

Kingdom Righteousness

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[0 : 00] I have a Captain Obvious statement to make this morning. As you turn in your Bibles to Matthew 5, we're going to be looking at verses 17-20.

And the Captain Obvious statement is this. The Sermon on the Mount, it's a sermon. It's Jesus preaching. And so as we turn there, listen to the words of Jesus.

Listen to what He's actually saying. It's phenomenal. It's extraordinary. It should blow your mind.

Hear the word of the Lord Jesus.

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. He's speaking about the whole Old Testament there. Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.

I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished.

[1 : 05] 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 righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

How many sermons have you heard in your life? I mean, if you've been a Christian for 10 years and you show up to, you know, 48 services, that's 480 sermons.

That's a lot of sermons. You've probably got by now that there's three basic parts to a sermon.

There's the introduction, which is the hook that raises the need.

And then there's the body, which is the content. And then there's the conclusion, which kind of brings it all together and to bear in our lives. Well, when you look at the Sermon on the Mount, you see all those elements.

[2 : 07] You see the introduction. Those are the Beatitudes. Jesus is saying, this is my kingdom people. This is the character of those who follow me.

And they're going to be salt and light. And the disciples are wondering, well, then, how do you do that? So he's hooked them. And then there's the conclusion of the sermon.

Would you flip over in your Bible to Matthew 7 and verse 13? This is the conclusion of the sermon.

And Jesus calls his listeners to make a decision. And he says, hey, folks, there's two ways to live.

You can either live this way or live this way. You can go through the narrow gate or through the wide gate.

You can be like a healthy tree or a diseased tree. You can be one who does the will of the Heavenly Father. You can be a worker of lawlessness. Or the final one is, hey, you can be like a wise man who builds his house on the rock.

[3 : 06] Or you can be like the fool who builds his house on the sand. The point is, Jesus is saying, there's two ways to live. You decide. That's the conclusion. He calls his listeners to make a decision.

And in between the Beatitudes in those two ways to live is the body of his sermon. And this morning, we're looking at the very start of the sermon.

This morning, I asked. We started by opening up the Bible and said, turn your pages to Bibles to Matthew 5. And then I read from you the passage that I'm going to be preaching on this morning.

Jesus does something very similar. He calls his disciples to listen to what he's going to expound on from the Scriptures.

Now, let me just tell you something about Christian preaching. What makes Christian preaching Christian versus Islamic or Jewish?

[4 : 07] A Christian preacher is going to preach Jesus Christ from the God-inspired text of the Bible. That's what makes Christian preaching Christian.

We preach Christ from the Scriptures. And we see that happening. This very first sermon of our King, it is distinctly Christian.

Let's ask Jesus a question. Jesus, as you start the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus, what text are you using? We want to open our Bibles, Jesus.

Would you show us the chapter and verse? What book should we turn to, Jesus? You know, if Jesus was here, you know what he'd say to us? This morning, would you open up your Bibles to the entire Old Testament?

Because I'm going to preach from the Old Testament. And then he's going to say something like this this morning. Here's the topic of the entire Old Testament.

[5 : 16] It's phenomenal. It's like, here we are, everybody. Here's the main point. The Old Testament is fulfilled in me. That's where he starts the Sermon on the Mount.

Text for this morning, Old Testament. Point of this morning's sermon, the Old Testament finds its fulfillment in me. Only God incarnate can pull that off.

Only God in the flesh can say something like that. Only God can say, the Old Testament finds its fulfillment in me.

The sermon that Jesus is preaching in the Sermon on the Mount, it's not the exposition of one verse or a paragraph or a chapter. It's on the whole Bible of their time.

The Law and the Prophets. Genesis through Malachi. And so what this morning, I just want to be very clear, is that you need to say is that Jesus is claiming to be the fulfillment of all that the Old Testament points to.

[6 : 36] It's all about him. And our response is, who can say something like that but God himself? So four things I want to help you see. First is this, how Jesus understood the Old Testament, his view of the Old Testament.

We'll see that in verse 18. And then we'll come back to verse 17, so you can see how Jesus thought about his relationship to the Old Testament. And then we'll see in verse 19 is a bit of a warning.

And then verse 20, after he lays all this out about his relationship to the Old Testament, he's going to call us to a kind of righteousness that has yet to be seen on earth.

A righteousness that exceeds that of even the scribes and Pharisees. So let's look at Jesus' view of the Old Testament. We're going to look at chapter 5, verse 18.

For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Up until this point, Jesus has already shown his view of the Scriptures.

