



Part 1: Going the Distance

When Jesus taught about heaven, his emphasis was often more about how we live rather than where we live. His primary message was to announce that God's presence and power was available to us, right where we are, if we want to experience it.

Scripture: Matthew 5:17-20

Bottom Line: God doesn't want us to be better people, he wants us to be transformed people.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you picture when you picture heaven? Jesus often announced that the kingdom of heaven was now at hand (close by or available). What do you think he meant by that?
2. Read Matthew 5:17-20 out loud. List out observations that stand out to you, as well as questions that you have. Discuss the questions you have and learn from one another's perspective.
3. Why do you think Jesus made sure that people knew that he wasn't 'abolishing' the Jewish law? Can you think of reasons why having laws are important? Why do we need to have rules and guidelines in our lives? Can you think of reasons why rules or laws are not enough to make us into the kind of people or the kind of community that we ultimately should be?
4. If Jesus came to 'fulfil' the law, what does that mean? What does it tell us about the nature of the law? What kinds of expectations do you think that should give us for the teaching that comes next?
5. Read Matthew 4:17. Sometimes it is assumed that repenting means saying 'sorry' for bad things that we do. On Sunday Pastor Dave said that one way to define repentance is: Abandoning your agenda for your life to the way of Jesus. How is this different than you may have thought it before?
6. What do you think it looks like for individuals and groups of people to truly repent in this way? How would someone's life change if they abandoned their agenda and gave Jesus authority to steer their life? What about this kind of repentance is hard or threatening? What about it is exciting and hopeful?

Moving Forward:

Split up into smaller groups for a time of sharing and prayer. What area(s) of your life are hardest for you to give up control of and trust Jesus? Spend some time exploring these areas and encouraging one another. Pray for each other and plan to follow up in the coming days or weeks.