

enter the kingdom of heaven.

Wow. Wow. Let's pray. And we need the Spirit of God to teach us tonight. So God, we bow now and we pray that you would teach us faithfully from your word.

We only want to know what Jesus is teaching here, not what we've been taught by anybody else.

Help us by your Spirit. Guide us into truth.

And set us free with what I believe the good news of the gospel is found in this passage. Help us, I pray in Christ's name. And God's people said, amen.

Amen. Please be seated. Well, if you ever turned on NBC between the years of 2016 and 2020, you may have caught an episode of The Good Place.

[4 : 59] It's a comedy that lasted about four seasons and it starred some famous actors like Kristen Bell and Ted Danson.

Now, if you've never seen the show, if you've never seen any of the episodes, I'm not going to spoil the story for you, but I'll give you kind of an overview of the plot. The premise of the show is about a woman named Eleanor who's played by Kristen Bell.

And she is welcomed after death in The Good Place, this heaven-like utopia that was designed by an architect by the name of Michael, as in Michael the Archangel, played by Ted Danson.

The good place is what you get for living a good life. And that makes sense, right? If you live a good life, you ought to go to The Good Place.

That's even how we often think. The problem is, is not long after Eleanor arrives, she realizes she's there by mistake. She didn't live a good life.

[6 : 09] And now she has to figure out how to hide her morally imperfect past while at the same time trying quickly to become a better person so that she can stay in The Good Place.

Let me show you an example of this. Great. So you've decided to help me. I don't know. There's a thousand questions. Is there a moral imperative to help you?

Do I have a greater obligation to my community? Are you taking someone else's spot? Someone who deserves to be here? Ooh, on that question. I honestly think I was just put here by mistake.

Because Michael called me Eleanor Shellstrop, so he knows I'm me. He's just wrong about my overall quality level. Please help me, man. I swear I am worth it.

Tell me one fact that you know about me. We spent the whole day together. You must remember something. What country am I from? Is it racist if I say Africa?

[7 : 08] Yes. And Africa is not a country. I am from Senegal. Do I have any siblings? Where did I go to college? Trick question. You didn't. I was literally a college professor.

Do you not remember one single thing about me? Dude, things have been nuts around here. I bet you don't know anything about me. You were born in Phoenix. You went to school in Tempe. You're an only child.

Your favorite show is something called The Real Housewives of Atlanta. And your favorite book is Kendall Jenner's Instagram feed. How did you know all that? Because you are constantly talking about yourself.

You are the most self-obsessed person I have ever met. You should see Kendall Jenner's Instagram feed. This is my fear about you, Eleanor. You are too selfish to ever be a good person.

Well, I think you're wrong. What country am I from again? Sensodyne. That is a brand of toothpaste. That last line gets me every time, right?

[8 : 09] So as you can see just from that clip, one of the big themes of the entire drama is what does it mean to be good? What does it mean to be a good person?

And that question is something that has been asked all over the place. Every single religion, generation, culture, or person in one way or another asks the question, what does it mean to be good?

And it's something that you're surrounded by everywhere in life. I mean, when you were in school, they taught you to be a good student. Your parents tried to raise you to be a good little boy or girl.

Your boss wants you to be a good employee for the company. Maybe you exercise so that you can feel good about yourself. And even spiritually, like in religion, there's certain rules that you can follow where you know you're good.

Every single one of us wants to be like Stuart Smalley in that old SNL skit where we can look in the mirror and say, I'm good enough. I'm smart enough.

[9 : 17] People like me. Everybody in this room tonight looks to something or someone so that you can know you are good.

And more often than not, that is some type of law. A set of rules, a code of conduct. I'm a good driver because I don't break the speed limit.

That rules a lot of you out, right? I'm a good student because I don't run in the hall. I'm a good teammate because I do whatever the coach asks. Well, that sense of goodness, or if we want to use the biblical term righteousness, is exactly what Jesus is addressing here in this next section of the Sermon on the Mount.

Look at what he says 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. For I tell you, unless your goodness, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees.

