

# Righteousness Exceeding The Pharisees

Matt. 5:17-20

## Introduction:

- A. Pharisees were the most strict and zealous of Jews. (Matt. 23:15,23; Acts 26:5)
  - 1. Not wrong to compass land and sea to make proselytes - if make them children of God. (Mk. 16:15).
  - 2. Not wrong to be strict - if strict in all of God's will. (Matt. 23:23,24).
- B. Pharisees condemned Jesus and disciples as Sabbath-breakers. (Matt. 12:1-10)
  - 1. "Work" of (cf. Ex. 20:9,10) did not include all kinds of activity—Pharisees knew it. (vv. 5, 9-12)
  - 2. "Work" meant employment; working for a living. (cf. 2 Thess. 3:11; 1 Cor. 9:6)
- C. Pharisees unmercifully condemned the *guiltless* disciples - broke neither letter or spirit of Law. (Matt. 12:7)
  - 1. They were both harsh and inconsistent -- would mercifully excuse *guilty* David (v. 4).
  - 2. Neither David nor disciples justify setting aside law in the name of compassion. (Note: Consequences)
- D. Pharisees condemned for strictly binding perversions and traditions, not of the law itself. (Matt. 23:2-4)
  - 1. Jesus expected disciples to strictly keep and teach the law. (Matt. 5:17-19).
  - 2. Jesus expected their righteousness to exceed that of the Pharisees in real matters of the law (v. 20)
- E. Jesus uses six subjects to illustrate what He meant by righteousness exceeding the Pharisees:

## Discussion:

### I. Murder.

- A. The Pharisee's righteousness. - "Do no murder" (overt act). (v. 21)
- B. The Righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees'. (v. 22-26).
  - 1. Uncontrolled anger and hatred is murder of the heart. (cf. 1 John 3:15).
    - a. "Raca" scorns the mind = empty head; "Fool" scorns character = morally worthless.
    - b. As anger and scorn progresses so does the danger: judgment, council, hell.
  - 2. Settle differences long before they lead to violence.
    - a. Be reconciled. (vv. 23,24)
    - b. Be agreeable. (vv. 25,26).

### II. Adultery.

- A. The Pharisee's righteousness. (v. 27).
- B. The Righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees'. (vv. 28-30).
  - 1. Uncontrolled passion is adultery of the heart.
  - 2. Take any measure necessary to control passions. (vv. 29-30).

### III. Divorce.

- A. The Pharisees' righteousness. (v. 31; cf. Matt. 19:2-9).
- B. The Righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees'. (v. 32).
  - 1. "Makes her an adulteress" (ASV), like "Make him a liar" (1 Jn. 1:10)
  - 2. Any remarriage results in adultery, except for innocent party.

### IV. Swearing.

- A. The Pharisees' righteousness—do not swear falsely. (v. 33)
- B. The Righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees'—swear not at all. (v.34-37).
  - 1. Some think this forbids the every day frivolous swearing of that day.
  - 2. Seems to me only safe thing is to swear not at all by anything.
  - 3. Christians should have reputation that "Yes" would be "yes" and "No" be "no" without having to swear. If would only tell truth under oath then he is not truthful enough.
  - 4. "What ever more than these of evil one"—Makes distinction between what one says under oath and what he says at other times—not as careful.

### V. Retaliation.

- A. The Pharisees' righteousness. (v. 38).
  - 1. Used a judicial law for personal application.
  - 2. Still right for state, not individuals. (Rom. 12:19-13:4)
- B. The righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees'. (vv. 39-42).

### VI. Love.

- A. The Pharisees' righteousness. (v. 43).
- B. The righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees'. (vv 44-48).
  - 1. Loving only neighbor no better than others.
  - 2. Loving enemy makes perfect in love as the Father.

## Conclusion:

- A. Do not worry about being too strict, but be sure are strict in right things.
- B. It is necessary that we do exactly what the Bible on all subjects. (Lk. 4:4)