

Righteousness 2.0

Matthew 5:17-20

Shocking Statements of Christ (Sermon on the Mount, Part 2)

¹⁷ “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

¹⁹ Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

v.48 “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

Today we are beginning a new section of the Sermon on the Mount and we have entitled this section:

The Shocking Statements of Christ!

A) Why shocking statements?

B) Did Jesus do what some preachers do today – say things that were EDGY FOR SHOCK VALUE?

C) No The words of Jesus always had a purpose that was aimed at the heart and the **eternal DESTINY** of His listeners.

But He did utter some phrases here in the Sermon on the Mount and in some other places that **completely shocked his listeners!**

A) Statements that left them scratching their heads – pondering with each other “what did he mean by that?”

John 6:53 “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.”

B) It tells us there in John’s gospel – that most of the people didn’t understand what he was saying

C) Others were offended – and a **large portion of the crowd** stopped following him after that!

Author and Bible Scholar FF Bruce wrote a book entitled “The Hard sayings of Jesus”

A) And several of these ‘SAYINGS’ in his book are statements in the Sermon on the Mt

B) Shocking statements in Jesus’ day – Made people ponder – what did he mean by that!

C) Shocking statements in our day! – Some of the things Jesus says in this 2nd section of the Sermon on the Mount – **has upset many believers**

1) Has **added fuel to Many Skeptics** –

C) When isolated or used out of context – has caused **unbelievers to say:**

“If that is true and that is really how God feels – I want no part of Christianity”

Ever notice how you talk to someone and they **only hear one thing that you say.**

A) Example: Kids your Aunt Suzy is really sick - looking like she is not going to be with us too much longer.

B) So over your **Spring break - Easter Break** - we are going to all go to Florida to visit her.

C) While we are there **we are going to try** and go to Disney world -

What is the only thing they hear? WE ARE GOING TO DISNEY WORLD!

A) Not even “we are going to try and go - we are going”

B) They tell all their friends - guess where I am going for Spring break.

1) Forget about Aunt Suzy – **ALL about Disney World**

C) Well I think the people listening to Jesus were a lot like us - they would hear statements that Jesus made - not consider them in context

1) Or in light of everything that Jesus was teaching

D) So it is important that we take a good look at these statements and consider them accurately and in context – **Avoid confusion - 6 weeks**

E) So glad that you are here today – because today is Key:

1) All the other Shocking statements we will look at in the next 5 weeks are directly connected to the one we are CONSIDERING TODAY!

Shocking Statement #1 “Your Righteousness must exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.”

A) That was a SHOCKING STATEMENT: - In the minds of the people of Israel there were no other people more Righteousness than those guys.

B) A popular Jewish saying of the time, “If only two men made it into heaven, one would be a scribe, and the other a Pharisee.”

1) BILLY GRAHAM OR MOTHER TERESA- Aunt Betty

C) The scribes were scholars who studied, AND interpreted, and commented endlessly upon the Law.

D) The word “Pharisee” literally means “separated one.” Numbering seven thousand, this company of men kept the minutest details of the Law.

E) In the Minds of MANY – THESE GUYS WERE THE STANDARD!

Outline:

#1 Jesus’ relationship to the law

#2 The Pharisees and the law

#3 The Purpose of the law

#4 How this relates to us as followers of Christ

#1 Jesus relationship to the law

¹⁷ “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

Sometimes Jesus was accused of breaking the law especially as it related to the Sabbath day-

A) The religious leaders interpreted healing as working on the Sabbath which meant to heal someone – violating the Sabbath day command

B) Concerning the law of God the religious leaders had 248 positive commandments and 265 Prohibitions

C) And many of those prohibitions had volumes written dissecting what breaking one of those laws looked like in every area.

D) 1992 residents in Orthodox Israel watched apartment complex – burn down – while they asked a Rabbi - whether making a phone call to the fire department constituted violating the Sabbath

Jesus wants to be very clear – He DID NOT – come to destroy the Law!

A) He never broke the law – NOT ONCE:

B) But He was against the way – the law had been perverted by man-made interpretations / traditions

1) Especially concerning the Sabbath – which God meant to be a blessing.

