

Jesus Proven Right — Delivery Transcript

Matthew 5:17–20 (CSB) • Wes Terry • Sunday, April 5, 2026 • Kingdom Culture

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Thanks to the worship team for leading us in worship. Yeah. Fantastic. And if you have your Bible, you can open it to Matthew chapter 5. We're going to be in Matthew chapter 5 this morning. And if you're new if you're new to Broadview, I don't normally sound like this. I've had a little frog in my throat all morning. What's crazy to me is with each service my throat gets a little bit better. So I think that's answer to prayer, at least that's what I'm going to treat it as. I sounded a little bit rougher at the 8:25 service.

As you're turning to the Bible, there's a little bit of housekeeping that I need to talk about before we get into the word. Every time that we have an Easter service at Broadview, we know everybody's going to be here at once. Plus a lot of guests. And so we have a special connect card that you should have received in your worship guide. And in that worship guide, if you'll pull that out, there's a couple of things I want to draw your attention to. One, if you're a member of Broadview or a longtime attender, you might say, I don't need to fill this out.

But we have old information all the time that is giving us calling strangers and sending mail to who knows who? And so if you wouldn't mind updating your information, especially if you haven't done so in a while, just put your name, telephone number, good email address. And so we can update our database. There's also a section on there for prayer requests. We're going to send these to our pastors, deacons, and staff. And so if there's a prayer need that we can join you in with praying, we want to do that with you this week and beyond.

I think it's a great opportunity, has a fresh reminder of the power of prayer. That we want to bring the whole church to bear on those issues. So please let us bless you and come alongside of you by filling out that connect card if you would be willing to do so. As you're as you're doing that and as you're thinking about it at the boring parts of the sermon. In Matthew chapter 5, Jesus is answering a question that every person who's ever lived, I think, at one point in their life We'll ask, and that is where is the flourishing life?

How do you find it? And Jesus is not unique in that discussion. There have been so-called experts having that discussion from the beginning of time. There's a little conglomeration in this graphic of different voices who have tried to say this is the path to human flourishing. You need to do this X, Y, and Z. Of course, one of the most famous examples in our culture is good old Oprah. And Oprah's path to the flourishing life is essentially, from what I can gather, self-authenticity. If you can be authentic about yourself and just be true to you, then that will lead you down a path to flourishing.

And that's basically every Disney movie you've ever watched. There's other people who on the other end of the spectrum, like Tony Robbins who would say it's about personal growth, maybe a Jordan Peterson who says it's all about taking responsibility there's guys like philosophers like Viktor Frankl who said it's about finding meaning through suffering, or psychologists like Abraham Maslow that talks about the hierarchy of human needs to self-actualization. And my purpose is not to go through all of those different avenues. And say this is what they think or that. I only say that to say that this is a conversation that has many different voices.

And it is a conversation that has been happening from the very beginning of time, from the serpent in the Garden of Eden to your know-it-all cousin at the Thanksgiving table. Everybody has an opinion on what's wrong with the world and then number two how to find how to find a life that is characterized by genuine flourishing. What is the good life? And in that way you might say the history of Western civilization has been about this question. It's what drove the ancient philosophers like Aristotle and Socrates and Plato. It was behind some of the great religious leaders, from Confucius to the Buddha right here.

I that's the only one you can kind of recognize. The rest of these guys like Muhammad and Zarathustra, they're not so well known, but every one of them was trying to present a solution to this human problem. The religious leaders, the philosophers, even our political institutions, whether it's the educational system, or the Democrat Party, the Republican Party, or social welfare systems, all of those systems and all of those agencies and institutions are trying to solve for this issue. What does human flourishing look like? And how can we partner together to bring it about?

And in that way, you might say Jesus is just one more voice among many. The thing that makes Jesus unique is not that he talked about this issue. The thing that makes Jesus so unique is that he died and rose again. And not only did Jesus resurrect, he predicted his death in resurrection. Not only did he predict how he would die, He assigned his death with a particular meaning. And not only did he predict that he would rise, he predicted when and the significance of that act. And when someone can predict their own death and resurrection and then actually pull it off, that is a person not to be ignored on the question of human flourishing.

