

**Bible Text:** Matthew 5:17-18  
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For our text this evening we're going to turn to the Gospel of Matthew 5 and I would invite you to turn there. This evening I'm just going to open the message by reading the text that will capture our attention and influence our hearts as we come to God's word here this evening. Matthew 5, beginning in verse 17. This is the Lord Jesus speaking in what has become known as the Sermon on the Mount. He said,

17 Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

It's a continual challenge throughout the ages when God's word is opened and taught to teach it with a proper sense of perspective. Far too many people approach the Bible, approach the Old Testament as though it were simply a series of moral maxims designed to teach us to live a little bit better and to live a slightly more moral life or with more kindness or with more love in our hearts. What we're going to see tonight is to take that approach to Scripture is to miss the point entirely and it cannot be overstated that the purpose of Scripture is to point to Christ; that the Old Testament laid the foundation for the life and the ministry and the work and the purpose of Christ coming to earth and Jesus makes this very very plain in what he says here in this passage.

Now, what I'm doing tonight is I'm doing the other side of the flip that I did on Sunday. Those of you that were with us on Sunday, I finished a series that I started last Tuesday and this is already far more complicated than it needs to be. Sunday mornings we're generally preaching through the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5 through 7. I took a little break two days ago in order to preach on a matter from Luke 19. Those CDs are out there. I would encourage you to get one if you weren't with us. Or if you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord, as your Savior, as your Redeemer from sin, you really need to get that CD and listen to it because we explained the Gospel and what a saving

response to Christ looks like in great detail there. So you need to hear those messages and it was so important that I felt like I wanted to do that on Sunday when more people would be here to hear it and now tonight I compensate for the little break and bring us back to the Sermon on the Mount. And basically, since we're all family here, in these four verses that I read, we're going to do a total of five messages out of these verses and we did one a week ago and we've got four more to go including tonight and that should give you a sense of the massive importance of the passage that is in front of us. This is a very critical text to all of Scripture in understanding what Scripture does when it testifies to Christ and what Christ meant when he said that he came to fulfill the law and prophets. So this is not a text to hurry through by any means whatsoever because there is so much that is foundational here.

Now, the last time that we were in this text, we looked at the fact that Jesus' audience would have been listening to him from a perspective that had a high regard for the authority of the Pharisees, the religious leaders of the day, the select group who were viewed with complete deference and what the Pharisees said was automatically assumed to be true, and they had distorted and perverted the teaching of the Old Testament in such a way that really hid its true meaning from the people. And so when Jesus comes and starts to say things that are different from what the Pharisees taught and when Jesus comes and challenges the authority of the Pharisees as we looked at nine days ago, we realize that this was a massive earthquake going on spiritually in the ears of his audience because it was clear that he was saying something different from their established religious leaders and the Pharisees claimed to be the true interpreters of the Old Testament, what we now call the Old Testament, and so for Jesus to come and contradict the Pharisees made it look like he was standing against the Scriptures themselves. Well, what we see in this passage is Jesus is not doing that at all and he is clarifying that misconception so that people could understand that Jesus Christ himself was the true interpreter and, indeed, the true fulfillment of everything that the Old Testament Scriptures spoke of.

So Jesus here in this passage is clarifying these issues for them and in a negative way, you'll see as you look at verse 17, he tells them, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets," that's his negative statement. He said, "Don't think this way. Don't go there. Don't let that idea take root in your mind whatsoever because that's not the case. That's not the case." So what you see is that as he starts to move into the fuller body of the overall sermon, he is concerned to give them a big overview that would help them have the perspective they needed in order to receive what he had to say properly. Well, you see, with that as our example, we're doing something similar here tonight in that we want to take the big picture perspective so that we would receive everything properly. You know, that's really one of the most important fundamentals of good thinking, not just spiritually but in any way whatsoever. We're all prone to make a serious mistake in our thinking. We are faced with a problem, we come to a text of Scripture and we wonder what it means, and we tend to dive straight into the details and try to deal with the details directly and that's not a good way to think; that's not a good way to approach life. What you must do repeatedly is start with the general principle, start with the broadest principles that frame the discussion and then let those principles inform the way that you

deal with details. So it's kind of like a picture frame, you don't immediately go into the details of a painting, it's framed and it is set in a display in a way that frames it and sets it apart so that you understand what you are looking at. Well, here when it comes to the Bible, when it comes to the Bible, you must have a fundamental idea in place, a fundamental understanding, that the purpose of Scripture is to testify to the Lord Jesus Christ and to pass over Christ in order to get into a few moral precepts or, you know, do's or don'ts of life, to pass over Christ is to miss the whole point and that's the problem of taking scripture out of context.

