

Matthew in Biblical Perspective: A Royal Manifesto of the Kingdom from the King – Christ, the Law and the Gospel

Matthew 5:17-20

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June 6, 2010 – Morning Sermon

Our study is on the Sermon on the Mount, the Royal Manifesto of the Kingdom by the King. We move to the third section in this study, Matthew 5:17-20 which says

17 “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. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 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. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Let’s look back at Matthew 5:20 which says “*For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*” Do you remember when Jesus said, “Unless you are born again...”? Jesus has already said there are some in the Kingdom that don’t live or teach things in an appropriate way and they are least in the Kingdom but they are in the Kingdom. Here He says “unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven.” Wow! That is overwhelming and it means we have to take a moment to take a close look at that text. It is obviously a key passage and it must be understood. It can’t be diminished. It can’t be misunderstood. It must be understood and it obviously is made for a pointed reason in the text.

This is the Sermon on the Mount. Here is an outline for the Sermon on the Mount.

Introduction: (Matthew 5:1-2)

I. The Christian, The Gospel and our Character (5:3-12)

II. The Christian, The Gospel and our Ministry (5:13-16)

III. *The Christian, The Gospel and the Law (5:17-48)*
IV. *The Christian, The Gospel and our New Life (6:1-18)*
V. *The Christian, The Gospel and our Perspective (6:19-34)*
VI. *The Christian, The Gospel and our Relationships (7:1-20)*
VII. *The Christian, The Gospel and Commitment (7:21-27)*
Conclusion: *(7:28-29)*

There is an introduction and we have covered sections I and II. There are five more sections to the Sermon on the Mount. In this study we start section III on Christ, the Law, the Christian and the Gospel and what is the Gospel use of the Law. We are looking at the Christian and the right use of the Gospel now which is in Matthew 5:17-20 and then we'll expand on that in verse 21 on.

The grass withers. The flower fades. This is the Word of our God. It abides forever and by His grace and mercy may it be preached for you.

However this is an amazing statement - *unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.* Do you know who we are talking about when it says scribes and Pharisees? We are talking about the pros here when it comes to the Law. These are the professionals. In fact, the very time that Jesus says this, the scribes and Pharisees over the years produced a document in which they had gone back to what we call the Old Testament and they scoured out all of the commandments that God has given. There are the ceremonial commandments, the civil commandments, the moral commandments, the worship commandments, the offering commandments, etc. They came out with 613 commandments but they didn't stop there because they said this was so important. They would grow a plant and when they went to the yard to see the plant they would count the leaves and when they got to the tenth one, guess what they would do with it? They would pluck it off and bring it as an offering. They were fastidious. They were focused. They were so meticulous concerning the Law.

They didn't want to mess up on those 613 commandments that they then developed a compendium document called The Traditions of the Scribes and the Pharisees, The Traditions of the Elders, to help you do the 613 commandments. They then put together a book, not a booklet, of 1,596 commandments to help you keep the 613. Now, *unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.* I know some of you are jumping ahead of me but let that rest on you for a moment. This was so astounding when Jesus said this to these people on this hill side.

We have already looked at the beatitudes and when the Gospel blesses you where there is personal Gospel reformation in your life, He gives eight characteristics called the beatitudes. They defy categorization because they are built on top of each other. When you have been brought to bankruptcy where arrogance and pride are gone, you are poor in spirit which leads you to mourn

over your sins. That leads you to a meekness in life which leads you to hungering and thirsting for righteousness and that leads you to a merciful life where you are giving mercy to others because you have received so much mercy as God has forgiven you and worked in your life. That leads you to be pure in heart. God, I can't be merciful without You doing something in my heart and working to the outside. That leads you to peacemaking where you will be a Gospel peacemaker. You will take the Gospel of peace so that people will be reconciled to God and each other through the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Where will that lead you? It will lead you to persecution from the world.

