prophets prophesy, but the Law prophesies. The entire Old Testament has a prophetic function; and Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament.

The question then is **HOW** does Christ fulfill the Old Testament prophecy? In what sense?

We'll look at how the **New** Testament sometimes uses the **Old** Testament as being prophetic. Matt 2:15 refers to Hosea 11:1 as a prophecy that **Jesus** would return from Egypt to Palestine. But actually Hosea 11:1 was historically talking about the **Exodus** of the **Israelites** under Moses. So Matthew uses this old testament scripture to say that it is the History of the Jews that points forward to Christ. It is like the whole story points to Christ, not just prophetic writings.

In Deut 8 the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years to learn that Man does not live by bread alone. Deut 8:2. It was law but in the New Testament Jesus was in the wilderness 40 days and He quotes the same passage in such a way you would think the old testament passage was prophetic about what He would do.

In Luke 24:44 Jesus explained to the disciples that everything had to be fulfilled that was written about Christ in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. He explained it in verse 27 beginning with Moses and the prophets.

The point is that the **whole** of the **Old Testament** was pointing to Christ in one form or another. Some we can clearly chart out. Others may be a mystery for now. But the point in our text this morning, from the New Covenant position, is that Jesus is not against the law. How could He be? It is all pointing to Him in some form or fashion. He fulfills it all in a variety of ways. He cannot be **against** that which **He is**. Jesus sees Himself as the bringing to fruition all that the Old Testament points toward.

So in the New Covenant view, the technicalities of the OT Law can be **superseded** because they are fulfilled, but they are not **abolished**. It is like how one law takes precedence over another law in a court of law.

The New Covenant view emphasizes that Jesus was teaching a **transition to His Kingdom**, so we need to pay attention each time we see that word.

DA Carson says this:

In the passage previously cited from Matthew 11:12f., we observe further that the **Law and the Prophets** exercise this prophetic function until **John the Baptist**. From John the Baptist on, the kingdom of heaven advances (cf. also

Luke 16:16f., where the expression is “kingdom of God”). Similarly, in the next two verses of Matthew 5 (19, 20), Jesus moves on from talking about the Law and the Prophets to talking about the kingdom:

19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

The new covenant position makes the point that this is the **Kingdom** under **God’s new covenant**. As such it does not get a new set of rules. But it gets the fulfillment of all of them in Christ. So where Christ says the least of These commandments, their emphasis is on the word THESE. This view holds that when Jesus says “**My Commandments**”, the commandments are limited to only what Christ taught. The position emphasizes that My means My. They are things He actually said. Some of those teachings Christ refers to are to immediately follow our Matt 5 text. In all of them to follow, Jesus expands the letter of the law to the spirit of the law. He teaches us how we are to obey in the Kingdom of God, and it is vastly more demanding and internally driven than the Old Testament application.

Then the rest of the Epistles build on Christ’s teachings rather than emphasizing the Old Testament focus.

I am going to leave the New Covenant view here. I think this view might be the best, but I do not have time right now to determine that. What it would mean to the Sabbatarian view is that they are focusing on the wrong thing. The OT law was not abolished but it was overshadowed by their fulfillment in Christ. Now the focus is living in the new Kingdom so we pay attention to what Christ teaches in order to properly live in the Kingdom. Christ never taught Kingdom people to keep the Sabbath. The New Covenant position says that when Christ says My Commandments, He is not talking about the 10 commandments. So He is not telling His Kingdom people to keep the Sabbath.

Ok next

3. The law will not pass until all is accomplished

What is “**the all**” that will be accomplished? I think it means that not all the predictions have been fulfilled. There are prophecies made in the book of Daniel, for example, that have not yet been fulfilled. But they will be. They will be accomplished. It is simply a matter of time.

So the point is the law will not go away until every single thing it predicts is accomplished. I believe that will be when we are solidly placed in our new homes on the new earth.

I find it interesting that it appears the law **will** perish after all is **accomplished**. If nothing will **pass away** from the law until all is accomplished, **will it pass** when **all is accomplished**? Maybe.

