



One Step Further

Class 1 – The Fundamental Principle

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- Introduce yourself and your family

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- Copy of notes are available online at www.gelineau.org - Click on Documents

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- ***It must have been an incredibly exciting time...***
- This man was gathering quite a following
- The stories about what had happened with John down at the Jordan were almost legendary by then
- And there were some incredible rumors circulating around about what had happened to him in the six weeks immediately after his baptism that were amazing
- He had gathered some men around him as assistants and protégés
- Good men, men who were well spoken of in town
- But, not necessarily religious leaders...
- Not the kind of men who usually left their jobs and took up lives of preaching
- Over the past year he had taught in Synagogues all throughout Galilee
- But, teaching was only part of what he's been doing...

- What has really drawn the crowds today is the miraculous healings
- He simply touches someone, and their sickness, disease and illness disappears
- Quite quickly, it has gotten to the point where they are bringing people to him who are completely paralyzed, mentally ill, and unable to function
- But, no matter how disturbed or dysfunctional they are, he simply prays over them, touches them, and they stand up, thank him and walk out on their own
- The crowd here today is incredible...
- It must be thousands of people
- People have come from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and even from beyond the Jordan
- Not just the sick and needy
- There are actually families here also
- People looking for spiritual guidance
- The excitement in the air is almost palpable
- There seems to be a sense that he is going to say something revolutionary
- Several people here have a look in their eyes almost like rebellion
- Most people are so frustrated with what the priests have been saying for so many years
- What he says is refreshing and new...
- Everyone quiets down as he begins to speak...
- **PAUSE...**
- *“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...”*
- He begins with some wonderful blessings that make everyone feel at ease, and comforts us with reassuring words...

- And then he says,

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.”

• **LONG PAUSE...**

- I think that the subject of Jesus' first major Sermon would have come as a surprise to many people
- Many people were ready to have the Law and the Prophets overthrown and destroyed
- The Priests had beaten the people over the head with this same club for hundreds of years
- The Scribes and the Pharisees have been lording it over the people for years with their insistence on always taking the best seats in the Synagogues, and their incredibly pretentious formal greetings in the marketplace
- The Lawyers have picked through the Law with such a fine-toothed comb that they had managed to load grievous burdens on everyone's back, without managing to lift a single finger to help anyone out
- The inconsistencies, unfairness and misapplication of the Law had clearly got to such a point that the whole system was corrupt through and through
- The only solution **HAD** to be the complete and total removal of the Law
- The way that Jesus spoke to the Scribes, Pharisees and Lawyers was already gaining fame
- It was clear that Jesus was set on some sweeping religious changes
- Everyone was ready for him to light the powder keg and torch the entire system...
- And yet he begins with...

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“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.”

- There is no doubt that Jesus did intend a sweeping religious change
- Effectively the creation of an entire new Religion that would quickly grow to be the world's largest religion
- But, he wanted everyone to realize right up front that these changes were not to be destructive

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- It was a spiritual **UPGRADING** that Jesus sought, not an **OVERTHROW**
- The call of Jesus that was so hard for people to hear 2,000 years ago, and that remains equally hard for us to hear today...
- It's not a matter of stepping out on some completely new course of action
- It's not a matter of heading down a completely different path

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- The call of Jesus is, and has always been, to simply go: **ONE STEP FURTHER**

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- The Bible is a Moral Play
- On many levels it is very simply a story of:

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Good

SLIDE

and Evil

SLIDE

- **Christ** is the center point of this story, it's main character, it's purpose, it's Hero
- And, every hero has a foil

- Characters designed to show the goodness of the Hero by their contrast to their evil

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- Christ had the **Pharisees**
- By addressing the Pharisaical attitudes of that day, Jesus reaches back into time to all Jews with the same attitude that ever lived
- And he reaches forward to talk to us today
- Christ redirects the focus of the story
- In Christ's teaching, the point of God's Word really is no longer Good vs. Evil, but...