Well, what Jesus is doing here in this passage is he's not only confronting in a negative sense and rebuking the false authority of the Pharisees, he's simultaneously on the other side of the coin, if you will, setting forth his positive claim to be the fulfillment of the Old Testament itself. So Jesus is clearing up misconceptions about the Pharisees on the one hand, and on the other hand he is giving a positive account of his own teaching and how he himself fits in with the Old Testament. It's very very profound as you're going to see as we move on.

Let's look at verses 17 and 18 again just to set them in your mind and then we'll start to unfold these things for you. Tonight's message is very very general, very very broad in what it has to say, and yet it's so fundamental. Verse 17, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill." You see, the purpose is there. In a negative sense, Jesus says, "I did not come to abolish." That is a negative purpose. "That is not what I'm doing here." In a positive sense, "I came to fulfill," he says. Then in verse 18 he explains it, he expands on that statement, "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished." So in a general way, in the broadest way that we could look at this, Jesus says, "You must understand that I came to fulfill the Old Testament and that has to be true," he says, "for, because nothing in the Old Testament is going to pass away until everything is accomplished." So he is stating and he is establishing the authority of the Old Testament down to its most minute detail. We'll see more about this later. But he says, "Because the Old Testament is like this, because it is authoritative, because it will not pass away, then my purpose in being here has to be in furtherance of the Old Testament, not contrary to it." This is very very basic, very very fundamental. So Jesus is saying, "Here I am speaking on behalf of God. You have to know and have to understand that I'm here fulfilling the Old Testament because the Old Testament cannot be broken, and that helps you understand my mission in being here on earth."

So with that little bit of outline, look at verse 17 again, he says, "Do not think that I came to abolish." As we said before, the idea of it is, "Don't even start to think that. Don't go down that road for a moment. Never ever view Christ in separation from the Old Testament or the Old Testament in separation from Christ. They are linked together," Jesus says. And this word that he uses for "abolish" is from a word that is used to describe the destruction of buildings. It's a word to use that when Jesus spoke that the temple would be destroyed in the future, buildings would be destroyed, and it's the same word, the same Greek word that is used to describe the destruction and the demolition of

buildings. That's the same word that is used here translated "abolish." So Jesus is saying, "Don't think that I came to demolish, to tear down the Old Testament, to come and do something contrary to it. That's not why I'm here. That's not the purpose of this at all."

So, beloved, there is something really really basic and fundamental here that we would say like this: Jesus did not come to dismantle the Old Testament. He did not come to set it aside. He did not come to nullify its authority. To the contrary, or let me state it a different way: Jesus did not come to establish his own independent authority apart and separate from the Old Testament. To the contrary, the Old Testament lays the foundation for everything about him. That is very very important and because that is true, it means that Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament, to advance their purposes, to accomplish what the Old Testament had in mind.

That's the general basic idea and having established that in painstaking repetition just in these past few minutes, I want to say this to just kind of set your expectations for what follows now: for Jesus to say that he came to fulfill the Old Testament is a far more breathtaking statement than you probably realize and that's what we're going to try to help you see a glimpse of here today. Look at what he says here, he says in verse 17, "I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. I came to fulfill the law and the prophets," and that's what we're going to break our message structure around, around two basic points simply saying that the law of Moses points to Christ, and that the prophets point to Christ as well. Two separate points, both pointing to Christ.

So point 1: the law points to Christ. And now, beloved, stick with me on just a little bit of chronology here and we'll let this kind of sink into us. When it comes to talking about Bible chronology, I always like to draw a comparison that I think is helpful for us who live here in the United States. Our country is now on the verge of being, what, 240, 241 years old? And for us that seems like a very long time. The year 1776 is imprinted on our collective consciousness as the founding of our nation and the delivery of the Declaration of Independence and so much has happened. We are on our 45th President since that time and we've been through major wars and we had a major Civil War 90 years after the founding of the country and there is just so much history that we have a general knowledge of, some having more detail about that than others. But 240 years and that's the history of our nation that has unfolded during that time. Wow. Well, take that number, take that sense, and multiply it by about 6 or 7 and you start to get a sense of the chronology and the time span from the beginning of the law when Moses wrote it until the arrival of Christ.

