

REAL RIGHTEOUSNESS

BECOMING REAL [MATTHEW, PART 3] · MATTHEW 5:17-48 · MARCH 7, 2021 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

SERMON OUTLINE:

"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." (Matthew 5:17)

Jesus' Arrival and the Time of Fulfillment (5:17-19)

Jesus and fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets
The continuing value of the Law and the Prophets
Real righteousness in the time of fulfillment

Different Pathways of Righteousness (5:20)

What is righteousness?
Moving from exterior to interior (Ezekiel 36:24-28)
A contrast between:

- The old, deficient righteousness of the Pharisees and teachers of the law
- The new, surpassing righteousness of Jesus and His disciples

Six Examples of Real Righteousness (5:21-47)

Theme/Text	"You have heard it was said..."	"But I say to you..."
Murder & Anger (5:21-26)	Don't murder	Don't be angry towards others; instead seek reconciliation
Adultery & Lust (5:27-30)	Don't have sexual intercourse outside of marriage	Don't look at others with lust in your heart
Divorce (5:31-32)	If divorcing, give the necessary certificate	Don't divorce in this way
Oaths & Vows (5:33-37)	Don't break oaths or vows used to convince others	Don't use oaths or vows at all; just speak the truth about things
Retaliation (5:38-42)	Repay injuries on par with what has been inflicted	Instead of harm, help the one who inflicts harm on you
Love for Enemies (5:43-48)	Love neighbors and hate enemies	Love and pray for your enemies

Living as Disciples of Jesus with Real Righteousness (5:48)

Disciples' vision: the incarnate righteousness in Jesus the Messiah
Disciples' power: the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit
Disciples' goal: the completeness (perfection) of God's character

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Answer one of these questions:
 - What was the hardest subject for you in school and why?
 - What was one of the hardest things you ever set out to accomplish in life?

2. This week we continue our series, "Becoming Real," on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount by looking at Matthew 5:17-48. Begin your study in prayer by asking God to speak to you through His Word.
3. Read Matthew 5:17-20. How does Jesus describe His relationship with the Law and the Prophets in verses 17-18? (Note: "The Law and the Prophets" was a shorthand phrase that conveyed the totality of Scripture.)
4. What does Jesus say about how others should relate with God's law in verses 19-20?
5. What do you think it means to surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law?
6. In Matthew 5:21-48, Jesus offers six examples of what such surpassing, real righteousness might look like in relation to specific topics: murder (5:21-26), adultery (5:27-30), divorce (5:31-32), oaths and vows (5:33-37), retaliation (5:38-42), and love for enemies (5:43-48). Read each section one at a time, using the following questions to guide your exploration of each:
 - What is the deficient or old righteousness that Jesus addresses here?
 - How would you summarize the surpassing or new righteousness that Jesus outlines here?
 - What examples does Jesus offer here, if any, that help shed light on what He means? What might be some contemporary examples of this new righteousness?
 - What would you say is the heart of the matter in regard to Christ's new and surpassing righteousness in regard to this topic?
7. Which of these six examples do you most relate with? Which of them highlights an area of growth for you in your life with God?
8. In verse 48, Jesus says, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." This echoes Leviticus 19:2, which says, "Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy." In light of what He says in 5:20, what do you think Jesus means by this?
9. What is one thing God is speaking to you through this study of Matthew 5:17-48? If you're on your own, write that down and pray over that this week. If you are with a small group, share your answers with one another before closing in prayer.

DIG DEEPER:

This week dig deeper into this section of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in one or more of the following ways:

- Consider memorizing Matthew 5:17, 20, or 48 this week.
- Take some time to prayerfully consider one or more of Jesus' examples of surpassing righteousness. Let God search your heart and life about this. Reach out to a friend to discuss what you're learning. Perhaps you could pray for one another about this.
- Consider reading Dallas Willard's article, "How Does a Disciple Live?" (old.dwillard.org/articles/artview.asp?artID=103), or his outstanding book *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*.