

It Has Never Been About the Rules

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Alright, thank you very much. Take your Bibles if you would and open them with me to Matthew chapter 9.

In the passage of Scripture you're about to study, there's a really wild thing going on. Religion has been around for a long time, and it's good stuff. The truth is that the Old Testament doesn't need to be replaced.

It's not like the Old Testament taught a different doctrine. It's not like the Old Testament was about the law or keeping rules. What had happened was they got off target. They got to the point that they began to act out all the religion part and act out all the rules and forget that God was working on the inside of man.

And so today the message is it's never been about the rules. So read with me if you would. We'll start in Matthew chapter 9 and work our way through. Matthew chapter 9 if you would, verse 14.

Your Bible says, Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast off, but thy disciples fast not?

[1 : 06] And Jesus said to them, Can the children of the bride chamber born as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

Father, I pray you'd make these Scriptures come alive. I pray you'd help us to learn the lesson here so that we can faithfully minister to our people and our generation, that we can reach out around our church and we can love people all over this world and get them the gospel.

And I will give you praise and I'll give you honor for what you do. In Jesus' precious name, amen. If you take notes, there's a contrast here in Matthew chapter 9, verse 14 and 15.

The religious crowd is criticizing Jesus. He associates with sinners. Look in your Bible at Matthew chapter 9 and verse 11. We were just there.

In Matthew 9, verse 11, it says, And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto the disciples, Why eateth your master with publicans and sinners? So in verse 11, the Pharisees saw Jesus meeting with Matthew, Levi, the tax collector, and he had a whole bunch of people over at his house and he was sharing the gospel and trying to get them saved.

[2 : 17] And they said to the disciples, We can't understand it. What's Jesus doing with those wicked people? Jesus nor his disciples were playing all the religious games that were going on in the day and time.

Jesus is highly critical of the religious games. Look at Matthew chapter 6 and verse 2 where we've come through it. Matthew chapter 6 and verse 2, there was a game going on down at the local church, just about like what may happen in many religious establishments today.

People were making sure others saw them giving. In Matthew 6, 2, the Bible says, Therefore, when thou dost thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee as the hypocrites do.

For in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have the reward. They were giving their money so people would know about it. And, you know, it's probably hyperbole.

Probably Jesus is exaggerating. But he said when they go to give money anywhere, if they're going to give it to a poor guy, if they're going to give it to church, they say, hey, blow the horn. Blow the horn. Get everybody looking.

[3 : 22] Tap on the glass in the banquet so everybody can see me give some money. Make sure people see me being a good guy. Matthew chapter 6 and verse 5, they did the same thing when they prayed.

They wanted men to see them. The Bible said that when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are. For they love to pray, standing in the synagogue, and in the corners of the street, that they may be seen of men.

Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. So they like to pray. They like to pray so men would see them. So they'd stand up and say, hey, guys, everybody watch. I'm fixing to pray. You ain't going to believe this. I am one praying machine.

I am one given machine. I like to be seen when I do it. In Matthew chapter 6 and verse 16, they fasted to impress people. Maybe they weren't even fasting.

Look at verse 16. Moreover, when you fast, be not as the hypocrites of a sound countenance, a sad countenance, for they disfigure their faces. They mark their faces. They put on sad-looking makeup.

[4 : 23] They go to Hollywood so they can look like they fast before men. They have their reward. They were all hypocrites. They were all faking it. They all went to church.

They were all religious. They all did all the religious stuff. But it wasn't real. It wasn't for God. It was for the wrong reason. And it appears that Jesus doesn't protect his holiness.

He's with Matthew. He's with Levi, Matthew, same guy. And he's at his house, and he's witnessing his preaching, and they can't understand why Jesus would do that. Then as soon as the Pharisees get through questioning him, here come the disciples of John.

Look at Matthew 9 and verse 14. The Bible said, Then came to him the disciples of John. That's John the Baptist saying, Why do we, John's disciples and the Pharisees, fast off, but your disciples don't fast?

So the disciples, they said, John's disciples said, Why are we always fasting, and we're always doing all the religious stuff that we've always been taught to do, but your guys don't do it?

[5 : 22] John's disciples were genuine. They loved Jesus. They loved God. They were right. They were not like these hypocrites, but they did worry a great deal about outward change.

They were focused on seeing what they considered to be fruits of repentance. After all, in Matthew 3, 8, John said, Bring forth fruits, therefore meat for repentance, or worthy of repentance.

