

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

Orcutt Christian Church

A Grace Driven Church for Grace Needing People!

Worship with others in the Chapel

Stay in your car if you choose

God is not far

Sermon on The Mount - 18 Matthew 5 - 7; Luke 6:17-49

Righteousness

July 18, 2021

Communion: Elder Ed Saunders

Matthew 5:17-20 (NASB)

¹⁷ "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸ "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ "For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

1 🎵 Doxology [DH 1981]

2 🎵 Come thou almighty king 8

3 🎵 To God be the glory 56

- 4 🎵 How firm a foundation 408
- 5 🎵 Thanks to God whose word was spoken 409
- 6 🎵 Living for Jesus 605
- 7 🎵 **Family of God** [DH 2357]

I. Why Did Jesus Criticize the Scribes and the Pharisee's?

Our Lord makes it clear that there is something deficient in the religious practices of the Scribes and the Pharisees.

He says to those who choose to follow Him

For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Indeed, Jesus calls righteousness a requirement for getting into heaven.

And Jesus is quite severe in His condemnation.

Oh, I know that people want a kind and gentle Jesus, and He can be when He chooses.

But in the Gospel that the Apostles had Matthew write, we see the gentle Jesus using the harshest language that is in the entire Word of God.

No prophet of the Old Testament denounced sin as the Lord Jesus denounces it.

He is not the "lovechild" that the liberal thinks He is.

YES, it is true that He loves sinners and died for sinners, but it also true that He is going to judge sinners.

We need to have a correct perspective of Him, and as we learn today what He says about righteousness, we may come to understand Him better.

He accuses the scribes and of blocking the way to heaven by their false leadership.

In the Gospel of Matthew, He uses severe language in regards to the Scribes and Pharisees.

In His denouncement, which Matthew gives us in Chapter 23, Our Lord uses the term **woe** eight times and calls scribes and Pharisees **hypocrites** seven times.

Listen to what the Holy Sprit had Matthew write:

Matthew 23:13-33 (NASB)

13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

14 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive greater condemnation.

15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, *that* is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.' **17 "You fools and blind men!**

Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold? **18 "And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, *that* is nothing, but whoever swears by the offering on it, he is obligated.' **19 "You blind men, which is more important,****

the offering, or the altar that sanctifies the offering? **20**

"Therefore, whoever swears by the altar, swears *both* by the altar and by everything on it. **21 "And whoever swears by the temple, swears *both* by the temple and by Him who**

dwells within it. ²² "And whoever swears by heaven, swears *both* by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.

²³ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.

²⁴ "You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

²⁵ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. ²⁶ "You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.

²⁷ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ "So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

²⁹ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, ³⁰ and say, 'If we had been *living* in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in *shedding* the blood of the prophets.' ³¹ "So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. ³² "Fill up, then, the measure *of the guilt* of your fathers.

33 "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?"

I think you agree that Jesus is very severe in His condemnation.

Luke 16:15 (GW)

¹⁵ So Jesus said to them, "You try to justify your actions in front of people. But God knows what's in your hearts. What is important to humans is disgusting to God."

Then He points His finger at us, His followers, and says **For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.**

We all know that **God knows what's in your hearts.**

We all rationalize our own sins and explain them away.

We excuse ourselves for the things we do and for the thing we know we should do and don't.

And, in that we are like the Scribes and the Pharisees.

To be righteous does not just mean the mere avoidance of certain things, or even not thinking certain things.

It means the ultimate attitude of our heart towards the Holy, Loving God, and our attitude towards our fellow men and women.

The Pharisees thought their self-proclaimed purity had earned them a place in Heaven.

They devised their man-made plan of salvation to get around God's law which they did not keep.

They compared themselves to other people rather than to God's perfect standard of law.

Then Jesus points His finger at us, His followers, and says

For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

What is our righteousness?

How do we become righteous?

How do we get ready for Judgment Day?

Well, it's helpful to read what Isaiah had to say about righteousness.

Isaiah 61:10 (NASB)

10 I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Isaiah says God **clothed me with garments of salvation**
And, Isaiah further says **He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness**

From this we can deduce that on the Judgment Day we must be appropriately dressed.

