

## Small Groups @ TBC Sermon Discussion Notes

**Date of Sermon:** 8<sup>th</sup> May 2016

**Speaker:** David Lawrence

**Title:** Sermon on the Mount: The King's Book

**Introduction:** This talk explored some of the most challenging and perhaps puzzling verses in the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus describes his relationship to 'the law and the prophets' (what we call 'the Old Testament'). What does it mean that he hasn't come to abolish it? Is it all still in force? And how ever could our righteousness be greater than that of the scrupulous Pharisees?

**Review:** (invite one or more who have heard the talk to give their own brief review)

**Read:** Matthew 5:17-20

**Reflect:**

- Jesus says that he hasn't come *to abolish* the Law and the Prophets: what continuing use might the Old Testament have for a Christian disciple?
  - See Romans 3:20; Romans 7:7; Galatians 3:23-25
- Jesus is the 'fulfilment' of the law. What can people remember from the talk that casts light on what that means?
- Jesus' Jewish contemporaries were bound by strict food laws that maintained their ritual purity (see for example Leviticus 11:1-12). How does Jesus' teaching in Matthew 15:10-20 show what it means that Jesus now *fulfils* the Law? (*if you get a bit stuck on this, consider how the Old Testament law established an external purity code by which people could maintain their purity before God. But now, Jesus is the One who makes people clean and therefore he 'fulfils' the purity code in his very person. Not one bit of it has passed away, but it has all been absorbed into Jesus, so that purity is no longer found in what goes into the mouth, but what flows from a heart transformed by Jesus*). See too Paul's advice in Romans 14:1-9.
- In the talk David suggested there were two ways that Jesus suggested that his disciples' 'righteousness' would surpass that of the Pharisees:
  - In the 'vertical' dimension Jesus would give people a rightness before God that the Law could never offer (Romans 3:21-24).
  - In the 'horizontal' dimension Jesus' disciples would need to love others from the heart and not just attempt to keep the bare minimum requirements that God has of us (See what Jesus says about this in Matthew 23:1-12).

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**Leaders:** feel free to be selective and creative with your use of these notes. Don't feel you have to use all of the material, but do try to keep the shape of Review – Read – Reflect - Respond

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- Are there any ways in which contemporary Christianity can stand accused by the words Jesus says about the Pharisees in the Matthew passage?
  - Which of these aspects of 'greater righteousness' do the members of the group find most challenging, and why?
- Finally, if all of this sounds a bit hard, what is the secret to following Jesus and pursuing this 'greater righteousness'? (Romans 7:6, 8:1-3). How does this help us?

### **And finally:**

As you conclude, ask each person:

- What is the main thing you are taking away as an action point?
- How can we pray for you?
- Is there anything we can check on next time we meet?

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