And so the question is, if Jesus was not wrong about his death and resurrection, then what else does the resurrection prove that Jesus was not wrong about? And I want to show you at least a handful of truths that show Jesus was not wrong, and that the resurrection proves that fact in four important ways. And all of them are in a passage in Matthew chapter 5. And Matthew 5 to Matthew 7 are what is called the Sermon on the Mount. And there is no better place to look on Jesus' view of human flourishing.

Than in Matthew chapter 5 to Matthew chapter 7, where he really spells it out. It's a blueprint for human flourishing and how someone can come to inherit it. And really Jesus presents himself as the author and pioneer of that life. If you're new to the Bible or if you're new to the person of Jesus, Matthew is one of four different gospels. Matthew's gospel is written to a Jewish audience, and he's trying to introduce the message of Jesus to them. These are people steeped in the Old Testament and steeped in Jewish tradition.

And in the Beatitudes, he shows Jesus kind of turning the religious establishment on its head. The Jewish establishment in the first century had a certain vision of true religion, a certain vision of what righteousness was and how to be rightly related to God. Jesus comes on the scene. And in the Sermon on the Mount, he takes their assumptions and categories and flips them on their head. And he'll say things like, Blessed are the helpless. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are the heartbroken who mourn over sin. It's not the healthy and the wealthy and the wise.

He took he takes these people who were the dregs of society, the least in the kingdom of God from the Jewish religious establishment. And he says, actually these people are the closest to the kingdom of heaven, because the kingdom of heaven is for the helpless and the heartbroken and the humiliated. And after he gives these beatitudes, he shifts to the main point of his sermon. And that's where we're going to be today. In Matthew chapter 5, verses 17 to 20. Jesus is going to show that true flourishing is in his life and that through his life it can be received.

Jesus, if you're taking notes, paves the way. So that a flourishing life can be ours. And one hand the flourishing life seems impossible, out of reach for the normal person. But Jesus is going to explain how that life can be received as a gift of grace through f through repentance and faith. And so with that said, let's start in Matthew chapter 5, starting in verse 17. And it's going to be reading down to verse 20 of chapter 5. So Jesus begins by making a negative statement about what he didn't come to do.

Don't think that I came to abolish the law or the prophets. I didn't come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or one stroke of a letter will pass away from the law. That is, until all things are accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do

the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches these commands, they will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

For I tell you unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven. Now, it's hard to overstate just how scandalous these words would have been. Jesus starts with this negative statement because people were accusing him of something. You got to appreciate the fact that Jesus was upsetting the religious apple cart. He took the religious leaders like the scribes and the Pharisees and essentially said, they're leading people astray. And people like the scribes and the Pharisees would have been accusing Jesus of something nefarious, namely, Jesus doesn't believe the Bible.

Jesus doesn't believe the Old Testament. And so Jesus is answering that charge and saying, this is my view on the Old Testament. Far from trying to do away with the Old Testament, I'm actually trying to bring it to completion. And so when Jesus says I didn't come to abolish the law and prophets, he's essentially saying everything in the Jewish scriptures is going to stand and I affirm them, no question. As a shorthand for the entire Jewish Bible. A lot of people get hung up on that phrase and think, well, what part of the Jewish Bible is he is he talking about?

He's not talking about one part, he's talking about all three sections. Now the Hebrew Bible was broken into the first five books of Moses, and then there were the prophets and the writings. We think of the prophets like the major minor prophets, but they would have included historical prophets like Joshua Judges and Ruth. And then they had this whole big section called the writings of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the wisdom Literature. But when Jesus says law, or when Jesus says law and prophets, he basically means the whole Bible. So it'd be as if Jesus would come up here and hold this Bible up and say, I didn't come to do away with this.

My goal, my mission is not to diminish this, it's not to tweak it's not to undermine it in any way. Rather, Jesus says, my mission is to fulfill it. Which means we need to know, Jesus, what do you mean by fulfill? A lot of us, when we use the word fulfill, we kind of mean it to suggest a satisfying a requirement. But if you look how Matthew uses this word, he uses it many times, not once, not twice, but six different times, leading up to this seventh instance in verse 17.