And Isaiah tells us that on the Judgment Day we will wear a **robe of righteousness**

Where do we get that **robe of righteousness**?

But, you are asking “Righteousness? What is righteousness?”

Biblically, righteousness means conformity to the Law of God. And being righteous means to satisfy the requirements of the Law.

And, the Bible makes it clear that to be truly righteous we must obey ALL His commandments 100%'

I. Why is righteousness necessary for entering heaven?

Because ONLY the righteousness will be allowed there.

2 Peter 3:13 (NASB)

¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Matthew 13:43, 49-50 (NASB)

⁴³ "Then THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. ⁴⁹ "So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, ⁵⁰ and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 25:46 (NASB)

⁴⁶ "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Only the righteous will be in Heaven.

Not one unrighteousness person will be found walking the streets of Gold.

Psalm 1:5-6 (NASB)

⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. ⁶ For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (NASB)

⁹ Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

2 Peter 2:9 (NASB)

⁹ *then* the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment,

Revelation 21:27 (NASB)

²⁷ and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Righteousness, then, is keeping God's law 100%

But, right there you and I have a problem.

We have never kept God's law 100%.

That was exactly what Jesus was trying to get the Scribes and Pharisees to understand.

They were absolutely sure that they were perfect; at least that is what they told the people on the street.

Luke 18:9-14 (NASB)

⁹ And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: ¹⁰ "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers,

or even like this tax collector. ¹² 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'

¹³ "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' ¹⁴ "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

I suspect that you and I are often like the Pharisee, and look down our noses on others.

I am still saddened about the time a young woman who lived in an Assisted Living house up the street on Patterson.

She had a physical problem and smelled.

But she loved God, and always carried a handwritten stack of 3x5 cards with Scripture she was currently memorizing.

One of the important women of our congregation told her she wasn't welcome here.

It's unfortunate that we make harsh judgments on others, and the other could be a different gender, or a different melanin color.

And that's bad news.

II. No one is totally Sinless

To be eligible for entrance into Heaven we must be Holy like the King of Glory.

And, you have to admit that standard is so infinitely high that even the most righteous person would not dare to claim to possess it or attempt to attain it.

And, that's the point.

We are to see ourselves as falling short of God's requirements.

Romans 3:10-12; 22-23 (GW)

¹⁰ as Scripture says, “Not one person has God's approval. ¹¹

No one understands. No one searches for God. ¹² Everyone has turned away. Together they have become rotten to the core. No one does anything good, not even one person. ²²

There is no difference between people. ²³ Because all people have sinned, they have fallen short of God's glory.

Think that's bad!

Even our best deeds are insignificant...

Isaiah 64:6 (GW)

⁶ We've all become unclean, and all our righteous acts are like permanently stained rags. All of us shrivel like leaves, and our sins carry us away like the wind.

No wonder Paul says in

Philippians 3:7-11 (GW)

⁷ These things that I once considered valuable, I now consider worthless for Christ. ⁸ It's far more than that! I consider everything else worthless because I'm much better off knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. It's because of him that I think of everything as worthless. I threw it all away in order to gain Christ ⁹ and to have a relationship with him. This means that I didn't receive God's approval by obeying his laws. The opposite is true! I have God's approval through faith in Christ. This is the approval that comes from God and is based on faith ¹⁰ that knows Christ. Faith knows the power that his coming back to life gives and what it means to share his suffering. In this way I'm becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ with the confidence that I'll come back to life from the dead..”

That makes it absolutely, 100% clear. that our righteousness depends on our relationship to Christ Jesus.

III. God gives us our Robe of Righteousness

The King of Heaven who demands perfect righteousness gives perfect righteousness.

The Righteousness of God is one of His main gifts of grace. And, God's gift of Righteousness makes us "ready for the Judgment Day."

Romans 1:16-17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "*The just shall live by faith.*"

Romans 3:21-22 (NKJV)

²¹ But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;

Romans 5:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:3-4 (NKJV)

³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not

submitted to the righteousness of God. ⁴ For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Philippians 3:9 (NKJV)

⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

Isn't it clear that we don't have righteousness by our own efforts?

Isn't it clear that Jesus makes righteousness possible?

