

Jonathan Griffiths, Lead Pastor  
Sunday, June 18, 2017

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup>For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. <sup>19</sup>Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>20</sup>For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. (*Matthew 5:17-20*)

**Study questions:**

1. Jesus clarifies in vs. 17 that He did not come to replace the Law or destroy it or to bring a new religion. He *fulfills* the Law. And we see in Matthew 5 that Jesus fulfills the Law by teaching it authoritatively (Matt. 5:1 - posture of authority = sitting down while teaching; and throughout Matt. 5 we read this pattern in His teaching: "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago..... But I tell you that.....") Considering that Jesus fulfills the Law and that He is the final authority of the Law, how can we practically apply this truth in our lives today?
2. Jesus fulfills the Law by keeping it perfectly. We all fall short. Jesus' life on earth showed total obedience to the Law. Think about how is this good news to you and to the world and discuss.
3. Jesus fulfills the Law by bearing its penalty. Read vs. 17 & 18 in light of the Cross and discuss its meaning.
4. Jesus fulfills the Law by calling a people who live righteously; marked by godly living for the purpose of bringing glory to God. In Isaiah 61:1-3, followers of God are called "oaks of righteousness." Oak trees are known to be durable trees, standing strong against pollution and most diseases. They are tolerant of most soils because of their strong and adaptable root systems. They have longevity and can mature to a height of 60 feet. They are majestic and awe-inspiring. How can we be "oaks of righteousness" to the world we live in today?

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5. *For personal reflection or to share at small group prayer time*

Read Matt. 5: 19 & 20. Our behaviour matters as followers of Jesus. The rest of Matt. 5 gets into this. A life that is marked by increasing righteousness is the necessary evidence that Jesus is at work in you. Are these verses a wake-up call to you? Are there areas in your life where you're living out cheap grace (meaning, you have accepted the gift of salvation, but do not show the evidence of Christ in you in the way that you live)? Reflect on this and pray to your gracious Father in Heaven.