

WEEK 5 | MATTHEW 5:17-20

A BEAUTIFUL KINGDOM

As believers in Jesus Christ, and citizens of his kingdom, we have the unique responsibility to reflect the glory of God to a watching world. In our new series, *A Beautiful Kingdom*, we will study Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount, considering what it means to flourish under his rule and reign, and live as his representatives where we work, live and play.

QUESTIONS.

Feel free to use any, all, or none of these questions as you facilitate your group. Their purpose is to be an aid to you as you consider how to teach the implications of this week's scriptures.

1. Did the Holy Spirit use last week's passage or sermon to convict, challenge, or encourage you in any way? Did he use it to confirm or answer a prayer in any way? If you're willing, share with the group?
2. Read v. 17. According to Frederick Bruner, "'fulfill' literally means *fill it full*."¹ Take a few minutes individually and note a couple of laws that Jesus fulfilled. Share verses/examples with the group.
3. Why would it have been difficult for Jesus' contemporaries to understand that Christ was fulfilling the law rather than ignoring it? Consider the following quotes:
 - a. "His purpose is not to change the law, still less to annul it, but 'to reveal the full depth of meaning that it was intended to hold'."²
 - b. "It was only the use of them that was abolished, for their meaning was more fully confirmed."³
4. Read v. 18 as well as Luke 16:17. What conclusions can you draw from these two verses?
5. Read v. 19. Consider the high view of Scripture given here. Our relationship to Scripture and how we internalize the truth of it is our access point in the here and now to life in the Kingdom. It is where we find the blessing and wholeness that comes from a life lived with a Kingdom perspective. Every part of Scripture is important and yet we often miss the point entirely. We are innately aware of our inability to live up to the standards of Scripture and so we "relax the commandments."

What are some of the ways we tend to do relax commandments? Why?

6. Read v. 20. Author Daniel Doriani speaks to the concept of righteousness discussed in this verse. He says, "The scribes and Pharisees sought to codify righteousness, prescribing proper behavior in minute detail for every foreseeable situation. For example, they specified proper Sabbath rest by setting precise limits on work. They codified how far one might walk (one thousand yards), how much one might write (one word), ... without breaking Sabbath."⁴

How is this different than the righteousness that Jesus represented?

¹ Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary. Volume 1: The Christbook, Matthew 1-12*, (Cambridge, UK; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2007), 197.

² John R. W. Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7): Christian Counter-Culture*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester: Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 72.

³ Ibid., 71. Stott attributes this quote to Calvin.

⁴ Daniel M. Doriani, *Matthew, Volume 1: Chapters 1-13*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, PA: P&R Publishing, 2008), 50.

7. Continue considering v. 20. How do we, in our own religious culture, make the same mistake in our interpretation of righteousness? How do we make that same mistake on a personal level?

“There is a real and terrible danger of our deluding and fooling ourselves... You cannot read your Bible without constantly being reminded of that terrible danger. There is the possibility of our relying upon the wrong thing, of resting upon things that appertain to true worship rather than being in the position of true worship.”⁵

8. Looking forward (vv. 21-48), we see that Scripture is about to address laws and instructions. How do vv. 17-20 form the framework to understand the upcoming passages?

PRAY TO CLOSE.

⁵ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 178.