What will you do in response to that? Jesus said, "You are going to rejoice and be glad." This rejoicing won't be in some stoic way where you say, "Go ahead and hit me, take my life and cost me my job. I'm just going to grin and bear it." No, you are rejoicing and being glad because the Lord is working in your life. The Lord is making an impact in my life and where does that lead me to? That leads me to the second section because when God does a work in you then God starts to work through you. As those beatitudes begin to come out and your rejoicing and being glad He says, "You now have a ministry. Your ministry is salt and light. You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world. As salt you have two ways that I'm going to use you. Salt seasons and salt preserves. Salt makes it tasty and salt is an antiseptic."

You're in the world that is under the curse of sin. There is nothing drearier than sin or nothing more disappointing than sin. Satan keeps promising and promising, saying, "Sexual promiscuity is okay, go buy this, consume this, just do this and all you have to do is live for yourself and you'll be happy." When you listen and do that you just go into despair and discouragement and there are never enough zeroes in the bank account, or square footage in the house or enough houses or enough televisions or enough cars and you always need one more this or one more that. There is nothing more depressing or discouraging than to buy into the world's system to think that's life. Jesus says, "Listen, you all live for Me." Those who are saved by grace bring zest to life. They bring taste to life. There is something different when they show up.

Have you ever had green beans without salt? Mercy, who in the world would eat that? But when you put some salt in it, that's good! A little bit of fat back wouldn't hurt either but don't turn me into the food police, please. So salt brings taste but at the same time the world is in corruption so salt preserves and keeps the world from its corruption because your presence restrains sin in society. Then you're the ministry to the world as light in that wherever the light of the Gospel goes it transforms. When light comes darkness has to disappear. He has told us what the Gospel does in us. He has told us about the work of the Gospel through us where we are salt and light and now He comes to this interesting thing.

The people hearing Jesus right now are probably thinking, "Jesus has not mentioned Moses yet or the Ten Commandments yet much less are 613 or our

1,596.” Jesus says, “I know what you’re thinking and I have four statements for you.” Here are the four emphatic statements that He gives to the people. Jesus is being very focused here. The first statement Jesus wanted all of them to understand is in Matthew 5:17 which says, “*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.*” The phrase “Law or the Prophets” is a very common phrase in the Bible. In other words, if you and I had been living at that time and Jesus is on the Sermon on the Mount, He wouldn’t have said “Okay you all turn in your Old Testament.” In fact, I’m not even sure we should say that. The Bible of that day, the first 39 books, were called The Sacred Writings or The Scriptures or The Law and The Prophets. The first five books of the Bible were the Law (The Pentateuch), given through Moses – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Then starting with Joshua all the way through Malachi are the Prophets. There were the former Prophets which were those up to the Babylonian Captivity and then there were the latter Prophets which were those after the Babylonian Captivity. So those 39 books were known as the Law and The Prophets.

So Jesus is basically saying, “Do not think that I have done away with the Old Testament. Do not think that I have come to abolish the Old Testament. I have not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets. I have come to fulfill them.” But notice something He says because Jesus phrases it very interestingly. Jesus says, “*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets...*” He doesn’t say, “The Law and the Prophets” and yet that would have been the normal way you would have said it but Jesus used “or” instead of “and”. He says, “I have not come to abolish “them” but I have come to fulfill “them” (Law and Prophets).” Let’s look a little bit closer.

The second statement Jesus makes is in Matthew 5:18 which says “*For truly (in the Greek we get the word “amen” from 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.*” Now when I preach you have to listen real carefully to think when you should say “amen” yet when Jesus preaches He puts the “amen” at the beginning. You don’t have to wait to see what He’s going to say because what He’s going to say is true anyway. Jesus is saying, “This Old Testament and the New Testament that’s coming, *the Scripture cannot be broken*” as He says it in the book of John. The Scripture is utterly inerrant, utterly infallible and utterly reliable. You can build your life on the Word of God because it brings you to saving grace and the God of the Word. One might think, “The whole thing?” Yes, down to the iota and the dot. The King James says “dot or tittle”. An iota is the smallest letter in the Greek alphabet. The dot or tittle is down to the smallest punctuation.