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Faith

SLIDE

and Law

- By associating with Prostitutes and condemning Priests he clearly turned the whole concept of "**Good People**" and "**Evil People**" on it's head
- The message of Christ is that it doesn't matter who your forefathers were, it doesn't matter what you had touched earlier that day, or the manner in which you had eaten your lunch...
- What matters is whether or not you are Faithful
- This was the revolutionary teaching!
- This was the complete reversal of hundreds of years of Tradition

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- People who live in obedience to **LAWS** think that **NOT SINNING** is what God wants from them

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- People who live by **FAITH** realize that **DOING GOOD** is what God really desires

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- The Fundamental Principle that Jesus taught is that **FAITH** is all about going **ONE STEP FURTHER** than the **LAW** requires
- If we claim to be Faithful
- If we claim to live by Faith
- Then we **CANNOT** be Legalistic
- We **CANNOT** live lives that are bound and restricted by rules & regulations
- We **CANNOT** live to the **LAW**
- What Jesus wants us to learn this important lesson
- What is the Opposite of Sinning?

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- **NOT SINNING** is **NOT** the opposite of Sinning

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- **DOING GOOD** is the **OPPOSITE** of Sinning
- Too often, when confronted when an opportunity to sin, we simply settle for not sinning
- Someone hits me, I'm a good Christian, I don't hit them back
- Someone sues me, well, I'm a Christadelphian, I don't counter-sue them
- Someone swears at me, I'm a Believer, I don't swear back
- This is good... But, Jesus wants something better from us!

- The Law was good, and right, and true, and just...
- But, Jesus calls us to go **ONE STEP FURTHER** than that...
- Jesus calls us to live lives of **Faith**
- Living a Life of Faith isn't always about choosing between **TWO** Choices
- Life doesn't present itself in clear, simple **RIGHT** and **WRONG** circumstances
- Life often presents us with **DOZENS** of choices, and often only a few of them are **WRONG**

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- The real bummer about maturing, is slowly coming to realize that life isn't **BLACK** and **WHITE** at all...
- As an Idealistic, young man, it was all so clear to me
- It was all so **EASY** to figure out
- if anyone would ever have listened to me, I could have easily solved all of their problems, because the answers were so very clear at that age
- Learning that there really is a large spectrum of potential solutions to every problem was hard to swallow, but it was very much true, and Scriptural
- It often isn't simply a matter of **RIGHT** and **WRONG**

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- Life, in reality, is a spectrum of **GRAYS**...

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- This spectrum encompasses many options that are clearly **SINFUL**

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- The spectrum also includes some options that are exactly what Christ wants from us

- Righteous, Holy, Pure and Honest choices
- Choices that don't simply avoid sin, but actually go **ONE STEP FURTHER**
- But... In between lies the **MAJORITY** of what we actually end up choosing in life

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- In the middle are all of the choices that we make that are **NOT SINFUL**, but clearly don't go **ONE STEP FURTHER** either
- All those choices where we preface our sentences with something like...

“Well, it wouldn't be wrong for me to...”

“It's OKAY if I do this...”

“There's nothing wrong with...”

- Here is where the Fundamental Principle of **ONE STEP FURTHER** can bring some clarity into your life
- It's in this middle section, that we can get some real help by changing our **FOCUS**...
- Christ has called us to change our **FOCUS**
- What you **FOCUS** on, is how you are going to see life
- If you are still looking at your life in a very **LEGALISTIC** sense, then your **FOCUS** will need adjusting...
- What is your main goal and purpose?
- For too many years, I was **FOCUSED** on **NOT SINNING**
- For many years, I was seeing this verse like this:

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- Romans 13:9 (KJV)

9) For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying,

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THOU SHALT NOT!

- But, that isn't the point that Jesus was trying to make...
- That's not the **FOCUS** that Jesus calls us to
- The point **ISN'T** to **NOT SIN**
- The point **IS** to **DO GOOD**

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- All of those “**Thou Shalt Not**” Commandments, can easily be fulfilled, if you would simply remember to: *Love thy neighbor as thyself.*
- Our **ACTIONS** are a natural **BYPRODUCT** of our thinking...
- So **GOOD ACTIONS** are a natural **BYPRODUCT** of correct thinking!
- Our **FOCUS** then, shouldn't be on **NOT SINNING**
- But, on **DOING GOOD!**
- We too often make our decisions, and determine our actions based on what is not sinful...
- Let's take a look at the opening passages in Matthew 5

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• Matthew 5:17-19

- 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.

