



SERMON ON THE **MOUNT**

**“Jesus, the Old Testament,
and Surpassing
Righteousness”
Matthew 5:17-20**

¹⁷“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:17-20

²⁰“For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

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B. But when we are convicted of our sin and repent and believe in Christ, we are born again by the Spirit of God. We become kingdom citizens.

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D. Christians have a new authority they submit to as they follow Christ. Before you became a Christian, you had a different authority guiding your decisions and actions.

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- 1. Reason—I do what I do because I think it's right.**
- 2. Experience—I do what I do because it feels right.**
- 3. Tradition—I do what I do because I've always done it that way.**

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4. Peer Pressure—I do what I do because everyone else is doing it.

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5. Scripture—I do what I do, think the way I think, live the way I live, because God says so.

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5. Scripture—I do what I do, think the way I think, live the way I live, because God says so.

F. In our verses today we see Jesus challenging His disciples to make sure the Word of God is their ultimate authority. He teaches them four reasons they should trust the Scriptures.

Introduction

G. Big Idea: The inerrant Scriptures point us to Jesus and are to be obeyed and taught while focusing on the spirit of the Law.

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B. Jesus did not come to dismantle or tear apart the Law or the Prophets. He came to fulfill them.

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C. Jesus is speaking here of the Old Testament Scriptures. And what Jesus affirmed about the Old Testament He also promised concerning the New Testament (John 16:12-15).

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D. The Scriptures, the entire Bible, find their fulfillment, their intended goal and purpose, in the life and ministry of Jesus the Messiah.

I. The Scriptures Point to Jesus (5:17)

E. “This means that the Bible is about Jesus and that he is its fulfillment in all ways. He fulfills the moral law by his obedience, the prophecies by the specifics of [his] life, and the sacrificial system by his once-and-for-all atonement” (James Montgomery Boice).

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G. “Jesus does not conceive of his life and ministry in terms of opposition to the Old Testament, but in terms of bringing to fruition that toward which it points. Thus the law and the prophets, far from being abolished, find their valid continuity in terms of their outworking in Jesus” (D. A. Carson).

I. The Scriptures Point to Jesus (5:17)

H. If you don't know the big story of the Scriptures and who the hero of the Bible is, you can't effectively share the gospel of the kingdom.

II. The Scriptures Are Perfect in Every Detail (5:18)

A. "Amen, I say to you." This expression means I affirm this as a fact. This phrase is "Jesus' own signature," since no other teacher is known to have used it. It occurs thirty-one times in Matthew and twenty-five times in John (in John with a double "Amen").

II. The Scriptures Are Perfect in Every Detail (5:18)

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B. “Until heaven and earth pass away” and “until all is accomplished” refer to the time of Jesus’ second coming and eschatological judgment.

II. The Scriptures Are Perfect in Every Detail (5:18)

C. “Not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law.” The smallest letter of the Greek alphabet (iota) and a tiny extension that distinguishes letters in the Hebrew alphabet (serif) will be fulfilled.

II. The Scriptures Are Perfect in Every Detail (5:18)

D. Even the tiniest detail of the Law would have abiding authority “until heaven and earth pass away.” Not even the tiniest, seemingly most insignificant, part of the Bible will be removed or changed until “all is accomplished.”

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D. Even the tiniest detail of the Law would have abiding authority “until heaven and earth pass away.” Not even the tiniest, seemingly most insignificant, part of the Bible will be removed or changed until “all is accomplished.”

E. All that God has declared will come to pass just as He has said. The Scriptures are perfect in every detail.

II. The Scriptures Are Perfect in Every Detail (5:18)

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G. When we survey Jesus’ teaching in the Gospels, we discover that Jesus consistently treated the historical narratives of the Old Testament as straightforward records of fact.

II. The Scriptures Are Perfect in Every Detail (5:18)

H. Jesus never questioned the historicity or accuracy of any Scripture. In His teaching He often used stories that modern skeptics find unacceptable (Adam and Eve, Noah's flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and Jonah).

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I. In his disputes with the Pharisees and Sadducees, the Scriptures were Jesus' final court of appeal.

II. The Scriptures Are Perfect in Every Detail (5:18)

J. Do you trust the Bible to be the Word of God? Do you believe the Scriptures are true, accurate, and authoritative?

III. The Scriptures Are to Be Obeyed and Taught Accurately (5:19)

A. In verse 18 Jesus teaches us that the authority of the Scriptures will not pass away until God has kept every promise and fulfilled every prediction in its pages. In other words, it will happen. God is faithful.

