

## **Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ SoM, Part 12: The Crux**

Thus far in the SoM, the Constitution of the Kingdom of heaven

- Beatitudes...  
characteristics of the King and the citizens of the Kingdom (v3-12)
- Salt and Light...  
the impact of citizens of the Kingdom on the citizens of the world (v13-16)
- I am come not to destroy but to fulfill the Law...  
the King is the Backbone/strength/satisfaction of the requirement of the Law (v17-19)

Next...Greater Righteousness

- The King's Righteousness
- The Righteousness needed for the citizens of the Kingdom
- Spirit of the Law vs Letter of the Law
- Regarding (Ch 5:21 – 7:14)
  1. Murder (Ch 5:21-26)
  2. Adultery (Ch 5:27-30)
  3. Divorce (Ch 5:31-32)
  4. Oaths/your word (Ch 5:33-37)
  5. Revenge (Ch 5:38-42)
  6. Love (Ch 5:43-48)
  7. Giving (Ch 6:1-4)
  8. Prayer (Ch 6:5-13)
  9. Forgiveness (Ch 6:14-15)
  10. Fasting (Ch 6:16-18)
  11. Money (Ch 6:19-24)
  12. Worry (Ch 6:25-33)
  13. Judgment (Ch 7:1-5)
  14. Life (Ch 7:6-14)

Between where we have been (5:3-19) and where we are going (Ch 5:21 – 7:14)...

v20 For:

The pivot point connecting where we have been and where we are going  
This verse is the hub in the SoM

- summarizes Ch 5:3-19 (why so important)
- introduces Ch 5:21 – 7:14

I say unto you:

Deut 18:18-19

Same authority as the prophets' "Thus saith the LORD"...but in Person!

your righteousness...exceed...scribes and Pharisees:

Righteousness is required to enter into the Kingdom of heaven

This verse hinges on "righteousness" – what is right and pleasing and acceptable to the holy God

To the primarily Jewish audience Jesus contrasts the righteousness required to enter the Kingdom of heaven with the greatest righteousness they know – that of the scribes and the Pharisees

- the scribes ("learned"): a profession, the scholars, the interpreters and instructors of the Law (representing knowing and teaching)
- the Pharisees ("separatists"): a sect of Judaism that was zealous to keep the Law (representing doing/practicing)
- the scribes and Pharisees: religious leaders of the Jewish people, the religious celebrities of the Jews

Josephus (a Pharisee): "A body of Jews who profess to be more religious than the rest, and to explain the laws more precisely."

v20 was a radical statement to His audience, a statement that undoubtedly blew their minds!

"How can we possibly be more righteous...more acceptable to God... than the scribes and the Pharisees?!"

How can our righteousness be superior to that of our leaders?!"  
("How can righteousness be superior to our righteousness?!")

The religious leaders, the scribes and Pharisees, believed

- they kept the Law, met the Legal Requirement of the Law (by their pains-taking observance/performance)
- they were NOT lawbreakers (keeping the strict Letter of the Law)

The scribes and the Pharisees were the Jewish “gold standard” for knowing, teaching, and practicing the Law of God

They knew, taught, and practiced even the most minute details of the Law, “righteous” far beyond any of the common folk

But Jesus is declaring to a bunch of common folk...

and to representatives of the scribes and Pharisees bird-dogging and keeping book on Him...

1. that the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was inadequate

a. to fulfill the Law’s legal requirement,  
to perfectly and completely satisfy God’s requirement,  
which He will develop as He continues to teach

- Ch 5:21
- Ch 5:27
- Ch 5:31
- Ch 5:33
- Ch 5:38
- Ch 5:43

b. inwardly...they had the wrong motives (Ch 6:1-18)

- for show or personal reward
- form vs content
- superficial vs substance

2. that an even greater righteousness is required to enter into the Kingdom of heaven...a righteousness

a. demanding a new relationship

- with God (Ch 6:1-18)...Table 1
- with others (Ch 5:21-48)...Table 2

b. demonstrated in heart-felt, genuine conduct

- toward God
- toward others

3. that the greater/superior righteousness that is needed (v6, 10) relates to Him (v17-18)

v20 is the crux (from whence comes “crucifixion”) of SoM

Greater Righteousness: horizontal (others) and vertical (God)

