

## ***Bookends of the Gospels: Matthew 5 and John 13***

### ***The law should be Love***

#### *Johns bookend*

I think Matthew 5 is fascinating. I really believe that John 13 is responding to Matthew 5. Jesus in Matthew 5 talks about who is blessed. He talks about worrying, treasure, and making the law better. In John 13 we have Jesus displaying what it means to be humble in the first 16 verses. Then in verse 17 we have Jesus making reference to verse 17-18 in Matthew 5.

*“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.”*

Matthew might be connected to Luke and Mark because they share most of the same stuff. John is said to be different. But, here we have Jesus using the same language on fulfilling scripture. Wait a minute. In Matthew 5 he says filling the Law? The Law in the Old Testament is scripture. John is pointing out that Jesus is saying the same theme.

If you notice, Judas rejects Jesus in this chapter. In a way Peter rejects Jesus too. The whole theme of blessed are the humble is on full display. Judas and Peter are not being very humble. Yet, Jesus just displayed his humble character by washing their feet: even Judas I bet. The connection to Matthew five is huge in John 13. The reason for the law is built into the heart. The disciples had trouble seeing that.

Then we have something strange. Jesus had said he came not to abolish or add to the law, but to fulfill it. In John 13 we have a new command. Isn't that contradictory and blasphemous? It appears that way. Yet, if you remember, Jesus said he came to fulfill the law. Again, I am saying that Jesus was deepening the old laws, not changing them. So how could he add one? In verse 15 of John, Jesus says he sets an example. He then says he fulfills the scripture or law. Finally, in verse 34 Jesus says he gives a new command: to love one another so that... So that, people can see Godliness being displayed within us towards others.

#### **What's it all means?**

In Matthew 5 we have Jesus ensuring them that the consistency of Gods law will always remain. He then says we have lost the spirit of the law. In John 13 Jesus tells us what the spirit of the law is. It's to love rather than oppress. It's to serve rather than restrict. John 13 is a great bookend or compliment to Matthew 5. Jesus is not adding but strengthening the Old law or scripture. He displays that command in washing their feet.

We have power in management, yet over bearing managers fail. We have power in leadership, yet overbearing leaders fail. There are overbearing husbands, wives, and teachers. In many of these cases there are victims that fail to measure up. Laws are good but they fail if they are unjustly enforced. Force never wins. A command is a strong subjection. How does one command us to love? Jesus is saying that if we love first then the law is not needed. Do we see that? Blessed are the peacemakers in Matthew 5. Love one another in John 13.

What it all means is that we need laws because we don't love. Jesus is saying that if we love first then the scripture is fulfilled. The Bible is all about community and doing what's right in God's eyes. God is not overbearing. Men have made his laws overbearing. If we loved first then the law would not be needed. These two chapters compliment each other so well. We are blessed if we love first. Jesus is honoring the original laws and adding love to make them irrelevant. Those are two great bookends to a great story.