

Matthew 5:17-20

As we begin this portion of the Sermon on the Mount, I want you ask yourself in your mind; What does true righteousness look like?

By true righteousness, I mean, righteousness that doesn't seek to look righteous in the eyes of others for commendation; THAT would be a pretended righteousness, motivated by pride, arrogance, and self-conceit.

The righteousness that I am speaking of is a righteousness that is without sin, and NOT of this world, but it is other-worldly!

At the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, He sent shockwaves through the religious world in Galilee, Jerusalem, Capernaum, and EVERY city in which He ministered and preached. He was a Preacher/Teacher like no other Man that had ever walked the planet!

His righteousness was not of this world, it was His own righteousness!

His Words were powerful and astonishing; His life was without even the smallest hint of sin! What a shame that He was unrecognizable to those who should have recognized Him! His righteousness was seen in His perfect obedience to the Law of Moses, proof that He was NOT a fallen man. He certainly looked like an ordinary Man, (He was made in the likeness of men); but time would prove Him to be no ordinary man, but the God-Man.

In His life, His ministry, His temptations, in the personal attacks in which He suffered from His enemies; in every aspect of His life, and then, in His sufferings and death, He taught us what perfect obedience to God's Holy Law looks like in a human life.

Jesus taught us what true righteousness and a sinless life looks like! But also, what true righteousness did NOT look like!

We just finished studying The Beatitudes or the excellent qualities and righteous virtues of children of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now we are committing them to memory; that's excellent, because the Beatitudes DESCRIBE children of the Kingdom of God; disciples of Christ! These heavenly attitudes should exist in every one of us!

The Beatitudes were not at all what the people saw in the scribes and Pharisees!

The Beatitudes SHOULD be the attitudes of EVERY sinner that has been born-again by the Spirit into the Kingdom of Christ! The Beatitudes IN US should be MORE obvious with each passing day as we grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

(In V13-16): The Lord Jesus taught us the powerful influence that each of us should have in this world as children of His Kingdom.

Every one of US (because of Christ IN US) should be the salt

of the earth and the light of the world!

And if you recall, this was spoken (by Jesus) in the present tense, meaning, we are to ALWAYS be SALT and LIGHT in the world! There is NEVER to be a time when we lose our gospel savor, or when our gospel light becomes dim.

If salt loses its savor, it is useless; a Christian who loses their savor; who doesn't stimulate and provoke sinners with the gospel of the Kingdom of Christ is useless! And there ARE to be no useless Christians!

Every one of us, as children of God ought to be godly witnesses and influencers in the world.

And then, every child of God IS and ought to be an illuminator; one who shines forth gospel light and truth in this dark and sinful world! YOU, Christian, ought to desire to be a faithful witness of the gospel to sinners!

NO Christian should be HIDING their gospel light!

Child of God: The Beatitudes should describe you, and you should be a powerful gospel influence and witness for Christ in your little piece of the world.

By this time, (when Jesus preached the sermon on the mount), He had already been introduced by John the Baptist as the Lamb of God, who would take away the sins of the world; and He was baptized of John:

Then He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil for 40 days. Afterward, He returned to Nazareth, where He grew up, and He went into the synagogue to introduce Himself to the people gathered there as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 61. Luke 4:16-32

So, by the time we get to the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' fame had spread throughout the land of Israel; the religious leaders, (the scribes and Pharisees) were asking, WHO IS This Man who teaches His doctrine with such authority? But He did not learn under us, and go to our schools and seminaries? And then, what is THIS new teaching? This is NOT the teaching of the Law of Moses!

But as we open up this portion of the Sermon on the Mount, (V17), notice that Jesus strongly ASSOCIATED Himself with the OT Law and Prophets:

Jesus taught the people, not only by expounding the Law of Moses and OT prophets, but by His perfect obedience and sinless life! He taught the people what true righteousness looked like in the life of One who kept the Law of Moses perfectly.

His life was a complete contrast to that of the scribes and Pharisees!

In regard to the prophets, Jesus proved that He was, in fact, the Promised Messiah written of by all of the OT prophets. MY TEACHING saith Christ, is in perfect harmony with the Law of Moses and the writings of the prophets. Read Text Again: (V17-20)

BOTTOM LINE: Jesus (IN HIS LIFE) presented A RIGHTEOUSNESS that EXCEEDED the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

And THE ONLY righteousness that God was pleased with!

Jesus opened this portion of His sermon/His ministry by telling His disciples and the multitudes what He came to do.

That is because he was constantly accused of being against Moses & the prophets. But He declared: I came NOT to destroy (or to abolish and cast aside) the law of Moses or the OT prophets; I came to fulfill them; to completely carry out and demonstrate what obedience to ALL the commands of the law LOOKS LIKE; but also, to expound and teach the meaning and spirit of the law to you. In fact, I am that Prophet, of whom Moses said would come to you; to teach you! Deuteronomy 18:15-19

I did not come to destroy that which cannot be destroyed or abolished!

(V18): OVERILY I say unto thee; when Jesus preceded what He was about to say with VERILY, He was strongly affirming what He was about to say! (V18), Luke 16:16-17

When we read the law in this text, I believe Christ is speaking of the moral law. The ceremonial law would be completely fulfilled in Christ at the cross, (Hebrews) and the judicial law was for OT Israel when it was a theocracy. But Christ, here, I believe, speaks of the perpetuity of the moral law. More to follow as we open the remainder of (C5) in the coming weeks.

(READ V19): The Pharisees made distinctions to the people concerning sins that were NOT as bad when committed, and portions of the law that were NOT as important if not obeyed:

That's like opening of the Word of God, and saying, nah, don't worry too much about THIS command of Christ, and don't worry too much about THIS sin against God, it's trivial.

Beloved, EVERY COMMAND of Christ and of God is as important as the next; and EVERY SIN, even what might seem in our eyes to be the smallest sin is abhorrent to God! Matthew 22:36-40, 23:23

The scribes and Pharisees highly esteemed themselves, but they were of NO ESTEEM in the eyes of God; (least in the Kingdom of Heaven); for they taught the people by their words and actions that certain sins were acceptable, while others were not; they made void or set aside the commandments of God for their own traditions.

James 2:10: For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all

But He that shall DO and TEACH obedience to Gods commands by His actions and words, would be called GREAT in the Kingdom of heaven.

Here's what it comes down to: (V20): For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven

Christ taught the people that they MUST possess a BETTER righteousness than THAT which they had SEEN in their religious teachers. Their righteousness MUST EXCEED the righteousness of

the scribes and Pharisees!

The scribes and Pharisees righteousness and obedience to the law and precepts of God was ONLY EXTERNAL; like many Christians today; as long as they look righteous on Sunday, it doesn't matter how they look and live the rest of the week. But THAT form of righteousness will not do for the Kingdom of Heaven!

Romans 1:16-18, 3:20-26, 10:1-10, 5:19, Philippians 3:6-9

The only righteousness that EXCEEDS any other faulty righteousness, (like the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees), or the fabricated righteousness' of this world, is the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; secured, merited, and EARNED by His perfect obedience in His life and death, and NOW imputed and freely given ONLY to sinners who repent and believe on Him! The righteousness of God which is by faith in Jesus Christ!

Isaiah 64:6-8, 1 Corinthians 1:30, 1 John 2:29