

Fulfillment of the Scriptures

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[0 : 00] Good morning, all. Can you guys hear me okay? Great. Grateful to the Lord and to you for this opportunity to share God's word this morning.! We're going to continue on in the Sermon of the Mount, Matthew 5. Today's verses are in 17 to 20.

Matthew 5, 17 to 20. As Sean said, these four verses are really important and dense. And they play a critical role in this Sermon of the Mount. And many Christians have poured out much ink over its interpretation, debating its interpretation. So we're going to ask for God to help us to understand his word. If you need a Bible and would like a paper copy, please raise your hand. One of our members would be happy to get you one. Amen. Please pray with me. Bow your heads as we ask for God's strength this morning.

[1 : 05] Heavenly Father, Father, we are your people, called by your name. We ask that you would address us by your word today.

You'd give us eyes to see and ears to hear what you have said, Lord Jesus, in your sermon. That it would not be my words, but it would be your words that shine through and pierce our hearts and make our hearts burn within us.

Not to me, not to us be the glory, but to you as we look to your Son, who is the fulfillment of the scriptures, of the law, of all righteousness.

The Son is all that we need. And so we pray for eyes and ears to, again, remember afresh the gospel. Speak to us, address us.

And in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. If you are able, please stand with me for the reading of God's word. Matthew 5, 17 to 20.

[2 : 20] 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.

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. This is God's holy and authoritative word.

You may be seated. In college, I had the blessing of spending one of my summers on missions on the westernmost island of Indonesia, Sumatra.

And as you guys likely know, it is predominantly a Muslim country. And part of our daily work was simply just to build relationships with local college students who wanted to learn English.

[3 : 38] And in doing so, there was one conversation that a teammate of mine had with a Muslim student that I still remember today.

The Muslim student admitted to my teammates that there are times at night when she experiences panic attacks or she cries herself to sleep, all because she gets to thinking about the afterlife, about heaven and hell, about what her afterlife is going to look like, because she didn't know.

She didn't know what it's going to be, how it's all going to turn out. While she did her best to follow the five pillars of Islam, like the daily prayers or fasting for Ramadan, she did not know whether Allah would have mercy upon her on that judgment day.

You see, in Islam, there is no assurance of salvation because they believe that Allah alone knows how the scales of justice will tip.

Muslims don't even know if Muhammad, the true prophet of Allah, the founder of the religion, made it to heaven. So all the student was wondering was, is my devotion to Allah enough?

[5 : 06] Is my faith enough? Am I good enough? After reading our passage today, are you asking the same thing? Is Jesus requiring that we need to be incredibly scrupulous, no, actually even more scrupulous in our obedience to the law than the scribes and Pharisees in order to make it into the kingdom of heaven?

Look at how Jesus closes the first chapter of the Sermon on the Mount with a daunting command. He says, you therefore must be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect. That sounds a lot like what our Muslim friend was feeling and thinking, keeping her up at night. This is an important passage for us to properly understand.

And the interpretive key, the crucial legend on the map is this idea of Jesus' fulfillment, fulfillment, which is why our three points of the sermon today is all about this.

It's about how Jesus fulfilled the scriptures, how he fulfilled the law, and how he fulfilled all righteousness for those who believe. To the praise of God's glory and grace, to enter the kingdom of heaven, we can find our righteousness in Christ Jesus.

[6 : 31] Find your righteousness in Christ Jesus, the fulfillment of the law and prophets. That's the main point of my sermon today. So before we get into the passage, this is a good point to remember the setting of the sermon.

Jesus has gone up the mountain, just like Moses, to declare God's laws to his fellow Jews. And the fact that they're Jews is a really important part.

At this point in Jesus' ministry, he's already gotten into some hot water with the Pharisees and the scribes, who were the conservative, law-abiding, rule-following Jews.

And he's healed paralytics. He's plucked grain on the Sabbath, all big no-nos, according to the Pharisees. Later, Jesus is accused of being a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners, something that the clean and pure Pharisees would never do.

But mind you, Jesus has not broken a single one of God's laws, but he has broken the man-made pharisaical ones. So rumors about Jesus are likely swirling around, spreading like gangrene, and the Jews, they're wondering, Jesus, you disregard the teachings and the practices of our religious leaders.

