

Light of the World

In the Sermon on the Mount, from which this section was taken, the Lord says to his disciples and to us also: "You are the light of the world" (Matt 5: 14). This is a reflection to what he said about himself in John "I am the light of the world" (8: 12). Jesus invites us to show this light through good deeds which would result in people glorifying God when seeing these deeds. After that, he wanted to deny a charge that Jews accused him with so he said: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets". Prophets talked about him; therefore, it is very normal for him to say that he didn't come to abolish them. However, how did he not abolish the Law of Moses which is related to obligations such as giving animal sacrifices to the Temple? Actually, he did liberate us from all materialistic obligations and kept the spiritual recommendations and guidance.

The moral commandments are kept in the Ten Commandments. However, the commandment of the Sabbath, which has a ritual nature and not a moral one, was cancelled: Christians don't rest from their works on Saturday. The prohibition of theft and lying stayed, but Christ entered to the depth of the commandments. He didn't only keep the fidelity of marriage as written in the Lord's statement: "you shall not commit adultery", but added on that: "anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt 5: 28). Jesus takes out adultery from the heart. He enters the kingdom of the heart so that sin disappears. He also excised anger and swearing. Jesus entered the depth of man to purify it.

Moses' Law is not maintained in its forms and organizations. Only its soul and direction towards God stay. There are no more sacrifices to the Temple because Christ became the only sacrifice. If he redeemed us, why would we need animal sacrifices anymore? Circumcision used to indicate God's covenant with Abraham, but the new covenant with God was through Jesus' blood, therefore why would we need circumcision anymore? We have now a new image of the covenant and it is Baptism.

Therefore, there is a relation with the Old Testament, but we go beyond its images and materialism because these were used to prepare, through their outer form, for the New Testament. However, we keep reading the Old Testament so that the bond between the new thing and its old image would be maintained, although the old image doesn't stay in the practice of the Church.

Another example is the cancellation of the Levite priesthood: After Jesus has become the only priest, there is no more need for the priesthood that came from Aaron, and Christian priesthood doesn't complete the Jewish one but continues Christ's priesthood.

Finally, this section ends with Jesus saying: “whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven”. One word could condemn us, because one of us could be excellent in giving the Christian teaching or theology but has no spiritual benefit. He who has the gift of teaching must try to acquire the gift of spiritual practice in Church so that he wouldn't be having a kind of schizophrenia and for God not to be blasphemed because of this person.

This is an invitation to combine teaching with practicing.

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