[7 : 47] Do you remember chapter 4? Satan comes out in the wilderness. Satan comes out in the wilderness. He squares off on Jesus and tempts Jesus three times. And Jesus pulls out the shield of faith. Pew, pew, pew, pew.

Blocks his shots. Brings down the sword of the Spirit. And he quotes three times from the book of Deuteronomy. Jesus had a high view of the Bible. And it functioned in his life.

You see him battling in chapter 4 with God's Word. He was already using the Mosaic Law. He believes in it. He trusts it.

He's living by it. And so what Jesus is going to talk to us about this morning is his relationship to the Old Testament. And so at the beginning of verse 18, he says, truly I say to you, for truly I say to you, and that's his distinct way of saying, listen to the truth I'm about to say because you can bank your life on it.

And then he says, until heaven and earth pass away. Until heaven and earth pass away. Not an iota. Not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished.

[9 : 00] That little phrase, until heaven and earth pass away, well it's an expression. Meaning, it's timeless. It's permanent. It's going to be here for the rest of time.

And then when he starts talking about those, what is an iota? What's he talking about that? An iota? What's that? What's a dot? What's he talking about? Well he's talking about this. God has inspired the Old Testament.

It originated in his mind. And what Jesus is getting here is the Old Testament's permanent. It's from God. And it's all from him. It's going to be here.

And then he says this. Just in case you're wondering, it's not inspired just in idea only. Every iota, every little dot originated in the mind of God.

And what those are, are the very smallest pen strokes strokes of the Hebrew alphabet. They're the tiniest of details in the Hebrew language.

[10:09] And what God, what Jesus is saying is, it's all from God. It's permanent. In the details. Not just the ideas.

But the very words, the very strokes themselves, originated in God's mind and is for our benefit now. And then he says, this law, the law and the prophets, the Old Testament, hey, it's not going to pass away until all is accomplished.

Well that's getting at the prophetic nature of the Old Testament. Do you know what a three point stance is in football? Guys get down like this. They're getting ready.

They're like poised to pounce. The Old Testament is like a coiled spring ready to make known something. It's prophetic in nature.

All of it. So whether it's the prophets, whether it's the judges or Ruth or 1 and 2 Samuel, those narratives, whether it's wisdom literature like the Psalms or Proverbs, even the Mosaic law itself, all those regulations, all of it is aimed.

[11:33] All of it is poised. All of it is anticipating something. It's all prophetic. It shows up in different ways. But it's all designed to point to something until all is accomplished.

accomplished. The Old Testament reveals God's plan for the fullness of time. And that plan comes into clarity in the New Testament.

So, the Apostle Paul talked about it this way in Ephesians 1.10. God has this plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in Christ.

the Old Testament is going to find its ultimate fulfillment, its ultimate yes and amen in the person of Jesus Christ.

So, Jesus' view of the Old Testament, it's permanent all the way down to the details. It's prophetic. It's pointing at something. He's going to say it's pointing to Himself.

[12:39] And it's binding. God's law, His moral law is to be obeyed by all for all humankind. And so, what God outlines in the Old Testament, His will for men and women, His moral will, that doesn't change as culture changes.

It's permanent. He's always been a holy God. And so, to sum up Jesus' view of the Old Testament, it is permanent, it's prophetic, it's binding.

Why? Because the Old Testament, the words of the Old Testament are God's words. All Scriptures breathed out by God, says Paul.

And he's talking about the Old Testament. Now, if Jesus had this view of the Old Testament, brothers and sisters, what's your view of the Old Testament like?

Is it like, take it or leave it? Yeah, if I had to choose, I'd just go with the New Testament. What Jesus is saying is that the Old Testament is vital to understanding who Jesus is.

[13:56] So, we've looked at Jesus' view of the Old Testament. It is a high and wonderful view. In fact, it would be a shared view with the Pharisees and scribes of the time.

Jesus never challenges on their understanding of the Old Testament. The conflict comes over the application of it. We'll see that later. The second thing I want you to see, and this is where, like, I've just been so jazzed all week.

I can't believe I get to proclaim this to you guys today. How Jesus viewed his relationship to the Old Testament. So, look at verse 17. Knowing what Jesus' view of the Old Testament is, let's go back to verse 17.

We read this. Jesus says, Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets, all of the Old Testament. I didn't come to put that aside. I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. I have come to fulfill them. I have come to fulfill the Old Testament. Now, we can ask a question like this.

[15:02] Why is even Jesus talking about the Old Testament? And what I've tried to tell you up to this point is, well, he's starting a sermon and he's starting in his text and he's saying his text is the Old Testament.

