

# I Have Not Come to Abolish

*Matthew 5:17–20 (CSB)*

## EPISODE SUMMARY

In this episode, we sit with one of the most misread paragraphs in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus opens by heading off a wrong conclusion: he has not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets. He has come to fulfill them — to be the One they pointed to, to embody the righteousness they described, and to bring the whole story to its intended goal. He affirms every detail of God's word down to the smallest letter, warns teachers against softening what God has said, and then drops the line that should stop every listener cold: unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom. The point is not that we need *more* rules — it is that we need a *different kind* of righteousness. Heart-deep, grace-rooted, and real. The kind the Beatitudes already described, and the kind the Antitheses will demonstrate.

## KEY THEMES

- Jesus does not abolish the Old Testament — he honors every word of it
- Three layers of *fulfill*: prophecies, embodiment, goal
- The smallest letter and stroke matter — Jesus held Scripture in the highest regard
- A sober warning to teachers who soften God's call
- Greater righteousness is not *more* rules but a different kind — heart-deep
- Grace is the soil; obedience is the fruit; both are real

## KEY SCRIPTURE

*“Don't think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill... unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.”*

— Matthew 5:17, 20 (CSB)

## TAKEAWAY TRUTH

Jesus did not come to tear down what God had said — he came to bring it to its goal in himself. And the people who follow him are called to a righteousness that runs deeper than rule-keeping ever could. Not because rules are bad. Because the heart matters more.

## APPLICATION FOR TODAY

Three honest questions to carry with you. Am I treating Scripture as authoritative — every part of it — or am I picking and choosing? Is my righteousness external (showing up, ticking boxes) or does it run heart-deep? Am I tempted to teach a softer version of God's call than what he actually says?

## SERIES FOCUS

This episode sits in the middle of Week Two of our walk through Matthew 5 — “The Witness of the Kingdom.” It bridges salt-and-light (the call to a visible, distinct life) and the Antitheses, where Jesus will demonstrate concretely what greater righteousness looks like in practice. Tomorrow we move into Matthew 5:21–32 — anger and murder, lust and adultery, divorce — the places where the heart is exposed and Jesus' call goes deeper than any surface obedience could reach.