Almost in round numbers 1,500 years had passed since Moses was on the scene and God gave the law, the first five books of our current Bible, gave the law to Moses and he wrote them down in exquisite detail and was the agent by which God delivered them to his people, the nation Israel. 1,500 years had passed since Moses had been on the face of the earth and in what he wrote is recorded events that happened to even a thousand years or more prior to that, 2,500, 3,000 years before the arrival of Christ, going back even to the beginning of creation itself. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,"

Genesis 1:1 from the pen of Moses and he wrote that 1,500 years before Christ said these words that we're studying here tonight in Matthew.

There is a vast chronology there, far more than anything that we really think of in terms of our own national existence. This is beyond our realm of comprehension as a people and yet this was the inherited legacy for the Jews. This was their word. God was their God and had given them this word and in that, in that law that Moses had given, it was a multifaceted law, as you know. It contained moral aspects, for example, expressed in the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20, enduring moral principles that reflected the great holiness and righteousness of God. The law contained things that governed their religious life and set forth a system of sacrifices and feasts and observances that governed and were embedded in their national life for over a millennia. It governed their daily life and gave them principles of justice and how to adjudicate disputes and so much more. There was a prophetic history that was given that recorded the history of the people after Moses through Joshua and the days of the judges and on into the days of the kings and following them into the days of the prophets. And on and on it went. There is a rich history here, a long history, a multifaceted history, all embedded in this word. And through the morality and through the sacrifices and through the judicial structure of that great word, of that great law, it was pointing people to look to a coming Messiah; to one who would come after Moses, and we'll look at that more in a little bit.

So, beloved, that's just the most general broad sense of the Old Testament and of the law of Moses. And look at what Jesus says in verse 18. With all of that, now 39 books of the total Old Testament in our Bibles, in our English Bibles, and Jesus says that that word from God is so full and so authoritative and so precise that it cannot be violated. He says in verse 18, look at it there with me, he says, "truly I say to you," this is a word that you can take to the bank, this is based on divine authority, Jesus says, "until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished." That is a breathtaking statement about the detailed authority of the Old Testament.

The smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet is called the yod. It's like an English apostrophe. Jesus speaks of the smallest letter, the smallest stroke. The Hebrew language has little tiny strokes of the pen that are used to distinguish one letter from another. When you study Hebrew for the first time, sometimes it's difficult for the untrained eye to distinguish one letter from another because the distinction between them is based on the tiniest little stroke of a pen. And Jesus draws upon the nature of the Hebrew alphabet to say this: to say that not one letter will be missing; not one stroke of the pen will be violated in the Old Testament. And he's saying that he came to fulfill that word, that in his person he came to fulfill it down to the smallest details without exception.

Now, think about that. Just think in the broadest terms of which we've been speaking. This word had stood in writing for 1,500 years and had been passed down and passed through and prophets had built on it after Moses had done his work. And Jesus says, "I came to fulfill all of that." Just from a human perspective to say, "I am here to fulfill the last 1,500 years of God's revelation," is breathtaking in its assertion. Then you go down

into the details and look at it and you realize this is phenomenal. So what Jesus is saying here is, there is kind of a mutual testimony here, the law points to him and he says, "And I am here to honor and to fulfill the law." This is a statement of breathtaking authority, breathtaking assertion.

Can you imagine, again, this is a horrible illustration I'm about to give. This is filled with all kinds of misleading things that I'm about to say but hopefully the kernel of what I can say will make enough sense to you that you get the point. Imagine some American man coming in the context of our own history and says, "Do you know the Declaration of Independence? Do you know the Constitution of our country? I'm here to fulfill all of that. I am here to fulfill the pursuit of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for you and you will find the fulfillment in me." Well, that's nonsensical for a human document to be spoken of that way and so I'm speaking in utter foolishness as I say these things, but we have in our minds a collective sense of veneration, of respect for the founding documents of our country, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and for a man to come to say, "I have come and in my person I'm going to fulfill them," would just be nuts. That would be utter insanity.

