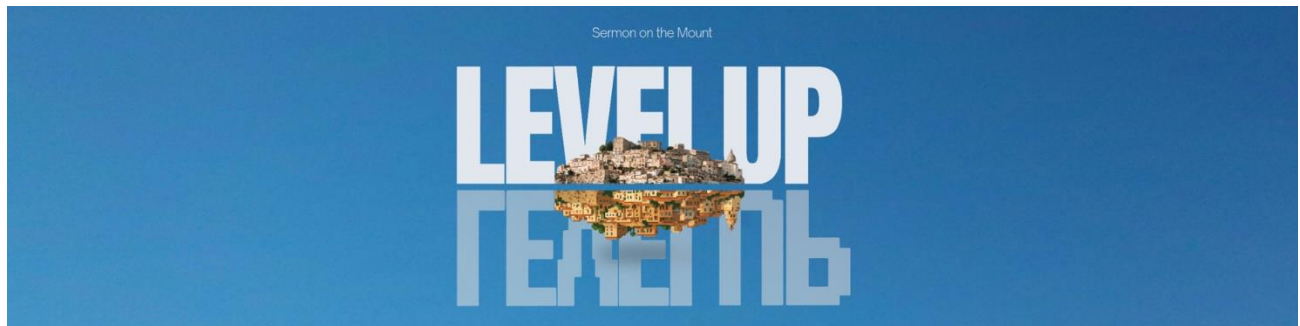




Week 3 – Christ as the Fulfillment of the Law

Opening: Begin with a brief welcome and prayer to set the tone for the group time. Ask Jesus to teach and form the group through His words.

Overview: Jesus is describing the kind of person He is forming through the Gospel. The Beatitudes show what grace begins to form in us, and salt and light show what Jesus intends to do through us. This week, Jesus answers a foundational question: Who gets to define the life we are being formed into?

Discussion Questions

CONNECT

- What standards do you instinctively use to decide whether someone is good? Where did those standards come from?
- Have you ever realized that something you believed or wanted conflicted with what Jesus teaches? What made that tension difficult?

DISCOVER

Read Together: Matthew 5:17-20

Initial observations + Interpreting Scripture:

- **Initial Thoughts:** What stood out to you from this passage or from the sermon?

Jesus and the Scriptures:

Jesus doesn't tell His disciples that they might someday become salt and light. He tells them, "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world."

- Jesus says He did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets but to fulfill them. Based on the message, what does "fulfill" tell us about Jesus and the larger story of Scripture?
- Verses 18-19 show how seriously Jesus takes God's Word. What is the difference between knowing what Scripture says, agreeing with it, and actually doing what it says?
- The message asked, "Do I want Jesus to teach me, or do I just want Jesus to agree with me?" Where are Christians most tempted to approach Scripture looking for agreement rather than surrender?

A Greater Righteousness

- Why would Jesus' statement that our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees have sounded impossible to His listeners?
- How can we fall into either ditch: trying to perform for God's acceptance, or assuming God's grace means we do not need to change?

APPLY – From Behavior to Formation

Jesus is not merely interested in outward behavior. Throughout the rest of Matthew 5, He moves from visible actions to the condition of the heart.

What is your community? Where has God already placed you where you consistently interact with the same people?

- Where is it easiest for you to look spiritually healthy on the outside while something very different may be happening internally?
- Think about the “minimum” mindset: “How little can I obey and still be okay?” Where have you noticed that mindset in your own discipleship?
- Choose one area - relationships, sexuality, money, ambition, forgiveness, priorities, or your future. What would it look like to stop asking Jesus to follow your plans and instead allow Him to form you in that area?
- What is one concrete act of obedience you can take this week - not to earn God's acceptance, but because you have already received grace?

RESPOND

Give the group a few quiet minutes. Invite everyone to reflect on the two questions below before anyone speaks.

- Jesus, where am I outwardly obedient but inwardly far from Your heart?
- Jesus, where am I resisting what You are trying to change in me?

If appropriate, invite people to share one area where they sense Jesus calling them to surrender. Encourage honesty without pressure to disclose more than they are ready to share.

GROUP PRAYER

- Thank Jesus that our righteousness is received, not earned, and that His grace meets us empty-handed.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to expose places where we are settling for Christian appearance instead of Christlike formation.
- Pray for courage to obey Jesus when His words challenge our preferences, assumptions, or plans.
- Pray for one another specifically in the areas of surrender shared by the group.

CLOSE