[10 : 34] Now, in Jesus' context, he is talking to people who understood that in the Old Testament, what it meant to be good was to follow the law, the Torah.

The Ten Commandments, as an example, although it was more than just the Ten Commandments. But that's how you were a good person. You followed the law written in the Old Testament. And Jesus is about to do something here that is absolutely transformative. In fact, I'm almost discouraged at the traditional approach to this passage because I think it misses what Jesus is actually teaching.

Let me show you, first of all, look at verse 17. Verse 17 says, Here's the first thing.

Hang with me. Hang with me tonight, okay? Jesus starts by addressing his relationship to the law. Their background, the disciples to whom Jesus is teaching, this is a Jewish audience, everything they knew in life centered around the law.

[11 : 55] You memorize the law, you keep the law, you teach the law to your kids. Everything in life was about obedience to the law. And Jesus says two things that to them would have been radical.

It would have been crazy. Jesus says, first of all, that he did not come to abolish the law. That is, whatever he is saying about the law, he's not saying anything bad about it.

He's not dismissing it. He's not rejecting it. He's not getting rid of it. I mean, after all, how many of you would acknowledge that in today's culture, it's still a good thing not to commit murder?

Show of hands. Please may all your hands be up, okay? I'm very nervous. It's like, I'm not sure on that one, all right? No, we would always, we would say that part of the law is still good, right?

Or to steal. So Jesus is saying, the law is good. I'm not saying the law is bad, and I didn't come to abolish it. That's the first thing he says. But more importantly, I believe, the second thing he says is this.

[13 : 03] Jesus came to fulfill the law. Now, I told you this is heavy teaching mode tonight, so you got to hang with me in order to feel the entire flow of this passage.

What does it mean that Jesus fulfilled the law? Well, it means at least two things. First of all, that Jesus obeyed the law perfectly. He lived the law.

He never broke a single commandment. He lived a perfect life. And the Bible testifies to this. He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf.

That's 2 Corinthians 5. He was tempted in every way, yet was without sin. Hebrews 4, 5. Peter says there's no deceit found in his mouth.

In other words, Jesus lived the law. He fulfilled the law in that he lived it perfectly. And the second thing that means that Jesus fulfilled the law is that Jesus is what the law was pointing us to.

[14 : 02] The law was promising a Messiah, and Jesus is that Messiah. Amen? Think, for instance, of the book of Hebrews. The book of Hebrews is saying all these things associated with the law, the sacrifices and the priesthood, all of these things are fulfilled, and we're pointing you to Jesus Christ.

So, Jesus says, I didn't come to abolish the law, but I did come to fulfill the law. Now, again, to those to whom Jesus is talking about, that would have been a very radical idea, but that's not so much a radical thing for us.

If you've been around the study of Scripture for very long, you know that Jesus is the fulfillment of those things. But what Jesus does next is quite radical. Remember the context that Jesus is teaching what it means to belong to his kingdom, right?

Jesus has entered in, and he's called these disciples, the kingdom of God is here in Christ. And he is teaching them what it means to belong to that kingdom.

So, here's the question. I hope you're with me. The question is not, what does it mean to be good according to the Old Testament? The question is, what does it mean to be good according to the kingdom?

[15 : 21] It's not, what does it mean to be good according to the Old Testament law? The question is, what does it mean to be good according to this new kingdom?

And this is Jesus' answer, verse 19. Whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be least in the kingdom of heaven.

But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus here is raising the bar of goodness.

He's raising the bar of righteousness. And here's the logic, okay? The logic is this, okay? Is everybody with me? Okay, say yes.

If Jesus fulfills the law, chapter 5, verse 17, then the righteousness required for his kingdom is greater than the righteousness required by the law.

[16 : 22] Are you tracking with me? If Jesus fulfills the law, then the righteousness required to get into his kingdom is actually greater than the righteousness than the law required.

In other words, some of you are feeling uncomfortable, good. If you thought obedience mattered under the Old Testament, it matters even more now.

In fact, can you tell I'm getting excited about teaching this? In fact, look at verse 20. I tell you that unless your goodness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

What are you talking about, Jesus? Jesus, like the Pharisees are the good guys. They're the people that strictly kept the Old Testament commandments.