Well, there's another reason why. He's already gone through the introduction. He's already told his disciples who are there on the mountainside listening to him, you are citizens of heaven.

blessed are those. And he goes from blessed are those in the third person to coming down into chapter 5 verses 10, 11, 12 to you.

You. You are my salt. You are my light. And then he gets into 5:17 and all of a sudden he's talking about me. I. It's emphatic.

And what Jesus is saying is this. Hey guys, I know you're wondering, now that I've told you you're my salt and light, I know you're wondering now how to do that.

[16:05] What to appeal to. What shows you the way to do that? And he also knows that, hey, if you think I'm the Messiah, you're probably wondering what my relationship to the Old Testament is because the Old Testament will show you the way.

And so Jesus anticipating that his disciples are going to want to know how to rightly relate him to the Old Testament, he addresses it right out of the gate.

So here's what I want you to see. The incarnate word, Jesus, is about to explain his relationship to the written word of the Old Testament.

it. And what you're going to see is they're not in opposition to each other. You see, the written word of God points to the incarnate word of God, and there's no need to put them at odds.

Jesus did not come to abolish the written word. He came to fulfill it.

[17:20] Have you ever planned a party? And you're planning the party and you're anticipating all your friends coming over and when they finally get there, you're kind of like, this is awesome.

All my friends are here. So your planning is the anticipating and pointing to the actual party. And when the party happens, it fulfills all the planning.

The Old Testament is the planning of the party. And when Jesus is coming and walks the party, it's all about Him.

The Old Testament is like a glove. And Jesus is the hand in the glove. The Old Testament anticipates Jesus. If Jesus didn't come to negate the Old Testament, to minimize it, why did He come?

What's His relationship to it? And it's in that word fulfill. Fulfill. He didn't come to abolish. He came to fulfill it. And that word simply means to bring meaning and substance to something.

[18:39] It has this prophetic sense of anticipation, finding, satisfaction, and fulfillment. And that is exactly what is going on here.

Jesus has talked about this in other spots in the Gospels. John 5, 39. I started our service off with this. He says, you look to the Scriptures for eternal life, but the Scriptures actually are about me. In whom is eternal life? Luke 24, 44-45, Jesus is up in the upper room after His resurrection with His disciples. And He explains to them how He fulfilled Moses and the prophets and the Psalms, how the Christ must suffer.

They're all pointing to Him. That word fulfill is key to understanding what Jesus is saying. And if you flip back in Matthew, this isn't the first time Matthew uses the word fulfill.

If you look at chapter 1, verse 22, all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel.

[19:55] Who fulfills the Old Testament prophet? Jesus. And then as you page through and look through chapter 2, you see again and again, this Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophets.

Not the easiest to understand, but it's there. Chapter 2, verse 15, and He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet.

Chapter 2, verse 17, then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah. And then in verse 23, and He went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled.

And so when we get here to chapter 5, there's no reason to think that Jesus is talking about fulfillment in any different way than it's been used already in Matthew. But Jesus is saying, I've come not just to fulfill the prophets, I've come to fulfill the whole Old Testament.

And so now the question I want to ask this morning is, how does Jesus fulfill the Old Testament? And there's a couple things I can point to. This is like 20 sermons right here.

[21:11] But let me give you a couple things. Early on in the Mosaic Law, in Genesis, we hear a prophecy in Genesis, Moses writing, that there's going to come one from Eve who will crush the head of the serpent.

That's Jesus. Genesis chapter 12, God calls Abram and He tells him, He promises him, through his offspring, He's going to bless all the nations of the earth.

And then Paul in Galatians 3 says, Jesus is that offspring. We see Jesus fulfilling Scripture after Scripture in a variety of different kinds of Old Testament literature.

Let me point you to a couple other things. You know how in the book of Exodus, God makes known the law, Ten Commandments, Jesus fulfills the Ten Commandments.

This is how. Every day that Jesus walked the earth, He went ten for ten on the big ten. He went ten for ten.

[22 : 34] He faithfully obeyed every commandment, not only the ten, but the hundreds of commands that came along with it. He perfectly obeyed and fulfilled the Old Testament law in a way that we could never.

Every day of His life. So, is it no wonder at His baptism, God says, this is my beloved Son with whom I'm well pleased. He's lived a perfect life of righteousness.

And so, Jesus, in a very real way, fulfills the Old Testament moral code in His life. And so, that's not so much kind of a prophecy from Isaiah.

