

Think Not

#0037

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—December 28, 1968

One of the greatest sermons ever preached in this world was the sermon that Jesus gave, recorded in Matthew 5, 6, and 7. We call it the Sermon on the Mount. From this sermon, I would like to read three verses this morning, as our opening text. Matthew the 5th chapter, verses 17 to 19. This is the last Sabbath of the old year. I was thinking of it as I was praying, meditating about this sermon. What would I say this morning if this were the last sermon that I was ever to preach? You know, we never know when our last sermon is, either to hear or to give, do we friends? We never know.

Since I last saw you, one of my dear friends, a man only half my age, his life was snuffed out suddenly in a terrible automobile accident. It's happening all the time. I would like to study with you this morning, that which I would give you, were this my last sermon. I know this is the last Sabbath morning sermon we will hear this year, isn't it? And we ought to get this morning that which will help us to review carefully our thinking and doings of the past year, to make sure everything is right as we close out this year, and then as we look forward to the new year and plan, if it pleases God, to live this next year through, with Him.

So in our imagination this morning, let us gather with the throng that surrounds the Savior on that mountain, near the Sea of Galilee, and hear Him as He speaks these words.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven..." Matthew 5:17-19.

That doesn't mean he'll be there; it means that in the kingdom of Heaven, he's at the bottom of the list. The drunkard in the ditch does not sink so low in the estimation of Heaven, as the man who dares to teach men to break *one* of these least commandments.

"...but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" Matthew 5:19.

Now dear friends, if we were sitting in a tent or in a tabernacle in an evangelistic series, and you were to hear me read these verses, you would at once

say, "Well, Brother Frazee, is going to give a sermon on the perpetuity of the law, and the importance of keeping the Fourth Commandment," wouldn't you? You could be right, too. I wonder this morning if you would want to leave this place of worship with no more than that, as what you got from the morning sermon? I hope not. I trust that the Spirit of God will witness to our hearts this morning, and if there is, in any of our minds, what Jesus told us not to think, that we can get those thoughts dislodged. You know, it's a difficult thing to change the thinking of the human mind. Very difficult.

This is one of the hardest tasks that Jesus faced. For three and a half years, He worked with those disciples that He had chosen personally, and at the end of the time, in some ways, they were thinking just as they thought when He called them. That's why nobody would move to wash the other's feet, there in the upper room. That's why they all forsook Him in Gethsemane. I repeat, it's a difficult thing to get the thinking of the mind changed. But one of the biggest aids that Heaven has is our desire and choice, to let Jesus change our thinking. Would you be willing to have your thinking changed this morning? Come now, really, would you? Oh friend, I'll tell you this: if we open the windows of the soul heavenward, some of us will go out of these doors this morning with our thinking *fundamentally* changed on one of the most vital issues of this closing hour in human history. This is what God hopes to accomplish in this service this morning.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets..." Matthew 5:17.

Don't think anything of that kind. Why would He say, "Don't think that"? Because some people *do* think about it. Some people thought it back there when He was speaking on the mount. There've been people ever since that have thought it, and today there are millions that think that Jesus came to do exactly that. And He says, "Don't think that, don't get any such idea in your head." Because He says, "It isn't so." Instead of coming to lessen the claim and loosen the ties of obligation in obedience to the law of God, I've come for just the opposite, to fulfill, to fully keep, to fully carry out, fully *preach* the Ten Commandments.

So this morning, I wonder if it might be well for us to review some things, and see if there is in our minds any thought that would loosen, that would lessen the claims of God's holy law. Oh, I pray that we shall let Jesus have His full way in our hearts and lives this morning.

You'll notice in the 18th verse, He says as long as Heaven and earth shall stand, not one letter of this law shall pass away. Not one piece of a letter will be changed. Now your minds naturally go to the Fourth Commandment, and this is good. I want to ask you a question, friends. Do you think it's all right for a church council or a Sabbath School council to change the hour of Sabbath School or church service? Suppose the church board here would get together, and the Sabbath School council, and decide that for some reason, it would be better to have the service in the afternoon instead of the morning. Or to have it at 9:00, instead of 9:30. Would that be permissible, could a church board do that? It has been done, hasn't it? Yes. That's perfectly all right. I think we all agree on that. But now I want to ask you another question. Suppose that the church board would get together and decide

that instead of the Sabbath beginning at sundown, it would begin at midnight, or at 9:00 o'clock at night. How would that be? Do you think that would be all right?

