**Holy habits - Biblical Teaching: Week 1**

We begin this series of 8 weekly emails by following the advice given to us in Hebrews 12 verse 2 to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. What was His attitude to the Bible? For Him, of course, the Bible meant the Hebrew Scriptures, our Old Testament. Luke 2 describes Jesus in the Temple discussing the Scriptures with the Rabbis at the age of just 12: *All who heard him were amazed at his intelligent answers (verse 47).* He clearly had already studied them deeply, and there is no doubt about His Biblical knowledge and authority during His 3-year teaching ministry. At the end of the Sermon on the Mount we read: *When Jesus finished saying these things, the crowd was amazed at the way he taught. He wasn't like the teachers of the Law; instead, he taught with authority (Matthew 7: 28-29).* So what did Jesus teach about the Hebrew Scriptures?

Earlier in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said: *Do not think that I have come to do away with the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets. I have not come to do away with them, but to make their teachings come true. Remember that as long as heaven and earth last, not the least point nor the smallest detail of the Law will be done away with (5: 17-18).* That is pretty clear, isn’t it? He follows that by saying over and over again: *You have heard that people were told in the past … But now I tell you … (eg 5: 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43).* In other words, He went inside the words of the Jewish Law and brought out their true meaning and purpose.

Jesus did not only speak about this, He acted it out. When the Pharisees criticised the disciples for picking and eating grain when it was forbidden by the Law, Jesus defended them: *Haven't you read what David did when he and his men were hungry? He went into the house of God, took the bread offered to God, ate it, and gave it also to his men. Yet it is against our Law for anyone except the priests to eat that bread (Luke 6: 3-4).* At the start of Mark 3, we read about Jesus meeting a man with a paralysed hand in the synagogue on the Sabbath: *Some people were there who wanted to accuse Jesus of doing wrong; so they watched him closely to see whether he would cure the man on the Sabbath (verse 2).* What did Jesus do? He healed the man, of course. As He had said at the end of the previous chapter: *The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath (2: 27 KJV).*

Jesus did not set aside the Jewish Scriptures, so neither should we. Rather, as we read above, He came to make their teachings come true. We shall see how next week.

*Produced by Glenn Evans on behalf of the Bents Green Holy Habits Planning Group (Debs Barnett, Glenn Evans, Martyn Read, Graham Wassell, Daphne and John Wilkins).  All quotations from the Good News Translation unless otherwise stated. You can find more information on the Circuit Holy Habits Programme on the Sheffield Methodist Circuit website and also the Sheffield Methodist Circuit Facebook page.*