C) **God’s TOP TEN:** One day in Seven – rest – set aside a day to rest – and really focus on the Lord

D) That Day that God intended to be a blessing – the religious leaders in Israel, TURNED into a BURDEN

1) Thru all of the regulations they attached to it

Jesus emphatically states – I didn’t come to DESTROY THE LAW - CAME TO FULFILL IT – IN THE MINUTEST FORM

A) Jot and Tittle: Jot was like an apostrophe – 66,420

B) Tittle is a small mark in a Hebrew letter - like the crossing of a t or the tail of the letter y –

C) In our Modern day vernacular Jesus might have said down to the Crossing of the t and the dotting of the i. (The idea – Minutest forms)

D) **How did Jesus fulfill the Law & Prophets?**

1) Law = Ten Commandments – Prophets = OT

- Jesus fulfilled the moral and legal demands of the Law and the Prophets in that He fully obeyed them and He reinterpreted them in their truth.

As a Child he was circumcised on the 8th day – he went through the normal school

A) **He kept all the feast** - As an Adult – He followed the law – He lived a **BLAMELESS LIFE!**

B) **Father: My beloved son in whom I am well pleased**

C) Pilot **“I find no fault in this man!”**

- Jesus fulfilled **the doctrinal teachings** of the Law and the Prophets in that He brought full revelation.
- Jesus fulfilled **the predictive prophecy** of the Law and the Prophets in that He is the Promised One, showing the reality behind the shadows.
- Jesus would **fulfill the penalty of the Law** and the Prophets for us by His death on the cross, taking the penalty we deserved.

Jesus was not against the Law of God!

A) But He was passionate about it being presented and interpreted correctly!

¹⁹ Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

A) One of the things that is most important to Jesus is that we accurately represent the Heart of God.

B) He is bummed and even gets Angry when we don't

1) WHIP – CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

C) Misrepresentation of God! -

1) That was Jesus' biggest Problem with the Scribes and the Pharisees and the religious leaders in Israel

#2 The Pharisees and the law:

A) The Scribes and Pharisees – study the law – interpreted the law and sought to live by the law!

B) Problem was with them – Everything was external!

1) Focused on the Right Clothes, The Right words, the Right Prayers and the Right Rituals.

– **BUT COMPLETELY IGNORED THE HEART!**

C) They were **FANATICAL** about things like tithing

1) They would take the herbs from garden – count out – separate a 10th = Jesus commended – good

D) But they would **completely ignore a person in need or even neglect their own parents - NOT GOOD!**

These religious leaders would compare themselves to everyone else and in their eyes – they were the best – **the most religious – MOST Holy**

A) Prayer of the Pharisee – **“I thank God that I am not like other men.”**

B) Comparisons are **RELATIVE**: If I go into the Toddler Room – Pretty Tall –

1) Dave Peister – Another story – Really Tall

C) Baseball – High School – Team – League - NY Met Scouting team –

1) Middle of the Pack – Every team has scout teams in Every county - Average at best!

OUTWARDLY Compared to other men

A) The Religious leaders were the cream of the crop –

B) But Compared to Jesus – Fell Real Short

1) In Fact – Compared to **GOD'S STANDARD – NOT EVEN CLOSE!**

C) Point of V.48 – **THE STANDARD IS**

PERFECTION! – BE PERFECT your Father in heaven is perfect.

1) That is the Standard: - **PERFECTION – PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS**

D) Remember God said to Samuel - **Man looks at the outward appearance – God sees the heart**

1) God saw – Heart betrayed them:

In the coming weeks that is the point that Jesus is going to build upon:

A) He is going to take five different commands from the OT Law –

B) Illustrate: It is not just **your actions** that condemn a person – it is what is **the attitude** of the heart

C) The only way that your Righteousness can exceed the Righteousness of the Pharisees –
1) You need a Righteousness – that goes beyond your actions – abilities – behavior

D) Because according to God's standard – You and I are always going to FALL WAY SHORT

#3 The Purpose of the Law?

A) **The law was a school Master to drive us to grace!** – Galatians 3:24

B) The law points out where we fall short – the law revealed sin!