Well, multiply that geometrically by infinity. The word of God inspired by God, fully authoritative, that has stood the test of time and has been the founding documents, as it were, of the nation of Israel, and these people are here under Roman domination and a man who looks like you and me, so to speak, a man who had no stately form by which we should be attracted to him says, "Do you know the word of God? It's all about me and I'm here to fulfill what it has to say down to its most minute statement of authority." That's astonishing what he's saying. And remember, as we talk about these things, beloved, remember that in outward form, Christ had no stately majesty that would make it obvious that that's what he was doing. There wasn't a big halo over his head. There wasn't an angelic spotlight that followed him around that set him apart. So he comes and in his full humanity speaks and says, "I'm here to fulfill the Old Testament."

Now, look over at Luke 24 just to see that this wasn't an isolated statement that Jesus made. Luke 24, beginning in verse 25, Jesus said, "'O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?' Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." And in verse 44 of that same chapter he said to his disciples, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." So what Jesus is saying is that, "The Old Testament is the foundation upon which I stand and I am here to advance the purposes of it and this book that you have venerated for the past 1,500 years points to me." That is a breathtaking assertion of privilege, of prerogative, of stature, of position, for Christ to say that God's word points to him.

That's true of the law, secondly, it's true of the prophets. The prophets point to Christ as well. The prophets point to Christ. Over the 1,000 years that followed after Moses, different biblical writers recorded God's words to the people. They recorded the history

of Israel and interpreted the significance of it. The people struggled in the days of judges because every man was doing what was right in his own eyes, for example. The prophets called people to repent when they strayed. They reminded them of the promises of God and warned them of the promises of turning away and sinning against him, getting to the point in the later prophets, warning them that the whole nation was at risk because of their sin and rebellion against God. They promised blessing for obedience and warned against sin. And in the midst of that, in the midst of those broad statements, they spoke repeatedly and pointed repeatedly of a coming Messiah who would deliver the people, who would deliver them from sin and bring them national peace.

So Moses, some 1,400 years before Christ, now we're going to look at some more Old Testament Scriptures. Go to the book of Deuteronomy and we're going to flip some pages in your Old Testament just for the general sake of perspective. In Deuteronomy 18, 1,400 years before Christ, Moses, speaking shortly before his death in Deuteronomy 18:15 said...I'll give you a moment. I hear those pages rustling and I like that sound. It's music to my ears. Deuteronomy 18:15, Moses said, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him." He points to the future and says, "There is going to be a prophet like me that will come. He's the one that you need to listen to." Now, what I'm giving you here is all just representative points along the way, along the course of time.

Four hundred years go by and King David is writing and in Psalm 22, look at Psalm 22 with me, in Psalm 22:16 David speaks prophetically of the crucifixion. In Psalm 22:16 he says, "dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots." A thousand years, beloved. A thousand years before Christ was on the earth and was being crucified, Jesus described in details the circumstances of that day, David described, I should say.

Three hundred years from David go by, again, speaking in round numbers, and the prophet Isaiah says, turn to Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel." In Isaiah 53, the spiritual purposes of the life of Christ are described in terms of a substitutionary atonement, a payment for sin would be made by the sufferings of this coming Messiah so that in Isaiah 53:4, the prophet could say, "Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him."

Let's pause for just a moment and have a sense of the accumulated testimony of 700 years of prophecy from 1400 years BC to 700 years BC. Moses saying, "a prophet like me will arise. Hear him." David speaks and says, "This is one who will be pierced." Isaiah speaks and says, "He will be born of a virgin and his sufferings will be redemptive in nature."

None of that had come to pass at the time that these men wrote. They were looking forward. They were pointing to something in the distant future from themselves.

Another couple of hundred years go by, some 500 years before the time of Christ, and the prophet Zechariah spoke. Zechariah, toward the end of your Old Testament. You won't find it in the New Testament so look in the Old Testament for Zechariah toward the back if you're not familiar with the minor prophets. Zechariah 9:9 says, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey." The New Testament writers record how Christ entered into Jerusalem on a donkey, riding on a donkey, and spoke of that event as being the fulfillment of what Zechariah had said 500 years before.