[8 : 00] Is it true that you have no respect for our laws? You have no respect for the teachings of our holy prophets. That's what the Pharisees are saying about you.

To quell all these fears, Jesus makes it abundantly clear that he has not come to abolish, dismantle, disregard the law or the prophets, which is just another phrase to mean the entirety of the Old Testament, all 39 books in our Bibles.

To this, we can just hear an audible, whew, from the Jews. I can imagine all the Jesus fans elbowing their Jesus-hating buddies, right, saying, see, see, he's not so bad.

He's one of us. And indeed, Jesus did share much of the Jews' reverence for the Old Testament scriptures. He quotes from it frequently throughout his ministry, and he speaks about it like it's authoritative and reliable.

Even more so, Jesus highlights both the permanence and the infallibility, the inerrancy of the Old Testament scriptures in verse 18, when he says, 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.

[9 : 24] The law is so important and without error that even the smallest of its letters, these iotas, these dots, which likely refer to the smallest of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, they will never pass away.

Like the dot above our English I's or how we cross our T's, the least stroke of a pen of the law will never pass away. They will never lose their relevance, their truthfulness, and their authority over us. Until heaven and earth pass away. Or in other words, when Jesus returns for the second time. Part of why I liked engineering and math as a student was, you know, before you get to the higher levels, is that there's only one right answer to the questions.

You either get it completely right or you get it completely wrong. It's binary. It's two plus two can only equal four. But when it comes to the arts, when it comes to writing, I get frustrated by this, that there's no perfect piece of writing.

An essay can always be adapted, can always be edited to be improved, change this sentence structure, swap out this adjective for a synonym. There is no right piece of writing that is but Scripture.

[10:49] Scripture. Jesus is saying that every word, every letter, every jot and tittle of the law of the Bible is just right.

Nothing needs to be tweaked or edited because not even the smallest of its letters will pass away. This is the highest endorsement that Jesus could give about a text.

When you publish a book these days, it's really important for publishers to get endorsements from really important voices in the field. And they're plastered on the back of these books saying, this is the best book ever, you should read it.

This is Jesus' highest endorsement of the Old Testament Scriptures. This is how important this book is to him. There is no other book, no other writing that will stand, that will persevere the test of time like these holy scriptures.

The American Constitution will pass away. The Quran will pass away. The Book of Mormon will pass away.

[12:02] Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* will pass away. Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* will pass away. Surely all of our Facebook posts and Instagram posts and X posts will pass away.

Even, as I dare say, all sermons and books by a John Piper or a Tim Keller or Charles Spurgeon, as helpful as they are, they too will pass away because they are the words, mere words of men. But this book, Holy Scripture, without error and full of truth, are the very words of God. Isaiah 48 says, The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the word of our God will stand forever.

There is no book like this in all of human history. So if the Old Testament is vastly important to Jesus, it also should be vastly important to us.

But, instead, like the Jews, Christians, we have historically struggled to appreciate the value of the Old Testament. Jesus, we like.

[13:15] New Testament, we like. but all these weird, antiquated food impurity laws, the instructions for building the tabernacle, the rules for the sacrificial system, we don't get.

It feels irrelevant, feels unrelatable. Who of us, when we read through the Bible in a year and we get to the book of Leviticus, we honestly just groan a little bit.

So how do we appreciate the Old Testament and why is it so important to Jesus? To that, we have to look to the end of verse 17.

In 17, after Jesus says that he's not here to abolish the law or the prophets, he continues, I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

That audible sigh of relief, whew, then turns into a shocked gasp, a palpable silence.

[14:19] That verse takes a turn that you don't expect. You would expect Jesus to say that if he's not come to abolish the law, then he's come to uphold it, to honor it, to preserve it, something like that.

But no, Jesus takes a different route altogether when he claims that these cosmically waiting scriptures that are more solid than the very earth we stand upon, he fulfills.

He is fulfilling. What exactly does Jesus mean by this? We find clues throughout the book of Matthew because he uses this word up to 16 times in his gospel, the most out of all the gospel writers.

And almost every time that Matthew uses this word, fulfill, he is pointing to the fact that Jesus is fulfilling a prophecy from the Old Testament.