And when Matthew uses the word fulfill, he typically uses it to describe how Jesus fulfills what the prophets had spoken in the Old Testament about the Messiah. And so Matthew would say Jesus was born in this place to fulfill what the prophet Isaiah had spoken. Or Jesus fled to Egypt to fulfill what the prophet had spoken. And each time Matthew is pointing that Jesus is reliving the story of Israel. Jesus is doing and achieving what Israel

could not do. And this really is on the nose when Jesus uses the phrase fulfill all righteousness.

He uses it in conversation with John the Baptist right before his baptism. He asked John the Baptist, will you please baptize me? And John the Baptist says, are you kidding? You should baptize me, not me, you. And Jesus says, yeah, I know, but permit it for now. He doesn't say I know, but he says, no, go ahead and permit it for now. Because in this way we will fulfill all righteousness. And what you saw in the baptism, and then what you see right after in his temptations, is that Jesus is reliving the story of Israel.

In the Old Testament, in their going through the Red Sea and their wilderness temptations. And it's as if Matthew is looking at Jesus and saying, everything that happened in the Old Testament has been preparing and pointing to him. And that's how Jesus means the word fulfill. It's not that he just satisfies a requirement. Jesus didn't need to be baptized for repentance. He hadn't had no sin to repent of. Rather, Jesus is saying, I am the point of the Bible. I fulfill the scriptures in that I am that to which they point.

Everything in the Old Testament. Is pointing beyond themselves to something bigger and better and I am that that reality. And I think that's really important for you and I as we think about the Old Testament. Because a lot of us, well a lot of Christians don't even read the Old Testament because they don't like the version of God that shows up in there. Or or maybe they just see it as a book of law and rules and moral philosophy. And I get all that in the New Testament and the books are hard to read, and so we don't look at it.

But Jesus is saying the Old Testament matters because it's like instructions on a map. Every instruction direction stands on its own right, but it's in service of a larger goal. Those instructions on your Google Maps or apple Maps, whatever you use they're driving you to a destination. And Jesus is saying, I am the destination to which they point. Or imagine if you were putting together a puzzle of a thousand some odd pieces which my mom and dad are really getting into because my grandma is she got dementia or Alzheimer's so they just sit around and do puzzles all day long.

And they do some big hard puzzles. But if you do a puzzle, you know that all the pieces are different and they and they kind of fit together. But each piece while it stands on its own, it's really part of a larger purpose. The purpose of every single puzzle piece is to paint a larger picture. And that's what Jesus is saying. I'm the larger picture. I am that to which every puzzle piece points. And when you put the pieces together, and see that bigger picture, not only will you believe the Bible, trust the Bible, and know it will never change, you will know that the purpose of the Bible points to me.

And so Jesus is the point of the scripture in every single way. Now again, we don't always read the Bible because we look at it as a list of rules, but if you will read the Bible not as a list

of rules, but rather as a story. Of a covenant-keeping God, keeping covenant with his people, you will begin to see how every pattern, every prophecy. Every promise is pointing beyond itself. It is pointing beyond itself to the person and the work of Jesus. From the garden in Genesis. And God's promise to bring a seed of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent and reverse the curse of sin.

That very offspring is pointing to Jesus or Noah and the rainbow. It's pointing to God's grace in Jesus and the judgment of a second coming. If you go to Abraham, the promise about land and lineage and a Lord, a seed of Abraham who would bless the nations, that is pointing to Jesus. Joseph, Jacob Moses, David, we could go on and on and on. Every covenant is pointing to a covenant-keeping God of grace. Every pattern from the temple to the sacrificial system is pointing beyond themselves. Every sacrifice is pointing to a true and better sacrifice.

Because they knew that blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. The blood of bulls and goats were pointing to a better sacrifice. The kings of Israel, like David and Solomon and the good ones and the bad ones, all of them were deficient. In very meaningful ways and in that way they were pointing to a better and righteous king. Jesus is that king. To which every Old Testament throne points. He is the promise, he is every pattern, he is the temple of God, he is the presence of God among his people, he is the glory of God in human flesh.