In the army sometimes, the commanding officer, when he's dealing with some Sabbath keeper that seems quite strict, not knowing the principle that we're dealing with, that commanding officer sometimes may say to a problem Seventh-day Adventist young man, "Why don't you go to your preacher and get a dispensation from him to do the thing that the army requires you to do?" Can the young man do that? Can a pastor give permission to a young man to do something on the Sabbath, merely because the army requires him to? What about the president of the conference, could he do it? And I'm sure Elder Pierson, as President of the General Conference, would be the first one to say that the office that God and this people have entrusted him with, does not give him that authority. Do you agree with me? And that's what Jesus is saying here: that no one has authority to change one letter of God's holy law. Regarding the time we have Sabbath School, that is not a matter of divine revelation and divine precept. Is that correct? But regarding the time when the Sabbath begins, who settled that? God settled it, and human beings, alone or meeting as an entire general conference, could not change that one minute. Is that correct? Are you with me so far? All right.

Now I would like to read a statement or two backing up this concept. This is from *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 603.

"The government of Israel was administered in the name and by the authority of God. The work of Moses, of the seventy elders, of the rulers and judges, was simply to inform the laws that God had given; they had no authority to legislate for the nation" *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 603.

What! Even Moses didn't have the authority to legislate for Israel? No. Didn't the 70 elders? No. Didn't the priests? No. What was their work? To enforce the laws that God had given.

"This was, and continued to be, the condition of Israel's existence as a nation" *Ibid.*

And then this chapter, which is on the first king of Israel, shows that even when Israel chose a king, God did not abdicate His authority. God was still the real ruler of Israel, and the king was simply to act to enforce and carry out the law of God. This is why, that when David as king of Israel, gave that terrible command to Joab to arrange for the slaying of Uriah the Hittite, it says that it was a sin for Joab to obey that commandment, even though it came from the king. God was still the ruler of Israel. No priest, no preacher, no committee, no king, nobody, has the authority. Nobody ever *has* had any authority to change the slightest precept, the smallest command of God. Are you still with me? Have we proved this is clear?

Now this applies also in the Christian church, not just in the Jewish theocracy.

"In the commission to His disciples, Christ not only outlined

their work, but gave them their message. Teach the people, He said, 'to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' The disciples were to teach what Christ had taught. That which He had spoken, not only in person, but through all the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, is here included. Human teaching is shut out" *The Desire of Ages*, page 826.

Oh, isn't that in the commission? No.

"Human teaching is shut out. There is no place for tradition, for man's theories and conclusions, or for church legislation. No laws ordained by ecclesiastical authority are included in the commission. None of these are Christ's servants to teach" *Ibid*.

My, what a world of problems would be settled if we would accept that simple but profound statement. So you see, dear friend, men have no authority, either to take from or add to the law of God. Then the only authority that any church officer has, that any institutional administrator has, that any teacher in the school has, that any parent in the home has, is the authority derived from God, and that authority is confined to enforcing the laws that God Himself has given.

In the book *Education*, the opening page on the chapter on discipline, page 287, I read:

"Help the child to see that parents and teachers are representatives of God, and that, as they act in harmony with Him, their laws in the home and the school are also His" *Education*, page 287.

Whose authority does the parent exercise? The authority of God. Whose authority does the teacher in the school exercise? The authority of God. Do you believe that? Now I want to ask you a question: If the church cannot change even one minute of the time to begin the Sabbath, that's the Fourth Commandment, do you think that parents can change any word or letter of the Fifth Commandment? Do you think they can? Will you repeat the Fifth Commandment with me?

"Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee"
Exodus 20:12.

And as magnified in the New Testament, this commandment to honor the parents, specifically requires obedience of children to parents. So Paul teaches us in Ephesians and Colossians. Now I want to ask you something. Here's a parent that's strict, here's another parent that's not strict at all. Here is one parent that requires his children to obey, here is another one that says, "Well, now, I'll just tell you to do what's good for you, but you do as you wish about it." Which home would you rather be in, if you were a child? But I ask a question that comes closer home: Does that second parent, have the authority to thus relax the divine requirement? Does he? That's the question. And so it is in church government, so it is in school

government, so it is in national government. We are living in an age, my friend, of rebellion against all law, human and divine, which has been brought on by utter disregard of what Jesus said in our opening text. Read the chapter in the *Great Controversy*, on the "Impending Conflict," and you will see that the root cause of the rebellion against law and order that we are witnessing in society today, the root cause, is setting aside the law of God.

Some weeks ago I, read you on a Friday evening, some statements from J. Edgar Hoover, the Federal director of the FBI, stating that one of the greatest causes of the increasing crime rate, (and especially among young people) is the permissive attitude of parents, teachers, and ministers, in regard to obedience to law. Mr. Hoover has put his finger right on the problem. But I want to tell you something, my friend. The enemy has stolen a march on multitudes of homes within the remnant church. And it's *rare* today, to find any parent, that has a correct understanding of his responsibility, to not only teach obedience to God's law, but to require it. And those few parents or teachers or administrators who seek to do that, are subject to criticism from all directions and they are told how to find an easier way. And there is an easier way, my friend: it's the way of Aaron; it's the way of Eli.