They were the conservatives, the inerrantists, the good boys. They were obsessed with morality and obedience. The Pharisees were so obsessed with obedience to the law that they would measure the hairs on their beard.

[17 : 39] And they would make up a whole bunch of other laws so that they could try to keep them too. So I don't think we understand the impact of that. Jesus is saying, let me give you some practical examples.

If you want to get in the kingdom, you have to paint better than Picasso. You've got to sing better than Adele, if you like that kind of music, right?

You've got to be able to shoot baskets better than Steph Curry. You have to be morally and in obedience better than the best that's ever been.

The people who are the strictest when it comes to their morality and following the law, if you don't make them look like a kindergarten class, you don't get the kingdom.

It's exactly what Jesus is teaching. Look at verse 48. You, therefore, must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.

[18 : 47] Can we go back to the Beatitudes, right? Is anybody feeling how uncomfortable this is?

And I don't think I've compromised for a moment what the text is actually teaching. And some of you have been around here long enough, you're like, okay, relief's coming. Okay, don't worry, don't worry, relief's coming, okay?

Don't get too, like, all caught up, relief's coming. There's going to be a punchline. Except there isn't. Because what Jesus does next is he gives us six examples of what he's talking about.

Six examples about how the bar for the kingdom is actually higher than the bar of the Old Testament law. And so if you're waiting for relief to come, it doesn't come.

In fact, if Jesus has you on the edge of the cliff, now is when he pushes you off. And again, I apologize that I won't have time to deal with every single detail of these examples.

[19 : 53] But I'm going to show you the overall point that Jesus is making. And the reason why I'm taking so much time to do this is because this, I think, is something that people misunderstand.

And it causes all kinds of problems in your life. So what is Jesus doing in these examples? Well, before we jump in, I have to point out the structure that Jesus is going to follow in every single one of these examples.

How many of you are having fun like me at this point, okay? How many of you just love studying the Word? Okay, I know every hand was up, but that's okay. Here we go. The structure is this.

You ready? He's going to say, you have heard it said. That is, that's the bar you're used to. But I say to you, that is, but here's how the bar is actually raised.

This is what you thought it meant to be good, but I'm telling you that to be good is actually higher than that. And this will show you the difference between the righteousness required by the law and the righteousness required to get in the kingdom.

[21 : 01] And honestly, it's disturbing. It's extremely uncomfortable. And it really, on the surface, doesn't sound like good news at all.

But do you trust me, faith family? We do. We'll work through the text to the good news. First example is murder.

Verse 21. Verse 21. You have heard it said. Do you see there? To those of old, you shall not murder, and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.

But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment. Whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council.

And whoever says you fool will be liable to the hell of fire. Well, all right. Jesus here is clearly referencing the sixth commandment.

[22 : 01] In other words, you know the sixth commandment. You have heard it said that you shall not murder. But Jesus now says, you're used to the bar of goodness being here. I'm going to raise the bar even higher and say that the same thing applies to you if you have anger in your heart.

The point here is this, and I hope you're listening. Those of you that see yourself far removed from those murderers, ugh, those really bad people, like murderers.

Jesus would ask you, have you ever felt hatred for someone? Have you ever wished someone dead? Have you ever attacked someone's character?

How about this? Have you ever called someone a name? Because he says, if you say you fool. And that's what he's referring to. You call somebody a name because you're upset with them.

Here's what Jesus is saying. All such vilifying anger has the same root as murder. And in that sense, you are not any different than the murderer.

[23 : 13] You thought what it meant to be good was just I haven't murdered. But I say to you that if you've ever had anger in your heart unrighteously towards someone else, you have the same seed inside you.

There's a comedian who I'll not mention that has a bit on murder. And he really gets to this idea in kind of a comedic way. He does it better than I can do, but this is what he says.

Listen, quote, I'd like to think that I'm a good person, but I don't know. A lot of it has to do with context. I mean, for example, if murder was legal, I might have killed a few people.

I mean, sure, we don't like to think we would ever do that, but be honest. We really need the law against murder. For one main reason, this is so funny.