All of it points to Jesus and the resurrection proves it. And what's so awesome is after the resurrection the disciples are kind of feeling their way towards this truth. And Jesus shows up to talk to two disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke chapter 24. And when Jesus appears to them, they don't really know that it's Jesus. And Jesus begins to explain to them, beginning with Moses. All the things in the scripture concerning himself. And when they get done talking to Jesus, it says, did our hearts not burn within us?

Did our hearts not burn within us when he opened up and interpreted the scriptures. Jesus was showing everything is pointing to me. I'm the point. And when you start to read the Bible that way, then you are not far from the kingdom of God. But until you can read the Bible with Christo-centric glasses, the kingdom of God will be distant. Because for you to inherit the kingdom, you must affirm Jesus is the point. And the resurrection is proof positive. It's a historical flag in the ground that says Jesus was not wrong.

In making this claim about fulfilling the scriptures. But he wasn't just not wrong about that. He was not wrong about a couple of other things. Point two in the four truths about the resurrection is that Jesus is the person he claimed to be. Not only is Jesus the point of the Bible, he is the person he claimed to be. And you see this in verse 18 with this interesting statement about the Bible. Jesus says, truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or one stroke of a letter will pass away from the law until all things are accomplished.

Now, this phrase here, the smallest letter or the smallest stroke of a letter, that's a Hebrew idiom to talk about the Hebrew alphabet. This is the Greek word iota. It's like the dot on an eye. And this I can't remember this Greek word, but it talks about the stroke of on a Hebrew letter. Like for example, the well you don't care. But let's say the Hebrew D, the Hebrew D looks very similar to a Hebrew G. The only difference is like a little hook or the difference between a dogish laine and a dogesh forte.

Man, it drives me crazy in Hebrew. I hated Hebrew. I was always getting my de laines and my fortes mixed up because of the dadgum little hook on the on the letter. And but Jesus is saying the minute detail will never change. In other words, it's not the Bible's basically true or mostly true on matters of salvation. Jesus is here taking a very high view of scripture. None of it will pass away. Why? Because it's inspired by God. It's a uniquely authoritative document because God has inspired the scripture. And as such it will never pass away.

Now, a lot of people will point to this passage and say, then we should trust the Bible. Well, Jesus believed the Bible, and therefore we should believe the Bible too. And I must admit that's one of the reasons I believe in what's called inerrancy, that everything the Bible states is true and that it does not err. And one of the reasons I believe that is because it claims to be divine revelation. And if God inspired any of it, then he probably inspired all of it and he doesn't lie. A second reason I believe in inerrancy is because Jesus believed in inerrancy and then God raised him from the dead, so I figure I'll just go with his view.

And I think that's perfectly reasonable and one of the implications of this text, but that is not the main point. That is not what Jesus is saying. The logic of what Jesus is saying is an extension of verse 17. He's basically saying God's word is forever. And I am the point of God's word. So just as you have certainty that God's word will endure, I have certainty my mission will be accomplished. That's the logic. You believe the Bible? Good. So do I. I'm the point of the Bible. And because I'm the point of the Bible, my mission will not fail.

As sure as the word of God will endure forever and ever, is as confident as I am that my mission will be accomplished. Now, what is that mission? We'll talk about that in just a minute. But Jesus is trying to emphasize that he understood his purpose in life. Now, if we heard someone talk like that, we would think they were crazy wouldn't you? And a lot of the first century audience of Jesus, they thought that he was crazy. Even his own parents thought he's lost it. He's cuckoo for cocoa puffs.

Not actually not his parents. Mary was a believer. Some of his relatives, and Mark's gospel talks about Jesus' relatives thinking, oh, he's lost his mind. And some people accuse Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebub because he was always talking to the demons, and the demons were talking back to him. So you could imagine if someone's talking to demons, you'd think they're a little cuckoo for cocoa puffs. But the resurrection proves Jesus was not crazy. In fact, the disciples, I think, finally appreciate this after the resurrection. There's an

interesting passage in John's Doing this, Jesus responds in John chapter 2, destroy the temple and I'll raise it in three days.

Now they respond back to Jesus, no way. This temple took 46 years to build. And Jesus, or I'm sorry, John puts in this parenthetical commentary, he was talking about his body. Jesus was talking about the temple of his body. And so when he was raised from the dead, then his disciples remembered that he said this, and they believed the what? They believed the scripture and the statement Jesus had made. So Jesus is the person he claimed to be, and the resurrection proves two very important personal claims. And they're both in verse 18, explicit here in John's Gospel.

