

Kingdom Manifesto

Studies in the Sermon on the Mount

Part 6 – Living Beyond Religion

Matthew 5.20

Most important things ever said – nothing more important in what Jesus taught than this verse

What is the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees (RSP)?

- It is self-righteousness
- Actions are ultimate (Matt. 23.25-26)
 - “I’m basically a good person” and “This is my Get Out of Hell Free card” (because I walked an aisle and prayed a prayer and got baptized)
 - Defining goodness by what I do (or don’t do) – whether I’m a rule-keeper or a rebel, I’m defining goodness by my action
- Appearances are everything (Matt. 23.27-28)
 - The inside betrays what the outside portrays (life and beauty v. death and decay)
 - “I am willing to paint over what’s killing me to keep up appearances”
- Religion is the place people run when they’ve lost the courage to be real
 - Isn’t authenticity / sincerity enough? It’s only half of virtue because you can be sincerely wrong
 - Self-determination is its own religion where people worship their desires, deny its consequences, and curse the disorder in their lives and in their world
 - “I determine my goodness by keeping the rules – whosever and whatever they are”

When is it surpassed?

- God’s kind of genuine goodness wins our hearts
- Transformation is ultimate (GOODNESS)
 - Radical shift in the heart – allegiance and affections are altered – deals with the real problems at the level at which they need to be dealt with
- Substance is everything (GENUINE)
 - Paper mache religion – form without substance

Why is this important?

- Because without it, we miss the Kingdom of the Heavens
 - We can live in our own kingdom or another kingdom (political, economic, relational, health, etc.) – but they don’t last and take more than they give
 - We can live in the *lie* the Kingdom is ours apart from genuine goodness, but not the *life* of the Kingdom
 - “I’ll just hold on until the end then repent”
 - “I’m sure me and God are okay”

- “I walked the aisle and prayed a prayer and was baptized...”
- We do not attain the wholeness God desires (Matt 5.48)
 - Whole without holes – think of this in light of His immediate audience!
- We are not permeated by love (Matt 22.37-40)

How does this happen? (Phil. 3.7-11)

- By faith in Jesus’ death
 - His death in my place purchased my forgiveness
- By faith in Jesus’ life
 - His life in my heart secures my freedom

Nobody ever got sad throwing away the trash – what is keeping you from trusting Him?

Questions for Discussion

1. In the sermon, we looked at Jesus’ description of self-righteousness described in the “woes” of Matthew 23. Take a moment and read the first several “woe” segments in that chapter. What are other ways He describes and defines the kind of self-righteousness He warns of in Matt. 5.20?
2. Do you find yourself more prone to religious self-righteousness or non-religious self-determination? How does that express itself typically in your life? Is there a relationship (other than God) that you find it affecting most?
3. Take a moment and scan the “real problems” that Jesus will address throughout the rest of Matthew 5. How would you describe them? How do you think Jesus’ version of transformation addresses them? How is His approach different than others? The same?
4. Reread Philippians 3.7-11. In your own words, what is Paul saying? What tie does Paul’s teaching have to Jesus’ teaching?
5. COVID Check in: how are you? Your family? Your neighbor? Your One?