It's hard for us to grasp that kind of chronology in our minds but for centuries, for centuries and, of course, we're just passing over so much more, 1,400 years, 1,000 years, 700 years, 500 years before the time of Christ, all of these things and many many more are being said so that there is this great expectation building amongst the Jewish people over the course of time, "Who is it going to be? When is this man going to come?" And for centuries the prophets had been giving this advance notice of a coming Messiah. And we've looked at this passage in the past, look in the New Testament with me for just a moment, 1 Peter 1:10. It says, "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven - things into which angels long to look." Giving us the sense that the prophets themselves didn't fully understand all that they were saying, all that they were writing. They spoke by inspiration of the Holy Spirit and then turned around and studied it to try to gain greater insight into what God had just spoken through them. Men longing to know. Some of the most noble man in all of the course of human history, God's servants, the prophets, longing to know these things. Eagerly seeking. Longing. Wondering. Yearning. Wanting to know. Wanting to understand. Reflective of a broader sense of desire among faithful Jews.

And with all of the law and all of the prophets having gone before him, and think about it this way, add this to the equation, if you will: as you read through the Old Testament and get a sense of secular history, you get something of the rise and fall of nations as well, don't you? Egypt rose and fell. Israel rose and fell. Assyria rose and fell. Babylon rose and fell. Persia rose and fell. Greece rose and fell. Rome comes and Rome falls, although not until after the time of Christ. But the greatest nations on earth over the course of these same centuries, there is this great rise and fall and rise and fall of human history as leaders come and leaders go, as nations rise and as nations go. And all of that spoken to and to different degrees of specificity in the Old Testament to say nothing of the other more minor nations that were there along the way.



So, beloved, all of this is in writing when Jesus is on the earth. It's in the scrolls. And with the whole flow of world history in his mind, with the law of Moses in his mind, with all of the ministry of the prophets in his mind over the course of 1,500 years of the recording of the events, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the 12 tribes and on having come, all of that and Jesus with all of that sweep of everything in front of him says, "I have come to fulfill the Old Testament, to fulfill the law and the prophets."

"Let me get this straight," speaking as a man in his sandals in the first century. To take in what Jesus had said in this passage that we're looking at tonight, Matthew 5:17 and 18, to take in what Jesus said would be something like this, "Jesus, what Moses and God's prophets had been writing for 1,500 years are fulfilled in you, an itinerant teacher in the land of Israel?" Yes. "The fulfillment of all of our sacrifices, the hope of every God-fearing Jew for 2,000 years is in front of us in human flesh, that's what you're saying?" Yes. "Jesus, you are going to take up these Scriptures that have been given to us over these centuries, over a millennia and a half, and you're going to expound them on your own authority?" Yes. "You're going to obey them perfectly? All that the Scriptures require, you're going to obey? You're going to fulfill them even in your own life?" Yes.

This would be insane except for the fact that it's true. This one who had no appearance that we should be attracted to him is the fulfillment of the entire Old Testament of the law and the prophets. The one who the religious leaders, the accepted religious authorities rejected out of hand, opposed him and ultimately crucified him, this one was the fulfillment of their scriptures.

And yet he did it in such a way that it was undeniable. He spoke with authority that no man had ever had before. "No man has ever spoken this way," was the resounding repetitive testimony of those who heard him. He did signs. He fed multitudes with a little bit of bread and a little bit of fish. He raised Lazarus from the dead. He healed the sick. He caused lame men to walk. He healed the eyes of a man born blind. So he didn't just make this declarative statement about himself, he went out and he backed it up and the Father from heaven spoke and affirmed him, "This is My beloved Son," speaking in the terms and the categories of John 5, the works that he did testify to him. The forerunner, John the Baptist said, "There is one coming after me. Listen to Him." And then he pointed to Jesus in John 1:29 and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God."

And with all of that testimony, in addition, look at what Jesus said in John 5. Let's turn there. John 5:39. In fact, let me just read, I alluded to this, let me just read the Scriptures of which I have been alluding to. Jesus gives a fourfold testimony to the witnesses that affirm him, that affirm his authority. In verse 33 he says, "You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth." John the Baptist spoke that this was the true Christ. "But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. But the testimony which I have is greater than the testimony of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish - the very works that I do - testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me." Christ did works that no man had ever done. No one had ever opened the eyes of a man born blind. There was a unique

authority, a unique power, a unique testimony, testifying that Christ was alone in majesty, authority.