The first personal claim it proves is that God's power was behind Jesus' ministry. Now Jesus did incredible things. He performed miracles, he healed the blind, he stopped the storm and calmed the sea. But he would also in his teaching speak with authority that was uncharacteristic of most rabbis. In fact, when Jesus says in verse 18 verily, verily I say unto you, it's a phrase, amen, amen. Believe what I'm about to say. I think a lot of rabbis would use that. Phrase, but not many would follow it with the kind of words Jesus spoke.

Jesus would speak words as if God was speaking the words. Because he claimed to have the authority of God. A good example of this, if you'll keep reading in the Sermon on the Mount, if you'll look in Matthew chapter 5, verse 21, you'll see this, you'll see this Jesus say these things. He'll say, you've heard it said, you should not murder, but I say to you, don't hate. Or a little bit later in the next paragraph, he says, you've heard it said, don't commit adultery. But I say don't even lust after a woman.

You've heard it said, don't break an oath. I say just let your yes be yes and your no be no. So essentially what Jesus is saying, he's doing two things. One, he's saying the scribes and the Pharisees think they have authority, they don't, and they're leading you astray. But he's also saying, my words have the same authority as Scripture. He is acting as if his words possess divine authority. And whether it's here or any other number of things where he's forgiving sin and so on, Jesus is claiming to have the authority of heaven.

The power of heaven is what grounded his ministry, is what gave him the authority to do what he did and to say the words that he spoke. And when people heard the teachings of Jesus at the end of the Sermon on the Mount You'll see it say, they were amazed because he spoke as one with authority. It wasn't just the wisdom of the words or the content of his teaching. It was the authority with which he spoke the words that made people wonder, is this from god is this man from God?

Does he have the power of God that is authenticating his ministry? And at every turn in the gospels, the answer to the question is yes to and the proof positive, the greatest proof is the resurrection of Jesus because the power that raised Jesus from the dead is the power he did

all of his ministry with. The second personal claim it verifies is the purpose of God in Jesus' death. It shows the power of God in his ministry and the purpose of God in his death. And again, you see this in verse 18 at the very end of the sentence.

He says, not one letter is going to pass away until all things are accomplished. Now I must admit there's a lot of debate theologically around these words. There's debates on when does until mean and what does all represent. And really the domination you fall in and your theological perspective has a lot to do with where you land, but I'm not going to go into the debate. The one thing everybody agrees upon is that the death of Jesus is included in the all. And so when Jesus says, my mission will be successful He's not speaking in generic terms.

He's speaking about the real core part of his mission, which was to die an atoning death for sinners. And he's saying that mission will be accomplished just as certain as the word of God is true. And when he would talk about his crucifixion, he would put it in theological terms. In other words, Jesus was not just saying, I'm going to die because people don't like me. And he wasn't saying, watch me die. I'm going to give you a good example of humility and grace. Rather, Jesus would say, my death is anointed by God, my death is appointed by God, it is part of his redemptive plan.

That my death is the fulfillment and the establishment of the new covenant. I don't have time to go into all of that, but it was a promise of God in the Old Testament that just as God was faithful to king David and promised him an eternal throne. And just as God was faithful to Moses and Abraham and all the other covenants, that there was coming a new covenant wherein the law of God would be written on our hearts, and wherein God would forgive his people of their sins forevermore. And when Jesus talks about his mission was to establish that covenant.

We looked at this last week when he talked about salt and light. And so Jesus, in talking about his death, talked about it as atonement for sin. In other words, Jesus says, my death is going to pay the penalty. That you and I have before God. The wages of sin is death, that our sin separates us from a holy God, and that we don't have what it takes to pay that debt. And so someone needs to stand in our place. And so Jesus would often talk about himself as that servant of the Lord in Isaiah.