This Greater Righteousness is

- it is not of a greater quantity
  - not status quo for more people than scribes and Pharisees
  - not more of the same standard, an even more rigorous “keeping” of the Letter of the Law
  - the current gold standard is not good enough for anyone
- it is of a greater quality, a new gold standard
  - more than the existing standard
  - in keeping with the heart and will of the Father:
    - restoring the broken relationships
      - between Himself and His people
      - among His people, between themselves
    - so His people can live in one accord according to His heart

Such a righteousness is radically different than that of the scribes and Pharisees:

Ch 23:1-10, 13-16, 23, 25, 27, 29, 33

They were all about works...a show for public consumption

Their teaching and their interpretations of God’s Law were...theirs

This body of Jews that “explained the laws more precisely” were not “of the same cloth” as Ezra, the post-captivity priest

Ezra 7:10      Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

Neh 8:7b-8      caused the people to understand the law: and the people *stood* in their place. So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

With v19 in mind, the scribes and Pharisees failed

- to keep the “Spirit of the Law”, thereby misinterpreting the Law
- to keep the “weightier matters of the Law”...justice, mercy, and faith
- to “enter in” (Matt 19:16-22), far more concerned with wealth that blinded them to the heart of God
- to lead the people to God in that they refused to follow the heart of God, thereby leading many astray

Nothing new under the sun...v20 is a prophetic warning: the righteousness of

- Legalism/legalists when Gal 3:3
- celebrity pastors and Christian leaders
- Christian humanism/ists when read/teach books about the Bible (written by men) vs read/teach the Bible (written by God)
- Jesuits and the Pope...the 1<sup>st</sup> Jesuit Pope  
[*The Secret History of the Jesuits*]
  - Publisher's and Dr. Rivera's Introduction
  - impetus behind
    - Immaculate Conception in 1854
    - Papal infallibility in 1870
    - Politics: "The pope is our king" and bring all nations under his dominion
    - All nations send diplomatic corps to Vatican
    - (why Pope said what said this week re: Trump)

shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven:

First of 11 "enter in" sayings in Gospel of Matthew (written to the Jews)

a. 6 refer to the Kingdom

Ch 5:20  
Ch 7:21  
Ch 18:3  
Ch 19:23  
Ch 19:24  
Ch 23:13

b. 3 refer to Life

Ch 18:8  
Ch 18:9  
Ch 19:17

c. 2 refer to the joy of the Lord

Ch 25:21  
Ch 25:23

The Greater Righteousness needed to enter in the Kingdom of heaven is

- greater than the righteousness of the self-righteous, legalistic religious leadership
  - for show or personal reward
  - form vs genuine content
  - superficial vs substance
  - saying vs doing i.e. hypocrisy  
(Matt 23:1-36 in the “Spirit” of Ezk 34)
  - “heartless” (Jer 31:31, Ezk 36:25-27)
  - blinded them to the Identity, words, and work of Jesus Messiah

and

- a gift of God...who we are (status)
  - John 1:12
  - “in” Christ
  - partaker of His righteousness
  - our identity

and

- a responsibility of man...what we do (conduct)...  
acting in accordance with:
  - who we are – children of God, disciples/followers of Jesus Christ
  - where we are – in Christ, the True Vine
  - what we have – His righteousness, good fruit pleasing to the Father

Citizenship in the Kingdom of heaven comes with responsibility as well as privilege

The Greater Righteousness is both who we are and what we do

How do we attain the Greater Righteousness necessary to enter into the Kingdom of heaven?  
By investing our measure of faith in God's Gold Standard, Jesus Christ

1. Trust Jesus – receive His righteousness by faith

- Believe v3-19
- John 6:28-29
- Rom 1:16-17
- Rom 3:21-22
- Rom 10:1-4
- 2 Cor 5:17-21
- 1 Cor 1:30

2. Obey Jesus – be righteous

- John 14:21 To have and keep Jesus' commandments is to love Jesus
- John 14:23 and the Father Who sent Him, and to be loved by F/S
- John 15:14 you are My friends if do what I command (John 13:34)
- Matt 5:21 – 7:14
- James 1:22

Jesus didn't have much use for the outwardly religious, inwardly haughty

Phil 3:1-14 (written by a converted Pharisee after Acts 9)

Religion for show is offensive to our Lord

The only acceptable righteousness before God is His Gold Standard

The issue is our heart – where is it... Whose is it?

Starting next week: The Greater Righteousness...the heart of God, the heart of the Gospel