

# Sermon on the Mount: Our Sovereign Lord (Part 1)

by J. Glyn Owen

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*This sermon explores Jesus' fulfillment of the Law and the character expected of His kingdom's subjects.*

**Duration:** 49:55

**Scripture:** Psalm 119:105, Matthew 5:17-20, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:12, Romans 13:10, Galatians 5:14, James 2:8

**Topics:** "Sermon on the Mount"

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## Description

In this sermon on the Sermon on the Mount, the speaker discusses how Jesus is now moving from the general to the specific in his teachings. He emphasizes the importance of our good works being seen by others and bringing glory to God. The speaker also highlights the role of character formation and the blessings that come with it, enabling us to be the salt of society and the light of the world. Jesus' understanding of the scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, is emphasized, and he begins and ends this section of the sermon by referencing the law and the prophets.

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## Transcript

Will you kindly turn with me to the Gospel recorded by St. Matthew in chapter 5? And we come this morning in the Sermon on the Mount to the passage beginning with verse 17, and it continues to verse 20. Though this morning we shall only be dealing with a half of this, I think it may be appropriate and helpful that we read the passage as a whole. Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets.

I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfil them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.

But whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. Our subject, our sovereign Lord, His subjects, or the subjects of His kingdom, and the Scriptures.

Jesus has already quite firmly, quite clearly laid the foundation of His teaching concerning life under His rule. In other words, life in the kingdom over which He is God's anointed King. Basic to everything else is

the production of character.

That was the burden, and that is the burden of course, of the Beatitudes. We are not actually graduating out of the school of the Beatitudes when once they have had their first major impression upon our lives. We may have been once impressed by them and we may in some measure have become poor in spirit and begun to mourn and so forth, but we do not thereby leave the Beatitudes behind us and graduate to a higher school of sanctity or of Christian living.

Far from it. We have to come back over and over again to the Beatitudes because there are various levels of experiencing every aspect of experience referred to there. There are various levels in the discovery of our own poverty.

There are various levels at which we may mourn for our sins. There are various levels to everything that we have here. The meek, we may be meek according to degrees.

We may become more meek than we were, and we should. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness, this allows of degrees, being merciful, being pure in heart, acting as peacemakers or persecuted. So you see, though we may have entered into the experience envisaged here on some level, it would seem that the Scriptures always call us back to these basics and experience them and move into them, as it were, into the enjoyment and experience of them on an ever-deepening level.

And that is primary to the kingdom of God. That is primary to the teaching that Jesus gives concerning life under his rule. And of course, I must add this, with the development of character goes also the deepening sense of blessedness.

Blessedness and character are integrally woven together in the mind of our Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot know the true blessedness of the kingdom if you do not daily grow in character and in God-likeness and Christ-likeness. It is the Christ-like soul that has the Christ-like peace and hope and joy in all its fullness.

Now moving this way, this is how the subjects of the kingdom are to be taught. Moving in this way, our Lord has shown us that we are capacitated now to become the salt of society and the light of the world. That's the way the reasoning moves in chapter 5 in the early part.

When character is formed and blessedness comes to the fore and our hearts are filled with the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, as Paul puts it, now we become increasingly capable of going out into the most dismal, unbelieving world and there to act as salt and stop the rot and as light to bring the knowledge of God into the darkest place. We are capacitated to do that insofar as we are developing a character that is consistent with the basics of the Beatitudes. Now our Lord has come to a turn in the road, as it were, and a division, a new division, a new landmark in the exposition of this great theme in the Sermon on the Mount.

He now wants to proceed away from the general towards particulars. He aims at specifying what he meant earlier when he said that our good works should be seen of men and that they should result in glorifying our Father which is in heaven. That was a general statement.

