

## Day One – Recap of Matthew 5:17-20

This is the point where Jesus takes off His gloves and shouts, “Enough with the pleasantries!” Not really...but things are definitely about to heat up as Jesus turns his focus to the relationship between himself and the Law. “So why the heat?” you ask. We have to remember that we get to read the Sermon on the Mount after having read the rest of the story, but these folks weren’t able to see the big picture. For those who had been following Jesus, it’s pretty clear that He is special, but they didn’t know much else besides that. For those in the crowd who made their living trying to understand the Law and its application, you can understand why they might be concerned about these statements. Jesus is basically telling them that the entire focus of their existence has been wrong, and now they just need to look to Him. And for those of us who are trying to figure out how to put the Old Testament and New Testament together, Jesus gives us a sort of formula. So...yeah...there’s a lot going on here.

Why would anyone think that Jesus came to abolish the Law and the Prophets? Since I doubt Jesus was shooting from the hip on any of this stuff, He knew that the next section in the Sermon would be a difficult one about how He relates to the law. He included this explanation in vv. 17-20 to make sure that His hearers would understand the meaning of His teaching about the law. It only *sounds* like He’s abolishing the law.

How would someone “fulfill” the Law and the Prophets? There’s actually a fair amount of disagreement on this issue, but I think we can say a couple of things. First, Jesus fulfills the “Law” in the sense that He obeys it perfectly, both in letter and spirit. He embodies the law in word and deed. The greater sense of “fulfillment,” however, is probably the fact that Jesus is the one to whom the Law and the Prophets looked. The Law and the Prophets, the entire Old Testament, resonates with an expectation with something/someone to come. Jesus makes up what was lacking in the Old Testament’s revelation. In Him we are able to see God incarnate, walking about and living in this very world. In Him we see one who not only obeyed the law, but had the authority to extend it as He wished. In Him we observe the long expected ruler and savior of His people, the one of whom the Prophets spoke and the Law pointed. Jesus ascent onto the mountain to deliver the Sermon on the Mount set in place a new way to view the world. To use B.B. Warfield’s famous illustration, it was as though Jesus entered a dark room and, while leaving the furniture intact, flipped on the lights so as to make everything visible. Everything was already there, we simply needed one to come along and offer new revelation.

It’s been said several times, but it’s important to remember that this is not an evangelistic sermon. Jesus is talking to believers, to those who have been called into the Kingdom. Our salvation is not dependent upon our own conformity to rules, whether internal or external. The fact remains, however, that Jesus does seem to give an awful lot of weight to His commands for those who would follow Him. We would be well-advised to heed His words.

## Day Two – Day Five - Read 5:21-48

What phrase is repeated in verses 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, and 43?

What phrase is repeated in verses 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, and 44?

By using these phrases, what does Jesus indicate He is rejecting? (The contrast in these verses is not between Moses' teaching and Jesus' teaching)

Read the Old Testament verses and complete the last column (Spirit of Law).

<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Old Testament</b>	<b>Letter of Law</b>	<b>Spirit of Law</b>
5:21-26	Exodus 20:13	Murder	Hatred, anger, contempt
5:27-30	Exodus 20:14	Adultery	Impurity of thought
5:31-32	Deuteronomy 24:1	Divorce	
5:33-37	Deuteronomy 6:13	Oaths	
5:38-42	Exodus 21:23-25	Injustice	
5:43-47	Leviticus 19:17-18	Hatred of neighbors	

Thus, in all these examples a superficial observance of the letter of the law has given way to a radical search for the true will of God. This goes beyond the literal interpretation of the law and may indeed in some cases leave it on one side, as Jesus' sovereign authority (*I say to you*) reveals the radically alternative value-scale which discipleship must involve. It is amazingly but appropriately summed up in the concluding verse, *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect*. Legalism has been left far behind, and the law has been 'fulfilled'.

Jesus' summary is in verse 48. How do you understand this verse?

How are you doing in applying this to your life?

*James Montgomery Boice says that we should be perfectly fitted to that for which we were created. But this is not some low standard, as if it meant only to be a well-rounded person. We were created to be like God, to aim at Christ-like character. The only way we will be able to aim at that character and achieve it is if God gives us a transformed heart.*

Demands presuppose grace...but you've probably already heard that somewhere.

## Day Six

If you are looking to go a little bit deeper in your understanding of the text for this week, try one of these resources:

<http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/index.php?action=getBookSections&cid=1&source=1>

<http://www.evangelibrary.org.uk/members/com/nt/jcr/mt/mat-Index.html>

### Sermons Transcripts:

Ligon Duncan - [http://www.fpcjackson.org/resources/sermons/matthew/matthew\\_vol\\_1-2/matthew\\_vol\\_1-2/index\\_Matthew\\_vol\\_1-2.html](http://www.fpcjackson.org/resources/sermons/matthew/matthew_vol_1-2/matthew_vol_1-2/index_Matthew_vol_1-2.html)

### Audio:

John Piper - <http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByScripture/14/>

S. Lewis Johnson - [http://sljinstitute.net/sermons/new%20testament/gospels/matthew/matthew\\_master.html](http://sljinstitute.net/sermons/new%20testament/gospels/matthew/matthew_master.html)