

Firm Foundations

Following the way of Jesus

Jesus and The Old Testament

Date: Sunday 13th June

Speaker: Adam Pipe

Key Verses: Matthew 5:17-20

Talk Summary:

Once you watch the final episode of a series it changes how you understand the rest of the story. We understand a story in the light of its destination. Matthew 5:17-20 is pivotal in salvation history and within the Sermon on the Mount itself. These verses are a gateway to all that will follow and they lay the foundation for the subjects Jesus covers in the rest of the sermon which we will look at in the weeks to come. When Jesus refers to the 'Law and the Prophets' in verse 17 he is using shorthand for the whole of the Hebrew Bible what we call the Old Testament. People watching and listening to Jesus at the time might have thought that he was another revolutionary starting something new and abandoning the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus says don't think I have come to abolish the law and the prophets. That word abolish means to destroy, to dismantle or to disregard. Instead Jesus says that he has come to fulfil the Hebrew scriptures. One of the big themes of the Gospel of Matthew is that Jesus was the fulfilment of the Old Testament. There are at least three ways in which Jesus fulfils the Hebrew Scriptures:

i. Jesus fulfils the Big Story

The Bible is a big story which reaches its climax in Jesus.

Jesus is like that final episode in a TV drama that puts all the pieces in place, that completes the narrative and provides the key to the whole story.

SUNGLASSES: when I put on my sunglasses everything looks different. It changes the way I see things. We must read and interpret the Bible through the lens of Jesus because he is the climax of the story.

ii. Jesus fulfils the Prophetic Promises

The Old Testament is full of hope and expectation and Jesus brought about the events to which the law and the prophets were pointing. Jesus fulfilled over 300 prophecies, including 29 in a single day, spoken by different voices over a 500 year period. Matthew 5:17 is also prophetic because Jesus had not done it yet! This statement is a promise that Jesus would do what no person had ever done.

iii. **Jesus fulfils God's Law**

God gave the law to his people as a blessing in the context of his covenant relationship. The law did not save God's people but it was a response to God rescuing his people. Jesus as we see in verses 18 and 19 does not simply brush aside the law. Jesus says not one letter of the law, not one stroke of the pen will disappear until everything is accomplished. Jesus in his life and death accomplishes everything in the law. Jesus kept every minute requirement of the law in his life and then took on the penalty of the law dying on the cross for us to set us free.

So where does that leave us? what is the application of what Jesus says? Verse 20.

When Jesus talks here about entering the Kingdom of Heaven he is speaking about living under his rule and reign. We may be free from the law but Jesus is calling us to a deeper, more radical obedience to him. Jesus calls us to a life that exceeds that of the teachers of the law and the Pharisees. Jesus doesn't add new rules but goes to the heart of the matter. The greater righteousness Jesus speaks of involves – purity of heart. Jesus closes this section in chapter 7:12 where he uses that phrase *the law and the prophets* again and gives us the Golden Rule. This is how we love God and love others. A spiritual barometer is what we do with our own solitude. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, '*if you want to know what you really are, you can find the answer when you are alone with your thoughts and desires and imaginations.*' Jesus is the final Episode he is the climax of the story. He has fulfilled the law to set us free from it so that we can live lives empowered by his Spirit that outclass the law and overflow with love for him and others.

Resource referred to in the talk: The Culmination of Israel's Story

<https://www.listenerscommentary.com/intro-to-the-gospels-1/the-culmination-of-israel's-story>

Worship

Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.

(Small group worship resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship)

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? *(Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it)*

Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)

- What is your favourite TV series you have watched over lockdown and why did you love it? (possible welcome/icebreaker question)
- What stood out to you from Adam's talk?
- Adam said that the Bible was a big story that reached its climax in Jesus. How would you summarise the story of the Bible to a friend who was not a Christian?
- How do we interpret the Old Testament through the 'lens' of Jesus'? (share resources which have helped you)
- In what ways can we, like the Pharisees, focus on externals and become more concerned about reputation than reality? Do we ever do this on social media?
- How does practicing the Golden Rule (Matt 7:12) open us up to a process of change?

- Adam referred to what we do with our solitude, when we are alone with our thoughts, desires and imaginations, as a spiritual barometer. In what ways do you find this challenging (this may be a springboard to praying for each other inviting the Holy Spirit to transform our hearts)

Witness

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invite to?