It's a different kind of speaking anticipation of one to come. But there's more. In the book of Leviticus, we are told of all these different sacrifices Jews had to make because for their sin, there needed to be the shedding of blood.

God. And so, in God's wisdom, do you know what He did? He wanted to really press into His people a lesson. And that is, sin is real.

[23 : 48] And if you're going to live with a holy God, you've got to deal with your sin. And the way you deal with sin is by the shedding of blood. And so, over and over and over again in the Old Testament, over and over and over again, there is this repeated offerings of sacrifices for the sin of God's people.

Over and over and over again, sin brings a penalty against a holy God. And that penalty is paid in blood. And that blood covers the sin and allows for relationship with the living God.

And so, the sacrificial system established under the Mosaic Law, it begins to point to an ultimate sacrifice. Jesus.

Jesus. Whom John said, behold, the Lamb of God comes to take away the sin of the world. Jesus fulfills the Old Testament sacrificial system because His sacrifice on the cross was a once for all done deal.

The perfect of all sacrifices. The perfect Lamb of God who shed His blood to take away the sins of a world. Jesus is the fulfillment of that.

[25 : 09] And we can go on and on and on. How His substitutionary death fulfilled Isaiah 53. We can talk about how Jesus shedding of His blood and what happened the night before at the Last Supper.

He's inaugurating the New Covenant. He's talking about the shedding of His blood. He's going to usher in what Jeremiah talked about in Jeremiah 31 and what Ezekiel talked about in Ezekiel 36 and Jesus ushered in the New Covenant fullness.

I want to point you to one more thing. In Deuteronomy 18:18 God is talking to Moses and He's saying there's going to be a prophet that I'm going to raise up from the people and He's going to speak for me.

And then Peter in Acts 3:22 and 23. Do you know what He says? Who this prophet is? Jesus!

The ultimate prophet. The ultimate sacrifice. He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. The anticipation that the Old Testament raises over the centuries is found fulfillment in Jesus.

[26 : 27] Is this making sense? You may be come in here this morning and you're like well I just thought the Old Testament was about God.

And if Jesus was here he'd be like oh yeah you're right. It's about me. I fulfilled it. So here's Jesus preaching this sermon.

His inaugural sermon and he starts off saying okay open up your Bibles to the whole Bible and the whole Bible is about me. I fulfilled it. It's all about him.

He's the yes and amen. So this morning if you walk away from here with just one thing it would be this. The Old Testament points to Jesus. And why do we say that?

Because Jesus said it. I came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it. that's a game changer. It changes the way you look at your Old Testament.

[27 : 27] Because you start seeing it through Jesus. Now I want you to see this warning he gives in verse 19. It's just the first half of it.

Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same they'll be called least in the kingdom of heaven. And so he's trying to do a corrective here.

And so he's saying to his disciples hey don't misunderstand what I'm saying. I came to fulfill the law but that doesn't mean you can relax the law. That doesn't mean you can kind of minimize the least of the commandments. In that day they made a distinction between the heavier matters of the law and the lighter matters of the law. And Jesus says don't minimize the lighter stuff. And what we'll see in the next couple weeks is how he corrects that. Just look down to the whole thing on anger in verse 21. You've heard that it was said from the Pharisees to those of old you shall not murder. And then Jesus says but I say to you. Look what he says. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother don't minimize little stuff.

[28 : 37] Don't minimize that. It's wrong to commit adultery but it's also wrong to lust. Don't minimize that. See what Jesus is doing? Man that guy is brilliant.

And so what he's doing here is don't mistake this. My fulfilling of the law doesn't mean it's no longer binding. It is.

Don't relax it. In fact Jesus is going to say I came to raise the bar. Now there's always been a temptation for God's people to make adjustments with the law.

One mistake is this thing called legalism and that's the belief that if I obey the law then God will accept me. I earn his love through performance. And the apostle Paul will say no, no, no, no. There's nothing that you can do to earn acceptance with God. That's why Jesus came. That's why he shed his blood. That's why in order for you to be right in God's eyes God needs to impute Christ's righteousness to you.

[29 : 43] So don't make that mistake. But the other mistake is the mistake of lawlessness. From legalism to lawlessness. And what lawlessness is is this. It's thinking okay, Jesus came to fulfill the law and so he's fulfilled all of God's requirements of me.

Praise the Lord. And now he's just covered me with grace. I can't out sin God's grace. So what I'm going to do is just sin and sin and sin and enjoy my sin because I'm just going to be grace and grace and graced.