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“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.”

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- This Fundamental Principle of **ONE STEP FURTHER** isn't intended to **DESTROY** our need to obey the Law!

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- Those that live by **FAITH** are **NOT** free to flaunt the rules **RIGHT** and **WRONG** and simply do whatever they want
- Look what Christ says in Verse 20!

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- Matthew 5:20

20) For I tell you, unless your righteousness **exceeds** that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

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- Your righteousness needs to **EXCEED** that of the Pharisees!
- You have to go **ONE STEP FURTHER** than the Pharisees!

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- Christ's Fundamental Principle of Salvation by Grace is **NOT** a license to laziness, or sinfulness or carelessness!
- Christ isn't offering us a restriction of morals so that we can live a life free from the stresses of laws and regulations
- Christ is calling us to go **ONE STEP FURTHER**
- Thanks, gratitude, and appreciation is the key to understanding this

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- We are called to live lives of righteousness that are driven by the thanks and gratitude that comes from having our sins forgiven!
- Not driven by the fear of punishment for not fulfilling the law
- In **THAT** sense, Christ has fulfilled the Law
- **WE** also will easily fulfill the Law if we follow him in Faith
- In Romans Paul refers to Christ as having “Ended” the Law...

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• Romans 10:4

- 4) For **Christ is the end of the law** for righteousness to everyone who believes.

- Christ ended the Law
- We are made right with God and justified in the sight of our Lord
- THAT was the purpose of the Law
- To reconcile our position before God
- Continue reading in Verses 8-11...

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• Romans 10:8-11

- 8) But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);
- 9) because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
- 10) For **with the heart one believes and is justified**, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
- 11) For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

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- Moses' Law was based on **ACTIONS**...
- Outward, Visible, External Actions...
- Things that could be controlled, monitored, and supervised by a whole community waiting to stone you when you slip up

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- Christ's Law is based on **THOUGHTS**...
- Inward, Invisible, Internal Thoughts...
- Things that are private and personal, and just between you and God
- Verse 10 said, "***For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God***"

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- We are counted as Righteous, we are blessed with Salvation, not based on what we have **DONE**, but on what we have **THOUGHT**

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- Because, the tricky thing is that you can **DO GOOD** things, even if you have **WRONG THOUGHTS**

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- But, if you have the **RIGHT THOUGHTS**, you can't help but **DO GOOD**
- So, why concentrate on the **ACTIONS**?
- Focus on cleaning up the **THOUGHTS**, and the **ACTIONS** have to follow!
- *EXPLAIN...*
- We're all familiar with this problem: Doing good things doesn't make you good!

- If you believe that sitting in a church made you more like Christ, then you probably believe that sitting in a garage would make you more like a car

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- Christ then rightly moves the focus from our **ACTIONS** to our **THOUGHTS**
- Was the Law wrong then? No!
- It was what the people needed at the time

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- Galatians 3:21-22

- 21) Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law.
- 22) But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that **the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.**

- If there was some way that rule-keeping and legalistic thinking had any power to create life in us... **God would have surely shared that with us!**
- What the Law did so well is point out to us that we are all prisoners of sin, and show us that the only way to receive God's promises is to believe in Jesus Christ and have faith in the Grace of God
- Until Christ was able to stand there on that mountain that sunny afternoon, and show the people a more perfect way...
- Until Christ was able to share this Fundamental Principle of Faith, the Law protected and guarded the people from wandering off into sin's oblivion

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- Galatians 3:23-24

- 23) Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.
- 24) So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be **justified by faith.**

- What did the Schoolmaster teach us?
- That LAWS can't save us!
- It's warm and cozy and **SAFE** living under a system of rules and regulations
- It's really tempting to stay inside that closed environment, and not have to wander out into the brave world of **GRAY**, where everything is no longer just Black and White...
- But, that is what Jesus calls us to do
- For we are no longer under the schoolmaster

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- Galatians 3:25-26

25) But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,
 26) for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through **faith**.

- Jesus has brought us into a special relationship with our Father, and we are now considered God's Children
- Not because of anything that we have done
- ***You are God's children because of your faith in Christ Jesus***
- Why do we want to cling to the Law?
- Why do Human Beings have a seemingly innate propensity to want to follow Rules and Laws?
- Why do we feel so much more comfortable when it is written down, clear and in Black and White?
- Don't we realize that it's the Black and White that kills us?
- Is it possible to keep the whole Law?