Verse 37 of John 5, "the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me." Affirmed him at his baptism. Affirmed him in the Transfiguration. "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him. Listen to Him and no others. Do not listen to Moses, do not listen to Elijah," as they faded away as the glory of Christ was pulled back at the Transfiguration. God said, "Listen to Him," and they looked and Christ alone was there. So as Christ fulfills the Old Testament, those primary representatives of it stepped into the background so that only Christ is seen. Then in verse 39, our point for this evening, Jesus said, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me."

So, beloved, what I want to see is this: in these words that we are looking at in Matthew 5, which we'll continue to look at, in some ways tonight's message has all been a long introduction to Sunday's message, and that will make sense when you come back on Sunday. What we're seeing here tonight, beloved, is this, I'll say it in two ways: Jesus Christ is the focus, he is the focal point of divine revelation and divine history. He is the whole purpose of it. Revelation and history all move together according to the eternal plan of God in order to put Christ on display and to testify to him and to point to him. Like no one else, there is no other. There is no other prophet. There is no other teacher. There is no other representative of God. It is Christ, the Son of God, the final revelation spoken by God, revealed in human flesh. He is the one to whom you must listen. And what should be happening in your mind, what should be settling into your hearts is this infinite and unrestricted elevation of Christ in your mind to realize when we contemplate Christ as he has revealed himself in the Scriptures, we are contemplating the whole purpose of history, the whole purpose of the divine unfolding of the divine decrees. Everything is summed up in Christ. And it is as if by comparison, as if we had gone through the dark night with just some lights, some stars in the sky in the Old Testament, but then when Christ came, the sun arose and eclipsed everything else and dwarfed and outshined it all with such brilliant splendor in the greatness of who he is. It all points to him and Jesus says, "I am over it all."

You see, beloved, Jesus Christ is asserting the very authority of God when he says, "I came to fulfill the Old Testament." No one else could do that. And Jesus says, "These Scriptures are mine. They point to me and I am the fulfillment and goal of them all." And it's from that blessed position of authority that he offered his life on a cross. It's from that blessed position of unparalleled and unchallengeable authority that Christ says that he voluntarily laid down his life in John 10:18. He says, "I lay it down voluntarily. No one has taken it away from Me. I give it on My own." So we are left with this great response of worship because of his worth and his authority and yet at the same time, we remember that he is the one who suffered voluntarily on our behalf to take away our sins. And in fulfilling the Old Testament, in fulfilling what the sacrifices of the Old Testament only pointed to, laying down his life once for all for the payment of our sins, for the forgiveness of our trespasses, beloved, your heart, your mind should just be lost in wonder, love and praise at the greatness and the sweetness and the majesty of this Lord

Jesus Christ who said, "I came to fulfill the Scriptures." You see, you have a high estimation of Christ which gives you a high estimation of the Old Testament and you have a high estimate of the Old Testament and it points you to a high estimation of Christ. They testify to each other in that way.

Beloved, that's why we honor Christ. That's why we proclaim him and not ourselves. That's why we take the word of God seriously. That's why we expound it. That's why we don't tell silly stories and we don't try to entertain people. Why would we put human entertainment on display from a pulpit when we can proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ? Do you know him? Do you love him? Have you bowed the knee before him?

Let's pray together.

*Our dear Lord, we have only scratched the surface of what this passage is saying and we thank you for the privilege that we will have on Sunday to open it even further and to see in detail exactly how you fulfilled the Scriptures. But for now, we bow in wonder. For now, we try to stretch our feeble fatigued minds around the concept that all of history has been directed by divine power and purpose in order to point to the Lord Jesus Christ in his first coming. And now in this era, one day we will look back and we will see that everything in this era was pointing toward his second coming for, Lord Jesus, you are coming again. Then in glory, your first time in humility and in suffering, then in power, holiness and victory. Lord, may we as your people proclaim you, proclaim Christ to every ear that would hear, walk in fidelity, walk in a humble reverence and fear that recognizes the majesty of who you are and yet is drawn even more by the love that your death on the cross calls forth from our hearts. We cannot comprehend the greatness and the humility that exists side-by-side in your matchless person. We cannot comprehend how a holy God of justice would humble himself to take on human flesh and live in perfect obedience to the law in order that you could simply lay that righteous life down to save a people who was not even looking for you. We bless your name. We worship and honor you and we believe without qualification, without mental reservation, that you are indeed the fulfillment of the Scriptures and that in you alone may salvation be found. We pray these things in the name of Christ. Amen.*

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