

## A Surpassing Righteousness (Matthew 5:20)

By: Eric Castle

**R**ighteous living has always been a cornerstone of godly living. Ever since the Creation, God has had the expectation of man and woman that he and she both live according to His command. However, both man and woman failed – as every man and woman have since. So, when Jesus declares, “For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 5:20), what is He teaching? It should be obvious that Jesus Christ was not commanding mankind to do the impossible (to live a perfect life)– this would be completely worthless.

In Matthew, Jesus describes the quality of human behavior. This understanding of “righteousness” does not describe a perfect life, but instead a blameless one – a life which seeks to be right, even if imperfect. With this understanding we can better understand Christ’s intention with His command. The Jewish audience to whom He was delivering His Sermon on the Mount were very familiar with the scribes and Pharisees. Their religious station and expertise were considered by to make them *de facto* righteous men. The Pharisees believed that because of their

position, and because of their outward overtures concerning the Law, that they were righteous men before God.

Christ’s definition of righteousness was much different than the Pharisees. He emphasized the importance of the inward man over the outward man. He explained that true piety came from a humble and repentant heart, not from a heart proud of its own accomplishment. In this light, the man who admits and confronts his own sin, through the Gospel of Christ and its power of forgiveness, is more righteous than the man who claims good deeds for himself. What is the difference? The difference lies within the heart. A heart which seeks to do right, and is broken when imperfections occur, is a righteous heart.

The scribes and Pharisees would never have this kind of righteousness for the same reason many in the world refuse the Gospel – they could not admit their own sin. In order for our own righteousness to surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees we have to learn from their mistake. It is not the outward things which make us righteous (even if they are worthwhile), it is the inward power of the

Gospel upon a heart which can be broken by the horror of sin.

(Psalm 51:17 ASV - *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*)

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## How to Fulfill The Law Of Christ

Selected Article

**F**ill a bucket with water right to the top. See how many steps you can take with your bucket before some of the water splashes out.

Sometimes our lives are just like that. We carry burdens like over-filled buckets in our hearts, our minds and our souls that wear us down, and with the least provocation, what we are carrying splashes out. These burdens may be doubts, misgivings, fears, guilt, suspicions, or any number of things that keep us from being at peace with ourselves and one another.

Even if you think you are pretty good at keeping your bucket from losing its load, why carry it unnecessarily? You don't get extra points for that.

In all the earth, what group of people should be the absolute best at making it easy for the weight of such burdens to be shared, or even be completely removed? Among what people should we feel the safest and actually be the safest, if we should let some of the water splash from our buckets?

Who but God's people? Is that you? Is it me? The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write to the churches of Galatia,

*Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ,*  
– Galatians 6:2

There it is. How do we fulfill the law of Christ? We bear each other's burden. Things may get a bit uncomfortable. Passions may arise. Strong feelings may come to the surface and we may not be used to such "unpleasantness." But what are we? Are we the Lord's saints, or are we just some nice religious folks? Toughen up, Buttercup.

The apostle had just written previously of the fruit of God's Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). How many of the Spirit's characteristics do we display when helping ease a brother's burden? Love? Patience? Kindness? Faithfulness? Gentleness? I'd say at the very least we are living out these five.

So let's welcome one another's buckets. It may be that by sharing them, we can, with God's help, rid ourselves of them completely.



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## Upcoming Events

Sunday, Dec. 4: Potluck luncheon after morning worship with a 12:45pm service in lieu of the 5pm service. Please bring a potluck dish/dessert to share.

Sat. Dec. 17: Monthly youth devo with a holiday activity. More details to come!

Sun. Dec. 18: White Elephant gift exchange after evening services. Please bring finger foods and a wrapped gift if you would like to participate in the exchange.

Sat. Feb. 4: MidTown will host Ladies Day with our sister Candice Starling as the speaker. Save this date Ladies!

Area Events (More info on the bulletin board in the hallway):

March 2-5, 2023: Arise and Overcome at South-west church of Christ.

## Prayer List

Prayer Requests:

Veronica Serenil who continues to recover from eye surgery.

Clifton Rutherford will be having thyroid removal surgery on Nov. 29th.

### Members

Jeff Cannady, Les Daltry, Kin and Sandra Marie, Ann Pantel, Veronica Serenil, Clark Withers, Dee Gilpatrick, Faye Henderson.

Annual Ladies Ornament exchange will be on Friday, Dec. 9th at 6:30pm at the home of Nia FitzSimmons, Please bring a wrapped ornament and finger foods.

Food Helpers for the month of Dec. - Team B.

## Service Roster

Week of November 27, 2022

### Sunday Morning

Scripture Reading.....Fred Scherffius  
Song Leader ..... Doug Jobs

Opening Prayer..... Steve Randle  
Closing Prayer..... Dan Fielder

### Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread..... Kevin Sheeran  
Cup..... Doug Jobs  
Offering.....Mike Atkinson  
Assist.....Jack Jobs  
Assist..... Willie Fossati  
Assist..... Luke FitzSimmons

### Sunday Evening

Song Leader ..... Kirk FitzSimmons

Opening Prayer..... Lupe Escojido  
Closing Prayer..... Bill York

Lord's Supper & Offering..... ... Doug Jobs,  
Kevin Sheeran

### Wednesday Evening

Adult Class ..... Brandon Starling  
Song Leader ..... Brandon Starling  
Devotional ..... Kevin Sheeran

### Other

Prepare Communion for Dec. .... Debra Sanchez

## Congregational News

### Birthdays

Les Daltry.....Nov.27  
Melanie Pantel.....Nov. 27  
June Fielder.....Dec. 1  
Jackie Rutherford.....Dec. 3

If you have any prayer requests or upcoming events to be announced, please contact our secretary, Nina Siegel, at (361) 573-0030 or email office.midtownchurch@gmail.com

## Our Elders

Mark FitzSimmons  
Ron White

## Our Deacons

James Cammock—Evangelism  
Lupe Escojido— Benevolence  
Bryant Siegel—Education and Finance

## Our Preacher

Brandon Starling

## Weekly Reading

“Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”  
Romans 1: 21

## Service Times

Sunday Morning Bible Class.....9:00 A.M.  
Sunday Morning Worship.....10:00 A.M.  
Sunday Evening Worship.....5:00 P.M.  
Wednesday Bible Class.....7:00 P.M.

## Attendance Records

Week of November 20, 2022

A.M. Bible Class.....70  
A.M. Worship.....96  
P.M. Worship.....66  
Wednesday Bible Class.....54

*Financial information is located on the bulletin board in the hallway.*

## Supported Works

John & Carla Moore *Bible Land Passages*  
B.K. York *Southwest School of Bible Studies*

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**midtown**  
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