

RIGHTEOUSNESS REQUIRED

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Matthew 5:17-20, 48

1. In Matthew 5:1-9 Jesus defined Christian character.
2. In Matthew 5:10-12 He pointed out the world's reaction to Christian character.
3. In Matthew 5:13-16 Jesus declared our purpose or relationship to the world as salt and light.
4. From verse 17 through the end of chapter 5 Jesus dealt with issues related to the Christian and the Law.
5. Jesus made several things clear.
 - a. He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets.
 - b. All that is written in the Law and the Prophets will be accomplished.
 - c. Proclaiming Jesus and the Gospel in no way takes from or adds to the Law and the Prophets.
 - d. God labels as least in the Kingdom of Heaven those who annul His Word in any way, either by example or word, while at the same time declaring those to be great in the Kingdom of Heaven who keep and teach, by word and example, His Word in its entirety.

NOTE: God expects us to take seriously every aspect of His Word, and those who do not, even though they may be Christians, are of little value to the Kingdom of Heaven.
6. There are three aspects to the Law.
 - a. The Ceremonial Law:
 - (1) The Passover: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."
 - (2) The Day of Atonement. Hebrews 9:11-14
But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; 12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
 - b. The Judicial Law that was designed to govern the nation of Israel.
NOTE: This aspect of the Law will be fulfilled during the Millennium reign of Christ.
 - c. The Moral Law as embodied in the Ten Commandments.
 - (1) In His birth and life Jesus perfectly fulfilled the ceremonial, judicial, and moral law of God. Hebrews 4:14-16
Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
 - (2) In His death Jesus satisfied the demands of the Law, and because He did God can be both just and the justifier of the ungodly. Romans 3:21-26
But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace

through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26 **for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**

7. Now I want us to look at verse 20 under three headings.

- a. Righteousness required.
- b. Righteousness revealed.
- c. Righteousness received.

I. Righteousness required.

- A. Most people look at righteousness as a continuum.
 1. At one end are really bad people, and at the other end is God.
 2. People who view righteousness is this way believed that somewhere on that continuum is a line above which we are acceptable in God's sight.
- B. Jesus made it clear that human righteousness, even at its best, does not, and cannot, suffice related to entering the Kingdom of Heaven, and He used the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees as an example.
 1. Their righteousness was an external righteousness that did nothing for the inner-man, and had to do with conduct and not character.
 2. Their righteousness was a ceremonial righteousness that was based on religious formality.
 3. Their righteousness was a man-made righteousness that was based on man's ability to keep certain rules, regulations, and formalities.
 4. Their righteousness was a self-centered righteousness that glorified man instead of God.
- C. In verses 21-47 Jesus clearly pointed out God's original intent for the Law, and in the process makes every person that has ever lived guilty before God.

II. Righteousness revealed.

- A. During His earthly life Jesus was the personification of God's righteousness.
- B. According to Romans 3:23, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory (perfection and righteousness) of God."
- C. The only righteousness that will suffice before God is the righteousness of Christ.
- D. The righteousness of Christ:
 1. Is an imputed righteousness. Romans 10:1-4
Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. 2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. 3 For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.
NOTE: A true Christian is clothed with the righteousness of Christ, and is viewed as righteous in God's sight from a judicial perspective.
 2. Is an imparted, internal, practical righteousness.
 - a. Jeremiah 31:33-34
"But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

b. 2 Corinthians 5:17-19

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

3. Is a righteousness that glorifies God. 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29 so that no man may boast before God. 30 **But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,** 31 so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

III. Righteousness received.

A. First of all the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment. John 16:5-11

"But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' 6 "But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. 8 "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; 11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged."

B. Secondly, based on that conviction, we repent towards God and embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Romans 10:5-13

For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. 6 But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?'" (that is, to bring Christ down), 7 or "WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." 8 But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART" — that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, 9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; 13 for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

APPLICATION

1. No person can be righteous in God's sight apart from the imputed righteousness of Christ.
2. Those who possess imputed righteousness will manifest imparted righteousness (sanctification) without which no one will see the Lord. Hebrews 12:14
3. Both aspects of salvation belong to every true child of God.