What does it mean in particular? Now it is more than probable that we are to understand the rest of the Sermon on the Mount from 5.17 to 7.12, over two chapters, we are to understand this large section in the sermon as actually telling us in detail what that means, the kind of good works that our Lord expects of those who have put their necks under his yoke, who own him as Lord in this world. And so we begin a new

section. Before we move into the section, or rather at the very entrance into this new section of teaching, our Lord deals with a basic and very fundamental issue.

How are we going to know what constitutes good works? Well, as far as the immediate listeners were concerned, of course, Jesus was going to tell them and he was going to be with them for a while. But our Lord could see down the centuries and he could see you and he could see me. And he could see his people down to the end of time until the great day when he comes to gather us from the graves to be his own and clothe us with a new body and consummate the purpose of history.

He could see his people floundering. How am I going to know what's right and wrong? How am I going to know what is good in the sight of God? And so he had this dissertation with his disciples and then later caused it to be written down by the Holy Spirit so that we should have no doubt at all as to what is to rule, regulate our conduct. What we have here is our Lord's understanding of the scriptures then in existence.

The scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and the place they should occupy in the lives of his people, particularly the subjects of his kingdom. Jesus chooses to begin and end this large section in the sermon with the same theme, with a reference to the Law and the Prophets. If you have your New Testament before you, you can see it.

I'll read it for you anyway. In verse 17 Jesus says, Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Now that's right at the beginning. And so you go right through chapter 5, chapter 6 and you come to chapter 7 and you come to verse 12 and this is what it tells you. This is the end of this main section.

In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you. For this sums up the Law and the Prophets. In other words, the whole of the teaching of the sermon is as it was sandwiched between these two references, the Law and the Prophets.

And when we realize that the term, the Law and the Prophets, was synonymous in our Lord's day with a reference to the whole of the Old Testament scriptures. Very often it includes the Psalms, it includes every aspect of the Old Testament. We can then understand what Jesus is saying.

Now we come to examine this very important section then and we see two main things here, two main divisions of the verses before us this morning. We can only deal with the first today and we'll come to the second God willing next Lord's Day morning. The first has to do with the scriptures as envisaged by the King himself.

And the second division, the last two verses, the scriptures as they then apply to the King's subjects. Now we are not coming so much to the application of the scriptures today to the King's subjects, but please don't run away with the idea that they don't apply. They do.

You read on. This morning we are going to consider a more basic issue. How did the scriptures relate to King Jesus? How did the King of the realm himself react to the Law of God and the Prophets, the whole of the Old Testament scriptures? How did he see them and how did he react to them? The scriptures as envisaged by the King.

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law of the Prophets. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke

of a pen will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

Now I am concerned that we should get the right perspective here. I have stressed it already, but let me please underline it again. Jesus is speaking as the King here.

He is the King of the Kingdom. Many theologians have said that He is another Moses standing on another mount, declaring not so much the Decalogue but all that the Decalogue stood for and pointed forward to. He lays down the rules for His realm, His Kingdom.

That is true. But I want to add to that. He is not only standing here as Prophet He is standing as King.

His is the authority of the King of the realm and He lays down the rules for His subjects. You do not have to take them. You may say it is too high for me, but if you are going to be His subject you have got to respect Him and His laws.

You may reject Him and you may choose your twenty or thirty pieces of silver or you may choose the pleasures of sin for a season. You may choose to live outside His realm and His Kingdom, but these are the terms of living under His rule and He is very clear about it. Now this exercise of His kingly rule publicly began, of course, at the beginning of the course, in chapter four.

He exhibited it in chapter three that He was Lord, that He was King. He dealt with Satan in the wilderness. And rather than depend upon His divine power, you notice what He did? I am so glad of this.

Our Lord Jesus Christ could have called all the angels of glory to come and wrest Him from the power of Satan and temptation. He did not do that. You remember what He did? He did what I can do and what you can do.

He used the Scriptures. And three times over He rebutted the enemy by saying to him, look Satan it is written. It is written.

It is written. And because it is written that rules my life. I am a king, but I am a king under authority.

