



After introducing his sermon with talk about the character (5:3-12) and influence (5:13-16) of a disciple, Jesus started talking about himself and the reason for his coming.

“Do not think that I have come to _____ the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to _____ them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is _____. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of _____.” (5:17-20)

What was Jesus’ mission? Why was he here? The New Testament gives us many answers to that question, but here is one provided by Jesus himself.

Abolishing vs. Fulfilling

When something is “abolished,” it’s torn down. When a law is abolished, it’s no longer in effect. When a practice is “abolished,” it’s no longer practiced. An “abolished” expectation is no longer valid, it’s void. The “Law and the Prophets” was a common way to describe what we refer to as the Old Testament Scriptures and Jesus teaches his disciples not to think that he came to “abolish” them. “I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

What did Jesus mean by that? I came to “fulfill”? The New Living Translation is helpful here: “I came to _____ their _____.” What was the purpose of the Law? To teach us about God, sin, the consequences of transgression, and God’s plan to defeat sin and death. What was the purpose of the Prophets? To call God’s people to repentance and point them to the coming of God’s Chosen One. And who “fulfills” the Law and Prophets? Who “fills them up” as the realization of what they were pointing to? _____.

Before Jesus shared this sermon, he had already been preaching, “_____,” for the kingdom of heaven is at _____” (4:17) and that’s what he draws the attention of his disciples to in 5:19-20—the kingdom of heaven. How does his kingdom relate to the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament? And how can our “righteousness” possibly exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees? Jesus has given us a lot to talk about. Let’s dig in...



For Class & Family Discussion:

1. What the apostle Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia might be helpful here. Let's read what he says about the law in Galatians 3:19-29. How does it help us understand what Jesus meant when he said that he had not come to "abolish" but to "fulfill" the Law and the Prophets?
2. The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews seems to have a similar idea in mind in Hebrews 1:1-2. How does this passage help us understand what Jesus meant in Matthew 5?
3. Let's focus back in on what Jesus said in Matthew 5:17-20. In your own words, what is he communicating in 5:18?
 - What is he warning about in 5:19?
 - When people of Jesus' day thought of "righteousness," many would quickly and easily think of the scribes and the Pharisees, so how could the righteousness of Jesus' disciples possibly "exceed" that of the scribes and Pharisees? What the apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 3:8-11 might be very helpful here...
4. How might even Jesus' words on the cross in John 19:30 help us understand what he was talking about in Matthew 5? From that point forward, what has God expected everyone, everywhere to do?
5. How might all of this talk of "fulfilling" the Law and the Prophets help us understand more clearly what Jesus will talk about next in his sermon?