That we are that he was pierced for our transgressions, that he was crushed for our iniquities, that the chastisement that brings us peace was upon him. That he stood in our place. He bore God's wrath for our sin. And Jesus would make it super clear, like at the last Supper before his crucifixion. We talked about this at our good Friday service where David preached an incredible message. Jesus, when he would take that final Passover meal, he would hold up the bread and say, this bread is my body. Which is broken for you.

In other words, the bread of the Passover, which used to symbolize Israel's suffering, is really about me, the true and greater Israel. It's my suffering on the cross that is being broken for you. I'm suffering in your place for your sin, Jesus would say. And then when he holds the cup, which symbolized the blood of the Passover Lamb that took God's death angel so that he would pass over the doorposts that had the blood of the lamb on them. He says of the cup that this is the blood of the new covenant.

In other words, this is my blood, which is shed for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus was plain as day that his death was an atoning death, that you and I are sinners. Separated from God, who cannot save ourselves. And no matter how hard we try, no matter how sincere, it'll never be sufficient. There was something greater that was needed, and Jesus is that greater sacrifice. He is the sinless, spotless lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and the resurrection. Proves that the death of Jesus was sufficient.

The death of Jesus, the resurrection proves that the purpose, that it was the purpose of God that Jesus died. Because in his death he made atonement for sinners like you and me. I've often heard it said that the resurrection is God's stamp of approval on the death of Jesus. And I agree. It is basically God's historical way of saying Jesus is enough. Jesus is sufficient. There is salvation and no other name. The only way that you and I can be reconciled to God is through repentance and faith in Him. Now that leads to the third thing, and then we're going to be wrapping it up.

Not only is Jesus the point of the Bible and the person he claimed to be Jesus is also the perfect pattern of righteousness, and that's really what he's drilling home in this little section. Now you and I hear righteousness, and it probably sounds theological and inaccessible. All that righteousness means is being right before God. That that the way that you live, the person that you are, that you are in right relationship with God. And Jesus is going to challenge that that kind of righteousness looks a different way. The Pharisees and the Sat and the scribes, they were saying this is how to become righteous.

And Jesus is essentially going to say, aren't you wrong? Righteousness looks like this. So he says in verse 19, truly I tell you, whoever breaks one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees then you will never get into the kingdom of heaven. Now when he says, unless your righteousness surpasses the scribes and the Pharisees, I got to imagine scribes and Pharisees were within hearing distance.

If they weren't within hearing distance, the original audience certainly knew, and they would have been shocked that Jesus made such a claim because the scribes and the Pharisees were the Sally Lloyd-Jones called them the very super holy people. They were the very super holy

people, and everyone knew it. Not only did they read the Bible and take it seriously, they tried to do every Jewish law. The 632, whatever it is, laws, they were fastidious to try to do every single one. And not only would they do all of those laws, they would put extra laws on top of them.

So that they wouldn't even get close to breaking the law. And people would look at them and go, wow, you're super, super awesome. And people would grow up and want to be f they would want to be Pharisees. And if you were a mom or dad of a Jewish boy, you would want your boy to grow up to be a scribe or a Pharisee. There's just so just so good, so righteous. Wow, way to go. Hercules, there's a spiritual Hercules. And Jesus says of the scribes and the Pharisees, they are far from the kingdom of God.

Not only does he say they're far, he actually says, you're the least. We don't fully appreciate it because Jesus is using a Jewish idiom. A lot of the rabbis in the first century they would distinguish laws in the Old Testament. There were heavy laws and then there were light laws. And they kind of carried a different significance. And one of the things that the Pharisees had developed as a tradition of bin. And this is something Jesus calls them out for in Matthew 15 and Mark 7. They basically distinguished between light and heavy on this it was a thing called Corban is the technical term for it.

But Corban was a way for you to shelter your wealth from anything other than God. And so you could say, I love God and I'm going to use this money for God's purposes. And so the Pharisees would take like a ton of their money and say, well, this is for God. But it really wasn't for God. They were just saying it was for God because they were for God, so it was really for them. And then they would use that tax shelter loophole. To escape responsibility for their parents. And they would say, I'm not responsible for the medical expenses of my father and mother.