You will remember that Aaron thought that Moses was too what? Too strict; too hard. And he had an opportunity one day to carry out his theory. Moses was gone, the administration was left in his hands, and the people came up there and demanded of Aaron that gods be made as they had seen in Egypt. We are told plainly, that if Aaron had stood up and had told those people that even if they killed him, he wouldn't yield to that, he could have stemmed the apostasy. But he wasn't that type. He gave in to the wishes of the people. Deep in his heart, he thought that Moses had been too hard, so he proposed the easier way. And we are told that it was amazing how the people responded. There was a unity in that camp that had never been seen before. Happy enthusiasm, glad and joyful cooperation, were evident. But you'll remember what happened as the result. Before the apostasy was quelled, 3,000 men of Israel lay dead, slain by their brethren in obedience to the command of Moses, who had the authority of God back of him.

Now the man that led in the reformation, there on his knees on Sinai, had begged and pleaded with God with tears to spare Israel from the destruction that Aaron's leadership and apostasy had brought about. Oh my friend, the true friend of Israel is not the man that takes the easier way. The true friend of Israel is the man that *pleads* with God in the mount, and then goes down and executes judgment on the idolaters. It wasn't long after this that Aaron reached the result of his easygoing attitude. His two older sons, Nadab and Abihu, had been honored to share the priesthood with Aaron, and the younger sons too. But these two older sons, on this occasion you'll remember, went in to offer incense. (But watch the point) They thought it wouldn't make any difference on a tiny little point, of whether they should take fire off the altar to put in the censer, or just get common fire from outside. And really, don't you think that was rather narrow and straitlaced? Do you see any sense in it? That wasn't the point: God had said it, and because they had been brought up by an *easygoing* parent, they dared to disobey the law of God, and the fire of God came out and smote them. They were carried out dead and buried outside the camp.

You wouldn't do that way, would you? God did it that way, dear friends. The loving God, the one who so loved the world that in Christ He gave His life to save rebels. He slew Nadab and Abihu to verify to a few was mercy to many. Before we shall ever see the reformation in this remnant church that *must* come before the Latter Rain and the Loud Cry, we're going to get a new concept of authority, my friends. We're going to get a new concept of the terrible danger of following Aaron and Eli. We're going to get a new appreciation of Moses and Elijah, with their deep burden for reform and authority and obedience.

Now lest I be misunderstood, let me say plainly, friends. Nothing we are studying this morning gives license to anybody to be mean or harsh or dictatorial or unkind. Moses was the meekest man on earth, we are told. It was indeed love for Israel that he executed judgment against the idolaters. No, this is not license for anybody to blow off steam by scolding; nothing of the kind. We're studying this morning this vital matter of whether parents, teachers, administrators, ministers, anyone who has authority, has any license from God to relax the law of God. Jesus says, don't think anything of the kind.

Think not that I have come for anything of this kind. I haven't come, as long as Heaven and earth shall stand, those precepts will stand without one letter change.

In this little book, *Child Guidance*, we have this statement on page 284.

"When it is necessary for parents to give a direct command, the penalty of disobedience should be as unvarying as are the laws of nature. Children who are under this firm, decisive rule know that when a thing is forbidden or denied, no teasing or artifice will secure their objects. Hence they soon learn to submit and they are much happier in so doing" *Child Guidance*, page 284.

We were speaking of Aaron, and what was that other man I mentioned? Eli. May I read you a word about Eli, as given here in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 578?

"Eli didn't manage his household according to God's rules for family government. He followed his own judgment" *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 578.

Well, a man can't do any better than that, can he, he did the best he knew? He followed his own judgments. My dear friend, thank God there is something better than following our own judgments; it's doing exactly what God says, which may not be our best judgment at all. Ah dear one, if the law of God isn't better than my judgment, what do I need the law of God for? Do you not see that the real value of the law of God is when I take *it* instead of my judgment? I read.

"Eli didn't manage his household according to God's rules for family government. He followed his own judgment. The fond father overlooked the faults and sins of his sons in their childhood, flattering himself that after a time, they

would outgrow their evil tendencies. Many are now making a similar mistake. They think they know a better way of training their children than that which God has given in His word" *Ibid*.

Now, why do they follow their own way? They think it's what? They really think it is better. Brethren, there may be men and women sitting right here this morning, that think *their* way of dealing with family discipline, institutional discipline, church discipline, is better. But like Aaron and Eli, they may live to see the sad result.

[Recording ended in progress]

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