So in other words, what Jesus is saying is that all of the Old Testament, from the law of Moses to the exiled minor prophets, from Genesis to Malachi, it's all pointing to Christ.

[15:30] In the Old Testament, God reveals himself as the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. We love those verses.

I love those verses. And as you read the Old Testament, you read of how God graciously promises great blessings to key figures like Adam or Abraham or David.

To Adam, he promises that the seed of the woman, Eve, will come to crush the head of the serpent, Satan. To Abraham, he promises that through his offspring, all the nations of the world will be blessed.

To David, he promises that a son from his lineage will sit on his throne forever. The Jews rightly understood that these promises are not predicting a slew of different people, but it all pointed to one Messiah figure, one Savior to come, Israel's prophet, priest, and king who will conquer Satan, who will be a conduit of blessing for all the world, and who will sit on his throne forever.

But there's one big problem, one question. By the end of the Old Testament, these promises have not been fully fulfilled.

[16:59] Many partially, yes, but none of them fully. So all of the Old Testament is about waiting. It's about waiting for God to fully deliver on his promises, to wait for this Messiah figure to come.

The Jews wonder, is it Abraham? No, he doesn't bless the nations in his lifetime. What about Moses? He's great, but he isn't even allowed to enter into the promised land.

Surely, it's David. He's a man after God's heart, but he falls into grievous sexual sin. Time and time again, we go through this cycle of, is this the one he's showing some promise to the deep disappointment of his abject failure and his human weakness?

Is God going to bless us like he said he would? Is he really abounding in steadfast love and mercy as he declares himself to be?

Part of reading through the Old Testament is for yourself to experience that anticipation, that waiting. Before becoming parents, I'm sad to admit that there have been way too many times where my wife, Christine, she'll be relaxing, and she'll be watching a movie or a TV show on her own, and I'll want to join halfway in because I want a break from seminary work or whatever I'm doing.

[18:32] So, as I do, I annoyingly ask her to pause the movie and to explain everything that's gone on, to explain the plot, who's this, what did he do to that character, and nine times out of ten, she will graciously give me a patient, detailed answer, here.

I'll leave you guessing what happens at one other time, but as I watch along, I notice something interesting as the movie progresses to its emotional climax.

I notice I'm not really feeling anything. I'm not really into it. I'm not longing for the hero to return. I'm not heartbroken when he's betrayed or relieved when good prevails.

And it's not that I don't know what's going on. Christine lovingly, patiently told me, but it's that I haven't spent the time with these characters to learn their story.

Just mere information, just mere knowledge transfer doesn't suffice to feel the full weight of the story.

[19:38] And likewise, we need to read our Old Testaments to feel the full weight of the biblical story, of the entire biblical timeline. But if we know the long waiting of the Old Testament, you know what happens?

Joy springs up when we read passages like 2 Corinthians 1 that all the promises of God find their yes in Christ.

Christ, our Messiah, has finally come to fulfill every single one of these open promises. All our waiting is over. That's exactly why theologian B.B.

Warfield has said that the Old Testament is like a chamber richly furnished, but dimly lighted. The Old Testament has all the ornate furniture, it has all the original expensive paintings, but without the light of Christ, we are blind to see and appreciate the beauty of the Old Testament.

And what is the result then of seeing that beauty? Seeing how the law and the prophets point to Jesus. In Luke 24, we read of how the resurrected Jesus on the road to Emmaus, he opened up the scriptures to two of his disciples and he showed them their true meaning, their true beauty as they all pointed to himself.

[21:05] And what did the disciples say to them, to one another? They said, did not our hearts burn within us while he opened to us the scriptures? Did not our hearts burn God?

May our hearts burn within us when we do read Hosea or Ecclesiastes or the Psalms because they all point to Christ, our Savior, the lover of our souls.

Yes, even Leviticus because Jesus fulfills the law of Moses, which brings me to my second point. Reading on in our passage, Jesus says in verse 19, therefore, whoever relaxes one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Again, remember that Jesus is speaking to this accusation that he is a false teacher who just spits upon the law.

And to that charge, Jesus is clarifying that he is not an antinomian, he is not anti-law. In fact, he teaches that whoever relaxes one of the least of these commands in the Mosaic law will be least in the kingdom of heaven.

[22:23] There is a strong similarity in the original Greek between this word relax in verse 19 and the word abolish in verse 17, hinting that there is a connection there.