And Jesus essentially says you break the Ten Commandments because of your man-made traditions. You and your light and heavy commandments. He says, even if you break the least commandment, even if you relax that one. You don't get into heaven because the standard is perfection. Now I know that makes you uncomfortable, it makes me uncomfortable too. But Jesus is not unclear. Perfection is the standard. In fact, if you read to the end of chapter 5 in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus concludes, he talks about six different moral issues and about how God is really concerned about the heart.

And then he talks about loving our enemies and concludes in verse 48, you must be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect. Now I don't know that Jesus means moral sinlessness per se. It could be part of a rich philosophical tradition that Jesus is talking about being complete, being whole, being kind of one with God and a flourishing life. Whatever Jesus means, the people he was speaking to didn't have it. And the Pharisees in particular did not have that standard because the Pharisees were guilty of partial obedience. They use

their man-made traditions to justify why they were exempt from certain laws in the Old Testament, but not exempt from others.

And that's how a lot of people treat the Bible. That's how a lot of people treat God's laws. They'll say well I don't murder and I don't haven't committed adultery lately or I haven't you know stolen from anyone and they'll say well that's makes me better that makes me better than these other people and maybe God'll give m have mercy. And Jesus is saying, earned wrong, wouldn't go to heaven with that logic. Because the righteousness that God demands is complete, perfect, all the way. The other problem with the Pharisees was not just their partial obedience.

If you go to the next slide, they were also guilty of focusing on the wrong thing. The scope of their obedience was merely partial. The focus was on external performance. In other words, they were all about the behavior, whereas Jesus was all about the heart. And again, just read the rest of chapter 5, and you'll see Jesus do it again and again and again. He'll say, you're so focused on murder and lying, but God really cares about the heart. Because out of the heart come evil thoughts and murder and adultery.

It's not what goes into a person that defiles a person, but rather what comes from the heart. And so many people, even today, even Christians, if they're honest, would say when I think about righteousness, it's more about what I do than who I am. And that is not the kind of righteousness that is impressive to the Lord. The kind of righteousness that God demands is a righteousness from the heart. It's not just about restraining your behavior. It's about being a person of virtue. It's about being someone with a healed heart so that you're no longer susceptible to that spiritual poison.

There's no bitterness. There's there's no roots of resentment and envy. And we're going to look at all of these things as we keep going through the Sermon on the Mount. The point is, Jesus is saying the Pharisees are guilty. They have deficient righteousness because their righteousness is partially applied and it's focused on the wrong thing. And the last problem with the Pharisees, we don't have time to fully develop it, but their righteousness was motivated. By the wrong thing. They were motivated by public praise, and Jesus says that isn't what God wants.

If you read chapter 6 Matthew chapter 6, he talks about this dynamic. He talks about two types of giving, two types of prayer, two types of fasting. And he says, there are those who pray in public, give in public, fast in public. And the reason they do it in public is to be seen by men. And I tell you the truth, they have received their reward. In other words, if your motive for being righteous is that people will look at you and go, Hercules, you have received your reward. God is not impressed.

What God requires is a righteousness that is beneath the surface, that is in the secret place. Pray in your closet where no one sees you. When you fast, pretend like you're not. Pretend like you just ate a 20-piece McNuggets and you're bloated beyond all get out. He doesn't say that. But he said, don't let people know that you're fasting. When you're when you're giving, don't let your right hand. This is my left hand. Don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. That's the righteousness God desires. And you see how different those are?

One is very external about what people think. And kind of cheat code so that you feel good, but you don't have to work too hard. That is the righteousness that most of us are guilty of. And if you're honest, even as a Christian, There will be seasons of your life where this has been you. And just like the scribes and the Pharisees, Jesus would say, you don't get in. The kingdom of heaven requires a righteousness that is above the average and below the surface. Which is why I think Jesus, the reason I think Jesus says this is to drill home one big point.

It is that the kingdom of God is primarily a gift of grace. That none of us can attain that righteousness. There's only one perfect pattern. Jesus is the pattern of righteousness, and that's why God sent him to die. Because in his death, not only does he absorb the wrath of God for our sin, but he offers up to God a perfect sinless life. And when you become a Christian, there's this great exchange that takes place. You receive the righteousness of Jesus and he receives your sin and shame. And God did that because he loves you more than you can even imagine.