I was made king by my Father. And as man made king of the nations, I fight my battles by the word of God. Then He goes out as preacher and He begins His public ministry.

And I want you to notice the authority with which He declares His word. He preached repent, for the kingdom of the heaven is at hand. You must get the background if you are going to see the significance of this.

He is not only speaking to ordinary insignificant people of the street, if any man or woman is insignificant. He was addressing these words to the scribes and the Pharisees. He was addressing these words to the intelligentsia of the land, to the established leaders of current religion.

And He was standing there with due authority and with authority He was declaring to them, you have to repent and to bring forth fruit, meat for repentance. See, He was speaking as the king. And He was saying, there is no way into my kingdom unless you come down from your self-esteem which is too high and learn to take your place for what you are in my sight, sinners, lost, rebellious, wayward.

And acknowledge yourselves to be such. And turn away from sin and come under my rule. The wonderful thing about it of course is there is this kind of coverage, this reassurance that He really has that authority.

Because alongside the authority of His word was the power of His miracles. This is probably why John uses the word for miracles, the word sign. That's usually the word in John, we translate miracle, the miracle says John, were signs.

They indicated something, they said something. What did they say? Well you read, you read what had happened at the end of Matthew chapter 4 and you see the crowds coming from all over the place. And He's touching the sick and He's healing them.

And He's uttering His word without touching them and He's healing them. You see the point. He has power, power over our bodies, power over our minds, power over demons, power over nature, power, the first miracle He performed was in Cana of Galilee to change water into wine.

And as we go through the Gospels we shall see that this power was all extensive. You see He's the King. Oh brothers and sisters this is our Lord.

I wish we could forget for a thousand years that little song, gentle Jesus meek and mild. Look upon the little child, it makes you sleep doesn't it? And that's the sole concept that some of us have of our Lord Jesus Christ. I tell you He's the King.

He is meek and He is mild and He is King. Now what does He think of the Scriptures? How does He the King of the realm react to the law and the prophets? First of all Jesus corrects a false impression. 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. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. Excuse me.

The language there is best understood on the supposition that there was a misunderstanding abroad concerning our Lord's precise attitude to the Old Testament and Jesus would nip it in the bud. He categorically denied that He had come into this world to dishonor the law or the prophets in any respect. Certainly not to put them on one side, to abrogate them or to belittle them in any way whatsoever.

On the contrary as we shall see in a moment He's come to fulfill them. Now it may be asked why should anyone think otherwise? What possible basis could there have been for believing that Jesus was in any kind of conflict with the law and the prophets? In reply we may probably legitimately say that some of the disagreements that had arisen between Himself and the teachers of the law up to this point in time were being misinterpreted. Now let me give you an example of a disagreement let me just illustrate this and I can only use one illustration in the time at our disposal this morning.

Before this point in time our Lord Jesus for example had had a real come to with the scribes and the Pharisees concerning the Sabbath day. Now some people might have understood it as meaning that Jesus was not going to honor the Sabbath day and the Old Testament law said that the Sabbath is the Sabbath of the Lord our God, that God ordained it. It is a creation ordinance.

And then again for God's redeemed people the fourth commandment stands as something that is required of us. Honor the Sabbath day, sanctify the Sabbath day, set it aside, it's got to be distinct from all others. Take as much of the Sabbath day with you into the Monday and so forth.

But nevertheless it's got to be separate. It's a different day, it's the Lord's day. Now you remember that Jesus did not do what the people of His day did.

He for example, and this is one of the first things that irked the teachers of the law and the Pharisees, He healed on the Sabbath day. He went into the synagogue for example in Capernaum where He was, and here comes in a man with an evil spirit, a demonic spirit. And Jesus exorcised the demon.

And they were absolutely mad. Not because they didn't like the man or had some animosity against the man who was healed, but because Jesus had done it on the Sabbath. You see we've got to distinguish between two things.