So if Jesus did not abolish the law, not even the least of these commands, then neither can we. He also makes a connection to verse 18.

He's saying that if the smallest of these letters are that weighty, aren't as permanent as the very earth we stand upon, then we also ought to obey the smallest of these commands.

The small letters and the small commands are all important to Jesus. What are these small commands? I think Matthew 23 is a good hint.

Sean read this passage recently for one of his sermons for the Beatitudes where Jesus is rebuking the scribes and the Pharisees for their obsession to obey the smaller ceremonial purity laws while neglecting the weightier moral ones.

[23 : 28] He says, according to Jewish tradition, there are 613 commands in the law of Moses.

613. So if Jesus is saying that we need to do and teach the smaller ceremonial laws, do we now need to obey all 613 commands?

Do we need to go home and rummage through our fridges and throw out all our bacon and pork belly? Do we have to get ourselves and our male sons circumcised?

Do we have to start slaughtering some animals? See, the key to understanding this verse is still the idea of Jesus' fulfillment of the law.

Romans 10.4 says that for Christ is the end, which means that he's both the goal and the purpose and the terminus. I'll explain what this means later. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

[24 : 45] in other words, the law is like a big old arrow sign that was pointing to Christ all along and it did so in many ways.

When the law demands holiness and purity in the ceremonial laws, justice and integrity in the judicial laws, love of God and worship of him in the moral laws, it exposes our sin.

It exposes that we need external help for a savior. It's been pointing to our savior, Jesus Christ. The Mosaic Law's insufficient animal sacrificial system, it's been pointing all along to the final once for all sacrifice of our Passover lamb, Jesus Christ.

The Levitical priesthood pointing to our need for an intercessor between God and man, pointing to the great high priest, Jesus Christ. the righteous law of God points to what kind of life the perfect, sinless Christ would live.

It predicted how he would act and think. In that sense, the law was like this traced, dotted outline of a man that Christ came to step into and it fit him perfectly.

[26 : 08] In this sense, Christ was always the end goal, the purpose of the law. So once Christ came and fulfilled the law, while the law was, is, and will be the inerrant, reliable, truthful, normative word of God until heaven and earth pass away, we just talked about that, the role of the law nonetheless has changed.

It's similar to how Paul says later in Galatians 3 that as kids we sometimes had babysitters, maybe we sometimes still have babysitters, but if we're good, we listen to our babysitters.

We did what she told us to do it when she told us to do it. But then when our parents come home, there's a dynamic shift in roles.

We listen to our parents over our babysitters. To listen to your temporary guardians over your parents who have full authority over you is then an act of defiance.

When Jesus came, he brought the law's role as our guardian, our temporary guardians to completion, to its terminus. And the entirety of the Mosaic law and the Old Covenant, it passed on, all 613 commands.

[27 : 33] But again, this by no means signifies that Jesus is anti-law. In fact, the New Testament has even more commands than the Old Testament.

Did you know that? So instead of the law of Moses, we are now under the law of Christ. We are not slaves to sin, but we are slaves to righteousness.

Christians must obey Christ and his commands because obedience really matters to Jesus. We are saved by faith alone and not by our works, yes, but there is not a single line, not a single command in Scripture that we should have a dismissive cavalier attitude towards.

It's a simple point, but one to really consider. Friends, is the posture of your heart to take every single one of God's commands seriously?

Do you orient your life around what Jesus tells you to do? Or are there things that you know that Jesus is calling you to do that you are ignoring, you're taking lightly?

[28 : 58] If so, this is a sober wake of call. you are playing with fire and you will, if you haven't already, you will get burned.

But if we do take seriously the commands of this book, of God's laws, as I know that many of you faithful do in this church, we also fulfill the least of these commands in the old covenant.

For the law of Christ compared to the law of Moses, does not lower, but it raises the standard of righteousness, of obedience.

And this is really, really key to understanding this particular verse. So let's look at some examples to explain what I mean. In the very next passages, in the rest of chapter 5, we're going to preach on soon, Jesus reinterprets the law and pronounces his higher standard of obedience.

For example, in the very next passage, after today's, Jesus says that you have heard that it was said, you shall not murder, but I say to you, you shall not be angry with a brother.

