

Brandon Phillips / General

The King and His Glory / Righteousness / Matthew 5:17-20
King Jesus reveals two shocking truths about Kingdom Righteousness.

Pre-sermon Comments

[James 1:17](#) (LSB) ¹⁷ Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

[Psalm 145:7-9](#) (LSB) ⁷ They shall pour forth the memory of Your abundant goodness And will shout joyfully of Your righteousness. ⁸ Yahweh is gracious and compassionate; Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness. ⁹ Yahweh is good to all, And His compassions are over all His works.

[Romans 8:28](#) (LSB) ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.

[1 Peter 1:3-7](#) (LSB) ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, having been kept in heaven for you,

⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,

⁷ so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

[Psalm 24:1](#) (LSB) ¹ The earth is Yahweh's, as well as its fullness, The world, and those who dwell in it.

[Romans 8:28](#) (LSB) ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.

[Genesis 12:1-3](#) (LSB) ¹ And Yahweh said to Abram, “Go forth from your land, And from your kin And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; ² And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; ³ And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

[Romans 11:1-3](#) (LSB) ¹ I say then, has God rejected His people? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. ² GOD HAS NOT REJECTED HIS PEOPLE whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in *the passage about Elijah*, how he appeals to God against Israel? ³ “Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE.”

[Romans 11:4-5](#) (LSB) ⁴ But what does the divine response say to him? “I HAVE LEFT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL.” ⁵ In this way then, at the present time, a remnant according to God’s gracious choice has also come to be.

[Zechariah 12:10](#) (LSB) ¹⁰ “And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

[Romans 12:15](#) (LSB) ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep,

[Acts 3:13-17](#) (LSB) ¹³ “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. ¹⁴ “But you denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ but put to death the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses. ¹⁶ “And on the basis of faith in His name, *it is* the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which *is* through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you

all. ¹⁷ “And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also.

Sermon Text

Matthew 5:17-20 LSB

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 does 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.

Introduction to our Text

[Leviticus 18:22-24](#) (LSB) ²² ‘And you shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.

²³ ‘Also you shall not lie with any animal to be defiled with it, nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it; it is a perversion.

²⁴ ‘So do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled.

Questions to ponder:

- How do we interpret the OT?
- How are we to view the OT especially considering the ministry of Jesus the Messiah?
- During His earthly ministry, did He reinterpret the OT for us?
- Does the NT take priority over the OT or is there another way to view it?
- Specifically, what is our relationship with the Law which was given in the OT?
- How do we view the Law considering God’s grace?

- How do you view your own righteousness considering God’s holy standard for righteousness?

Proposition and Outline

In [Matthew 5:17-20](#), King Jesus reveals two shocking truths about Kingdom Righteousness. You must recognize that Kingdom righteousness:

1. Completely Concurs with Old Testament righteousness
 - a. Jesus did not come to abolish the Old Testament
 - b. Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament
2. Comprehensively Challenges Pharisaical righteousness

Review

[Matthew 4:17](#) (LSB) ¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

[Matthew 4:23](#) (LSB) ²³ And Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.

[Matthew 5:1–2](#) (LSB) ¹ Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. ² And He opened His mouth and *began to* teach them, saying,

[Matthew 5:13–15](#) (LSB) ¹³ “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out to be trampled under foot by men. ¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; ¹⁵ nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

[Matthew 5:16](#) (LSB) ¹⁶ “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

More questions to ponder:

- Why did the religious leaders begin to hate Jesus in the first place?
- What led them to take such a drastic action by sending Him to be crucified on a Roman Cross?

The theme of the remainder of the Sermon on the Mount is the kind of life of righteousness which the Christian is to live. ~ Martyn Lloyd Jones

Kingdom Righteousness Completely Concurs with Old Testament righteousness ([Matt 5:17-18](#))

[Matthew 5:17](#) (LSB) ¹⁷ “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

[Matthew 5:16](#) (LSB) ¹⁶ “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

[John 1:5](#) (NASB95) ⁵ The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Jesus did not come to abolish the Old Testament ([Matt 5:17](#))

[Matthew 5:17](#) (LSB) ¹⁷ “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

Jesus Knew the Purpose and the Ramifications of His coming

[John 3:16-18](#) (LSB) ¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷ “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. ¹⁸ “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

[John 3:19](#) (LSB) ¹⁹ “And this is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.

[Matthew 5:17](#) (LSB) ¹⁷ “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

What is the Law and the Prophets?

[Exodus 20:1](#) (LSB) ¹ Then God spoke all these words, saying,

[Exodus 20:2-6](#) (LSB) ² “I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³ “You shall have no other gods before Me. ⁴ “You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. ⁵ “You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, ⁶ but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

The law given there is the only law because the Lord is the only God. The Lord does not change ([Mal. 3:6](#)), and His law does not change. It does not change to meet the whims of society or even of theologians. It was not given to be adapted and modified but to be obeyed. It was not given to suit man’s will but to reveal God’s. ~ John MacArthur

Exodus 20:7-17 LSB

⁷ “You shall not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain, for Yahweh will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. ⁸ “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ “Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath of Yahweh your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female slave or your cattle or your sojourner who is within your gates. ¹¹ “For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore Yahweh blessed the sabbath day and made it holy. ¹² “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which Yahweh your God gives you. ¹³ “You shall not murder. ¹⁴ “You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁵ “You shall not steal. ¹⁶ “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. ¹⁷ “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your

neighbor's wife or his male slave or his female slave or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

[Matthew 23:35](#) (LSB) ³⁵ so that upon you may fall *the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.*

Everything Jesus taught directly in His own ministry, as well as everything He taught through the apostles, is based on the Old Testament. It is therefore impossible to understand or accept the New Testament apart from the Old. ~ John MacArthur

What is the origin of the Law?

