

Main Idea: In Matthew 5:17-20 we learn plainly what Jesus had to say about The Book, and why it matters today. Jesus addresses the importance of God's Law in two ways.

- I. Jesus' Relationship to The Book (17-18)
 - A. He said He came to fulfill the Law, not abolish it (17).
 1. Jesus fulfilled the precept of the Law with His life.
 2. Jesus fulfilled the penalty of the Law with His death.
 - B. He said the details of the Law would be accomplished (18).
- II. Our Relationship to The Book (19-20)
 - A. Jesus confronted the danger of lawlessness (19).
 - B. Jesus confronted the danger of legalism (20).
 1. The problem is not that Pharisees aren't good.
 2. The problem is that Pharisees aren't good enough.

Make It Personal: In light of what Jesus said, we need to ask two questions.

1. What am I doing with the Scriptures?
2. What am I doing with Jesus?

This morning we are returning to Jesus' most famous sermon, the Sermon on the Mount. We've come to a perfect passage to prepare for a baptismal service that will follow.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:17-20

Notice the final words of our Scripture reading. *Will never enter the kingdom of heaven.* Those are significant words. Jesus is talking about heaven's kingdom, and those who will enter that kingdom, and not. How does a person know for sure they are going to heaven? We'll find out this morning. Indeed, we'll find out that one of the barriers that keeps people from going to heaven is the faulty notion to which millions, even billions of people are clinging.

I'm going to heaven because I am a good person.

To which Jesus gives the shocking announcement, “Unless your goodness exceeds the most righteous people in this country, you're not going.” What does He mean? How does a person go to heaven? We'll find out this morning.

It's good to be back in the Sermon on the Mount, after a several month break. These are some of the most significant words that Jesus spoke. It's Matthew that records this sermon, which is fitting because Matthew is presenting Jesus as King. This is the King speaking, announcing to His followers (and those who are interested in becoming His followers) what kind of King He is and what kind of kingdom He's establishing.

Notice the setting in 5:1, “Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.” This sermon came about because of two types of people. First, there are the crowds. Second, there are Jesus' disciples. There are those who checking Jesus out, and then there are those who have committed themselves to following Jesus.

Are you following Jesus? Do you want to follow Jesus? This is the king speaking. This is kingdom living 101. He begins with the question, “Who can enter His kingdom? Who is a candidate?”

^{**} Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the series preached at WBC in 1988.

His answer is shocking, as He reveals in His first words. He says in verse 3, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Who is a part of the kingdom? Those who admit they don’t deserve to be there. The spiritually bankrupt.

And they don’t just admit it. They *mourn* over it, says Jesus in verse 4. They grieve over their sins. And they’re *meek* too, verse 5, not proud and self-sufficient. Indeed, they *hunger* for what they need most. Not money. Not recognition. They hunger for *righteousness*, says Jesus in verse 6. And they, those who admit what they lack will receive what they need, righteousness. They receive it from the only One who can give it to them. Their King.

How will this King meet that need? That’s yet to be seen, at least from the perspective of Matthew 5. You have to keep reading. In Matthew 6-20 you see King Jesus living the righteous life that we sinners were created to live, but failed to live. He loves God with all His heart, soul, mind, and strength (and His Father says, “This is my beloved Son”), and He loves His neighbor as Himself.

Then the King rides into Jerusalem on a donkey in Matthew 21, to the applause of a fickle crowd. But He will not submit to their whims. That’s not why He came. He knows what the spiritually bankrupt need, and this is why He has come. To give His life on a Roman cross as a ransom payment. Yes, keep reading as you’ll discover that this King is unlike any other. He came to die for His people, to pay for their sin. And He died, and then conquered death.

But that payment is yet to come as the King speaks to His audience on the mount on the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee in Matthew 5. At this point, there are questions that King Jesus needs to address, like, what are His followers to do and be in this world? Salt and light, He says to them in verses 13-16.

By giving the eight beatitudes, He addresses the Christian's character, what we are. Then with the similitudes He describes the Christian's influence, what we must be. Verse 16, “Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

And with the mention of “good works,” the King promptly shifts the focus to the source which identifies what good works are. He begins to address two questions that He’ll spend the rest of chapter 5 unpacking. The first question, “What’s the King’s relationship to The Book?” And the follow-up question, “What’s our relationship with The Book supposed to be?”

The Book, of course, is what we call the Bible. In Jesus’ day, The Book was what we now call the Old Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures, what Jesus here calls “the Law and the Prophets.”

Listen to Jesus in verse 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.” He says, *do not think*, apparently because that’s what some were tending to think, that Jesus was intending to blaze a new trail and leave The Book behind.

Is that true? Did Jesus abandon The Book? To take it a step further, can a person be a Jesus-follower and leave The Book behind? What place did The Book have in Jesus’ life and ministry, and what place did He say it should have in ours?

These are critical questions, indeed, controversial questions. What Jesus has to say about these questions will set in motion the events that lead to His execution on the

cross. This is not insignificant. This has to do with whether a person belongs to God's kingdom, nor not, whether a person is heading to heaven or hell.

In Matthew 5:17-20 we learn plainly what Jesus had to say about The Book, and why it matters today. Jesus addresses the importance of God's Law in two ways.

I. Jesus' Relationship to The Book (17-18)

Jesus says in verse 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."

Don't think this, says the Master. After hearing what He has to say in verse 21, you might think that. "You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not murder," [a quotation of the Book, specifically the fifth of the ten commandments]...But I say to you." It sounds like Jesus is distancing Himself and His followers from the Old Testament. He says something similar in verse 27, "You have heard that it was said...but I say to you." And again in verse 31, and verse 33, and verse 38, and verse 43.

What does Jesus think of the Book? Has He come to abolish it, to replace it with something else? "Do not think that," He says. What should we think then?

A. He said He came to fulfill the Law, not abolish it (17). Notice that word "Law." Imagine a society where there was no law, no standard of right and wrong. Where would we be without the law? Law is a necessity of life for us.

Jesus refers to the Book as "the Law." This is not "law" in the abstract. This is God's Law. God has revealed His Law. God delivered His Law to His people Israel, at Mt. Sinai, nearly 3500 years ago. His Law is a manifestation of His character, specifically His holiness. But also His grace. He wants His people to know how to live, what's best for them.

He gave His Law to Israel to prepare them for life in the promised land. That's significant. This Law had a general purpose—to reveal His holy character. But also a specific purpose—to show the Israelites how to live as they served the One who redeemed them when they came to the promised land.

When Jesus spoke those words, He's standing in the promised land. He's talking to Jews, the descendants Abraham, people who have devoted themselves to the Law of Moses for centuries.

Now they're following Him, or thinking about following Him. He just told them He expects His followers to have the influence of salt and light in the world. As salt, we are to both prevent moral decay, and provide savor to a tasteless world. We are to act as moral preservatives in this increasingly evil society. As light, we are to manifest God's glory so as to bring others to Him.

But how? Now Jesus begins to answer that question in verses 17-20. By living a life of righteousness, righteousness which is the expression of God's Law.

But not just the Law. Jesus refers to "the Law *and the Prophets*." The Bible of Jesus' day, of course, consisted only of the Old Testament Scriptures. The Jewish Bible was the first 39 books of our Bible, although the Hebrew Bible had only 22 books (combined Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, etc). The Hebrew Bible divided the "OT" up into three main divisions:

--The Law (Genesis through Deuteronomy)

--The Prophets (both the former prophets, Joshua through Samuel, and the writing prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc)

--The Psalms/Writings (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes)

What term did the Jews use to identify God's Book. They didn't call their Bible the "Old Testament." How could there be an "old" testament when there was not yet a "new" testament? No, the Jews of Jesus' day could identify the Scriptures by using any one of the three divisions: Law, Prophets, and Psalms. Any reference to one part stood for the whole. For instance, here are some examples...

--Law and prophets:

*Matthew 22:40 "On these two commands hang all the law and the prophets."

*Acts 28:23 "to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses, and out of the prophets"

--Law, prophets, and psalms:

*Luke 24:44 Jesus said, "These are the words which I spoke unto you. . . , that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."

--The Law:

*John 10:34 "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" (a quotation of Ps 82:6--Jesus calls the Psalm the Law!)

We have seen that the Jews used the terms interchangeably to refer to the OT Scriptures. With that in mind, what do you think Jesus had in mind in verse 17 when He spoke concerning "the law and the prophets", and in v 18 when He mentioned "the law"?

He's talking about THE SCRIPTURES, God's written revelation, which began with Moses in 1400 BC, and culminated over 900 years later with Malachi.

How many books has God-inspired, God-authorized, inerrant, infallible books has the Creator given to His world? The answer is *one*. The Book. And it's this Book to which Jesus is referring in His kingdom manifesto.

I have not come to destroy the Book, but fulfill it, He says.

Jesus wanted to set aside any potential misunderstandings concerning the nature of His kingdom. The crowds noticed that His teaching was much different from other religious leaders of their day (Mt 7:28-29). He spoke with authority. He spoke with power. He changed lives. But Jesus wanted them to know that He was NOT a "Johnny come lately". He was not an afterthought in God's redemptive program for history. And what's more, He had not come to negate or cancel God's previous works or God's previous Word.

"Think not," He says. It's emphatic. Don't think for a moment that I am come to destroy [He uses a term used elsewhere to describe the destruction of old, rundown buildings] the Law, or the Prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill."

Jesus makes a strong contrast between "destroy" and "fulfill". He did not come to destroy the Law. He had come to fulfill it.

That raises some important questions. First, did He do it? Did He fulfill the Law and Prophets? The answer is most certainly *yes*. Jesus always did what He said He would do. He is the perfect, sinless Savior.

Then the second question, *how*? How did Jesus the Christ fulfill the Law? I'll answer the Law with two simple statements that the rest of the New Testament fleshes out in great and significant detail.

1. *Jesus fulfilled the precept of the Law with His life.*
2. *Jesus fulfilled the penalty of the Law with His death.*

Law has both precept and penalty. That's true of "law" in the general sense today. You drive down the road and see a 35 mph speed limit sign. That's precept. Break that law and you qualify for a speeding ticket. That's penalty.

Another example. You approach a building that has a sign on it that says, "No trespassing." That's precept. Proceed and you may well end up in jail. That's penalty.

Similarly, God's Law likewise contains both precept and penalty. Do this. Don't do that. Thus saith the Lord. That's precept. The soul that sins shall die. That's penalty.

But here's where grace enters the story. Jesus Christ came to fulfill both aspects of the Law. First, He fulfilled the precept of the Law. How? With His perfect life. Second, He fulfilled the penalty of the Law, and did so by His death.

The word "fulfill" does not mean "to finish or complete". It does not mean "to add to something already begun." Rather, "fulfill" is associated in meaning with the verb "to fill". To fulfill means "to fill up something" or "to draw out the implications of something". Jesus fulfills the Law and the Prophets (that is, all the OT Scriptures) because they point to Him. He fulfilled the Law by carrying out everything stated in the Law.

Let this sink in. Read the four gospel accounts, read them carefully, and what do you see? You see that Jesus fulfilled the Law by His perfect obedience to its precepts.

Again, God's Law is a reflection of His Holy Character. The Holiness of God is expressed by the Law of God. The Law of God is...

- reflected in Creation
- revealed in capsule form in the 10 Commandments
- fleshed out for the Israelites in the Pentateuch
- summarized by Jesus in Matthew 22:40 (Love God, Love man)

That's the Law. It's black and white. It's what God expects His image-bearers to do.

But there's a severe problem. It started in the garden and continues to this day. *Mankind has failed to keep the Law.* Romans 3:10 says, "There is none righteous, no not one." Mankind has broken the Law.

So did God scrap the Law? Certainly not. How could He scrap the reflection of His character? So He sent every lawbreaker to the eternal prison of hell, right? That's what those who violate the precept of the law deserve, right? Yes, it is what they/we deserve.

But God who is merciful and gracious purposed to do something about our predicament. He sent His own Son into the world to be the sinner's REPRESENTATIVE.

Paul explains this wonderful reality in Galatians 4:4-5, "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

Amazing! The God who gave the Law, the author of the Law Himself, became a man and placed Himself "under the law"! Jesus Christ came to do what man could not do. He kept the precept of the law. He lived a perfect life. He carefully observed every portion of Scripture, down to the minutest detail. He upheld the authority and integrity of God's Word. He fulfilled the very letters of Scripture.

This brings us to verse 18. “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 accomplished.”

B. He said the details of the Law would be accomplished (18). Notice how Jesus begins with the words (AV), “For verily I say to you.” A prophet in the OT would begin his proclamation with the words, “Thus saith the LORD”. No prophet appealed to himself as the authority to substantiate his message. But Jesus did. Why? Because He was not simply a prophet. He was and is God. And HE had come to fulfill the Law He Himself had given.

And not just fulfill in generalities, but down to the minute details. He says that “not an iota, not a dot” will pass from the Law until “all is accomplished.” In the AV, it’s “one jot or tittle.” The iota/jot is the smallest Hebrew letter. In the Hebrew it’s called “yodh,” and if you want to see a yodh, turn to Psalm 119:73 (in the AV and NIV, not the ESV). There you’ll see the Hebrew letter yodh directly above verse 73.

The dot/tittle refers to the smallest part of a letter. Again, looking at Psalm 119, notice the small hook that distinguishes the beth in verse 9, from the kaph in verse 81.

What is Jesus saying? No part of The Book is insignificant. Every letter, every part of every letter is God-inspired. And every purpose, every prediction, every prophecy that God placed in His Book must take place. And Jesus Himself has come to do just that. The Old Testament anticipated Christ. The New Testament announces that He has come, and has met the just requirements of a Holy God.

Jesus Christ, during His 33 years on this earth, was the Living Portrait of God's Law. If you want to see the precepts of God's Law in action, look at Jesus. He fulfilled the precepts of the Law with His perfect life. No man or woman, before or since Jesus, has kept the Law perfectly. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

But whereas we all like sheep have gone astray (Isa 53:6), He didn't. The sinless Christ met the demands of God's law perfectly. He fulfilled the Law as our representative. He fulfilled the precept of the Law with His life, and the penalty of the Law with His death.

Dear friends, if we are not clear in our understanding of God's law, we'll never understand the meaning of the cross. Some think that the death of Jesus on the cross was a tragedy, a great man dying for what He believed. Others view Jesus' death sentimentally, what a shame that He had to die.

But the purpose of the cross is not to arouse pity in us. No, we will understand the purpose of the cross only when we grasp the implications of God's holy law. What happened on the cross two thousand years ago? Jesus Christ, the Son of God, endured in His own body the PENALTY prescribed by the very law He had given. Jesus, the Son of God, took the penalty established in the Law for sin. For whose sin? His own? No! For the sin of every person who would ever repent and put their total trust in Him!

God, because He is holy, cannot ignore our sin. That would imply a contradiction of His holy nature. He says sin must be punished. And sin was punished, in the holy, spotless, blameless body of His own Son hanging on the cross at Calvary.

Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law, its precepts with His life, and its penalty with His death. If you want to know more about this, read the epistles, such as Romans and Galatians. There you will see the word *justification*, meaning, “the legal act of God whereby the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed (transferred) to us.”

In the court of law, there is legal representation. Lawyers can represent their clients. In the divine court of law, God has provided the repentant sinner with legal representation. Jesus Christ is our legal representative. He kept the precept for us. He took the penalty for us. He is the fulfillment of the Law for us!

In the words of 2 Corinthians 5:21, "God made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

But King Jesus has more to say about the Book, and this brings it even closer to home. First, He made it clear concerning His relationship to the Book. He came to fulfill it. Next...

II. Our Relationship to The Book (19-20)

When it comes to the Book, and specifically God's Law, there are two dangerous extremes that entice us, and Jesus prohibits both for His followers. One is lawlessness, that's verse 19. The other is legalism, that's verse 20.

A. Jesus confronted the danger of lawlessness (19). In verse 19 He says, "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."

Jesus says that there is a connection between the Law of God, and the Kingdom of God. He makes a contrast. There are those who "relax" The Book's commands and "teach others" to do the same, and these people are the "least in the kingdom of heaven." And then secondly, there are those who "do" the commands and "teach others" to do the same, and they are called "great in heaven's kingdom."²

By the way, look ahead to the final words of King Jesus in Matthew's gospel, and you'll hear the same words. There He is, the crucified, risen Savior who just before returning to heaven says to His followers (in 28:19-20), "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*"

There's a powerful movement in this generation which promotes the rejection of any absolute authority. It's called the New Morality. There's no need for law. There's great emphasis on freedom, and rights, and choice of the individual.

Jesus rejected this antinomian attitude and lifestyle. He said that His followers are to be those who "do and teach" the commandments of God. In Jesus' day, the "commands" referred to God's prescription for living revealed in the OT Scriptures. By the end of the first century AD, the Scriptures were complete, both OT and NT. And we are to yield ourselves to The Book's authority for our living.

A man by the name of Marcion lived in Rome in the year 144 AD. He felt that the Bible contained contradictory teaching about God. He taught that the God of the OT was an evil, harsh God, and the God of the NT was a loving God. He believed that the God of the OT required bloody sacrifices, enjoyed bloody battles, and was vindictive. He also said that the God of the OT gave an inflexible, stern law to man, and required obedience for salvation. Because of this, Marcion taught that Christians did not need the OT. He rewrote the NT, by eliminating the OT.

Most of us have been more influenced by Marcion than we think. We don't know the OT very well, and may not even see that as a problem. But remember that the OT

² Notice that the "doing" of God's will precedes the "teaching" of God's will.

was Jesus' Bible. He said that He was the fulfillment of the OT Scriptures. And He also said that ALL of the Scriptures should be important to His followers.

Look again at verse 19. "The one who does and teaches the commandments is called great in the kingdom." Is Jesus teaching that a person must save himself by doing the commandments of God's Law? Is He teaching salvation by our works? Certainly not. And He will continue to make that very clear He continues to teach, and even clearer by what He has to say later about His atoning death (Matt 20:28).

But He did confront the danger of license and lawlessness. His people are to be holy as He is holy, and this happens as they devote themselves to being people of the Book. We are to keep it and teach it. And we do so with another extreme in mind.

B. Jesus confronted the danger of legalism (20). Verse 20, "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

So in verse 19 Jesus tells us that we are to avoid the extreme of lawlessness. Now he confronts what essentially is the opposite extreme. Legalism. And the scribes and the Pharisees were exhibit A of legalism.

We need to be careful at this point. Most of us have a pretty negative view of these two groups because we know the rest of the story. These two groups were behind the murder of the Savior.

But when Jesus made this statement, they were the good guys in Israel. They literally were, the *good* guys.

They loved The Book. They were meticulous in their attempts to obey The Book. They had calculated the Law, and determined that there were 248 commands, and 365 prohibitions in the Law. They strove to keep the commands, and avoid the prohibitions.

But Jesus said they were lacking. The problem wasn't The Book. The problem wasn't their love for The Book, nor their intense desire to obey its commands. What was their problem? What *is* their problem (for the spirit of the Pharisees is alive and well on planet earth today)? To put it simply...

1. *The problem is not that Pharisees aren't good.* They are good. They do a lot of good. They do so much that The Book commands. But...

2. *The problem is that Pharisees aren't good enough.* Their goodness is external. It's what you can see. They keep the Law. They pay their tithe. They gather for corporate worship. All good and necessary, as commanded by God.

But the Pharisee assumes something. He assumes that his goodness satisfies God, but it doesn't. He possesses external righteousness, but lacks internal righteousness. He needs a righteousness of the HEART.

And Jesus says to His followers, who all their lives have held the scribes and Pharisees in highest esteem, these stunning words. Hear them again in verse 20, "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Do you want to go to heaven? Then you need something more than a good life. You need a righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the most righteous people in Israel. And there's only One who possess that, and He will give it to you if you will but ask.

“That’s too easy,” you say. Yes, that’s what a good, self-righteous Pharisee always says. “I’m okay with God. Just look at how I’ve lived my life. Surely I’m going to heaven.”

But Jesus loves you too much, my Pharisee friend, to let you stay in that heaven-forsaking way of thinking. That’s why He preached this message, so keep reading. The sermon on the mount is one of the most powerful ways to evangelize unsaved church goers.