4. Whoever relaxes the law is the least

What does this mean? What does it mean to **relax** a commandment. Many other versions use the word “break”, but the Greek word in the text has lots of leeway. I think we can learn what it means by it being the **exact opposite** of what Christ does in the verses right after this text. We can be sure that what follows as examples in Matt 5 are examples where Christ **does not** relax or **break** a commandment. Given that Christ **EXPANDS** the commandments, I think the translating of the word to **relax** instead of **break** is best because it is the opposite of **expanding** the commandment, which Christ does.

Now notice something here. What this means is that all of the commandments that **are to be kept**, all the commandments in the **To Keep** list, are also commandments that Christ **would not relax**. He is about to show us how He would **NOT** relax them. Hang on to that thought.

What does Christ do that shows us what He means not to relax a commandment? What did he do? He internalizes the commands. He makes them, not only matters of our behavior. He makes them matters of our hearts. But note this too. This is extremely important to our text. When Christ says, “Relaxes the law” notice what He does not want it relaxed **from**? In every case in His following examples He is making the command more expansive than whose version? It is the **Pharisees**. The Pharisees were the best example of **relaxing** the law. And Jesus is telling us to not **relax** any of the commands like the **Pharisees** do. In context in the Sermon on the mount, All the laws we keep should not be relaxed like the Pharisees relax them. This will become important in a little bit.

Matt 5:21 starts the expansion of the law. Anger is on the same train as murder.

Lust is on the same train as Adultery.

Divorce for unallowed reasons is adultery.

Swearing falsely is sinful.

Revenge is evil.

Loving your enemies is required.

Benevolence should be done in private.

Christians should not teach these imperatives in any way that makes **less** of them. Christ made the laws **harder to keep** because He **internalized** them. And we should do the same thing.

With Christ's teaching, he goes inside to our thoughts. He goes where no man can see. And He makes the commandment shine a light there. Why? Why would he do such a thing?

Well, have you ever thought about how many non believers have never committed murder? Have you ever thought about how many non believers never committed adultery? The same could even be true for stealing, but I am guessing the numbers drop on that one. But there still are a lot of non believers who have never lied in court.

Frankly, that won't do. The sermon on the mount is Jesus's discourse to those who would **truly follow Him**. Jesus is describing **true spirituality**. And true law keeping cannot be done by those who do not know Christ. We just looked at that in Romans. I think that is the point. If you reduce law-keeping to a standard that a non believer can do with his fleshly will power, you have missed the mark.

So suppose we were to make them easier? Suppose we were to say it was all external. All one needs to do is to keep these commandments **technically**. If we were to do that, we would be called the least in the kingdom of God. Why? Because those that God condemns would not be condemned by those laws. That kind of righteousness is not good enough. The Pharisees would keep on being pharisees and feeling good about it. The Pharisees could keep abusing the law but technically keeping it externally.

No. Christ revealed the **spirit** of the **law** because only those with the **Spirit of Christ** can keep the **spirit** of the **law**. And even **they** will not keep it perfectly. They have that nasty sin nature that still resides in their flesh. But Christ has **enabled believers** to live by the spirit. Christ has set us free from the sin principle. He has allowed us to live the intent of the law. So relaxing a commandment shows that we do not understand at all what Christ has done for us. We don't understand the change that Christ makes in every believer's life. And we don't understand the purity of His holiness.

Now one thing we notice about all of the commandments that Christ expands here in Matt 5 and 6 is that he expands them beyond the boundaries that the religious leaders were willing to take them. He says, **you've heard it said**.

And who they've heard it said from was the **Pharisees**. And then He makes it harder. He makes every one of the commandments he mentions harder to keep than the Pharisees would have.

Now this is where we encounter a problem. Think about this. Where is the one time in scripture where Christ seems to **relax the law**? Instead of **expanding** it to cover issues of the heart, instead of expanding it to have an even greater scope than the Pharisees took it, Christ actually dramatically relaxed it?

I think the easiest way of viewing what Christ said about Sabbath keeping is to say he relaxed it.