Harry, do you believe the Bible is inspired and inerrant? Yes, down to iotas and tittles, all the way down to the smallest letter and smallest punctuation mark. I believe the Bible is the Word of God all the way down to the smallest letter and

smallest punctuation and it cannot be broken or done away with until heaven and earth is done away with. In other words, Jesus came and fulfilled the Law and the Prophets initially at His first Advent and finally and completely in His second Advent when the heavens and the earth flee before Him and a new heavens and a new earth are brought down by Him. This Word is true until that day when He comes again, until the heavens and the earth are done away with down to the smallest letter. The Law and the Prophets go down to the smallest letter and I haven't come to abolish it. I've come to fulfill them.

The third statement He makes is a life takeaway found in Matthew 5:19; *"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."* If anybody in the Kingdom takes the Law and the Prophets, specifically looking at My commandments, and relaxes them, modifies them, mitigates them, makes them more acceptable or something done to reduce them, then that person is least in the Kingdom of heaven. If you do it for your personal life you relax it or if you teach others to relax it He says you are least in the Kingdom. You may be saved where you are in the Kingdom but you will be least in the Kingdom, why? It is because He says you have taken that which I have come to fill up and fulfilled and you have reduced it. So don't reduce, relax or modify the least of these commandments.

You may look at this and say this one is more important than that one. You have the Ten Commandments before you and realize the list is there for a reason and everything is important. You may say I'll pull this one out and perhaps modify it or reduce it and He says if you do that for your personal life or in your teaching then you are least in the Kingdom of heaven but the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven are those who embrace it and teach it for its proper purpose in Me. Matthew has already emphasized Jesus has come to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. When we went through the first four chapters we noticed that in the birth of Jesus ten prophecies had been fulfilled. We also noticed there are over 60 prophecies in the Scriptures about Jesus and He fulfills every one of those prophecies but what do you mean by fulfill the Law?

Normally we think the laws are precepts that He teaches and prophecies are His predictions but no, because prophecies point to Him and the Law points to Him. The Law does not just point to ethical guidelines. The Law was given to point to Jesus. I want to show you this from a passage of Scripture. It is found in Matthew 11 and I love this chapter. Look at what Jesus says about John the Baptist and how there is nobody greater in Matthew 11:11; *"Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."* But I want to look primarily at Matthew 11:12-13 which says, *12 From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.* We know the

Prophets prophesied but this just told you the Law prophesied. In other words the Law is there to prophesy that God is going to give a Law Keeper for us. The Law is there to point to Christ, just like the Prophets point to Christ. All of that Law back in the five books of Moses all point to Christ. So not only prophesies but also the Law is there to point to Christ.

Now let's look at Matthew 5 where it says the Law is fulfilled in Christ, why? The Law pointed to Christ just like the Prophets pointed to Christ. So He says now that you're here and now that you have My Law before you and I don't want you to relax it, I want you to use it to its fullest because it is fulfilled in Me. The Law is there to present Me just like the Prophets are there to present Me. Then He gives a fourth emphatic statement.

The last statement is in Matthew 5:20 which says *"I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."* So how do I get a righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees, particularly in light of what Jesus teaches as righteous? When the phrase "the Law of God" is used in your Bible it is used three ways.

One way it is used is as the Bible as a whole. For instance Psalm 1:1-2 says *1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.* That's not just referring to the Ten Commandments. That's referring to God's whole Word, the authoritative teaching of Jehovah, the Law of the Lord.

Sometimes the phrase "the Law of the Lord" is referring to the Pentateuch. Do you remember the disciples on the road to Emmaus who were discussing the resurrection of Jesus? Jesus said to them in Luke 24:25-27, *"25 And he said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?' 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.* The disciples said to each other in Luke 24:32, *"Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the Scriptures?"* So sometimes it is referring to the Pentateuch.