What the Old Testament law says about the Sabbath, and then the multiplicity of details that the scribes or the teachers of the law had woven together telling the Jews of the day how to apply the law of the Old Testament to life. For example, let me give you one or two. On the Sabbath day all work was forbidden.

Now that of course comes from the Old Testament. That's not scribal tradition, that's in the Word of God. The Jewish law was quite definite and detailed about this.

Medical attention could only be given if life was in danger. If you did anything when life was not in danger, well then you were breaking the law, so said the scribes and the Pharisees. A woman in childbirth might be helped on the Sabbath, now I'm quoting from their Midrash.

An infection of the throat might be treated. If a wall fell upon anyone, enough might be cleared away to know whether he was killed or whether he was not, whether he was dead or whether he was alive. If he was alive you could haul him out from the rubble, if he was dead he has to be left there until the Sabbath is gone.

A fracture could be attended to. Cold water might not be poured, sorry, cold water could be poured on a sprained hand or a foot. A cut finger might be bandaged with a plain bandage, but not with ointment.

Now I don't want to go any further into this, but I hope that's enough to give you some idea of the kind of reasoning that had emerged, the kind of rules, thousands of them attempting apparently to relate the commandment of God to the demands of life. Now what our Lord rejected was not the commandment of the Old Testament, the law, but what he rejected was the interpretation that men had put upon it. And therefore when he healed a man in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, he insisted that he was doing exactly what God required of him to do on such an occasion, on the Lord's day, as he says in another place, my father is working hitherto even on the Lord's day and I am working too.

Now that is probably why this misunderstanding had arisen. But I want to turn from that to the next matter. Jesus next positively affirms his personal attitude to the Scriptures.

I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. This is a crucial statement. Those who conclude that he was at loggerheads with the law and the prophets were wrong.

He says so. He denies it categorically. He denies that he was at loggerheads.

He says, I did not come to abolish Catilusae, but to fulfill Plaerosae, to fill them out to the full, to bring them to completion. Now we've already noted that the law and the prophets stood for the whole of the Old Testament. So this statement means that our Lord came to fulfill the Scriptures in their totality.

At the end of his earthly life, you remember, this proves the point I'm saying. At the end of his earthly life, Jesus said to the two on the road to Emeus, quote, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe

all that the prophets have spoken. Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

You see the point? They couldn't see any sense to Calvary and the death of our Lord Jesus. Oh foolish men, he says. It is written in all the Scriptures and he took them through all the Scriptures to show these things had to be fulfilled because they were written of me.

They had to be fulfilled. And later on that very same day, speaking to a much larger group, including these two, Jesus said, everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms. There he distinguishes the Psalms from them, as if to make it quite clear that the people who took the Psalms as the hymn book of the Old Testament, without having the same kind of authority as the law and the prophets, do see the Psalms as equally authoritative for life.

Their teaching too has authority over us. Now, this is a very important statement that Jesus is making here. I have not come to abolish, I've come to fulfill.

And when I've gone through my life, I'll be able to take you back and lead you through the Scriptures and show in all the Scriptures how the things concerning myself will have been fulfilled. It must be so. Now, let me illustrate some aspects of the rich fulfillment of the Scriptures by Jesus.

One note, perhaps, one word that ought to be said is that Jesus does not fulfill all the Scriptures in exactly the same way. I just want to say that one is aware of that and it will be reflected in what I'm going to say now, though I've no time to deal with it and to indicate the real difference between the way in which he would fulfill certain aspects and in which he would fulfill others. Let me give you four or five illustrations of our Lord's fulfillment of Scripture.

First of all, Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures by bringing to completion the revelation found in the Old Testament. True scholars, biblical scholars and teachers of the Bible, have discovered that it is very rarely that you have any strand of teaching in the New which does not have its roots in the Old. Dr. F. F. Bruce has a book out on the development of themes in the New Testament and he very magnificently traces the roots of some of the doctrines and some of the themes away back into the Old Testament.