[30 : 08] That's a quick paraphrase. Jesus declares that it's not simply enough just not to murder, but we can't even be angry with one another.

Do you see how if we fulfill the true meaning of the law, Jesus' interpretation of the law that we will automatically then fulfill the least commands in the Mosaic law?

If we can't even be angry with one another, how would we even ever get to the point of murdering one another? Let's keep going. We already read in Matthew 23, 23, where Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for carefully tithing their herbs and spices.

They would carefully weigh out these tiny seeds and tiny leaves, saying, nine for me, one for God. Nine for me, one for God. But Jesus expands this command, not by continuing this practice of tithing for new covenant believers.

Not saying that we give to God 10%, but we have to give to God 100%. Everything that we own belongs to him. We are not to store a single treasure here on earth.

[31 : 23] We are not to be motivated by storing up money here on earth. We can't serve both God and money. What about the food laws?

The Mosaic law prohibits the consumption of foods like pork or shellfish. To that, Jesus says that we don't have to follow these food laws anymore because it's not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person.

So you bacon lovers, you oyster connoisseurs, you are free to eat. But right after he allows the consumption of these unclean foods, he again raises the bar for obedience.

He says that it's not what goes into the mouth, but what comes out of the mouth, out of our hearts that defiles us. And in terms of what an easier law is, the Mosaic food law is way, way easier.

It is so much easier to cut out bacon or oysters from our diet than it is to prevent evil thoughts, anger, lust, greed, and envy from bubbling up in our hearts and coming out through our mouths.

[32 : 32] You see, Jesus is expounding upon the true meaning of the law. And the law was always pointing to the need for more than external conformity to a set of rules.

It's always pointing to more than external obedience. He's been wanting internal transformation and purity. That's precisely why Jesus says in verse 20, for I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus drops this second bomb on them now. There was a Jewish saying back then that if two people went to heaven, one would be a scribe and the other a Pharisee.

To this statement, the listening Jews must have been flabbergasted, thinking the scribes and Pharisees aren't making it. They're the best of us.

What hope do I have? But actually, as we'll see later on in Matthew, many, many times, Jesus rebukes the scribes and Pharisees because they only put on a mere facade of righteousness.

[33 : 44] righteousness. And even for us today, it is so easy to get caught up in the external show, is it not? It's in our nature to be easily impressed, to be made insecure by what other people are doing, by what they can do in their own strength.

And in one sense, man can seemingly do a lot. Take the example of Rudolph Bultman, who was a famous theologian.

who had a major, major impact on the course of church history. There are only a handful of men that fit that description. And he intimately knew the scriptures, so much so that if you asked him to recite any random verse in the New Testament, he would tell it to you.

In Greek, in the original Greek. Ask him what Jude 6 is, and he'd tell it to you. Ask him what John 3:16 is, and he'd tell it to you.

Can you imagine knowing God's precious word that intimately? Imagine waking up for your morning devotionals, and you just sit there, and you remember the whole chapter you're supposed to read. [34 : 59] Based on that, you might think that he was one of the most faithful of us, that he is the best of us, but barring last-minute conversions, I think I can confidently say that Rudolf Bauman won't be dining with us at the wedding supper in heaven.

Because although he knew the scriptures probably more than any of us, he didn't believe in them. It's really quite sad. He had a major impact on the course of church history negatively when he pioneered this idea of demythologizing the Bible.

Basically meant that anything supernatural he just threw out. So creation, the incarnation, the resurrection, all myths.

In the end, Jesus is neutered to be just a nice guy, a good man to model our lives after. Instead of Emmanuel, God with us, God incarnate come to save the world from our sins.

It's not enough to merely know some Bible or some theology externally obeyed some rules to look all nice and pretty on the outside. No one, no one will fool God with empty works of righteousness if there's no faith, there's no love in them.

[36 : 26] For the Lord sees not as man sees. Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. Christ is looking for those who are righteous, not just on the outside, but on the inside too.

But if the Jews are feeling a little squirmish, feeling nervous because the Pharisees aren't making it, what about us? If Jesus did not lower the bar, but he raised the bar and the standard of obedience, if the law of Christ is not less but more demanding than the law of Moses, how can we possibly make it into the kingdom of heaven?