And your Heavenly Father desperately wants you to have a flourishing life. And he knows that the only way that a flourishing life can come. Is first and foremost for you to become poor in spirit and spiritually helpless. And for you to see your heart and the severity of your own sin. And to become heartbroken over the sin and its consequences, both in your life and all around you. And for you to come to a place of surrender where you say, Lord, I'm done being the boss. I'm done trying to control my life.

I'm going to give the reins over to you. Where you begin to finally see Jesus is the king. He is the risen king, the risen Savior, and He demands my all. And anyone who calls on the name of the Lord, the scriptures say, they will be saved, not because of works. It's not salvation is by grace through faith, not of works, lest anybody boast. The way anybody becomes a Christian is the same way. It's by realizing you can't save yourself. And here's the coolest part though, because it's not just trusting in Jesus and he forgives you of sin.

Jesus is also promising, I will give you a flourishing life. And the wonderful thing about the Beatitudes, it's not just when you get to heaven. Jesus promises a flourishing life here and now. And the way that that life is received is in the same way that it's inherited. It's a gift of grace through faith and the power of the Holy Spirit. When you become a Christian, the Holy Spirit comes to live in your heart, sealing you with eternal life and ensuring that you'll go to heaven, but also empowering you to live like Jesus says to live.

To focus on the heart and not just behavior. To pursue perfection as your father in heaven is perfect. To become a good person, not just well-behaved. But to become a true person of virtue. And imagine a world full of people characterized by that righteousness. Imagine a world full of people flourishing in that way. That is the New Covenant community. That is the kingdom of God. And that is what our church exists to bring about in Abilene. And every other place we can go, we want to connect every person to new life in Jesus.

And if you haven't experienced that new life, then this morning is your opportunity. I talked about the connect card right when you came in. If you'll look at that connect card on the back, there's some responses that you can make. And in just a few moments, I'm going to ask you to bow your heads and to pray. Skylar's going to come up and lead us through a time of invitation, but I want you to do something in that time. On the back of this card, there is a section number five, and it has four letters, A, B, C, D, and they each represent your relationship with Jesus.

And so if you would say I've already begun a relationship with Jesus and I'm following him, would you just check the box A and still turn in your card so we can have your information? Or if you would say, I don't think I'm a Christian. I've been basing my righteousness on good behavior or hoping maybe God will cut me a break. When I go to heaven. If this morning the Holy Spirit is saying to you are not enough, but I love you and I sent Jesus to do for you what you couldn't do for yourself.

Just check that box, the letter B, and say I need to give my life to Jesus. And I'm going to give you a moment in just a second to publicly testify that that's what you want to do. I'm going to ask you to raise your hand and I'm going to pray for you and I'm going to give you a prayer that you can pray so that you can make that decision this morning. Maybe you would say, I need to consider it more. I'm open, but I don't know exactly where I'm at.

Or maybe you'd say, I don't really want a relationship with Jesus, but I'll be honest and I'll say it out loud. Loud. Jesus said, anyone who would deny me before men, I'll deny before my Father in heaven and the holy angels. But anyone who would confess me before men, I will confess him before my Father and the Holy Angel. Holy angels. One day we are going to stand before God on a day of judgment, and Jesus will say to many people, Depart from me, because I never knew you. And they'll point to their good works and their ministry and their miracle-working power.

And Jesus will say that doesn't even matter because that's not where the kingdom is. The kingdom is for the poor in spirit, for those who mourn over their sin, and who in humility surrender their lives to God and Jesus as Lord. And so would you bow your heads with me? And I want to give you just a few moments. If you're here today and you're not a Christian, I want to give you an opportunity to make that decision. I'm going to give you a prayer that you can pray. There's nothing magic about this prayer.

It's just a way to express true faith. And you can say something like this, Heavenly Father, I admit that I am a sinner and that you're a holy God. And that my sins have separated me from you in a way that I cannot fix. But Father, I believe that you loved me so much that you sent Jesus, your one and only Son. So that if I would repent of my sin and believe in him, that I could have everlasting life. And so Father, I repent. I turn away from my sin and I turn to Jesus as Lord.

And I believe he died for my sins and that you raised him from the dead. And today I want to confess publicly, Jesus Christ is my Lord. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.