

## THE WEIGHTIER MATTERS OF THE LAW

Mat 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

In this passage Jesus is confronting the religious leaders of His day. They were focusing on minutia of outward observances of the Law but missing the intent, purpose, and fulfillment of the Law altogether. These Pharisees were painstakingly observing tithing. They even were tithing their spices! What a burden they must have been under to even figure out how much of their spices they were to tithe. One might congratulate these guys for the load of religious duty they carried day after day. However, Jesus was not impressed. Jesus told them that they had neglected the weightier matters of the Law. This means that they were not carrying enough of a burden to satisfy the Law. The word “weightier” is the Greek word **barus**, which means *a grievous burden*. To keep the whole law it is a grievous burden that no man could keep. These Pharisees were taking up part of the burden of the Law which they felt they could keep, but Jesus said that it was not enough. They needed to carry the whole weight of the Law to satisfy God.

**Jas 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.**

Here we see that in order to keep the Law in God's sight, you must not offend even in one point, or you are guilty of breaking all of it! God gave the Law to show man that he was a sinner and needed salvation. God did not give the Law for man to keep, but to break, so that man would seek salvation from Jesus Christ. Jesus was trying to get the Pharisees to see that they had no hopes in finding salvation under the Law. The burden of the Law was just too great.

It is interesting to note that Jesus mentioned that the weightier matters of the Law were judgment, mercy, and faith. Now let's take the last one mentioned here which is faith. Let's see what Paul said about faith and the Law.

**Gal 3:12** And the law is not of faith: but, **The man that doeth them shall live in them.**

Here we see that Paul says emphatically that the Law is **NOT** of faith. The Law was not based upon faith. It was based upon works. It is interesting Jesus said the weightier matter of the Law is faith. Why is that? Before we see why, let's look at the second one Jesus mentioned which was mercy.

**Heb 10:28** **He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:**

Those that despised [or broke] the Law died without mercy. When the Law is broken there must be death because God's Law was despised. Either an animal had to die or the person had to die. There was no mercy. Death had to be incurred. The Law is not about mercy. It is about justice and judgment. This leads us to the first weightier matter of the Law Jesus talked about which is judgment. The Law was given to reveal to man God's judgment on sin, but it was also given to reveal God's mercy in sending a substitute for man's sin—Jesus. Every law and sacrifice was a teaching tool of what Jesus would do for us. Once God's method of judging our sins through Jesus was revealed, we can see God's mercy and love for us. Once we see God's mercy in judging our sins in Jesus then we could have faith upon Christ and be saved.

What was Jesus saying to the Pharisees? He was saying that they had missed the whole intent, purpose, and goal of the Law which was to reveal God's judgment on sin through Jesus, God's mercy in offering Christ as a substitutionary sacrifice for us all, and the need for faith in His finished work. When someone accepts this and believes they fulfill the Law's intent, purpose, and goal. They fulfill the weightier matters of the Law!

Once we are saved, we often tend to revert back to a system of laws in order to satisfy God and qualify for His blessings. When we do this we neglect the weightier matters of God's kingdom which is faith in God's judgment for our sins in the person of Jesus and of His mercy to us in freely forgiving and blessing us through Christ outside of our personal merit and performance. When we walk in faith in the

finished work of Jesus we are living out the weightier matters of God's law. The good news is that Jesus bears the weight for us!

**Mat 11:28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

**Mat 11:29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

**Mat 11:30** For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

Jesus has born the weight of God's judgment for you. He has born this burden to carry His mercy to you. He has even taken the burden of giving us the faith to believe it. [Romans 12:3] Are you going to ignore the weightier matters of the Law today, or are you going to believe.