Show me you have repented, and let me see it. Obviously, there's nothing wrong with John's message. It might be easy, though, to get caught up in appearances for those that love Jesus and are seeking him.

It might be that God's people could focus on what they considered the change, the fruit, and miss the real fruit. So here they are. Jesus has just gotten over to Matthew.

He's just been witnessing to Matthew. That's where we were just in the previous part of the chapter. Now the people are saying, What's he doing hanging around with him? And then John's disciples come and ask the same question again.

[6 : 20] There was a problem, even in the question that John's disciples asked. The way John's disciples come and ask the question, there's a problem. You see, fasting was a common, prominent, outward form of spirituality among the Jews.

They usually fasted two days a week and on special days. So the question is an indirect criticism of Jesus and his disciples. John's boys look at Peter and James and John, and they say, Hey, how come we fast and the Pharisees fast, but you guys don't fast?

It wasn't, it was as though Jesus wasn't teaching his disciples correctly. Apparently, even the disciples of John have been affected by the Pharisees.

Look at verse 14. They came to him. They came to him, the disciples of John say, Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but you and your disciples don't fast?

John's disciples probably are showing a pride problem. They consider they're doing better than Jesus and his disciples. They had gotten hung up on outward forms of spirituality.

[7 : 27] So Jesus answered the disciples and said, Why he didn't fast. Let's look at verse 15. Verse 15. He said, Jesus said to them, Well, can the children of the bride chamber, that means the people at the wedding party.

You're at the wedding party. You're about to have a wedding. Here's a beautiful young lady about to get married to a handsome young man, and they're having a big party. And he said, Do you have fasting going on there? Is that what they do?

He said, But one day my guys will fast. Fasting was associated with sadness and great need. How could they be sad if he was there? How could they be sad if Jesus was there?

How could they need something if they were in his very presence? The day was coming that he would leave, but not yet. John the Baptist was great, but Jesus was God, and therefore the greatest.

John had known that he needed to decrease, and Jesus needed to increase, but maybe his disciples were having a hard time with that. In John chapter 3, in verse 28, the Bible said, You yourselves bear me witness that I said, John the Baptist is talking.

[8 : 34] He said, You guys know I said it. I am not the Christ, but I am sent before him. And in verse 30, he said, He must increase, but I must decrease. So here's what's going on.

There's a contrast. There's the religious crowd, and even John's guys are kind of like the religious crowd. And then there's this guy named Jesus, and man, they're having a hard time understanding the difference.

Religion and Jesus, and they're having a hard time understanding the difference. Maybe the real question behind all this was, Why do you emphasize internals, like forgiveness, while the religious people ask for fasting, which is external?

So there's a contrast. There's a contrast between what the religious people were doing and what Jesus was doing, and it's confusing the fire out of good people. So Jesus is talking to them, and he gives them an explanation.

Look at the comparison he makes in chapter 9 and verse 16. Matthew 9, 16. He says, Well, guys, no man puts a new piece of cloth in an old garment. Because if you put a new piece of cloth in an old garment, when you wash it, the new piece of material is going to shrink, and when it shrinks, it's going to make the tear worse.

[9 : 45] You've got to remember, they didn't have pre-shrunk jeans. You know, back in the day, you used to buy clothes, and when you washed them, they shrunk. Nowadays, you buy them, and they say the same size. But they shrunk.

And he says, So you don't buy, you don't get an old piece of cloth that's got a tear in it, and then put a new piece of cloth in there. Because when you wash it, if you did that, that new piece of cloth would just make that tear worse.

So you can't mix the old with the new. Look at verse 17. Neither do you put new wine in old bottles, else the bottles break, and the new wine runs out, and the bottles perish.

You put new wine in new bottles, and both are preserved. In other words, when you get new wine, you need a new bottle, because it was used in animal skin, and they'd stick it in there, and they'd sew it up, and if it got old and hard and brittle, and that wine was in there, it'd end up bursting it.

And he said, That's the comparison I want you to get. So he's saying to them, Now watch, he's saying, Guys, the way things are being done just don't work. And what I got is something brand new.

[10 : 48] It's not really new. We're going to see that in a second. It's not really new, because he didn't come to do away with the law, but religion had gotten in the way. That's a lot of what goes on today, isn't it? I think people with very good intentions have become very pharisaical.