The number one thing preventing murder is the law that prevents you from murder. I mean, it really stinks to get caught murdering someone. If murder was legal or even just a misdemeanor, there would be so much murder.

[24 : 21] Regular people would murder. Murderers would murder even more. And even really nice people would murder a few people. But no people would murder no people.

You wouldn't even trust people that didn't murder. And then he goes on and on and on. And again, that's meant in a sarcastic kind of comedy way, but he's actually at, likely unknowingly, what Jesus is talking about here.

That seed of anger is inside all of us. And so just because you've never murdered someone doesn't mean that you've not broken the law.

Here's the second example. Are you still with me? This is so much fun. We ain't going anywhere for hours. All right. Example number two is adultery. Look at verse 27.

Here's the structure. Now verse 28. But I say to you that everyone looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

[25 : 30] If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out, throw it away. It's better that you lose one of your members than your whole body be thrown into hell. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away.

It's better that you lose one of your members than your whole body go into hell. This is the seventh commandment, right? And we've heard that said. We know that that's a part of the Old Testament law.

But Jesus says it's actually not enough that you've never committed adultery. If you have lust in your heart, you've done the same thing. Lust is the sexual version of coveting.

And so maybe for you it's not lusting for a person sexually. Maybe you lust for something that isn't yours. And this craving and this lusting is around us everywhere. You know, you've heard the phrase sex sells. The reality is lust sells. It's behind our advertisements that are trying to tap into your desires. [26 : 33] And that's why Jesus says it would be better that you remove your eye. But of course, he doesn't mean that literally because you could still lust in the mind. But here's the point. Here's the takeaway.

More that could be said there. But Jesus is saying, you've heard it said that the bar was just don't commit adultery. I'm telling you the bar is even higher than that. If you have any desire for something that isn't rightfully yours, you have broken the law and aren't fit for the kingdom of God. Who's ready for me to end the sermon now? Ain't done. Number three. Here's the third example. Divorce. Verse 31. Verse 31. It was also said, whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.

But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery. And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. Wow. Have I heard this taught wrongly so many times? This is actually in a reference to Deuteronomy chapter 24. There, the Mosaic law taught that if a man found his wife to be unclean, he could divorce her with a certificate of divorce.

[27 : 47] If she remarried, her first husband was not able to remarry her. Okay? So Deuteronomy 24 is not prohibiting remarriage in general.

But Jesus says that's what you're used to. That's the bar that you've known. But I say to you, if you divorce for reasons other than immorality, you make her and her next husband commit adultery if she remarries.

I'm so glad this is uncomfortable because it's precisely how you should feel. And I'm not taking off the gas yet. All right?

I'm going to keep pressing forward with what Jesus is doing. I love this. Example number four. Truthfulness. Look at verse 33. Again you have heard that it is said to those of old, you shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.

But I say to you, do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or earth, or his footstool, or Jerusalem, or in the city of the great king.

[28 : 59] And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply yes or no.

Anything more than this comes from evil. Jesus is dealing with truthfulness in the courtroom. Oaths. And of course we know, based on the ninth commandment, you're not to bear false witness. You're not to lie in the courtroom. Jesus here is saying, not only that you're not to make oaths at all. Are you ready for this? Your yes must always be yes. And your no must always be no.

So men, when your wife asks if that dress makes her butt look big, according to Jesus, you must tell her the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

[29 : 58] So help you God. Now I'm being a little sarcastic with that, but that is actually Jesus' point. His point here is that truth is not trivial.

There's no small lie. Again, I wish I had time to get into the details, but I've made the decision not to do that. But in the text where Jesus talks about you swear by God, footstool, Jerusalem, your head, they would have understood that to be going down in degrees.

Let me translate that into our modern vocabulary. You swear to God. You swear by the Bible. You swear by your mother's grave. You make a pinky promise.

Do you see? Big things and little things. And what Jesus is saying is that in every single situation of life, whether it is great or small, you must always be 100% accurate.

Every time. Your yes must always be yes, and your no must always be no. Now be honest. How many of you at this point like me are saying, I suck. Are you kidding me?