The third way the phrase is used is when it is referring to the Ten Commandments. Here is the Law of the Lord, the Word of God and He is saying, "The Law, the Pentateuch, the Ten Commandments and the Prophets, I have not abolished but I have come to fulfill them because the reason they were given was not to give you a religion but to bring you to Me." This has been so clear to me and so convicting to me.

Did you know there is no difference between the religious and the irreligious? Both of them are looking to themselves as the answer to salvation. The irreligious

says, "I will be happy because of sin." The religious say, "I will be happy because of my righteousness." The Christian is distinct from both the world and religion. They are different from the world that says, "I will be saved and joyful in life because of my rebellion against God and my self absorption." The religious say, "I will be delivered because of my self resolve and reliance, my righteousness, my religion will get me there." Both will be sincere, both are wrong. Christians are not only distinct from the world because of grace and not only repent of sin but they are distinct from religion and they repent of their righteousness which is like filthy rags. They realize the Law and the Prophets weren't given to give me a religion but to bring me to Jesus. That's why they were given. So Jesus says, "Whatever you do don't modify them or relax them because they have a purpose in Me." He will then begin to expand His purpose.

How does He fulfill the Law and the Prophets? He fulfills the Law and the Prophets four ways. Number one He fulfills the Law and the Prophets with His life. Do you want to know what it means to live out the Law of God with perfection in word, thought and deed? Let's go back to the beatitudes. Who alone is perfectly poor in spirit? Philippians 2:8 says, "*And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*" Who knows what it means to mourn over sin? Luke 19:41-42 says *41 And when He drew near and saw the city (Jerusalem), He wept over it, 42 saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes...."* In Luke 13:34 Jesus says, "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!*"

Here is the One who is poor in spirit. Here is the One who mourns over sin. Here is the One of meekness. Matthew 11:28-30 says *28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* Here is the One who has hungered and thirsted for righteousness. Here is the One who has perfectly shown mercy. I love that promise of the mercy of God to me but I only get the mercy of God because the only Person who lived who didn't need mercy received no mercy so that I might receive mercy. The Father gave His Son no mercy, only hell that I might receive mercy yet He was perfectly righteous. Here is the One who is pure in heart. Here is the One who is a peacemaker who has made peace between the enemies of God and God Himself as He redeemed us from our sins. Jesus has fulfilled the Law in thought, word and deed to perfection.

Secondly, He has fulfilled it in His death, because when He went to the cross "*for our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin*" to become sin on our behalf. In other words, He took my sin and fulfilled what the Law demanded of me by dying in my place, paying for my sins on the cross, so that He removed the curse of the Law in my life with His death. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "*For our sake he*

made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Thirdly, He fulfilled the Law by teaching us what it means. Here, I am so excited, overwhelmed and feel totally inadequate for the next ten sermons as I really feel in every sermon. The One who fulfilled the Law and the Prophets is now going to bring us Ten Commandments in the New Testament in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus says, “That Law said don’t murder now let Me tell you what it’s pointing to in Me. You don’t even assault people with your tongue in the Kingdom much less a knife. You don’t call them fool. You don’t call them Raca. In My Kingdom we don’t even kill people with our tongues. This is a righteousness that surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees.”

It’s hard for me to get this next one out of my mouth because it is so true of me. When I see sin in someone’s life what do you think it looks like? It’s big! Do you know how I see sin in my life? Oh it’s just a little problem I need to handle. He’s going to teach me so let me tell you how you see sin in the Kingdom. When you see it in your brother’s life it looks like a speck. In your life it looks like a log. The self righteous and the religious people are not like that. They see logs in people’s lives. They see specks in their own lives where we just need to modify and relax the commandments a little bit. No, no, we have a whole new way of life here. When I see sin in someone else’s life the first thing I’m overwhelmed with is how telescopically big it is in my life. That’s what I see in my life. Do you want to know truth? Let me tell you about oaths in our Kingdom. Let me tell you about anxiety and why it’s not in this Kingdom. Jesus is going to develop for us these ten statements built on the Old Testament Law fulfilled in Him and where His grace will take us by transforming us and changing us, who has saved us from our sins.