With very good intentions, we've become very rule-based. With very good intentions, we've become very morality-based. And Jesus came, and he said, That's the old way, and this is the new way.

Look if you would, look if you would, and a few ideas here. Jesus gives an illustration they can understand. If you had to close the trunk, and you wash them, with a new piece of cloth, it would make the hole worse.

The animal skins wouldn't hold the wine. It would burst it. There's no way you can put new stuff in something old without causing a problem. So if you were smart, you would be wise enough to prepare something new for the new.

Now, you know, we've got an Old Testament, and we've got a New Testament. We've got Israel, and we've got the church. There's a whole lot going on in this passage of Scripture. And so let me show you real quick the story, as he told it, so they could lose, so they could understand what he's saying.

[11 : 59] Somewhere along the way, the Jews had lost sight of God's will for them. You see, in Genesis chapter 12, when he called Abraham, he said, Abraham, I'll be a blessing to you so you can be a blessing to the world.

And he had given Abraham, he had trusted him with his gospel message, he trusted him with all that we have. Everything we have as a church came from way back in those Jewish skies. The Bible we have, the church we have, the apostles we have, everything came out of that Jewish root.

But somewhere along the way, from Abraham to before you get to Malachi, things are messed up. And now you've got people walking around being religious. They don't really know God, they don't understand all the things, they've read all the stuff, they've listened to the preachers, and they come walking in and say, check me out, fix to get my offering.

Everybody look, check me out, fix to get my offering. Watch me, watch me. I'm about to pray. Hey, watch me. Hey, look at this. I'm keeping sad today, because I've been fasting. Everybody see that? My wife put mascara on me and everything to make me look really bad because I'm fasting.

It might not even be fasting. Somewhere along the way, they had lost sight of what their job was. They had misunderstood the law and its purpose. It had always been, the law has always been to show man his need of a savior.

[13 : 14] The law has always been for the same purpose. So in the Old Testament, every time man was given the rules, man was given the law, it was never so that man could walk around and say, check me out.

I'll keep the rules. It was never so man could walk around and say, I'm more spiritual than others. I fast two days a week, and I this, and I this, and I this. It was never for that. The rules were given, so you'd need the sacrifice that you were taught about.

That's why the rules were given. It was never about the rules. It was always about getting to the savior. It's always been to show man his need of a savior. It was never a morality checklist.

It was never meant to be the way you compare yourself to others. You remember the Pharisee that goes in to pray with the public and in the temple, and the Pharisee walks in and he raises his hand and he looks up to the heavens and he said, God, I sure do think you ain't like these other guys in this room.

I tithe and I fast and I give and I'm a great guy and you're lucky to have me. I sure appreciate the fact that I'm a Jew. I'm not a woman. I'm not a slave. I'm here serving you.

[14 : 17] Ain't I something? And the other guy on the other side of the room reached over, hit himself on the chest, bowed his head and said, God, forgive me. Totally different attitude. Jesus uses that story and he tells it.

That's basically what you got going on in the story. It was never meant as a way to compare yourself. It was never how you should show off what was happening in your life. God has always been concerned about the internal and not the external.

So I want you to understand something before we move on because easily you could say, well, in the Old Testament God was law and in the New Testament God was grace. Not really true. In the Old Testament God was grace and in the New Testament God was grace.

In the Old Testament you got saved by the grace of God and in the New Testament you got saved by the grace of God. In the Old Testament the law showed you you'd messed up and in the New Testament the law shows you you messed up. In the Old Testament the law was meant to be your schoolmaster and in the New Testament the law was meant to be your schoolmaster.

So you've got to understand we've got one message out in the whole Bible. Can you say amen right there? One message. You know what the message is? We stink and he smells good. You know what the message is?

[15 : 21] We fail, but he forgives. You know what the message is? We can't, but he can. That's the message of the whole Bible. Jesus is trying to get something across to him. He's trying to get something across to him.

He said, we need something new. Jesus' message is actually not a new message. Man has always been a sinner in need of a Savior. The law was always to show you that you failed God and needed grace.

Man has never been saved by keeping the law and never will be. I need you to understand something. Nobody went to heaven in the Old Testament because they kept the Ten Commandments. Nobody went to heaven in the Old Testament because they kept the Ten Commandments.