If we need to be perfect as our heavenly father is perfect, who by their own sheer willpower could possibly conjure up this kind of righteousness. Martin Luther, the reformer, he tried this.

As a monk before his reforming days, he woke up at 3.30 a.m. every day to pray. He fasted for days on end.

And he punished his body so severely that he permanently damaged his digestive system. Celibate by choice to devote himself to scrupulous rule following, he obsessively confessed every little sin to his confessor.

[37 : 54] Mind you, he's still Roman Catholic at this point. And he'd do this for up to six hours a day. Can you imagine? It's all because he was terrified that he might have overlooked some little sin.

He would confess everything that he remembers, he would remember, and that he would leave, and that he would just come rushing back, running back, because he realized he forgot some other little foible, some other little sin.

His confessor, the one who was hearing, had to sit for six hours hearing all this, he once got so annoyed that he told Martin, look here, if you're going to confess so much, why don't you go and do something worthy of confessing?

Kill your mother or father, commit adultery, quit coming in here with such flummery and fake sins. I get worried that I might give bad pastoral advice, but I think this takes the cake.

Luther is a great case study for how far someone can push themselves to achieve this kind of righteousness I'm sure that any of us have honestly tried to do on our own and yet still fall so short of the goal.

[39 : 12] He later said, I kept the rules of my monastic order so strictly that if ever a monk went to heaven on account of his monkery, I should get there too.

But he knew, he knew all this effort to produce this righteousness on his own strength was never enough, never produced any peace within him.

The reality is that none of us are enough. If it were up to us to conjure this kind of righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, that goes further than skin-deep righteousness, we can't.

The world loves to tell us that we can do anything that we set our minds to, but this is the one thing and unfortunately for us, this is the most important thing, the eternally important thing that we need to be able to do, but we can't.

And it's a misconception that, let me correct for maybe some of you guys today, that as long as we do more good things than bad things in life, then we can atone for our own sins and God will just

give us a slip.

[40 : 25] He'll just let us in. that all we have to do is just a tiny bit more good than bad and then the scales of justice will tip in our favor.

But that's a completely unfounded biblical idea. The wages of sin, even just one, is death. Our God is a just judge that cannot even look even one sin.

when we think that our good works can atone for our bad sins, it's like being on trial for first-degree murder and testifying before the judge, yes, your honor, I did murder him in cold blood, but I've never cheated on my wife, I've never stolen, and hey, I obey all the traffic laws when I drive.

Would that judge acquit? no, nor will God. So when you stand before the Lord on your judgment day, how do you think the scales of justice will tip for you?

If you have yet to put your faith in Christ, I ask you, how do you think the scales of justice will tip? When one sin, it weighs like a boulder on the scales of justice, how do you think the scales of justice will tip?

[41 : 53] Will you be found to be enough? Praise be to God that he has sent his one and only son who is enough for us.

Copying the words of Matthew 3.15, Jesus has come to fulfill all righteousness by living a life of perfect obedience. theologians sometimes split Jesus' perfect obedience into two categories, his active and his passive obedience.

The active obedience of Christ is the perfect obedience to the entirety of the law, every single one of these commands, from least to greatest.

Christ obeyed without a trace of sin with all of the love and faith that he had in the Father. Yet the sinless man, the only one who never deserved to die, was crucified on the cross.

He was beaten, betrayed, and bloodied. He was humiliated, naked, and abandoned so that he might atone for our sins. This is called Christ's passive obedience.

[43 : 05] And therefore, what is called the great exchange of righteousness, our heinous, our ugly sins are imputed to Christ on the cross.

While his perfect righteousness, his spotless righteousness, one that far exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, is attributed to us, it's imputed onto us.

This is the foundation, the only foundation sturdy enough for all our hope to stand before God on that last day. This is exactly why theologian J.

Gresham Machen declared on his deathbed, moments before his death. I'm so thankful for the active obedience of Christ. There is no hope without it.

Here, Pastor Derek Bingham also speak of this great exchange. I gave him a crown of thorns. He gave me a crown of righteousness.

[44 : 07] righteousness. I gave him a cross to carry. He gave me his yoke, which is easy, his burden, which is light.

I gave him nails through his hands. He gave me safely into his father's hands, from which no power can pluck me. I gave him a mock title. This is the king of the Jews.