That's the other mistake. We can't make either. But what Jesus is worrying about right here is don't relax these commandments because I've fulfilled them.

Don't relax them. Just because Jesus fulfilled all the commandments of the Old Testament and for us even that doesn't mean they no longer apply.

God is just as holy now as he was then. And he's calling us to a righteousness that is an essentially different kind of righteousness that people were seeing in Jesus' day.

[30 : 55] And so the warning, don't relax the law. And now Jesus is going to bring some action. Look at the second half of 19 and 20. And this is the last point of this morning's sermon.

Jesus calls his followers to a new kind of righteousness. A kingdom righteousness. He says, but whoever does them and teaches them the commandments will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you'll never enter the kingdom of heaven. He's like, don't relax them. I'm calling you something that exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

So the Pharisees were known to do things like this. They would have their cloak and they would kind of hold their cloak close to them while they're walking through crowds because they didn't want to touch the rabble.

They didn't want to be made impure. And so when Jesus is talking about the righteousness of the Pharisees, his disciples were like, what? More righteous than them?

[32 : 02] And what Jesus is actually talking about is a new kind of righteousness. A new covenant kind of righteousness. An internally born of the Holy Spirit righteousness.

You see, this righteousness that Jesus is getting at is not an outward conforming for the eyes of man kind of righteousness which he rails on the Pharisees about.

No, the righteousness that Jesus is calling his disciples and us to is an inner obedience born of the Holy Spirit that wants to glorify God the Father. That's what he's doing in us.

This is the kind of righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees and scribes. It's this kind of righteousness that if you look ahead to chapter 5 verse 48, that's the perfect. A righteousness within and without.

Jesus is raising the bar of righteousness. Better yet, he's saying there's a qualitatively different kind of holiness I'm calling you to live by and it comes through me, the fulfiller of the Old Testament.

[33 : 22] I want to start wrapping things up here. here. But here's one of the things I want you to see. Have you heard of the Rosetta Stone?

The Rosetta Stone was this rock steel, it's called, found in 1799 in northern Africa. Found by a soldier.

Up until this point, people didn't know how to make sense of Egyptian hieroglyphics. It was like, what does that mean? We don't know what it's saying here. And then when this discovery of the Rosetta Stone was found, it unlocked the language.

Because the Rosetta Stone had three languages on it. There was Egyptian hieroglyphics on the top, and then there was another language called Demotic. I have no idea what that is.

And then there's another language called Ancient Greek. And they were all translations of a decree of a king from Egypt from 196 B.C. They're all saying the same thing.

[34 : 26] And so that gave scholars the key to understanding Egyptian hieroglyphics. It was the Rosetta Stone. It unlocked the hidden meaning of hieroglyphics.

Jesus is our Rosetta Stone. He unlocks for us the true meaning intent of the Old Testament.

Because the Old Testament is all about Him.

And now He's calling us to live in a way that is pleasing to Him. Jesus is calling us to a righteousness that we can't produce ourselves.

It's a work of God in us. Would you turn in your Bible to Romans chapter 8? This is what Jesus is introducing.

This is the new covenant which He's bringing with Him. Romans 8 verse 4. Let's start in verse 3.

[35 : 29] 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 in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk, who obey, not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament and He brings with Him a whole new way of relating to God. A whole new kind of righteousness born of His Spirit.

What we're going to be seeing in the rest of Jesus' sermon, the Sermon on the Mount, is how this righteousness is lived out. He's going to correct us on some things and He's going to direct us on some things.

But He's introducing now that Jesus, He's the fulfiller of the Old Testament. He's got a high view of the Old Testament. He didn't come to abolish it but to fulfill it.

He warned us not to relax it because He's calling us to a new kind of righteousness, a Spirit-born Ezekiel 36, Spirit-within-us kind of righteousness. So in order to close, let me just ask this.

[36 : 47] Who can say something like this? Who can say that the Old Testament's about me but God alone?

It's about Him. All of God's plan for the fullness of time is uniting all things in Christ. So two things, very quick.

because this sets Jesus apart, you know what? You know what we need to do? Follow Him and listen to Him.

He's our Rosetta Stone. Let me pray. God in Heaven, thank You so much. Thank You so much that You, Jesus, that You are the focal point of the entire Bible.

Thank You, Jesus, that You have provided what we need in order to walk in righteousness now.

You've supplied us with Your own righteousness, and that You've indwelt us with Your Spirit so we can experience it too.

[37 : 55] Lord Jesus, thank You. Thank You for Your words. In Your name we pray. Amen. Amen.