1) That was its purpose: To lay out the Standard to the point where we would realize – **All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God!**

C) Paul wrote in Romans 7:14 **“The Law is perfect and Holy.”**

1) The Problem is not the law – **but the weakness of our Flesh** – Romans 8:3

D) **We could not keep the law – we could not consistently follow the law**

1) We Failed – Spirit is willing but the Flesh is weak

E) Our weak flesh – gave us up time and time again!

Sin = TO MISS THE MARK – the Bulls Eye

A) Doesn't matter if you missed the target all together or you missed the Bull eye by a fraction of an inch – **YOU MISSED IT – SIN!**

B) Speeding 30 miles or 1 mile over the speed limit – still speeding and you can still get a ticket.

C) Many of the people living in Israel – missed the target all together – the Religious leaders – missed it – millimeters – Still missed

D) Especially the way Jesus defined it – as we will see in coming weeks – Thou shalt not MURDER

1) **ANGRY WITHOUT CAUSE - THE SAME - Busted**

Paul was a Pharisee – According to the Righteousness found in the law Blameless –

A) I crossed all my t's and dotted all my i's.

B) But He also said: My heart is the thing that exposed me – In my heart I was coveting –

1) **(No one knew on the outside – Outside Paul looked great)** – Inside there was a problem – all of us

Jesus takes it out of the realm of the eternal activities and says the issues start with the heart!

A) So what does it mean then to Have a righteousness that exceeds that of the Scribes and the Pharisees?

#4 Application for us as followers of Christ! – Turn to Romans 3

²¹ But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, (OT – was always pointing to this)²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,²⁵ whom God set forth as a propitiation (Satisfaction) by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,²⁶ to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Note several things

#1 There is **a righteousness of God that is apart from the law** ~ Romans 3:21

#2 That Righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ – Romans 3:22

C) IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

1) God was Just – Couldn't ignore sin – So He treated Jesus like He was us!

2) God was the justifier – Treated us like we were Jesus

D) The message of the Gospel – all my sin all my shame – was transferred to Jesus at the Cross

E)ALL His Righteousness is transferred to me at the moment of faith!

1)AMAZING GRACE

We are Justified: Declared Righteous – Our faith in Jesus!

A)That is how our Righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.

B)We rest in the righteousness of Christ –

1)We rest in the Reality – God sees us in Jesus!

C)YOU TODAY – Don't know Christ – Sin separated

D)You today - **Living by religious standard** – never good enough (Good outweighs bad – not the issue)

E)Embrace Christ – His Work / Death

1)Found in Him Complete –

Rest in Him - Does that mean free from the standard live however we want?

A)Not exactly – Motivation is now different.

B)Before: If I tried to follow the standard – it was so God would be pleased with me.

1)Problem was I broke the law – might be better than others – but not good enough

2)**Standard is perfect, is perfection**

C)Now I try to live by the standard not so God will love me – but because I know He does!

1)Because He does – I know that MY FATHER KNOWS BEST – He wants the Best for me!

D)I love Him – I want to walk in that!

Think of it this way: On my first date with Denise I took her to the Chart house in Cardiff – table by the water.

A)Why did I do that – I wanted to impress her – I wanted her to like me.

B)I wanted her to know how much I loved her.

C)After we got married – **Never went there again**

1)MacDonald's – Top Ramen

D)No, I still take her out to nice restaurants/ trips

1)But the difference is – I know that She loves me - RESPONSE – I WANT TO Bless her.

I don't have girlfriends on the side: I'm not interested in other women - Why? Yes it is wrong – Adultery

A)But FOR ME – GOES DEEPER – I love Denise.

B)My relationship with her is not a **Ball and Chain**

1)I am not tied up or tied down

C)I am willingly surrendered - TO LOVE

That is the type of relationship that God is looking for with us.

A)RESPONDING TO HIS LOVE – HIS GIFT – HIS GRACE! **Not GOT TO – NOW – I GET TO**

B)I want to walk in Righteousness – Because God went to great lengths to make me Righteous in His eyes!

C)Our life is a response to His work

New Covenant:

A)Old Covenant – Do this and you shall live –

B)New Covenant – Live – and Do these things

Ezekiel 36:26

²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*.