He gave me a new name and made me a king and a priest to God. I gave him no covering, stripping his clothes from him. He gave me the garment of salvation.

I gave him vinegar to drink. He gave me living water. I crucified him. I crucified and slew him on a tree. He gave me eternal life.

It was my sinfulness that put him there. It is his sinlessness that puts me here. We read for our assurance to pardon the beginning of one of the greatest chapters in all of scripture.

[45 : 09] I'll read it again. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

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 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit.

These are the perfect verses for the counterpart of our text today. We are set free from the bondage of sin and death, the Mosaic law.

Not that the Mosaic law was bad in and of itself, but when it was given, it's that our sin, our ugly sin, had increased. Therefore God knew the only way for salvation was to send his son to be born in the likeness of sinful flesh, to be born under the law so that the righteous requirement of the law might

be fulfilled.

But here Paul says something I want you to notice. He says that the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in who? In us. We get to be the righteousness, we get to fulfill the righteous requirement of the law.

[46 : 32] How? The law's demands for perfect compliance is met in believers like us, positionally, by faith, through our union with Christ, through his imputed, accredited righteousness to us.

But the law's requirements is also fulfilled in us experientially as we, as believers, walk according to the Spirit. when we walk in the Spirit, we do and we teach the least of these commands from the least to the greatest.

And it's all summed up in this greatest command that Jesus says, love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and prophets.

Obedience to the law is not only imputed to us, but as Christians who have the living Spirit of God, we can now go forth and we're able to obey and carry out his commands.

We're able to love God and love our neighbor, all not within our own strength, but with God's. And one of the greatest ways that we can obey the law of Christ and fulfill Scripture is through our evangelism.

[47 : 49] The world is dying. Billions of people are still enslaved to their sin. Jesus makes it very clear in our passage that not everyone will be saved from hell.

Not everyone will be saved from hell, only those whose righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees. And so to close, I want to remind you of the power of salvation.

It's not within us. It's not within our eloquence. It's not in how we share the gospel, but it's in Christ Jesus to save anyone at any time.

William Perkins was a Puritan preacher in the late 16th century, and he witnessed a man on death row climbing the gallows for his immediate end.

The look on his face was absolutely terrified. terrified. Imagine what you might feel minutes before your death. Perkins approached them and asked, what man?

[48 : 57] What is the matter with thee? Aren't thou afraid of death? The prisoner confessed that he was less afraid of death, but more afraid of what would come after it.

Divine judgment. I think our sleepless, panic-attacked Muslim friend can relate to this feeling.

Recognizing the man's spiritual anguish, Perkins invited him to come down from the gallows, and after praying a prayer of confession, and sensing that the prisoner was spiritually ripe, ready to hear the gospel, he shared the gospel truth.

He explained how Christ's blood could cleanse the prisoner's sins and to heal the man's troubled conscience. Nothing fancy, nothing totally unique, shared the basics of the gospel.

But then see what happens. His eyes were opened to see how all the black lines of all his sins were crossed and canceled with the red lines of his crucified Savior's precious blood, so applying it to his wounded conscience, which made him break out into new showers of tears for joy for the inward consolation which he found.

The prisoner rose from his knees, went cheerfully up to the gallows, testified of salvation in Christ's blood, and bore his death with patience, as if he actually saw himself delivered from hell, which he feared before, and heaven opened up for the receiving of his souls to the great rejoicing for his beholders.

[50 : 39] Friends, this is the power of the gospel, to save, because Jesus is the great fulfillment of the scriptures, of the law, and all righteousness on behalf of those who believe in him.

Please pray with me. Heavenly Father, we thank you again that once there was no way but you made a way, that you sent your Son to fulfill all righteousness on behalf of us ugly, wretched sinners.

May we never forget the wonder and the beauty of your mercy. May it overflow in us so that what bubbles up in our hearts is not envy or anger or ugly thoughts or evil thoughts, but what bubbles up out of our hearts and overflows is the joy of the gospel, and that other people would get splashed, other people would be affected in our lives, in our workplaces, in our families, in our friend groups that people would see and know this gospel about Jesus Christ who has fulfilled all this for us.

We know that you alone do the heavy lifting. To you alone be the glory, Lord Jesus, we look to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.