[31 : 11] I'm just through four examples. And here's the fifth. Here's the fifth. Retaliation. Verse 38. I love y'all, faith family. It's so awesome to be able to teach this and y'all not throw sharp objects at me.

38. You have heard it was said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, there it is again, do not resist the one who is evil, but if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, will turn to him the other also.

If anyone would sue you to take your tunic, will let him have your cloak as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, will go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you and do not refuse the one who will borrow from you.

Okay? Jesus is referring here to the Old Testament teaching that an eye for an eye. Right? Exodus 21, Leviticus 24, Deuteronomy 19. In other words, in the Old Testament, the punishment had to always fit the crime.

If they took your eye, then from them you should get a what? An eye. Not both eyes, but just an eye. Right?

[32 : 22] The punishment would fit the crime. But Jesus is saying here, you don't get anything in return. If they slap your cheek, you don't get to slap their cheek.

You give them your other cheek. What? Can I just have a little slap? Like, just a little bit? No. Jesus says you cannot retaliate. And of course, in the ancient Near East, a slap was the greatest form of insult. So practically, Jesus is saying if somebody insults you, you cannot insult them in return.

Even if it's right or fair. If somebody asks you to go a mile, how many miles do you have to go? Two. In their culture, the Roman soldiers were required by Roman law to go with a Roman citizen up to a mile and help them carry their belongings.

And so Jesus is here saying, if somebody asks you to go with them a mile, go two. Go twice as much. If somebody asks you for your shirt, give them your shirt and your jacket.

[33 : 32] And if that's not the kind of person you are, you don't get the kingdom. This is crazy. And if Jesus hasn't gotten you yet, my guess is he's gotten all of us already.

Look at the last example, which is love. Verse 43. You have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.

But I say to you, love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you. So that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.

For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward will you have? Do not even the tax collectors do that? In other words, Jesus says, you know in the Old Testament, the law, you had to love God and love your neighbor. And you know that people have said that it's okay to hate your enemy, right?

[34 : 35] I mean, come on. Clearly it's okay to hate somebody who's been awful to you. Amen? Oh, you're so righteous, you faith family, right?

Of course. And even if you don't say that, you know you live that way. It's like, it's okay to hate an enemy. And Jesus says, but I say, not only do you have to love God and not only do you have to love your neighbor, you have to love your enemy.

And not only do you have to love your enemy, you have to pray for them. Otherwise, you're just like everybody else. Now, you think about that person in your life right now that you can't stand, somebody who's truly harmed you, and you apply that verse to them.

Now, you hung with me. Are you still with me? Okay? So, Jesus in the first part, we ain't done yet. We got another hour. Okay? In the first part, Jesus is clearly saying, the righteousness required of the kingdom is far greater than the righteousness required by the law.

You want me to give you some examples? Okay. You've heard it said this, but I say that. You've heard it said this, but I say that. And every single time, the bar gets raised higher.

[35 : 54] Here's the summary. Do you want a righteousness whereby you are accepted in the kingdom of God? It's actually quite simple. Not only can you not murder, you can't even get angry or call someone a name.

It's not just that you can't commit adultery. You can't even have lust in your heart. It's not just that you should never have been divorced, but that you're not remarried. It's not just that you don't lie in court, but you're 100% honest in everything in life.

It's not just that you don't retaliate, but you have an extra mile generosity approach to life. And it's not just that you love your neighbor. You actually love your enemy.

And if that's not enough, verse 48, you therefore must be perfect. As your heavenly father is perfect. Or you don't get the kingdom. What in the world do we do with this? I believe, maybe some of you will call me out afterwards.

[37 : 00] I believe I have preached that text faithfully. What in the world do we do with this? And this is where, faith family, because, and I mean this sincerely, I want you taught well.

I want you to know the word. And so I am not unwilling to call out traditional approaches to these passages when I think they are leading to error.

And I'm convinced that the traditional approach to these passages not only misses the entire point Jesus is making, but it actually, please listen to me, it ends up doing the same thing the Pharisees did, which places a yoke on people that they cannot bear.