[Matthew 22:37-40](#) (LSB) ³⁷ And He said to him, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.” ³⁸ “This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹ “And the second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’

⁴⁰ “On these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets.”

[Exodus 20:3](#) (LSB) ³ “You shall have no other gods before Me.

[Exodus 20:4](#) (LSB) ⁴ “You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.

[Exodus 20:7](#) (LSB) ⁷ “You shall not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain, for Yahweh will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.

[Exodus 20:8](#) (LSB) ⁸ “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

[Exodus 20:9-10](#) (LSB) ⁹ “Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath of Yahweh your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female slave or your cattle or your sojourner who is within your gates.

[Genesis 1:31-2:3](#) (LSB) ³¹ And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

¹ Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. ² And on the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³ Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He rested from all His work which God had created in making *it*.

Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament ([Matt 5:17](#))

[Matthew 5:17](#) (LSB) ¹⁷ “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

Jesus contended for the permanence of God’s Holy Law ([Matt 5:18](#))

[Matthew 5:18](#) (LSB) 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.

Conclusion:

[John 14:6](#) (LSB) ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me.

The Gospel

[2 Corinthians 5:21](#) (LSB) ²¹ He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

[Romans 5:8](#) (LSB) ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

If the Holy Spirit has laid anything on your heart in the preaching of this sermon, please contact one of the leaders or speak to a mature Christian to answer your questions. I can be contacted at brandon.phillips@gracegainesville.org.

Additional Quotes for Edification

Kingdom points to rule, and the expression is to be understood in terms of doing the will of God now as well as looking for the coming of his final kingdom. The important thing for the disciple is to be constantly seeking to do the things that God wills, that is, to be submissive to the King. In this context seeking God's *righteousness* (not our righteousness)¹⁰⁶ will mean seeking that righteousness which God only can give (there is no thought that the believer by his own efforts can attain a righteousness that may fitly be called "God's") ~

Leon Morris

I have always felt that [Matthew 5:20](#) was the key to this important sermon: "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." The main theme is true righteousness. The religious leaders had an artificial, external righteousness based on Law. But the righteousness Jesus described is a true and vital righteousness that begins internally, in the heart. The Pharisees were concerned about the minute details of conduct, but they neglected the major matter of *character*. Conduct flows out of character. ~ **Warren W. Wiersbe**

Now it is this deep obedience which is a righteousness of the heart and is possible only in those whom the Holy Spirit has regenerated and now indwells. This is why entry into God's kingdom is impossible without a righteousness greater (*i.e.*, deeper) than that of the Pharisees. It is because such a righteousness is evidence of the new birth, and no-one enters the kingdom without being born again. ~ **John Stott**

Participation in the kingdom, as Matthew has already informed us (see 5:20), necessitates righteousness of a qualitatively new kind. The gift of the kingdom and the demand of this new righteousness are inseparable. ~ **Donald A.**

Hagner

For the standards of the Sermon are neither readily attainable by every man, nor totally unattainable by any man. To put them beyond anybody's reach is

to ignore the purpose of Christ's Sermon; to put them within everybody's is to ignore the reality of man's sin. They are attainable all right, but only by those who have experienced the new birth which Jesus told Nicodemus was the indispensable condition of seeing and entering God's kingdom. For the righteousness he described in the Sermon is an inner righteousness. Although it manifests itself outwardly and visibly in words, deeds and relationships, yet it remains essentially a righteousness of the heart. ~ **John Stott**

Saints are so righteous in Jesus Christ that they are more righteous than Adam was before he fell, for he had but a creature righteousness, and they have the righteousness of the Creator. He had a righteousness which he lost, but believers have a righteousness which they can never lose, an everlasting righteousness. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

Human beings would like to think that they can attain God's standard of righteousness merely by adding to their own, but since the two kinds of righteousness are different in nature, this is impossible. ~ **James Montgomery Boice**

The proper wedding garment of a true believer is God-imputed righteousness, without which no one can enter or live in the kingdom. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

One thing I know: Christ thinks more of our sins than he does of our righteousness, for he gave himself for our sins. I never heard that he gave himself for our righteousness. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

Righteousness is a rich and full concept, but whichever way we understand it, it is a righteousness that people cannot produce of themselves. ~ **Leon Morris**

The law was given, in order to convert a great into a little man—to show that you have no power of your own for righteousness; and might thus, poor, needy, and destitute, flee to grace. ~ **Augustine of Hippo**

The righteousness of the kingdom, which altogether exceeds that of the Pharisees, involves a call to be like the Father. ~ **Donald A. Hagner**

Beware of self-righteousness. The black devil of licentiousness destroys his hundreds, but the white devil of self-righteousness destroys his thousands. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

Kingdom Righteousness Comprehensively Challenges Pharisaical righteousness