

What Makes Your Christian Life Superior?

Matthew 5:17-20

Intro:

1. **Righteousness** = right living in the sight of God & others.
2. Who are the Pharisees? Today they are the Hasadim.
3. **v18** - The OT was God's Bible & His Law for His people the Jews.
 - a. Our Lord said that not even "the smallest letter" or the "least stroke of a pen" would be changed.
 - b. This is the KJV "jot" & "tittle".
 1. **Jot** is the Hebrew letter "Yodh" in the word אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִי , the letter י .
 2. **Tittle** is the slight difference between some Hebrew letters = אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִי , the ה - ה
 - c. The Jews tried to obey this law - but couldn't (Rom 9:31).
4. **v17** - Our Lord fulfilled this OT written law.
 - a. **Col 2:13-14** - When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.
 - b. So **Gal 3:24** says that the law was "put in charge" - KJV "became our schoolmaster" to bring you to faith in Christ - **ILL: Crossing Guard at a school crosswalk.**
 - c. **Rom 10:4** - Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.
 - d. Jeremiah said that someday the law would be written on your hearts (Jer 31:33).
5. The Scribes & the Pharisees represented the best life that could be lived under the law - yet they fell so short.
6. So what make your life superior to theirs - the best lives of that day apart from Christ?

I. Your Life has the Right Motivation

- A. The motivation of the Pharisees was the praise of men.
 1. When they gave an offering, they made sure everyone knew it (Matt 6:2).
 2. When they prayed they made a big production out of it.
 - a. **Matt 6:5** - And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.
 - b. When you pray for the admiration of men instead of to God, that is as far as your prayer goes!
 3. When they fasted they wanted everybody to know how much they were suffering (Matt 6:16).
 4. So their righteousness was a show for men instead of a real commitment to God.
- B. Your motivation must be for the praise of God.
 1. Lord Jesus tells you in Matt 6:3-4 to make your giving a matter between you & the Lord only.
ILL: The Widow's Mite - Mk 12:41-44.
 2. Lord Jesus tells you in Matt 6:6 to make your prayers a personal petition to the Father.
ILL: The Pharisees & the Tax Collector - Lk 18:9-14.
 3. Lord Jesus tells you in **Matt 6:17** to make your fasting a personal matter. Freshen up, comb your hair & dress normally.

II. Your Life has the Right Nature

- A. The good deeds a Pharisee did were often openly displayed to be seen of men.
 1. They would even tithe the plants in their gardens to keep the law to the letter.
 2. The Lord said they would **strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.** - Matt 23:24.
- B. Your good deeds should be demonstrated from your inward Christian attitudes - not for open display.
 1. When selecting David to be king of Israel, Samuel was told, **Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.** - I Sam 16:7.
 2. The Fruit of the Spirit developed & demonstrated in your life means more to God than mere church

attendance!

III. Your Life has the Right Source

A. The source for the Pharisees was the OT Law & its corresponding traditions.

1. But **Gal 2:16** says this source no longer justifies.
2. **Matt 23:3** says the Pharisees didn't even obey the Law that they had very well!

B. Your source is the Lord's sacrifice on the cross.

1. **Rom 3:21-24** - But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.
2. You are considered righteous not because of your good behavior but because of what Lord Jesus did!

Have no doubts that you are pleasing to God when your trust Lord Jesus for your right relationship to God & fit in with His plan for your life!

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