Do a search on the word "Sabbath" in the Bible and you will easily find all of Jesus's discussions. In every instance He was being condemned by leaders who applied the Sabbath more **harshly**, more **extensively**, **more rigidly** than Jesus did. Every time He corrected them by softening their wrong demands of the Sabbath. So regarding the Sabbath one might say that Jesus was **relaxing** one of those commandments. He was making it **less than** the Pharisees required. And yet we are told that our righteousness must **exceed** that of the scribes and Pharisees. You would expect that if Christ is telling us that the laws we **must teach** and **do** should **never be relaxed**, that we should never be guilty of relaxing the laws the way the Pharisees did, You would expect that if keeping the Sabbath is one of the laws he was referring to, that Christ Himself would **not relax them**. You would think that Christ would demand more strictness from the law on the commandments He is referring to in the Matthew text, not less.

And then every example that Jesus gives us from the law immediately following the Matthew text involves Christ quoting a law and then expanding it to being a sin of the heart. He does not relax any of them. No. He expands them all. He makes them all harder to keep. He makes them even more demanding than the Pharisees did.

I realize an argument can be made that Jesus, by what He says to the Pharisees, is actually expanding the 4th commandment to allow for greater good to be done on the Sabbath, but I think that is a far harder argument to make than that he is relaxing the Sabbath keeping. You would only make that argument because you believe that Christ could not be relaxing the commandment. Read it again this week and ask, what is Christ most clearly doing?

Are you seeing what I am trying to say.

The Sabbatarian position takes us to Matthew 5 to tell us that we must teach and keep the law without relaxing it.

Matt 5 gives us multiple examples of exactly what Christ means by not relaxing a command.

Now even the Sabbatarian position believes not every commandment in the Old Testament needs kept by New Testament believers. The Sabbatarian does not believe Jesus in Mat 5 is talking about **Every** law in the whole Old Testament.

Note that Jesus does not mention the Sabbath law in this discourse in Matt 5 about how true followers of His are to live in His kingdom.

When Jesus **does** teach on the Sabbath, I think it is clear that He **relaxes** the commandment.

I find it difficult here to buy the Sabbatarian position that when Jesus says “My commandments” that He necessarily and without question means the 10 commandments and more specifically the Sabbath commandment.

And that this Matt 5 text is telling us that we absolutely must keep them all. Why?

Who is the least in the kingdom of heaven?

He who relaxes a commandment.

Christ Himself not only relaxed the 4th commandment in His teaching but He confesses that He breaks it.

Therefore Christ is the least in the kingdom of heaven.

And we know that that conclusion is impossible.

Think about it. If you were trying to make the 4th commandment more stringent spiritually, if you were to follow the example of the way Christ intensified the other commandments, how would you do it?

Would you not emphasize the importance of the holiness of the Sabbath?

Would you not emphasize the importance of one’s holy attitude toward the sabbath? Would you not more deeply spiritualize it?

But what does Christ do?

Mat 12:1-5 shows us. In refuting the Pharisee’s view, He appeals to two Old Testament precedents to show that there are more important things than keeping the law about the Sabbath. And look what He appeals to. He says, Something greater than the temple is here, right in front of you. You are concerned about keeping the Sabbath. And here **I am**, the guy who made the Sabbath. And tomorrow you will go right back to keeping the Sabbath when you had the maker of Sabbath right in front of me. You would worship the

Sabbath but you would not worship the **Lord of the Sabbath**. That is really the point. It is as if Christ was saying the Sabbath is pointing to me but you would rather the symbol than the reality. And you will not relax the lesser to have the greater.

Now, how could we say that Jesus did not relax the Sabbath in this discussion. Jesus was showing the Pharisees that there is **legal precedent** for choosing higher laws over lower ones. Jesus was clearly making the point there are times to loosen your restrictions.

That is exactly the opposite of the examples he gives in Mat 5 about not relaxing the commandments. Not only that, but Jesus never does what we would think He would do if He were treating all the commandments the same. He never spiritually intensifies our method of keeping the Sabbath. Check it out for yourselves.