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• James 2:8-11

- 8) If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.
- 9) But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.
- 10) **For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.**
- 11) For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

- The Law has always been impossible for men to keep
- That is why we needed Jesus
- Jesus freed us from that curse
- But, Jesus asks a price for that service...
- Jesus has made us subject to the Law of Love

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• James 2:12-13

- 12) So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.
- 13) For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. **Mercy triumphs over judgment.**

- Jesus calls us to follow his Law of Love
- We are not bound by the Law of Moses any longer
- But, Jesus calls us to a **HIGHER** calling
- This isn't a relaxing of the standards...
- This new law is **tougher!**

- ***“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them.”***
- The Concordance is helpful in understanding what it means to fulfill the law...

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- **Fulfill** = **PLEROO** = To make replete
- *Hmm... Okay, so, the Dictionary is helpful in understanding what Replete means!*

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- **Replete** = Plentifully Supplied or Abounding
- Our calling from Christ is the same...
- We aren't called to simply make do...
- We aren't called to just get by...

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- We are called to **ABOUND**
- Our calling is not just to make it to the end...
- Our calling is not just to keep our heads above water...
- Our calling is not just to hold our breath until it's over...
- We are called to go **ONE STEP FURTHER**
- One of my favorite examples of this Fundamental Principle is not in Matthew
- Let's look at a simple, little verse in Ephesians Chapter 4...

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- Ephesians 4:28

28) Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to **share with anyone in need**.

- The Principle of **ONE STEP FURTHER** shines clear in this verse...
- Under the law it was quite simple:
- ***If you are thief, stop stealing***
- It's all very clear and black and white when you think legalistically, isn't it?
- It's also often very negative
- A lot of talk about what **NOT** to do
- Don't sin! Don't sin! Don't sin!
- But, under the Law of Christ we are called to go **ONE STEP FURTHER...**
- ***Begin using your hands for honest work, and then give generously to others in need***
- Stop Sinning!
- Sure, that's the ***EASY PART!***
- Christ expects that from us as a "***Given***"
- His call is for us to go **ONE STEP FURTHER**
- To actually **DO SOMETHING POSITIVE!**
- Don't just **NOT SIN**
- Actually **DO GOOD**

- Take those hands that used to steal, and set them to work so that you can **GIVE** to others!
- Over the next few classes we are going to look at several other examples like this from Christ's first sermon
- Where Christ says it isn't good enough to be **GOOD**
- Where Christ called us to be **GREAT**
- Where Christ called us to go **ONE STEP FURTHER**

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- This Fundamental Principle applies to all aspects of our lives...
- And we plan to look at as many parts of your life as possible
- My goal this weekend is to make you uncomfortable
- It takes me about 20 times longer to prepare a class than to give it, and, trust me, I needed to hear this 20 times more than you!
- We will approach the topic in Concentric Circles, each one getting smaller and smaller, and closer to home

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- First we will consider this Principle of being **One Step Closer at Work**
- The average person spends more of their waking hours at Work than anything else that they do
- We can't ignore this huge part of our life
- Christ's principles apply from 9:00 to 5:00 as much as they do the rest of the day

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- After that we will look at the Principle of **One Step Closer in the Ecclesia**

- We all feel pretty comfortable calling for spiritual growth and reformation inside the Body of Christ
- We'll talk about how that starts with you!

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- Tomorrow morning at Sunday School the cheese will start to get a little binding... We'll talk about the Principle of **One Step Closer at Home**
- *It's hard to talk about things when they start to get PERSONAL...*
- But, Christ's call extends into the home
- Into our Living Rooms, our Dens and into our Bedrooms

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- Our exhortation will address the Principle of **One Step Further in your Heart**
- Because at the end of the day, that really is where this topic resides...
- It's not about the **ACTIONS** that you do
- It's not even about what others **THINK** about you
- Christ calls you to go **ONE STEP FURTHER**, and to look deep into your own heart because it's in our hearts that the battle is waged!
- And it's in our own hearts that the battle is **WON!**