



CENTRAL IDEA

True righteousness is not a matter of external ritual or legalistic checklist. We must move beyond "doing" religious acts to "being" the kind of people who love both God and neighbor from the inside out.

Matthew 5:20 ESV

For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

INTRODUCTION

- In the first century, the Pharisees were the gold standard of religious devotion, known for their meticulous adherence to the Mosaic Law and the "tradition of the elders."
- To the average listener, their level of righteousness seemed unattainable—they fasted twice a week, tithed even their spice racks, and spent hours in prayer. Yet, Jesus shocked His audience by declaring that unless their righteousness *exceeded* that of these religious elites, they would never enter the kingdom of heaven.
- Jesus wasn't calling for more rules, but for a deeper, more authentic devotion.

I. From External Ritual to Internal Transformation

- The Pharisees excelled at the "outside of the cup" religion.

Matthew 23:25–27 ESV

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness.

1 Samuel 16:7 ESV

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."

- Instead of simply refraining from "bad words" (the external), focus on rooting out the bitterness or pride that causes you to want to speak them in the first place.

II. From Technical Obedience to Total Surrender

- Pharisaic righteousness often looked for loopholes or the "minimum requirement" to satisfy the Law. Surpassing righteousness seeks to fulfill the *intent* of God's Word. It is the difference between asking "How far can I go before it's a sin?" and "How close can I get to God?"

Matthew 22:37–40 ESV

And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

- Obedience to the Gospel is not about legalism; it is the natural response of a "living sacrifice" who recognizes Jesus as Lord.
- Rather than just attending Sunday service because it is a "command" ([Hebrews 10:25](#)), arrive with a heart prepared to actively edify others and truly worship in spirit and truth.

III. From Self-Exaltation to Self-Sacrificial Love

- The Pharisees performed their righteous deeds "to be seen by men" ([Matthew 6:1](#)).
- Their righteousness was competitive and exclusionary. In contrast, the righteousness of the Kingdom is defined by humble service and a love that extends even to enemies.
- Look for a way to serve someone in the congregation who can do nothing for you in return, and do it anonymously so that only God receives the glory.

CONCLUSION

- Surpassing the righteousness of the Pharisees is not about trying harder to be "perfect" by human standards; it is about letting the Spirit of God rewrite the laws of the Kingdom onto our very hearts.
- It is a transition from the "letter" that kills to the "Spirit" that gives life.

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"The churches of Christ greet you"
Rom. 16:16

Hebrews 4:12

THE HOLY BIBLE

2 Tim. 2:15, 3:16-17

HEAR
Rom. 10:17

BELIEVE
Jn. 3:16

REPENT
Lk. 13:3

CONFESS
Rom. 10:9

IMMERSED/ADDED
Acts 2:36-47, 22:16
FORGIVEN/SAVED

FAITHFUL
Rev. 2:10
Remain Saved
Till the end
Phil. 2:12

"See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be immersed?"
Acts 8:36
"water immersion now saves us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." 1 Pt. 3:21

How Jesus commands us to be forgiven of sins and added to His kingdom.