This is, I think, the **12th difference** of the 4th commandment and all the rest.

Christ applied it in a more lax way than the Pharisees did.

I think this should at least be reason to question if Mat 5 is really a good foundational scripture to use as proof that Jesus is telling us that the 4th commandment needs to be kept. I think it is impossible to say, based on Mat 5 that the 4th commandment is for sure one of the commandments that Jesus was commanding us to obey and not relax, since He relaxed it himself.

I think Jesus did not include the Sabbath in the Sermon on the mount because He knew the Sabbath day was predictive and that He was soon about to **fulfill it by becoming it.**

5. Whoever does the law is the greatest

Clearly to live by the law as Christ describes it requires walking in the Spirit of Christ. It cannot be done by flesh. The Christian does not try to limit the commandment to the place that on a good day he can do it with human self discipline. No. He knows he must die to Himself and live to Christ. He must depend on the resources that God promises to us. We must live by faith and not by sight. We must be saying yes to King Jesus at every turn with every thought.

So it is only natural that keeping the law like Jesus is describing will be honored. It is our reasonable service. It is our reasonable worship. It is the Christian life 101.

6. Our righteousness must exceed the Pharisees

When I think of Pharisees I think of the most adamant Sabbath keepers. That might not be fair, but I think scripture paints them that way. Yet we know, they

are not the role models for Christians. If the Sabbath is to still be kept, it is to be kept in a way that allows for preserving and improving lives far more than the Pharisees thought. It is not as rigid or as strict. It will not stop us from doing good to our neighbors. Only the rules applied to it in the Bible would apply.

Conclusion:

Wow, it has taken a long time to get to this point.

The strength of the **Sabbatarian position** is this. We cannot refuse to keep a commandment after Jesus has told us we must keep His commandments.

The Sabbath Command is one of His commandments. Therefore we must keep it.

The ultimate difference in **my position** and the **Sabbatarian position** is that the Sabbatarians view the 4th commandment as a **principle commandment** that Christ fulfilled by **perfectly keeping it**. I view the 4th commandment as a **prediction commandment** that Christ fulfilled by **being the greater reality** that the command was pointing us to.

The Sabbatarian position holds assumptions that are not obvious on the surface. The greatest is the assumption that the 4th commandment is included in the list of Old Testament commandments Christ was requiring us to keep in Mat 5.

In this 5 week study I have shown 12 ways that the Sabbath commandment is different than the rest of the 10 commandments.

I have shown how there is ample evidence that the 4th commandment was a **prediction command** rather than a **principle command**.

I have shown evidence that Christ fulfilled the Sabbath command by enabling us to enter the perfect rest that the Sabbath command pointed to.

I have shown evidence that even the Matthew 5 proof text where Jesus commands us to **keep His commandments** has evidence that the 4th commandment is excluded in that list since Christ Himself relaxed the Pharisees restrictions of the 4th commandment. The commands Christ referred to in Matthew 5 were not to be relaxed.

I see no reason to not interpret Col 2:16,17 to mean exactly what it says, without reading in additional meaning. This passage tells us not to pass judgment on others for keeping or not keeping the Sabbath. Logically implied in this is that keeping the Sabbath is no longer a requirement. I think this passage, if believed as stated, is the most direct and authoritative passage proving that Sabbath keeping is not a NT requirement.

God in His Sovereignty decided **not to declare** that New Testament Gentiles no longer need to keep the Sabbath. God in His Sovereignty also decided **not to declare** that New Testament Gentiles need to keep the Sabbath.

Our conclusions are based on what our reasoning about what scripture says, rather than a direct answer to this issue.

Colossians tells us that we do not need to have the same convictions on this issue. But Colossians commands that we do not judge each other on this issue. That is the position that this church will hold, while we welcome fellowship to those holding different views.

We are free to keep the Sabbath if we desire. It is surely a blessing. But we are not free to use it as a determiner of inclusion or exclusion in the church.

And this church at this time will not do so.

And that is the conclusion as of today.