Then fourthly, He will fulfill the Law by it being seen in His people who become salt and light in the world. As they come to Him who has loved them, He then sends them back to this Kingdom life. If you love Me you’ll keep My commandments (John 14:15) and watch what happens with “salt and light.”

I have a few last thoughts. Here’s the takeaway – since the Law of God is now fulfilled in Christ, the Good News is that it can now be used as God intended it to be used when He gave it to us. God intended the use of Gospel grace to point people to Christ. So if we now take the Law of the Lord, fulfilled in Christ, and brought to this glorious Law of grace and liberty in the Gospel that is explained to us in the New Testament, now we can begin to use it properly. If we use it properly what will happen? Three things will happen.

Number one we will have an evangelistic use of the Law. Jesus saves us from our sins. What is sin? It is the transgression of God’s Law. So why did God give us the Law? He gave us the Law to show us that we’re sinners so that we would go to Jesus. I need to go to Jesus because the Law is a lot more than don’t kill somebody. The Law is a lot more than don’t go steal something. The Law is a lot

more than that. I am so overwhelmed with what the Law is telling me about what is righteous and if I need to get into the Kingdom of heaven and my righteousness has to surpass the Pharisees then I need help. I want to tell you about Jesus. He is not a religious guru to help you. He is a Savior to save you and redeem us. Deuteronomy 5 and Exodus 20 overwhelm me now I see how Jesus says, "Now, let Me show you what this is really saying." We'll just walk through a couple of things on the Sermon on the Mount and I am so overwhelmed at its intensity, extensiveness, and intensiveness and I have to have a righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees? Oh yeah, and I actually have a righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees and it doesn't come from them. It doesn't come from you. It comes from Me.

Romans 1:16-17 says *16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."* Now that's a surpassing righteousness. That's what I have to take me to heaven. I don't have religion to get me to heaven. I have a surpassing, exceeding righteousness that is absolutely perfect through and through in Jesus, wiped away my old record of sin with His blood and now cloths me with the garment of His righteousness and says, "You're forgiven with My blood but now you're accepted in the Beloved One. I have a righteousness for you" and that's where the Law sends me which is to Jesus.

There are so many passages on this but I'd like to show you one. This is an exposition of how the Law is used in the book of Galatians to bring us to the truth of the Gospel, it's glorious Gospel purpose. Galatians 2:15-16 says *15 We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; 16 yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.* Why was the Law given? The Law was given to send me to Christ to trust in Him. I am saved by His righteousness not mine. It is not my relationship to the Law that saves me. It's my relationship to Christ who did the Law perfectly on my behalf.

Galatians 3:10-14 says *10 For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." 11 Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." 12 But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"— 14 so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.* I don't get a righteousness by my religious performance, I get a righteousness that I receive that is a gift from God in Jesus. It's been given to me through Him who has loved me.

Paul goes on to say that the Law was a guardian to bring you to Jesus. It was a schoolmaster, a tutor, a teacher to bring you to Jesus. It was predicting Jesus who alone can save you. Dear friends, some of us reading this need to start right here and not only need to repent of our sin in the world and our irreligious life but we need to repent of our righteousness that we think commends us to God and trust in Jesus for a surpassing righteousness way beyond anything we could think or imagine in Jesus Christ. Now the Law is pointing us to where it intended to point us. It has an evangelistic use.