III. The Scriptures Are to Be Obeyed and Taught Accurately (5:19)

A. In verse 18 Jesus teaches us that the authority of the Scriptures will not pass away until God has kept every promise and fulfilled every prediction in its pages. In other words, it will happen. God is faithful.

B. In verse 19 Jesus teaches us the authority of the Scriptures applies and is relevant to the smallest details, “the least of these commandments” (Deuteronomy 22:6-7 and a commandment about a bird nest).

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D. To “annul” or “break” even a little commandment, and to teach others to do the same, has serious consequences.

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E. To teach others that portions of God’s Word are no big deal is a very big deal. You “shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.”

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E. To teach others that portions of God's Word are no big deal is a very big deal. You "shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven."

F. If you obey and teach the Scriptures accurately, you "shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

III. The Scriptures Are to Be Obeyed and Taught Accurately (5:19)

G. On the day of judgment God makes the pronouncement. "Do not, many of you, become teachers, my brothers, knowing that we will receive the stricter judgment" (James 3:1).

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H. The Scriptures are to be obeyed and taught accurately.

IV. The Scriptures Focus on the Heart and Spirit of the Law (5:20)

A. The scribes were highly trained in the interpretation and application of the Law. They would begin their training as children and continued their studies until they were ordained at age 40.

IV. The Scriptures Focus on the Heart and Spirit of the Law (5:20)

B. The Pharisees were members of a movement in Judaism that was committed to meticulous observance of the Law. They emphasized matters such as tithing, ritual purity, and Sabbath observance. The scribes and Pharisees shared a common commitment to study and keep the Law.

IV. The Scriptures Focus on the Heart and Spirit of the Law (5:20)

C. The Jews had a saying. If only two people could go to heaven, one would be a scribe and the other a Pharisee.

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D. Jesus shocked everyone when He said “unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

IV. The Scriptures Focus on the Heart and Spirit of the Law (5:20)

E. “The righteousness required in 5:20 is not imputed righteousness, the perfection of Jesus transferred to the believer’s account through justification (2 Cor 5:21). The word ‘righteousness’ and related words in Matthew consistently refer to a person’s obedience to God’s commands and conformity to His character expressed in personal behavior, speech, and attitudes” (Chuck Quarles).

IV. The Scriptures Focus on the Heart and Spirit of the Law (5:20)

F. Good works do not earn the kingdom of heaven for you. Rather, surpassing righteousness is the necessary evidence of a true follower of Christ. We're not saved by works, but the faith that saves produces good works.

IV. The Scriptures Focus on the Heart and Spirit of the Law (5:20)

G. The righteousness Jesus demanded here is a gracious gift. It is the righteousness promised in Matthew 5:6. This is the righteousness of sanctification or personal holiness.

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G. The righteousness Jesus demanded here is a gracious gift. It is the righteousness promised in Matthew 5:6. This is the righteousness of sanctification or personal holiness.

H. “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

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IV. The Scriptures Focus on the Heart and Spirit of the Law (5:20)

I. The Gospel of Matthew and the Sermon on the Mount in particular provide several descriptions of this surpassing righteousness.

1. Surpassing righteousness focuses on the spirit of the Law rather than merely the letter of the Law (Matthew 15:1-6).

2. Surpassing righteousness focuses on internal matters rather than merely external matters (Matthew 15:10-20; 23:25-28).

IV. The Scriptures Focus on the Heart and Spirit of the Law (5:20)

3. Surpassing righteousness focuses on the weightier matters of the Law rather than minor points of the Law (Matthew 23:23).

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3. Surpassing righteousness focuses on the weightier matters of the Law rather than minor points of the Law (Matthew 23:23).

4. Surpassing righteousness focuses on manifesting God's character rather than merely keeping God's commands (Matthew 5:9, 45, 48).

Conclusion

**A. What's your ultimate authority?
How do you complete the sentence
"I do what I do because**

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**C. Do you desire to be holy as God is holy?
Are you walking in fellowship with God?**

Conclusion

**D. By what standard do you do what you do?
To whom do you think you will have to give an
account on judgment day?**

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**E. “So then each one of us will give an
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To whom do you think you will have to give an
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F. The Gospel Definition

The gospel is the good news that the just and gracious God of the universe looked upon hopelessly sinful people and sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, God in human flesh, to bear His wrath against sin on the cross and to show His power over sin in the resurrection so that everyone who turns from their sin (repentance) and believes in Him (faith) will be reconciled to God forever.