

Small Group Guide: Summer on the Mount

Sermon Title: The Law, the Prophets, and Jesus

Scripture: Matthew 5:17-20

Series: Summer on the Mount

OPENING PRAYER

Begin your group time by praying for open hearts and minds to understand how Jesus fulfills the Old Testament and what that means for our lives today.

ICEBREAKER

Share your favorite summer memory or summer camp experience. How did that experience shape you? What made it memorable?

SERMON RECAP

Jesus addresses concerns that He came to abolish the Old Testament law and prophets. Instead, He declares He came to **fulfill** them. The Old Testament points us to our need for a Savior, while the New Testament reveals that Savior—Jesus Christ. Our righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees, which is impossible on our own. We need Jesus' righteousness, not our own.

KEY SCRIPTURE DISCUSSION

Read Matthew 5:17-20 together

Discussion Questions:

1. **What was your initial reaction when you heard Jesus say our righteousness must surpass that of the Pharisees?** How do you think the original audience felt hearing this?
2. **The sermon stated: "The Old Testament Scriptures help us understand that we are sinners in need of a Savior, and the New Testament Scriptures tell us about that Savior."** How does this framework change the way you read the Old Testament?
3. **What does it mean that Jesus came to "fulfill" the law rather than abolish it?** Can you think of specific examples where Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies or practices?

DEEPER DIVE

The Role of the Old Testament

4. **Be honest: How often do you read the Old Testament?** What makes it challenging? What value do you see in it after this sermon?

5. **The sermon mentioned several Old Testament practices no longer required (dietary laws, circumcision, sacrificial system).** How do we discern what still applies to Christians today and what doesn't?
6. **Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and James 1:23-25.** How are the Old Testament Scriptures still "useful" and "perfect" for us today?

Our Need for Jesus' Righteousness

7. **Why is it significant that even the Pharisees—the most religiously devoted people—weren't righteous enough?** What does this tell us about trying to earn our salvation?
8. **Read Romans 3:21-24.** How does Paul's explanation of righteousness through faith connect to what Jesus is teaching in Matthew 5?
9. **What's the difference between trying to be righteous on our own versus receiving Christ's righteousness?** How does this impact your daily spiritual life?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Read with New Eyes

- Read one Old Testament passage each day this week (suggestions: Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, Genesis 22, Exodus 12, Leviticus 16)
- Journal how each passage points to Jesus or reveals our need for Him

Option 2: Gratitude for Grace

- Each morning, thank God that your righteousness comes from Christ, not your own efforts
- Notice when you slip into "performance mode" and remind yourself of the gospel

Option 3: Share the Good News

- Identify one person who might be trying to earn God's approval through good works
- Share how you've learned that righteousness is a gift, not an achievement

Group Accountability:

Who will you share your progress with this week? Exchange contact information and check in mid-week.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ **Jesus did not abolish the Old Testament; He fulfilled it**
- ✓ **The Old Testament reveals our sin and need; the New Testament reveals our Savior**
- ✓ **We cannot achieve righteousness on our own—we need Jesus' righteousness**

✓ **The Old Testament is still valuable Scripture that points us to Christ**

✓ **Even the most religious people fall short without Jesus**

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Personal Reflection (take 2-3 minutes of silence):

- In what areas of my life am I still trying to earn God's approval rather than resting in Christ's righteousness?
- How can I grow in my appreciation for the whole Bible, including the Old Testament?
- What would change in my daily life if I truly believed my righteousness comes entirely from Jesus?

PRAYER REQUESTS & CLOSING

Share and Pray:

- Pray for the youth group traveling to CIY this week
- Share personal prayer requests
- Pray specifically for group members to rest in Christ's righteousness rather than their own efforts

Closing Prayer Focus: Thank God for sending Jesus to accomplish what we could never do on our own. Ask for wisdom to read all of Scripture through the lens of Christ and His finished work.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Book Recommendation:** *The Jesus Storybook Bible* by Sally Lloyd-Jones (shows how every story in the Bible points to Jesus)
- **Podcast:** Listen to teachings on how the Old Testament points to Christ
- **Memory Verse:** Romans 3:22 - "This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe."