



- I. **Ice breaker.** *Getting to know each other questions.* (10 minutes)  
What was the highlight or low point of your summer?
- II. **Read the scriptures** out loud, slowly, either in unison or using a designated reader and move into scripture quiet reflection. (3 minutes)

**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. 18 For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. 19 Therefore, anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:17-20)**

**Scriptural quiet reflection:** (5-10 minutes)

This is a time to personally reflect on this week's scripture. Have a paper and pen available.

**1. Read.** Read through the passage silently.

**2. Reflect.** Notice any words or phrases that particularly draw your attention and stand out to you.

How do these words/phrases speak directly to you and your present situation? Write your insights.

**3. Respond.** As God has spoken to you in the Scripture, respond back to God in prayer. What do you want to say to God? What else does God want to say to you?

### III. Sermon and Scripture Application Discussion. (20-30 minutes)

- As you reflectively engaged the Scriptures, what stood out to you from these passages?
- "Jesus often repeats this phrase *"you have heard it said, but I say to you."* (Example found in Matthew 5: 21-22) When Jesus is saying this it is important to realize that he is not revising the Old Testament or replacing it...He is recovering the Old Testament scriptures for us." -SC
- How is the idea of Jesus recovering the Old Testament scriptures reinforced by what 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."
- The iota and the dot are the smallest strokes of the Hebrew alphabet. Jesus goes on to say: "Not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished." What point is Jesus making by saying even the smallest and most insignificant aspects of the law of God will be fulfilled?



- Jesus’ interpretation of the Pharisee’s take on the law is shocking. In verse 19 he says they are relaxing the law. The version of righteousness the Pharisees and the scribes’ follow is on the outside; it is behavioral, cosmetic and superficial. -SC
  - How is Jesus elevating the law of God by prioritizing the law from the heart with a motivational perspective?
  - Discuss what Stephen means when he exhorted us to repent of our sin and our righteous acts.
  - Maybe you have been looking good on the outside that reflects following Christ on the inside. However, discuss a recent example of how you have **not** been okay on the inside even though you proposed to look okay on the outside?
- In verse 17 when Jesus talks about the law and the prophets, he’s talking about the entire Hebrew Bible, what we call the Old Testament (i.e., Matthew 7:12, Acts 13:15, 24:14, Romans 3:21). And what he’s after here is a comprehensive receptivity to all of Scripture. He’s saying to his audience, *you must stop treating the bible like a book of suggestions and opinions and start treating it for what it is*. Stop the process of picking and choosing what you like and don’t like because that’s not obedience; that’s not surrendering to God as your King; that’s reaching out to God as your advisor. All of Jesus means all of scripture. The two are inseparable. -SC
  - Here are some questions to discuss with your group regarding the comprehensive Scriptures:
    - a) What do you do with the hard parts?
    - b) What do you do with the parts of scripture that contradict you?
    - c) What do you do with the parts of the bible that contradicts our American culture or the culture you grew up in?
    - d) What do you do with the parts of scripture that contradicts your feelings?
    - d) What do you do with the parts that push back on you?
- Discuss together and give an example for the three-fold use of the law according to 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformer, John Calvin:
  - 1. **Civil Laws**, which governed the nation of Israel.
  - 2. **Ceremonial Laws** which were about “clean” and “unclean” things, about various kinds of sacrifices, and other temple practices.
  - 3. **Moral Laws**, which declared what God deemed right and wrong.
- How did Jesus intensify the moral law? How did Jesus fulfil the law? How does Jesus’ fulfilment of the law bring peace to your heart?
- Martyn Lloyd Jones said: “The way you keep the sermon on the mount is to recognize that you’ll never be able to keep the sermon on the mount.” Discuss what MLJ’s means by this and how it relates to the message of the gospel.



- a. Take a few moments to reflect on those you know who may be striving to earn their way into God’s Kingdom. Pray for them to find freedom in the righteousness that has already been earned through the merits of Jesus at the cross.
- b. Pray for one another that you will despair of your own attempts at righteousness and at the same time rejoice in the deep love of Christ that declares you righteous through His merit and sacrifice.