Introduction
One of the greatest dangers facing the church is the temptation to take the Jesus of the Bible and twist him into a version of Jesus we are more comfortable with.”  David Platt
We are not the first to do that. The Pharisees and teachers of the law reinterpreted the law in ways that were not what God intended.

Jesus calls us to a radical righteousness. Jesus is showing us the law’s intent and where we are out of line, he calls for change.

“I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them.”
• Jesus fulfilled the moral law by his perfect obedience.
• Jesus fulfilled the ceremonial law by his perfect sacrifice.
• Jesus fulfilled the messianic prophecies by his perfect accomplishment of all things.

Jesus affirmed the authority of Scripture down to the smallest letter. Jesus is the sole authoritative interpreter of Scripture.

“Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”
Jesus is calling for a different kind of righteousness – a righteousness that only he can give.

II. JESUS CALLS FOR A RADICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS IN SIX AREAS. MATTHEW 5:21-48

1. In our relationships. Verses 21-26
   The prohibition against murder also prohibits anger and abusive speech. Jesus calls for a radical righteousness that pursues peace and reconciliation rather than anger and hate. The goal is health and harmony in our relationships.

2. In purity. Verses 27-30
   The prohibition on adultery also prohibits the lust that leads to adultery. Jesus is calling for a radical purity that does whatever it takes to avoid this sin. The goal is holiness in our relationship with God and with others.

3. In marriage Verses 31-32
   Divorce was common in Jesus’ day too.
   - Shammai School – Divorce was allowed only for gross indecency.
   - Hillel Scholl – Divorce was allowed for any reason.
   God’s intent is that marriage should be a permanent union between one man and one woman.

   The only reason divorce was permitted was because of the hardness of men’s hearts.
   The goal for all believers who are married is a happy and holy marriage.
4. In honesty and integrity. Verses 33-37

The Mosaic Law forbid irreverent oaths and broken vows. The Pharisees came up with a sophisticated way to get around it. If oaths, designed to encourage truth telling, could be used to tell clever lies, Jesus would abolish them all. Jesus’ point is that we shouldn’t need oaths to get us to tell the truth. We should always be truthful.

5. In resolving conflicts. Verses 38-42

The principle of Lex Talionis – “an eye for an eye” was set up to limit conflict. The punishment should fit the crime. The problem was that people turned it into a justification for personal revenge. Jesus calls us to overcome evil with good.

6. In unconditional love. Verses 43-48

All people, even our enemies are to be loved. One of the practical ways that we can show love is by praying for our enemies. If you just love those who love you, you are no different than a tax collector or pagan.

Conclusion

“Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.” How can we do that? The answer isn’t to change the standard. The answer is to admit our sin and our need for Christ. When we receive Jesus, he clothes us with his righteousness and he changes our heart.

As we walk with him in the power of the Holy Spirit, he changes us from the inside out.

“Therefore, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set us free from the law of sin and death...he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.” Romans 8:1-4