

Mark 10:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

Analysis

Jesus listed commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother' (Μὴ μοιχεύσης, Μὴ φονεύσης, Μὴ κλέψης, Μὴ ψευδομαρτυρήσης, Μὴ ἀποστερήσης, Τίμα τὸν πατέρα σου καὶ τὴν μητέρα σου). Jesus cited commandments from the Decalogue's second table (human relationships), omitting first table (duties to God). The addition 'defraud not' isn't explicit in Exodus 20 but summarizes various laws about economic justice (Leviticus 19:13; Deuteronomy 24:14-15; Malachi 3:5). Jesus' selective citation sets up His later diagnosis—the man kept horizontal commandments but missed the first, greatest commandment: love God supremely (v. 21). External moral conformity doesn't equal heart righteousness. The list reveals law's function: exposing sin and driving to grace (Romans 3:20; Galatians 3:24).

Historical Context

The Ten Commandments were Judaism's moral foundation (Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-21). Rabbinic tradition organized them into duties toward God (1-4) and duties toward people (5-10). Jesus' citation omitted coveting (tenth commandment), perhaps saving it for deeper diagnosis (what the man lacked, v. 21). First-century Jewish piety emphasized Decalogue observance. Pharisees developed elaborate halakhic traditions to 'fence' the commandments, ensuring no violation. The rich man's confidence that he kept these from youth (v. 20) reflects cultural confidence in law-keeping. Paul similarly boasted of his law observance

before conversion (Philippians 3:4-6). Jesus' interaction reveals that mere external conformity misses law's deeper demand for heart transformation and supreme love for God.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' selective citation of commandments set up revealing the man's deeper spiritual need beyond external morality?
2. What does the rich man's confidence in keeping commandments reveal about self-deception regarding spiritual condition?

Interlinear Text

ὁ	δὲ	ἀποκριθεὶς	εἶπεν	αὐτῷ	Διδάσκαλε	ταῦτα
G3588	And	he answered	and said	unto him	Master	these
	G1161	G611	G2036	G846	G1320	G5023
πάντα	ἐφυλάξαμην	ἐκ	νεότητός	μου		
all	have I observed	from	youth	my		
G3956	G5442	G1537	G3503	G3450		

Additional Cross-References

Philippians 3:6 (Parallel theme): Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

Romans 7:9 (Parallel theme): For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

Matthew 19:20 (Parallel theme): The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

