

# Matthew 6:13-20

**Matthew 5:13–20** is Jesus' call for His followers to live as a visible, preserving influence in the world (salt and light) and to pursue a deeper righteousness that fulfills—not replaces—the Law. This section sits early in the Sermon on the Mount and forms the bridge between the Beatitudes and Jesus' later teachings on true righteousness.

## 1. Salt and Light (vv. 13–16) — Your Identity and Influence

Jesus uses two vivid metaphors:

- **Salt of the earth** — Salt preserved food in the ancient world. Jesus' point: His followers are meant to **slow moral decay** and bring goodness into the world. If they lose their distinctiveness, they lose their impact.
- **Light of the world** — Light reveals truth and guides. Disciples are meant to **live visibly faithful lives** so others see their good works and glorify God.

Salt works by contact; light works by visibility. Jesus is saying: *Your life is meant to matter to the world around you.*

## 2. Jesus and the Law (vv. 17–20) — Fulfillment, Not Abolition

Jesus anticipates a misunderstanding: His authority might make people think He is discarding the Old Testament. He corrects that:

- **“I have not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets but to fulfill them.”** Jesus completes the story the Law began—He embodies its purpose and brings it to its intended goal.
- **The Law remains significant** until God's purposes are fully accomplished. Even the smallest part (“iota” or “dot”) matters.
- **Greatness in the kingdom** is tied to honoring and teaching God's commands.
- **Righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees**—not in quantity of rules, but in **depth of heart**. Jesus will unpack this in the rest of the chapter (“You have heard... but I say...”).

This is the hinge of the Sermon: **Kingdom righteousness is not about stricter rule-keeping but about transformed hearts that live out God's intent.**

## 3. The Big Idea

**Matthew 5:13–20** teaches that disciples are meant to influence the world through visible goodness and integrity, while embracing a righteousness that flows from the heart and aligns with the true meaning of Scripture.