

**"Jesus Fulfills It All," Matthew, Part 10 – Matthew 5:17-20 – Joshua Harris
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Introduction

What was it like to be in that throng of people on the hillside listening to Jesus? Matthew tells us that *great crowds* followed Jesus. His fame spread throughout the region. There was an electric excitement about him. People heard how he healed the sick. How he cast out demons. How he taught with authority.

To understand what Jesus is teaching it's helpful for us to consider to whom Jesus is speaking and the questions they must have been asking. They must have wondered, "Who is this man? Is he from God? Is he bringing a new message?" We can surmise from Jesus' words in verse 17 that some people were accusing him of throwing out or "abolishing" the law and prophets. People must have been asking, "Is Jesus a lawbreaker? Is he throwing out the teaching of the scriptures?"

Jesus has come to fulfill the scriptures.

1. Jesus says, don't think that I've come to destroy all God has spoken in the scriptures. I'm not wiping that out and starting from scratch. No, in fact I'm what the scriptures have been all about. I fulfill them. I bring them to completion.
 - D.A. Carson, in his book "Jesus' Sermon on the Mount," makes the point that we shouldn't have too narrow an understanding of what it means for Jesus to fulfill the law and prophets. It's certainly true that Jesus fulfills the law by perfectly obeying it. But Carson makes the case that there seems to be a broader meaning. Jesus "fulfills" the Old Testament scriptures by bringing to pass all that the scriptures pointed to and predicted. Jesus fulfills the scriptures by bringing them to fruition.
2. We see that the Passover and all the traditions given in the Old Testament to remember God's past redemption were in anticipation of Jesus, the ultimate redeemer. All the laws for holiness and rituals for the sacrifice of animals were given to point to our need for cleansing and the ultimate sacrifice of atonement in Jesus' death on the cross. Jesus wants us to understand that everything God promised his people will come to pass—and it will come to pass *in him*.
3. You can't understand the Sermon on the Mount, you can't rightly understand the entire Bible until you understand that point. Jesus is the fulfillment of all scripture!
 - a. 2 Corinthians 1:20 says, "For all the promises of God find their Yes in him."

Sermon Outline

- b. John 5:39 Jesus said, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me..." Eternal life is in Jesus. The scriptures give us life because they point us to Jesus. You can know the Bible, but if you don't know and trust Jesus, you won't have life. You just have knowledge.
- c. And in Luke 24:25 he says, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses [the law] and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." All the scripture ... not just predictive prophecy points to Jesus.

The righteousness God requires is qualitatively different than religious rule-keeping.

1. When we hear Jesus say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The immediate question is, "So what do I have to do to get in? What requirement do I have to meet?" The righteousness that God requires isn't about keeping rules. It's about supernatural transformation that only God can bring about in us. It's only possible by the power of Jesus Christ who redeems us by his death and resurrection, changes our hearts and fills us with his Holy Spirit.
2. When we approach God and say, "What do I have to do to earn your favor? What list of rules do I have to follow to get into the kingdom?" it assumes that you can save yourself. It assumes that you have what it takes to meet God's requirements. You and I can't save ourselves. If we think we can meet God's requirements by our own effort, it's because we don't really understand God's requirement. It's only when we realize our problem is too great for us to fix that we can receive Christ's salvation that is greater than we could imagine.
3. D.A. Carson points out that this is the discovery the Apostle Paul made. Paul gave himself to religious rule-keeping. He put all his confidence in his own efforts. In one of his letters, the letter to the Philippians, he writes that he was the best of the best, "circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless." But then Paul met Jesus ... he met the perfect Son of God who fulfilled all the Law and Prophets. He realized that his law-keeping was worthless, as he said, "whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, **not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ**, the righteousness from God that depends on faith..." Philippians 3:5-9 ESV

Sermon Outline

4. We cannot live a new life of righteousness in our own strength. We need supernatural transformation. We need new hearts! This is exactly what the prophets promised and exactly what Jesus came to fulfill. God says in Ezekiel 36:26, "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." Through faith in Jesus this promise is fulfilled in us!
5. And in Jeremiah 31:33-34, God promises to make a new covenant, "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Conclusion

What we see in this passage is a wonderful announcement of the gospel. And remember—there is good news and bad news in the gospel. The bad news of the gospel is that we don't measure up. Our religious rule keeping can never accomplish the righteousness of heart that God requires. We fall short. Our best efforts are not enough. But the good news of the gospel is that Jesus has come to fulfill all the promises of God to rescue, redeem and transform us.

Fellowship Starters

1. Take time as a Care Group to read Matthew 5:17-20.
2. When you read the scriptures, do you see Jesus as bringing to pass all that the scriptures pointed to and predicted, and fulfilling the scriptures by bringing them to fruition? If so, what are some examples you can think of? If not how will this change the way you read the Old Testament?
3. Do you understand that everything God promised his people will come to pass—and it will come to pass *in Jesus*? How does this change the way you live? Does this change the way you view Jesus in any way?
4. What is the difference in searching the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life and finding eternal life in Jesus (John 5:39)? Have you ever been guilty of just searching the scriptures and losing sight of who they point to?
5. Have you every been tempted to ask, "What do I have to do to get in to the Kingdom of Heaven? What requirement do I have to meet?" What are some ways that you can guard from this kind of thinking and living?
6. Josh talked about the good news and bad news in the gospel. Do you recognize and see the bad news of the gospel: that we don't measure up, and that our religious rule keeping can never accomplish the righteousness of heart that God requires? In light of that bad news, do you see and recognize the good news that Jesus has come to fulfill all the promises of God to rescue, redeem and transform us?