

MATTHEW 5:17-22 / OCTOBER 11

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

Read and Pray

This week's sermon continues our series through the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus shows us the kind of righteousness his kingdom produces. As a group, read Matthew 5:17–22. Pay attention to what Jesus says about the Law and how he moves the conversation from outward behavior to the heart. After reading, spend time in silent prayer. What stood out to you? What might the Spirit be pressing into your life?

Sermon Recap (to *apply*, not rehash the sermon)

Review the sermon with your group. Focus especially on:

- Jesus did not come to abolish the Old Testament law, but to fulfill it.
- Jesus exposes the difference between looking righteous and actually having a righteous heart. Restraint is not transformation.
- We need a righteousness we cannot produce ourselves. Jesus gives us his righteousness and, through his Spirit, begins transforming us from the inside out.
- Christianity is not about becoming a better version of ourselves. Jesus came to give us new hearts and make us new.

Group Discussion

1. Look again at Matthew 5:17–22. What words or ideas does Jesus repeat or emphasize? What seems surprising about the kind of righteousness Jesus describes?
2. Jesus says our righteousness must “exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees.” How do verses 21–22 help us understand what he means? Why does Jesus care about more than us simply avoiding sinful behavior?
3. The sermon described those moments when something ugly comes out of us and we immediately wonder, “Where did THAT come from?” What can our reactions in moments of anger, frustration, or temptation reveal about what is happening in our hearts?
4. “Restraint is not transformation.” Where are you most tempted to settle for managing your outward behavior rather than allowing Jesus to deal with what is underneath it?
5. Jesus fulfills the Law by living the righteous life we could not live and taking the judgment our sin deserved. How does the gospel change the way we pursue righteousness—from trying to earn something from God to responding to what Jesus has already done?

WEEKLY REFLECTION QUESTIONS

REFLECT:

Where are you most tempted to confuse outward obedience with inward transformation?

RESPOND:

What part of your heart do you need to honestly bring before Jesus this week?

REACH:

How could a heart transformed by Jesus change the way you respond to a difficult person this week?

PRAYER

- ☐ Thank Jesus that he fulfilled what you could never fulfill and gives you a righteousness you could never earn.
- ☐ Ask the Spirit to reveal where you are managing behavior while ignoring what is happening in your heart.
- ☐ Pray for God to produce genuine transformation in you—a righteousness that flows from a heart that loves him and increasingly desires what he desires.