But there is more:

Jesus IS our righteousness.

Jesus IS our **Robe of Righteousness**.

Jeremiah 23:5 (NKJV)

⁵ "Behold, *the* days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

1 Corinthians 1:30 (NKJV)

³⁰ But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Jesus IS the **Robe of Righteousness** that we are wearing!

But you ask, "How is Jesus our Robe of Righteousness?"

You ask, "How is Jesus Himself righteous?"

Jesus kept all the commandments, all the laws.
So Jesus is Himself pure righteousness.
He did that as a human being for Himself because He had to be pure and holy.
So, we can say that Jesus satisfied the commandments of God's law but this was for Himself.

He's holy and sinless.

We are lost in sin.

How can we be saved?

Jesus came and lived a perfect life so that He personally would not owe to the Father eternity in hell.

This prepared Him to step into our shoes and accept the penalty of hell in our place.

He paid our debt of eternal punishment.

How did He do that?

Well, there is a bookkeeping concept that He used.

Bookkeepers use a process called "imputation," which is the assignment of a value to something by inference from the value of the products or processes to which it contributes.

The bookkeeper may "impute" your interest which will increase your taxable income.

Imputation is the process of replacing a missing value with substituted values.

And God uses imputation to release us from the penalty of eternity in hell.

God transfers Jesus' payment of the eternal penalty for our sin to our account.

This bookkeeping technique of imputation transfers Jesus' satisfaction of the death penalty to our account, and when the books are opened on the day of Judgment, you will see recorded "PAID IN FULL!"

This is how Jesus is our righteousness: He became a human being for the specific purpose of suffering on the cross in our place.

Thus He satisfied the penalty of the law—He was *righteous*—FOR US! And He transfers this TO US!

Romans 5:7-9 (NKJV)

⁷ For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

The **Robe of Righteousness** itself—is specifically *the blood of Christ!*

This is the “garment of salvation” that covers and hides our “filthy rags.”

Romans 4:8 (NKJV)

⁸ *Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.*

Wouldn't you like to know how to receive this gift of the **Robe of Righteousness**?

It starts by accepting the FACT you ain't gonna make it on your own!

You have to choose to have faith in Jesus Christ and His righteousness.

Philippians 3:9-10 (NKJV)

⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

We are not saved by believing in ourselves—trusting that we are *good enough* to get past the Judgment Day.

We must comply with the Judge's Terms of Pardon.

Yes we have sinned.

Yes we deserve condemnation.

But the blood of Jesus Christ can change our status.

Jesus our Redeemer has already achieved the righteousness we need in the act of propitiation; and in the act of justification He transfers that righteousness to us!

We are justified by the righteousness of God!

But what do we do to receive it?

We have just learned that we receive by obedience to the gospel.

Romans 10:16-17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "*Lord, who has believed our report?*" ¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God

2 Thessalonians 1:6-8 (NKJV)

⁶ since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with

tribulation ...⁸ in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Obedience to the Gospel is compliance with the King's Terms of Pardon, and as specified by God our Redeemer the Terms of Pardon are

- (a) believe that Jesus is the Christ, and your personal Savior
- (b) in desire to be like Him, change the way you think and act
- (c) confess openly to others your faith in Jesus
- (d) be immersed into Christ.

Then, and only then, we are under God's system of Grace.

Christian baptism is the exact moment when we receive the Robe of Righteousness.

Here we are immersed into His death, where His saving blood clothes us:

Romans 6:3-4 (GW)

³ Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ When we were baptized into his death, we were placed into the tomb with him. As Christ was brought back from death to life by the glorious power of the Father, so we, too, should live a new kind of life.

Here we put on Christ, our Robe of Righteousness, like a garment:

Galatians 3:26-27 (GW)

²⁶ You are all God's children by believing in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ Clearly, all of you who were baptized in Christ's name have clothed yourselves with Christ.

We then wear this Robe of Righteousness for the rest of our lives, 24/7, for as long as we continue to trust in the saving works of Jesus Christ.

Have you complied with God's Terms of Pardon?

If you have, then you can rejoice in your Robe of Righteousness.

If you have not complied with God's Terms of Pardon, why do you choose not to comply?

There is no better day than today.