

Righteousness That Exceeds *Matthew 5:20*

Theme: Legalism

Aim: To show that doing God's will is not legalism.

1. Matthew 5:20. What a challenge to His disciples.
2. What did Jesus mean by that challenge?

I. What is righteousness?

A. Defined: "what is consistent with God's will."

1. Whatever God has appointed for man to do, Matthew 3:15,21:32.
2. It is the sum of man's religious duties.
3. Whatever is right, right action.

B. Romans 4:1-8, 22-25.

1. Compare Psalms 112:1-10.
2. Righteousness is right doing.

II. But what was righteousness of Pharisees?

A. Jews believed all truth was in the Law.

1. Either explicitly or implicitly.
2. Scribes interpret the Law, the Pharisees do the Law.
3. Resulted in the "Oral Law" defining what was acceptable. See Barclay on Matthew, pg 124.
4. The "Oral Law" was written down resulted in the 60 volume Mishnah and Talmud.
5. Compare Luke 11:46, Acts 15:10.

B. They became "legalists."

1. Was it their intense desire to obey God that was legalism? No!
2. Legalism involves more:
 - a. They were hypocritical in their judgments, Matthew 23, Luke 11:46.
 - b. Gave minute attention to some things (alms, prayer, fasting) Matthew 6:1-18 while omitting the more important matters of the Law, Matthew 23:23. *Note: These ought you to have done and not left the other undone.*
 - c. Elevated interpretations to status of Law ... Jesus "But I say to you ... "
3. Being meticulous about obedience is not legalism.
4. Not proper to charge past preachers or church today with such.

III. Righteousness must exceed, be better than, the Pharisees.

A. How? Proper motivation, right heart.

1. Inner man, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:22-24, Colossians 3:8-13.
2. Example of a man in a 20 mph school zone.

B. Righteousness involves:

1. Right object - pleasing God.
2. Right authority - God's Word.
3. Right actions drawn from the right motives, pure love.

1. That is not legalism

2. Is your righteousness exceeding?

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