The traditional approach to these verses usually ends up leaving, like many of you are right now, in one category or the other.

And here they are. The first category is, I feel pretty good about myself. I mean, I've never murdered. I've never committed adultery. I'm not divorced. I mean, I'm mostly an honest person.

[38 : 08] And occasionally, I'll admit, Pastor, that I get a little angry. And I probably struggle with the whole love your enemy one. But I could pass this test. I'm good.

Where most of us fall is in the second category, where by now you feel worthless. You feel second class. You feel sub-Christian. After all, you are divorced.

And you've remarried. And you've committed adultery. And you sought revenge on an enemy. And you're quite certain by now you have failed this test miserably. And you are worthless to God.

And therefore, have no chance whatsoever of getting in the kingdom. And when these passages are preached to get people in one of those two categories, they miss entirely what Jesus is doing.

In fact, Jesus is doing the exact opposite of that. Here's my last point. And if you've zoned out at any point, I don't know how.

[39 : 16] But I need you to zone back in for this. Because this is what I'm driving us to. What is Jesus doing? I think he's doing two things.

One is obvious. And the other not as obvious. The obvious one is what tends to get emphasized the most. The non-obvious one is actually, in my view, the main point.

It's the core of the kingdom. It's what will set you free. So what are they?

Number one. The first thing that Jesus is doing, I think, obviously, is he's moving us from hands to heart. Are you with me? What I mean here is that Jesus is shifting the focus from an external obedience to the law to an inward obedience of the heart.

And that, I think, is clear. In other words, it doesn't matter that you've never done this with your hands. The question is your heart. After all, notice this on the screen. The kingdom of God is not about your compliance.

[40 : 29] The kingdom of God is about a conversion. Amen? Now's the part you can amen here, right? The other part, you're like, I don't know what to say, right? Now you can amen.

This is not about compliance to the rules. It's about a conversion of the heart. I mean, the new covenant, Jeremiah 31, is about getting a new heart. Please listen in, listen in.

Again, Jesus will not let you be like the rich young ruler and settle for a surface morality. He will force you to examine your heart. And if all you've ever done in life is avoided doing bad things, you have not gone deep enough.

The flow would go like this. But I've never murdered. Yes, but you've been angry. But I've never broken an oath. Sure, but your yes isn't always yes. Well, I love people.

Yeah, but you don't love your enemy. In other words, Jesus is forcing you to go deeper. He's forcing you to look within. It is not enough that you haven't done these things with your hands if you've done them with your heart.

[41 : 34] The problem is most preachers stop here. And all you have left people with is an internal morality.

I don't anger. I don't have lust. I say yes all the time. Right? But the question still remains. Yes, Jesus is taking from hands to heart.

He's making you address the inside. Totally 100% agree. But the question still remains. Why is Jesus penetrating so deep?

Why is he raising the bar so high? And here it is. Jesus is moving us from goodness to grace.

Now, this is where I'm going to get controversial. This may be where some of you do throw things at me. But will you hear your pastor out?

[42 : 37] Just hear me out. In all of the but I say to you commands, do you remember all those where Jesus raises the bar higher?

I believe that in all of those examples, please listen and let me explain, okay? Just let this land on you and then give me a moment.

I don't think Jesus actually means it. You're like, okay, now you have some explaining to do. Well, let me explain, okay? Listen, listen. I've got everybody's attention now. Because you're like, he's on the verge of heresy. We're either going to burn him with the stake after this service or we'll let him stay.

Now, listen, listen, listen. On one hand, of course Jesus means it. Of course Jesus means these things. Listen to me. The requirement of righteousness in God's kingdom is far greater than the requirement of righteousness under the law.

[43 : 42] And in that sense, the bar Jesus raised is 100% accurate. And he even warns us not to lessen it.

Verse 19. Are you with me? Jesus is absolutely right. The bar is far greater to get into the kingdom than it is to follow the law of the Old Testament.

And yes, Jesus means these things in that he is encouraging obedience. You shouldn't murder. Amen? Thank you.

Right? And you shouldn't have sinful anger towards someone. You should love your neighbor. Amen? And you should love your enemy.