For example, when somebody asked Jesus, which is the greatest commandment? Which is the most important commandment of all? Well, you might have expected Jesus to speak off the chest, as it were, and specify it without any relation to Scripture. He didn't. He quoted from the Old Testament.

He brought two Old Testament Scriptures together and he says, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Now, they come from the Old Testament, you see.

Why am I saying that? Every doctrine, I believe, that we have in full bloom in the New Testament finds its embryonic form away back in the Old Testament. Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament by taking the little, the diminutive in some cases, revelation that we have there and expanding it and enlarging it and filling it out and bringing it to completion in his own person or in his own teaching or in his own dying and resurrection. I would just illustrate this with reference to one particular point.

You will be able, I believe, to find illustrations from your own experience and your own reading of Scripture. Take the doctrine of God. Take the doctrine of the fatherhood of God.

Now, theologians have over the years said that perhaps the most characteristic feature of our Lord's teaching in the New Testament is his teaching of the fatherhood of God. He came into the world and he expounded that God was Father and we could call him Father. And he would care for us as Father.

We'll be going into that in Matthew 6, for example. But all this was new, they said. God was God.

God was creator. God was the provider in the Old Testament, but the Old Testament knew nothing about the fatherhood of God. Well, now that is not quite true.

Even in the Old Testament there are indications of the fatherhood of God in relation to some individuals such as Abraham, but especially in relation to the race of Israel. And when you come to the book of the prophet Isaiah, he speaks of God as Father. And in order to enlarge the fact that he meant also to refer to the tenderness of God, he even speaks of God as Mother.

He's Father and Mother. He is all that a parent can be. Nevertheless, all that was said in the Old Testament was but a fragment of what emerged when Jesus came.

He lived as a Son. And men couldn't see what it means to be able to trust God as Father in living without a banking account, in facing your enemies and every day and its exigencies, in coming to die. Don't forget that it was his confidence in the fatherhood of God that kept him as he was kept on the cross of Calvary, so that at long last when all was over and the pain and the anguish of body, mind, and soul had gone as far as it could go, the blessed Son of God could say, Father, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

See? He could see the enemies around. He could feel the pain. He smarted.

He swooned. He bled. He died.

But there was something more real than anything else. He could see the Father's hands awaiting him. And he says, Father, Father, into your hands.

And that's only illustrative. He'd been doing that all through his life. God was to be trusted as Father, you see.

And if you're a child of God, you can depend upon his fatherly care of you. He filled out. He fulfilled the doctrine of the fatherhood of God, whatever, however great it is in the Old Testament.

He made it full. He made it open. He made it clear.

He brought it to its completion that men may see the glory of God the Father. Again, Jesus came to fulfill the scriptures by making himself subject to them, and finding in them the pattern and principle by which to shape his own life, even his own death, and his ministry in life and in death. Now if anyone anywhere, anytime, might claim exemption from the need to be directed in life by any objective standard, surely that would have been Jesus.

He was the Son of God. He was the incarnate Lord. And you might well say, He doesn't need the scriptures of the Old Testament to tell him what's right.

He doesn't need the law. He doesn't need the prophets. He doesn't need any of these.

He can live above them. He's the Lord. He didn't reason like that.

Having become man, he subjected himself to the law and to the prophets. He found the pattern for his living and dying in the scriptures, and he put his feet in the footmarks laid down in scripture. And he went on through his life and into his death as it was written in the scriptures.

Can you see that? Someone has said that the most gigantic statement of the scriptures--I don't necessarily agree with this, but I get near to it--someone has said the most gigantic statement in all the scriptures is this. It's found in Galatians chapter 4. When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman--here it is--born under the law. Have you ever pondered that statement? Born under the law.

You say, what does it mean? Well, in order to explain what it means, we've got to go a little bit behind it. God, the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Godhead was eternally over the law.

