

Fulfilling the law



- **READ:** A selection from Deuteronomy 5:1-22

Moses convened all Israel, and said to them:

Hear, O Israel, the statutes and ordinances that I am addressing to you today; you shall learn them and observe them diligently. The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. Not with our ancestors did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today. The Lord spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the fire.

- **REFLECT:**

On the one hand, the Ten Commandments seem fairly easy to keep. No idols—check. Don't murder—check. Don't steal—got it. We might get the impression that it's within our power to do right, to keep the commandments, even to earn God's love.

But as Jesus expounds upon the commandments in Matthew 5-7, obedience starts to seem less and less attainable. "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect," Jesus says to the crowd (Matthew 5:48). Be *perfect*? That's nigh impossible.

Until we remember how the whole thing works. Jesus is the true human. He's the one perfectly reflecting the image of God (Colossians 1:15). And he hasn't come "to abolish the law" (Matthew 5:17) by dismissing it as no longer relevant in an age of love and forgiveness. Nor has he come to make it ridiculously hard to keep, although we could stand to be reminded that we're incapable of earning our salvation by perfectly keeping the law. Instead, says Jesus, "I have come not to abolish but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17).

Ah yes, that's right. Jesus comes to fulfill the law, to keep the commandments that we fail to keep, to reverse the fall, and to break the curse. He does what we cannot. And when we are united to him by the power of the Holy Spirit, we mysteriously keep the law, too. Praise God!

- **PRAY:**

Jesus, I don't understand it completely, but I am so thankful that your life fulfills the law I daily fail to keep. Holy Spirit, work that mysterious process in me, and make me one with Christ. Amen.