


Recap from last week:

Salt & Light
Matthew 5:13-16

- Live using our gifts to influence the world around us.
- Encouraging conversations full of grace reflect the love of Jesus, leaving a *tasteful* impact on those around us



MATT.
5:17-20

FULFILLED

17 “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. 18 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. 19 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. 20 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.



LET'S EXPLORE MATTHEW 5:17-20

Observe:

- What stands out to you in this passage and why?
- What is this *Law* that Jesus is referring to?
 - Hint: Briefly read Luke 24:44-48 then come back to Matthew 5:17-20.
- How does Jesus contrast those who are "least" and "great" in the kingdom of heaven in verse 19?
- What consequence does Jesus mention in verse 19 for those who break or teach others to break even the least of the commandments?

Interpret:

- What do you believe this passage means?
- What do you believe the author intended with this message?
- Compare your interpretation with a trusted commentary.

Optional activity for *after* the above study:

Look up "law" in the concordance.

See how many times it appears in scripture?

Thank God for sending his Son to fulfill what we could never keep!

Here's a few other passages to read for homework:

Matthew 5:21-37 and Leviticus 18

Remember...

Cross-referencing is an activity to give you a broader and deeper view of any passage of scripture.

**Whatever you don't finish tonight, you can study at home.*

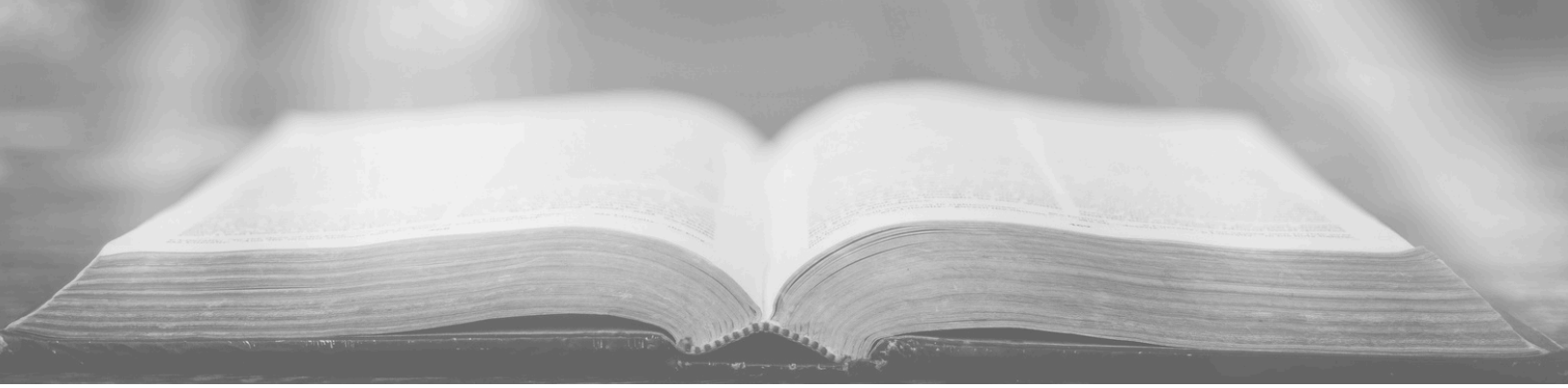


NOW, LET'S READ THE AFTER-SUMMARY TOGETHER

In Matthew 5:17-20, Jesus begins by affirming that He did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets but to fulfill them, stressing the permanence of God's commandments. He emphasizes that the Law will remain until everything is accomplished and that those who break even the least of the commandments or teach others to do so will be least in the kingdom of heaven. He also raises the standard of righteousness, teaching that to enter the kingdom of heaven, one's righteousness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees, expressing that external behavioral modification is not enough.

Jesus then expands on several specific commandments in Matthew 5:21-37, demonstrating how God's expectations go beyond external actions to the attitudes of the heart. He addresses anger, stating that anyone harboring anger toward others is subject to judgment just as someone who commits murder. He also emphasizes the seriousness of adultery, explaining that even lustful thoughts are equivalent to the act of adultery. Furthermore, He teaches about the importance of integrity in relationships, including the sanctity of marriage and the need to honor one's commitments. Overall, Jesus deepens the meaning of the Law by showing how true righteousness involves not just outward behavior, but internal purity and intentionality in relationships. Motives matter.

The good news (gospel) is stated in Luke 24:46-49, that because Jesus came to fulfill the Law as the ultimate and perfect sacrifice, His blood atoned (paid the penalty) and freed us from the punishment of sin and death. Because of His sacrifice, our sins (internal and external) have been washed away! It's through the empowerment of His Spirit that we're now able to walk in obedience, not only in action but also in motive of heart. Hallelujah!



APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

- In what ways can you actively pursue a righteousness that goes beyond external actions, focusing on the attitudes of your heart, especially regarding anger and relationships?
 - What steps can you take to cultivate a deeper sense of personal integrity, where your internal motivations match your external actions, especially in your interactions with others and your relationship with God?
 - In what areas of your life do you struggle with aligning your thoughts and attitudes with the righteousness Jesus describes, and how can you begin to address those struggles?
-

Closing Prayer...

Father, we can't thank you enough for sending your Son to die on the cross on our behalf. On our best days, we fall so short of your glory. We thank you for extending the solution to our problem...sin. We're grateful that not only are our sins pardoned, but that we also get to have a relationship with you! Help us to not take your Spirit for granted, but to tap into all that has been made available to us through His empowerment.



Father, when we are tempted to exhibit only outward cleanliness...bring us back into remembrance that it is our inward being that you are concerned about. We want to be led by Your Spirit, and not by our sinful desires. Thank you for your patience in renewing us day by day. May our lives be a reflection of your transforming power at work in us. In Jesus name, amen!