Nobody goes to heaven in the New Testament because they keep the Ten Commandments. And nobody in the future will go to heaven because they keep the Ten Commandments. For by grace are you saved through faith. And that not of yourselves, it's the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

God's always done that. Abraham, Romans chapter 4, Genesis chapter 15. Abraham was not saved because he got circumcised. He was saved because he believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness.

[16 : 24] It's always been about man as a failure and Jesus as a Savior. Can you say amen? Amen. It's always been about man as a failure and Jesus as a Savior.

The law was to show you that you had failed and needed grace. Man has never been saved by keeping the law. In the Old Testament, every time man messes up, God arranges a sacrifice.

I wish you'd go back through your Bible. I know somebody told you that the God of the Old Testament was a mean God. The God of the Old Testament was a bloody God. And the God of the New Testament is a nice God. And the God of the New Testament is sweet to us.

And the God of the Old Testament was mean. He's the same God from the beginning of the Bible all the way into the Bible. He's always loved us. He's always loved people. He's always been doing it. So Adam and Eve messed up in the Garden of Eden.

And when Adam and Eve messed up in the Garden of Eden, God came down in the afternoon. He said, Adam, where are you, buddy? And Adam said, I'm hidden. Because just to be honest, I'm naked. I ate that fruit you told me not to eat of.

[17 : 21] And here I am naked. And Jesus didn't say, well, I'm going to beat the devil out of you tonight. Here's what he said. He said, come here, Adam. You're covered up with fig leaves. But I've got some skins that will cover you, which was a symbol of blood that would be shed.

And then he called forth Eve. And he said, Adam and Eve, you guys ought to die. You know that. You are dead. You now sinned against me. But guess what? Eve, you're going to be the mother of all living. That was like radical.

Can you imagine the grace? If anybody ought to be dead, it's Eve. But instead of being dead, she's called the mother of all living. And not only that, he gave her a promise. Someday your baby will stomp the head of the snake's baby.

And God will give you victory. Eve, as you messed up one day, you will be rescued by the same seed. Just like that. And so when she even got her first child, the first thing she said was, I got a man child from the Lord.

She knew it. You go all the way through the Bible. When they got on the ark in Genesis chapter 6, when Noah got on the ark, he took on clean animals. Because he knew that he had to sacrifice. And God said, you're going to offer sacrifices to remember that it's my blood that saves you.

[18 : 25] It's always, always Jesus. It's always God. It's never because you kept the law. Man, it was never saved that way. The whole tabernacle was designed to show forth Jesus and how sins would be atoned for.

There's a need for something new. But it's not to say the Old Testament was wrong. The real question wasn't if the Old Testament was wrong, but rather the way they were understanding it and practicing it was wrong.

Now, just let me stop and say this. You'll meet people that say we don't need to use the Old Testament. The Old Testament is law. The New Testament is grace. That's ridiculous. The Old Testament is the word of God. The Old Testament was given to us from God.

The Old Testament teaches everything about the Old Testament. Screams Jesus. Jesus on a cross. Isaiah 53. What a fantastic passage. Genesis 3.15. What a fantastic passage.

The tabernacle. What a fantastic passage. Leviticus. All the blood offers. Jesus. He is the only answer for man's sin. It's all through your Bible. All through your Bible what God is doing for us.

[19 : 29] The Old Testament wasn't wrong. But they had gotten religious and not real. They were following what their leaders said instead of finding out what God had said in his word.

All of their religious hypocritical ways were wrong. But the Old Testament wasn't wrong. So when you read this and he says, time to do what the old put in the new.

He's really not talking about, I messed up for 39 books. I'm kind of going to rewrite this thing. Kind of like we made a run at it. The Old Testament, scratch it. I got a New Testament because the old one didn't work.

That's not the story at all. The Old Testament simply showing you that it was an animal dying because it was a figure of Jesus coming. The New Testament is we're going to see Jesus die. Jesus is screaming by his methods.

You're off track. You messed up. It's not about keeping the rules. It's not about looking good. It's not about being religious. The old had been the nation of Israel.

[20 : 27] The new will be the church. Now let me show you something real quickly. See, in the Old Testament, the nation of Israel had the job of getting the gospel to the world. It was more of an attractional ministry.

It was that the Queen of Sheba would come down to Solomon and say, half of what I've heard about you and what God has done with you has never been told. It was that she would say to him, men, when you talk, everybody who stands around you and hears you talking should be thrilled with the great wisdom that you have.

And they came to them. But somewhere along the way, Israel forgot their job. And when they forgot their job, they got off track. The Bible wasn't wrong, but they got off track.

