

SERMON PASSAGE GUIDE

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This Week's Passage

¹⁷ "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

¹⁸ For 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. ¹⁹ Whoever 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 keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

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.



Prepare Your Heart & Mind

Begin this time in prayer, confessing any sins you can recall, thanking the Lord for the gift of His Word, and asking for His Spirit to guide you in your time.

Reflect/Connect

Use these questions to reflect privately in prayer, or journal, or to start a meaningful conversation in your Life Group.

- Think of a rule or law you follow only because you have to, like a speed limit, a workplace policy, or a household chore. What is the difference between simply obeying that rule and actually agreeing with the heart behind it?
- How might this dynamic show up in your relationship with God? In what areas do you feel a tension between your outward actions and your inward desires?

Grow in the Word

These questions are designed to guide your personal study, or spark spiritual conversation in your Life Group.

After calling His followers to a visible presence in the world, Jesus clarifies His relationship to the Law and Prophets. He states that He did not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. Jesus affirms the enduring nature of God's Word, saying that not even the smallest part of the Law will pass away until it is all accomplished (v. 17-18).

- What do you notice about how Jesus speaks of the Law and the Prophets in verses 17-18?
- What does Jesus mean when He says He came to "fulfill" the Law rather than abolish it? Consider how fulfillment is used in these passages: Matthew 1:22; Luke 24:44; Romans 13:8-10.
- How does recognizing Jesus as the fulfillment of the Law deepen your understanding of who He is? In what way does that shape the way you trust and follow Him?

Jesus goes on to speak about righteousness in the kingdom of heaven, warning that anyone who breaks or ignores even the least of the commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom. He then states that entrance into the kingdom requires a righteousness greater than that of the Scribes and Pharisees (v. 19-20).

- What stands out to you about how Jesus describes those who keep and teach the commandments versus those who do not?
- Take a look at Matthew 23:25-26. How does Jesus describe the righteousness of the Pharisees in this passage? How does this comparison help you understand the 'greater righteousness' Jesus requires in Matthew 5:20?
- What thoughts and emotions rise to the surface as you reflect on Jesus' words about righteousness and entrance into the kingdom? How might it inform the way you approach the rest of His teaching in the Sermon on the Mount?

Practice Together

This section provides an easy way to live out the truths of the passage in daily life, whether you're with your Life Group, family & friends, or on your own. These practices help turn reflection into relationship & action.

- This week, ask God to shape not just your actions but your desires. Pray, "Lord, create in me a righteousness that flows from the inside out."
- As a group, family, or on your own, choose one area of your life (e.g., how you speak to family, how you handle work stress, or how you view your finances) where you notice a gap between your external actions and your internal heart. Pray over it this week and take one intentional step to align your desires with your actions.



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