In the weeks ahead in our study of Jesus' teaching, we'll see Jesus again and again confront the inadequacy of pharisaic, legalistic righteousness. He'll hold it up to the Light, as it were, and show its folly for all to see.

The Pharisee agrees that the murderer is in trouble, but Jesus says that so is the person who is angry with his brother (21-26).

The Pharisee affirms that adultery is wrong, but Jesus says that so is looking at a woman with lustful intent (27-32).

The Pharisee doesn't swear falsely, so he thinks he's good. But Jesus says, “God’s kind of people don’t need to take oaths, because they’re honest all the time (33-37).

The Pharisee practices eye for eye, just like the Law says. But Jesus insists that true righteousness requires a self-denying love for neighbor, which the Law also says (38-48).

By the time Jesus finishes this sermon, if you’re listening to Him, you will no longer see yourself as one who is good, but as one who isn’t good enough. And while that’s painful, it also puts you in the perfect position to receive this invitation from Jesus which He offers at the end of this sermon.

“Ask, and it will be given to you (Matt 7:7).”

What does Jesus give if we but ask? *Forgiveness* and *righteousness*. Forgiveness for all the sins we’ve every committed. And His perfect righteousness, which entitles us to enter His glorious heavenly kingdom forever and ever!

A century ago, in a western state, a one room rural school had a difficult time in securing a teacher. Its previous male teacher had been attacked by some of the bigger boys. But in September a new teacher appeared. When the boys saw him they smiled. "He's not very big or strong. We'll show him a thing or two."

The teacher told the class on the first day, "Fellows I think we ought to have some rules in our school, but I would like you to make them; also the penalty for breaking them." The boys were impressed by the suggestion. They came up with 10 rules. One read, "No one shall steal a lunch." The penalty--"5 lashes on the back after the jacket has been removed."

*Eventually lunches started disappearing

*The teacher caught the boy, and announced to the class, "It's Willie."

*Willie--smallest boy in the class, thin, undernourished, poor

*Both the teacher and the class wished there was a way out, but the Law had been broken, and the penalty had to be paid.

*Willie called forward; instructed to remove his jacket; but he had no shirt, only a bare, exposed back. The rule had been made on the assumption that a shirt would absorb some of the lashes sting. But without a shirt the lashes could have serious effects.

*Teacher raised the whip, ready to lash the bare, little back with ribs protruding

*Suddenly a hand went up. It was the teacher's son. He asked, "If someone went up and took Willie's place, and took his 5 lashes, could Willie go free?"

*The answer, "Yes." So the teacher's son, went forward, and asked Willie if he could take his place. Willie agreed. Then the teacher whipped his own son who had done nothing wrong, while Willie, the guilty boy, went scot-free.

*God's Law was broken by man's sin. But God's Son willingly took the penalty for man's sin. On the cross God whipped His own Son, not for any sin He had done, for He was sinless, but for mankind's violations. Isaiah 53:5-6, "He was wounded for our transgressions. . . the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Just as Willie had to say yes to the teacher's son, so we must say yes to God's Son--our representative.

Make It Personal: In light of what Jesus said, we need to ask two questions.

1. *What am I doing with the Scriptures?*
2. *What am I doing with Jesus?*

Closing Song: #406 "My Faith Has Found a Resting Place"

Baptisms to follow: Braxton Tackett, Logan Mantle, Ross and Jennifer Bradley

Community Group Discussion:

1. This morning's message was entitled, "*Jesus and The Book, and Why It Matters Today.*" Take time as a group to re-read this section from the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5:17-20. According to verse 17 what did Jesus say He did *not* come to do? According to the same verse, why did He come? Why is His announcement significant?
2. According to what Jesus said in verse 18, how reliable are the Scriptures? Why is that important to know in a day like ours?
3. Look again at verse 19. Who did Jesus say is the *least* in His kingdom? Who is *great*?
4. In verse 20 Jesus said that our righteousness must surpass that of the Pharisees if we are to enter God's kingdom. What does that mean, and what are the implications for "good people" like us?
5. What is something you personally plan to do this week in light of what you have learned today from God's Word? Spend time as a group praying for one another regarding these commitments.