Can I just say, here's a parenthesis, because I want you to get this. Most churches in America today have gotten off. Most churches in America have gotten off. And so now it's all about morality. It's all about keeping rules.

It's all about making sure your children don't mess up. It's all about making sure the United States government stays clean and pure like we want it to. And we're a political group, but that's never who we were. We're a preaching group.

[21 : 29] Not a political group. We're a Jesus announcing group, not a Republican defended group. That's who we are. That's who we are. And so the Old Testament, the Jews are God's people, but they've gotten off track.

So out of the great nation of Israel, he calls out a remnant to start his church. Please do not forget that all those that started the church were Jews. We're not against Jews.

If you ever get against Jews, you're against God's people. You're against our roots. You're against everybody. Hey, Jesus was a Jew. And I like Jews. I like Jesus. Amen? Amen. Amen.

And so it wasn't a condemnation of Jews, but rather of their being fake religious people. They taught us and gave us all we know.

So here's some common mistakes. It's a mistake to think that the Old Testament is not important. That's totally wrong. It's very important. It's very important.

[22 : 29] It's the Word of God. To think that God was one way in the Old Testament and another way in the New Testament is wrong. He was loving and kind and merciful and full of grace in the Old Testament, just like he is in the New Testament.

Before I go, let me just give you one illustration. Most people don't have any idea what the story of Jonah was. But Jonah was sent by God to go to Nineveh and preach, and in 40 days they'd be destroyed.

And Jonah took off, and he ran in the opposite direction. And all of us preach, boy, God will get you, make a fish swallow you, and burp you out on the ground so you'll do his will. But that's not what the book's really about.

And Jonah 4, too, Jonah says to God, I'll tell you why I ran. You know why I ran, because I knew all along how you are. I know your character. You told me you'd kill them, but I knew you wouldn't.

I knew you as a good God. I knew you as a sweet God. I knew you as a long-suffering God. I knew you as a God full of mercy. And I'm just going to tell you, I didn't really want them saved. That's why I ran. Because I knew if I told them, if they repented, I knew you'd forgive them.

[23 : 31] See, that's Jonah. Jonah knew God's a good God. You serve a good God. Amen. You came this morning, you're dirty and filthy and away from God. You know you've messed up. Don't worry.

He's a God that loves you. You came this morning, you're all religious. You're all right and perfect and morality checking. He knows you're wrong, and he still loves you, and he'll save you. Jesus didn't come to do away with the law.

People were never saved by keeping the law, by doing good, or keeping rules. In the Old Testament, sins were forgiven by the blood sacrifice, just like in the New Testament.

And in case some of you religious guys are sitting here thinking, Wait a minute, you're wrong on that. Let me remind you what Jesus said in Matthew 5, 17. Got your Bible? Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets.

I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. Guess what he did? Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world, John 1, 29.

[24 : 29] Write that down. In the Old Testament, there was a lamb getting killed all the time. Lambs were dying, lambs were dying, and lambs were dying. And John the Baptist knew it. When he saw Jesus coming across the hill on his way down to the river to be baptized, he looked up and said, That's him!

That's the Lamb of God! That's the guy they were talking about in Genesis 3, 15. That's the guy that was killed in the tabernacle. That's the guy that died all through the Bible. That's him! He's here! He's here to fulfill everything the Bible said.

It's all been about Jesus from the very beginning. Verse 18, not one jot or tittle would pass. In verse 19, he said, And by the way, if somebody wants to use, like all of a sudden you're under grace, and that means the law is of no value, if you teach people to disobey the rules or not obey the commandments, not respect the commandments, verse 19, you'll be the least in the kingdom of heaven.

Verse 20, he really sums up what's going on in the story. Look at chapter 5, verse 20. I say unto you that except your righteousness will exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not get to heaven.

And what had happened was they were religious. They had been baptized, catechized, they'd been disciplined, they'd been fundamentalized, they'd been everything they needed to be all the good, but they weren't saved.

[25 : 44] Their kids didn't go with bad kids, and they didn't watch bad TV shows. They always lived right and always did right. They were really, really good people. But really good people don't go to heaven.

Only lost people go to heaven. Lost people get saved by the grace of God. So all of a sudden you had this group of people in the New Testament walking around going, you ain't so good, you ain't so good, I'm the good one, check me out.