The law is the law of God. God made it Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God promulgated it Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and promulgated it for his creatures, God's creatures.

And now the eternal Son of God takes our flesh to his deity and becomes a man. And lo and behold, he is not only coming to be born of a virgin conceived of the Holy Ghost and be born of a woman, but he places his own neck under the law. And he makes himself obedient to it, and he so organizes his life and living that in all things, as he told John the Baptist, I must be baptized, he says, for it must fulfill all righteousness.

He came to fulfill the law. He came to bow under the law. He who was over the law, who gave the law, because he was greater than the law, put his neck under it.

And here are some of us who are too proud to obey the law of God. God have mercy on us. If the king of the realm thus fulfills the law and the prophets, can it be demeaning for any of his subjects so to do? If the eternal Son of God could express himself fully by placing his life under the word of Scripture, can it be spiritually or psychologically damaging for any of us to do so? Any scheme of psychology that suggests otherwise betrays its alien origin and its ungodlike nature.

And I don't care who's in church this morning. If your psychology goes contrary to this, and you tell people that obeying the law of God can do damage to their personalities, I tell you, you're not a man or a woman of God. And you read on to the next verse and you will see what I mean.

You will be called the least in the kingdom of God. Jesus came to the fullness of his divine human glory under the law in one sense. Has one pledged to fulfill the law? Do you think it will damage you? Change your mind if you do.

It makes no sense. Thirdly, Jesus fulfilled the law by accepting its condemnation of transgressors and by offering to take the condemnation and curse of our guilt upon himself. You see the point, don't you? Jesus came to take the curse of our sin.

Now, he didn't argue with the Father and say, look, I'm willing to save sinners. I'm willing to do anything to save sinners. But, but, but, but, but, this is too much.

The law is too stringent. The wages of sin go too far. To demand death, the soul that sinneth it shall die.

That's going too far. Did Jesus speak like that? No, he didn't. He didn't argue with the curse of the law and the condemnation of the law.

He didn't argue with it at all, even though it meant that he had to die the death of one accursed. He accepted its standards. He accepted its condemnation as just.

And you see, I believe, now this is my belief, I may be wrong. I, I believe that when Jesus refused to talk and say anything when he was charged before Pilate and others, he was silent. One reason he was silent was this.

He realized that as the one who was coming to represent sinners, and he represented sinners before Herod and Pontius Pilate, as the one who was bearing the sin of the world before them, there was a sense in which he was guilty. Not in his own person, not for himself, but he bore the sins of the world, and the sins of the world deserved a thousand deaths. He did not argue with the law.

He came to fulfill it, even though it meant his death upon the cross as a curse. Fourthly, Jesus fulfilled the prophets by coming as one to whom they had borne witness, however faintly. Yes, and with the prophets, we may say also the types and the shadows of the Old Testament.

The skins that God gave Adam and Eve in the garden were pointing to something beyond themselves, to the garment of righteousness that Isaiah speaks of, and the justification that the Apostle Paul speaks of. When God's righteousness is imputed to men, and their sins are taken away, Abel's sacrifice spoke of a sacrifice beyond itself, so did all the sacrifices of the Old Testament, and Jesus came to fulfill them. You see, without our Lord's coming, all those Old Testament sacrifices, the types and the shadows, would stand in history like signposts that had misled the ages.

They had said that someone was coming to bear away the sin of the world, to die for sin. And if he hadn't fulfilled them, all those signposts would appear to say that they were pointing to something that never happened, to someone that never came, to something that did not exist. No, no, says Jesus, it cannot be that.

The Scriptures cannot be broken. They must be fulfilled, and he came to fulfill them, and he did so. Can I say one other thing? Jesus also fulfilled the Scriptures in planning to provide such a salvation for sinners as would transform us.