I agree with all of that. I think Jesus actually is teaching those things. And in that sense, he means it. But I submit to you that those things are not Jesus' ultimate purpose for raising the bar.

[44 : 54] And there is a verse in the text that is the key to unlocking it all. Faith family, if all preachers do is preach these six examples as a new form of morality, they have missed the entire point in my estimation of Jesus' preaching.

I believe the reason why Jesus is driving deep into the human heart is to actually show us the good news of this new kingdom. What is absolutely so glorious about this king and the kingdom he brings.

Follow the flow. You haven't murdered, but you've been angry. You haven't broken an oath in court, but you've lied.

You love a friend, but you don't love your enemy. Jesus gives examples that are impossible for us to achieve.

Why? Because he is showing us that the righteousness that is required for his kingdom is found not in you, but in the one who fulfilled the law.

[46 : 14] Follow the flow and you tell me if I'm being exegetically correct here. Jesus teaches that he is the fulfillment of the law.

That's the key. That's the verse that unlocks it all. Jesus says, I am here to fulfill the law. Then he gives us six examples how it is impossible for us to fulfill the law.

Because even if you have committed no sins of the hands, you have absolutely committed sins of the heart. And therefore, notice it on the screen, the righteousness of the kingdom demands a righteousness that you can't find in your heart, but can only find in him.

And you say, why did you make such an emphasis on this tonight? Here's why. That's the hope of the murderer.

That's the hope of the divorced. That's the hope of the one who struggles with lust or does not love their enemy.

[47 : 27] If you make these verses the means of establishing your goodness rather than seeing your need for grace, not only have you misunderstood this passage, you may miss the kingdom.

Because the kingdom of God is not about your goodness. If you want to go that route, go that route. But your righteousness has to surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees, and you must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Good luck with that if you have any knowledge of what your heart is truly like. But I, Jesus says, have fulfilled the law.

Which means that in Christ and in Christ alone, the law of God is fulfilled in us.

Look at what Paul says in Romans 8 verse 3. I know I've got to finish. For God has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do. By sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh.

[48 : 36] Notice this next phrase. In order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us. The only way you'll ever be enough to get in the kingdom is seeing that Jesus is enough.

It's the only way. And so where does this leave us, faith family? Where does this leave us as I close? It leaves us in a place of brokenness.

Does that sound familiar to any of you? I don't know, like maybe blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are the broken.

Blessed are those who hunger for a righteousness that's not their own. Listen, listen, listen, listen. I'm done. By raising the bar, Jesus is not driving you to guilt.

He's driving you to grace. By raising the bar, Jesus is not pointing out all your failures to shame you. [49 : 58] He's pointing out all your failures to save you. And so if you have been divorced, remarried, committed adultery, sought revenge on an enemy, the good news of the gospel is that God's acceptance of you into his kingdom is not based on your ability to keep the law.

It's based on your faith in the one who's already kept the law. That's the good news of the kingdom of God. And that faith family is the good place.

The good place is where both now and for eternity, you come to realize there is one who is good and it's not you.

There is one whose righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and it's not you. There is one who is perfect as the heavenly father is perfect and it's not you.

It's Jesus. And the sooner you embrace his grace, the sooner you will enter the good place. And all God's people said, Amen.

[51 : 14] Will you pray with me? Let's pray together. Father, God, thank you. Thank you for the time tonight in your word. I am so passionate about this because the good news of the kingdom is not beating us down to feel like we're failures.

It's to show us who we are in light of Jesus so that we'll experience his forgiveness. And yes, the heart matters.

And no one in this place should be hearing anything but obedience matters. That is clear from the text. But what is also clear in the text is that there is only one who has been perfectly obedient.

There is only one who has fulfilled the law and his name is Jesus. And therefore, getting the kingdom is simply getting Jesus by faith.

And if there is somebody here tonight that has never put their faith in Jesus Christ, I pray right now they would believe. That they would surrender all their attempts of trying to be good and rest in your saving grace.

[52 : 31] In Jesus' name. And God's people said, Amen. Amen.