That's what was going on. So I didn't come for that. Jesus said if you don't have more righteousness than they do, you won't go to heaven. Let me give you the last thing, and this is the application for today, the cry for today.

We can make the same mistake that the religious crowd did in Jesus' day. We can be so worried about our externals that we fail to realize what's really important. Too many of us, in my youth, it was, did you keep your hair cut?

Did you dress a certain way? Did you shave? If you didn't keep all these outward things looking good, you weren't really a good Christian. That's what we used to say. And the Lord in heaven says, it's never been about that, boys.

[26 : 45] It's never been about the length of your hair. It's never been about what clothes you're putting on your body. It's never been about that. We became focused on the externals. We became critical and judgmental, just like those Pharisees.

In many ways, we're falling into the same trap that ruined the work of the nation of Israel. It's never about what the outside looks like, but rather what's happening on the inside. It's understanding grace, not works.

Love, not law. Understand that rituals and rules never take the place of the work of God in your life. Let me just say this.

A few years ago, all across the southeast, they put up signs that said, come to our church. It's not like your grandmother's church. It was kind of like an insult to a lot of us. Don't go to church like your grandmother went to.

But they had a point. Because at that church, if you had showed up and you had a mark on your body that they didn't think belonged there, or if you had an earring, or your hair wasn't just exactly right, or your skin wasn't the right color, or whatever, they might easily judge you.

[27 : 49] That was wrong. That was wrong. And religious people got hung up on the worst things. You're divorced. There's no hope for you. They just made up all kinds of stuff to ruin us and to hurt us.

That was wrong. And so a bunch of preachers got really anti-church to have church. They were wrong. They're both wrong. The truth is, Jesus has always been the God of grace.

The Old Testament, God's always been the God of grace. From the very first sin you see in the Bible, you see a loving, wonderful, sweet God show up and say, Adam and Eve, y'all messed up, and I'm here to save the day.

Praise God for Jesus. Amen? Praise God for the lamb that was slain on the cross. Praise God that saves you. No matter what your skin color is, no matter how much money you have, no matter where you live, no matter what your past has been, He cares for you.

There was no way that God's word in the New Testament could work in that current Jewish environment. They've become believers in themselves and their own goodness. So today, I ask you to turn from your goodness, turn from your pride, humble yourself and come to Him for what He has done instead of what you can do.

[28 : 59] I'm ready for you to pray with me, but just let me say, this church has got to be real careful. We're about getting the gospel out. And the gospel is good news.

The good news is no matter who you are or where you came from, He loves you. And He died on a cross and you can be saved. It means our neighbors down the street. It means the homosexual crowd. It means the lesbian crowd.

It means the drinking crowd. It means the drug-using crowd. It means everybody. Our God wants to see them saved. It means that somebody comes in with a really bad past. Our God's like, glory to God, bring them on.

How about saving God? It's about somebody who messed up their life and they walk in the door and our God says, yeah, you're a mess. But that's what I work on. Messes. And so today, look at this.

Jesus said, they said, Jesus, how come your guys don't fast and ours do? Hey, He said, let me tell you something. You can't put the old, you can't take this new and put it in the old. If they'd have put Jesus in, they killed Him.

[29 : 57] They killed Him. Now God's going to use Him down on a cross, obviously. And it was God's will that He died. But can I remind you? The religious crowd hated Jesus because He wasn't for keeping all the rules.

He was for keeping the grace and the forgiveness. He was a different God. So let me just say this to you as it ends. It's never been about the rules. I have made it about the rules in the past.

I have lived a life where I was so rule-based that made me feel sad and made everybody I preached to feel sad. It's not about the rules. It's about grace. It's about Jesus down on the cross for every man, everywhere, so all can be saved.

If you're here and you're not been saved, you can be. If you're here and you are saved, man, we've got good news to tell the neighbors. We've got to go tell them, He loves you. We've got to send the gospel to the other side of the world.

We've got to think about the Chinese and the Indians and the Indonesians. We've got to think about the Europeans and we've got to think about the Africans. We've got to think about the South Americans. We've got to think about the Russians. We've got to think about everybody because, man, we serve a God that's got great news for everybody.

[31 : 00] Jesus died for sinners. Father in heaven, I love you and I praise you and I thank you for your people and I pray, God, that today you would help us to grow, help us to learn, to serve you, love you, and look to you, and I'll give you glory and honor and praise for you.

This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia. For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.