Every regenerate, every justified soul of man, every believer, every subject of King Jesus in this world, he would transform us to seek to obey his law. Indeed, the very codicil in the New Covenant, there is a codicil in the prophetic word relating to the New Covenant which says that God would write his law upon the minds and hearts of his people. He honored the law, you see.

He came to fulfill it. And Paul puts it like this, what the law of the Old Testament in written form was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature in us, God did. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.

And so he condemned sin in sinful nature in order, now this is a point I want to get to, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us. Our Lord died and rose again and sent the Holy Spirit into the lives of his people. Why? One reason is this, that the law should be written on our hearts and we have a predisposition to obey.

And that we have the power of the Spirit to obey and to obey to the glory of God. You see, he fulfilled the law, he honored the law, there's no way out of it. Now, I conclude with this.

Jesus makes a general statement therefore concerning the permanence of the law. He says, I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen will by any means disappear from the law until everything is accomplished. Now, I don't know how to get this across in just two or three sentences.

Jesus refers to two small little spots, little dots are their equivalent in the Hebrew alphabet. The first is a glorified in our English alphabet it's just a comma, upside down kind of thing. Nothing more than that.

And then the other is the least stroke, or the King James Version speaks of it as a tittle. It's just a tiny projection that distinguishes one letter from another. The nearest in our English equivalent is, you know, on a capital Q there's a little squiggle down the bottom there, isn't there, to distinguish it from an O. Now, says Jesus, not the least dot or squiggle of a pen will Sorry, that's not good pulpit language.

But whatever it is, not the least bit of the law will be unfulfilled, he says. As long as earth and heaven remain, the law stands until it is altogether fulfilled. Let all your liberal scholars go wherever they will.

The Lord Jesus Christ says, the law stands. I am bewildered by some of our liberal men and women in our colleges these days. And I'm frightened by them, because they're going in a way that is contrary to our Lord Jesus Christ.

They're dishonoring my Lord. To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, to believe he is the Son of God, means this. I must believe that he knows what he's talking about, better than Professor so-and-so, or Principal so-and-so.

He's better, he's bigger, he's greater, he's omniscient. Or is he? Now, we've got to get our categories clear. I respect men for their positions, but I will not allow a man to assume a place in my thinking which belongs only to one, the only Son of God, the incarnate Lord of glory.

The King of the Kingdom of God says, it stands until heaven and earth pass away. Oh yes, heaven and earth will pass away, and all men will pass away. All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man is the glory of the grass, and it withers and wilts beneath the midday sun.

You know how grass withers after a little heat, but the word of our Lord will endure forever. And he says, this law and the prophets are not going to pass away. You will have to meet their teaching in eternity.

You will have to answer for what you read in them when you come before God. You will need to know the Savior that forgives your sins, and you will need to give proof that you have the divine life in you that has brought you to a point where you are, by God's grace, wanting to honor the Father and his law as the Son of God himself did honor. I apologize for rushing through this this morning.

I apologize more to my Lord than even to you. This is one of the great statements of the New Testament. I urge you to go home and read it and pray about it.

And let us remember this, that its practical implication for the moment--we'll come back later--but its practical implication is this. It requires a recognition on our part, as subjects of his rule, if we are his subjects, that this Word of God is to have final authority in all matters of faith and conduct in the lives of the subjects of the heavenly realm. Let us pray.

O God, most high and most glorious, we thank you for your Word, and for the fact that it is not a dead end, but that it always leads the humble to yourself. So that we were able to sing this morning, beyond the sacred page, we seek thee, Lord, and we have found thee. You have been among us again today, and we pray that, O Lord, none of us present in this morning hour will be able to shrug our shoulders and presume that we have not heard your voice.

Rather, may your voice follow us and bring us all, preacher and people alike, bring us all increasingly under the dominion of your holy Word. Forgive our sins, therefore, and not only forgive our sins and take away those things that are as heavy weights upon our consciences, but strengthen us in mind and heart and will to be faithful to the heavenly vision for the glory of your name. Amen.

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