In the next ten sermons Jesus is going to say, "Let me show you how to live the Law as saved people. This isn't how you live the Law to be saved. I did that for you. This is how you live the Law because you love Me." I love Jesus because He first loved me. Jesus says, "If you love Me you'll keep My commandments." Now folks, hang on because there's a whole lot more than those 613 little commands. We're going to find out what it means to turn a cheek. I always thought turning a cheek was when somebody slaps me on one side of the face I turn and tell them to slap the other side but that is not what it means. I only wish it did mean that and that would be easy. After 70 times 7 it might get a little hard but that would be easy, so wait until you hear what it actually means to turn the cheek when your cheek has been slapped on one side. It means something absolutely astounding. Wait until you hear what it means to give the cloak when you have been asked for one. Wait until you hear when He talks about where your portfolio is supposed to be. We will long for the day when someone will get us and just talk to us about tithing. "Oh my goodness is that what you mean by don't covet?!" I may have just dropped the attendance for the next ten Sundays.

By the way you don't do this just to be saved. You do this because you love Your Savior who has given you a surpassing righteousness. He says, "Now I'm going to make your life full of zest and tasty in this world. Wait until you see how you live for Me. Wait until you see how My Law directs you. It doesn't empower you because you are not under the Law. The Law has no power. Wait until you see how My commandments and by the way don't relax the least of them because they have a divine purpose of grace in your life."

Finally it has an impact in the world. When God's people use God's Law to point to Jesus in the way they live and in what they say and people are brought to Christ, it just adds taste to the world. When they see our marriages get in trouble and they don't see the first thing we run to is a divorce that's an impact. I know there are Biblical grounds for divorce and I understand that. They see us run to, not God change my spouse, but change me. That adds taste to life. When we show up at work and just love to work and not because work is our God but we do our work for the Lord, the way we talk, the way we live and the way we function with humility and not arrogance, with meekness, with thoughtfulness, and with the courage of the Lord to laugh at the face of persecution that adds taste. It is also an antiseptic and that brings all kinds of light to the world that you

now will make an impact in bringing grace throughout the world, not only evangelistic use for redeeming grace, sanctifying grace as it directs us who love the Lord, but now common grace as it spreads the testimony of Christ throughout all the world.

This is a terrible illustration but it's my best shot and it's the closing one however I wished I had a better one than this. I was on vacation this week and we have a little system. This doesn't surprise my children because I basically have systems in everything in my life and so at 4pm I go get the groceries that we're going to eat that night. That's what we do on vacation. I go kill the animals and bring them home. I go catch the fish and bring them home. One of the things I love to eat on vacation is corn on the cob. So I went and got corn on the cob and brought it home. I said, "Okay honey let's eat the corn on the cob I brought home." She said, "That a great idea, where's the butter and salt?" I said, "Oh was I supposed to get that too?" Have you ever eaten corn on the cob without butter or salt? It's just not the same. Have you ever eaten corn on the cob with butter and salt? It's pretty good, isn't it? Amen, that's good! When you finish do you turn to your spouse and say "Honey, that was great butter and salt"? No, you say, "That was great corn!"

When God's people showed up, who have been brought to an end to themselves and they go to Jesus for exceeding righteousness and then out of love follow Jesus and are different than the world, the irreligious and are different from the religious because the difference of grace with humility and courage is at work, there is salt and light. The world doesn't look at us and say, "Man, look at those Christians." They say, "Where's the corn? We want to meet Jesus. We want to meet the One who makes the difference." It's all fulfilled in Him. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we could be together. Thank You for the enormous privilege to worship You, to give praise to You and to come to Your Word. You may be reading this thinking, "I've had enough of the irreligious and the sin has brought me to an end of it" and today you heard the answer isn't religion but there is a Savior. His Word, the Law and the Prophets, is there to bring you to Him and you might say to Him, "Jesus this day I put my trust in You. I turn from my sin and my righteousness. I turn from my irreligion and my religion and I give myself to You alone." Father, for those here who have done that already, may You open a brand new vista to us, first of all that we would know with great joy the surpassing righteousness of Christ that we have received that's been given to us and then Father, would You now with great joy give us the desire to live out a life that would show Christ to others way beyond 613 notations. "If any may be in Christ He's a new creation, the old has passed away and the new has come." Come Lord Jesus, I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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