

Sermon on the Mount

Lesson #6

“Kingdom Fullness” Part II

Matthew 5:20

Scripture: Philippians 3:7-11 *“7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”*

Introduction:

Do you know what a “Bench Mark” is?

Basically when your building any type of construction project, whether it is a house, or a sky scrapper, pond or a cement wall ...you want it to be level. You don't want to walk in your front door and feel like your scaling Mount Everest to get to your kitchen.

It is interesting that some folks have a hard time leveling anything. I was leveling something at the house one day when the boys were younger and one of the boys was helping me and I gave them the level and told them to level what ever it was. They had a big struggle because they didn't understand how to level something. They kept changing which end of the level they were moving.

To level anything there is one overall arching truth that cannot be overlooked. You have to have one fixed point. That fixed point must stay the same and it is called a bench mark.

Can you imagine what this floor in this building would look like if the men that built it leveled the east side of the building off the old sidewalk and leveled the west side of the building off the great big tree limb outside and leveled the north side of the building off the chain link fence behind the building.....It would be more crooked than all the politicians in Washington.

Transitional Statement:

Church the righteousness of God is kind of like a level, God tells us to make Jesus our stationary point and just worry about the other end of the level and to avoid the destructive illusion of trying to manage both ends of the level.

I. Matthew 5:20

20 "For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

A. First we should establish that true righteousness is basically the condition of a man that God finds acceptable.

B. Here Jesus looks to His disciples and tells them that if they are going to enter the kingdom of heaven, they must rise above the righteousness that is understood and taught by the Scribes and the Pharisees.

1. So we understand from what Jesus is saying that the Scribes and Pharisees approach to God wasn't going to get it.....basically they were lost in their approach to God!

C. So what was the Scribes and Pharisees approach to God?

1. Let's look at the Scribes first.

a. A scribe in the Old Testament was a person who:

1) Was part of the Kings direct administration serving as a secretary of sorts to keeping the tally sheets balance and even controlling access to the king. 2 Samuel 8:15-17

"So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered justice and righteousness for all his people. 16 Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the army, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder. 17 Zadok the son of Ahitub and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar were priests, and Seraiah was secretary(Scribe)."

2) Would muster the troops for battleJeremiah 52:25

"He also took from the city one official who was overseer of the men of war, and seven of the king's advisers who were found in the city, and the scribe of the commander of the army who mustered the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land who were found in the midst of the city."

3) Latter Hezekiah, king of Judah, had the ancient records transcribed for preservation Prov 25:1, which was most likely his scribes.

-Here as they copied and even edited the Law of Moses, they became well versed in many of its details.

b. Under the Old Covenant, the priests were suppose to be responsible for teaching and interpreting the Law.... Lev 10:8-11 & Deut. 33:8-10

- 1) But corruption in the priesthood had all but turned the peoples heads away by the end of Babylonian captivity.
- 2) After release from captivity it was a scribe who read God's word aloud to His people (Ezra) Neh chapters 8-10
 - a) It seems that by this time the scribes were looked to for understanding of the Law and its application.
- c. By the time of Christ the Scribes had gained such respect and position that their official interpretation of the Law had become more important than the Law itself.
 - 1) This position of strength allowed these early scribes to enforce their rules and practice them with binding authority.
 - 2) In short these scribes formulated rules for holy living out of their study and interpretation.
 - a) By this time tradition had become more weighty than God's word itself.
 - 3) Scribes were also referred to as teachers of the Law
- d. Apparently a large number of priests during the time of Christ also served as scribes.
 - 1) Where the desire for power and position seemed more important than the study of God's word.
- e. According to the traditions of the scribes there were "secrets" of interpretation, that weren't to be shared with everyone.
 - 1) It was an exclusive club
 - 2) They believed that God intended to leave the mass of people ignorant, giving understanding to only a few.
- f. The gospels refer to these scribes also as lawyers Matt 22:35; Luke 7:30 which seemed to carry the idea of being an (expert) in the Mosaic Law which governed Jewish life.
 - 1) Many Scribes were members of the Sanhedrin, which was the highest ruling counsel among the Jewish people.
 - a) These Scribes were often called rulers of the people
 - 2) And can you guess who presided over the Sanhedrin?.....The high priest who was usually a scribe.

- g. The Scribes often developed attitudes based on their professional privileges most often resulting in pride Matt 23:5-7
- h. Scribes were usually closely connected with the Pharisees.....Matt 5:20:12:38; Mark 7:5; Luke 6:7

- 1) Even called the Scribes of the Pharisees in Mark 2:16

2. Now lets talk about the Pharisees

- a. The Pharisees seemed to find their roots in a group of 2nd century B.C. Jews called the Hasidim. The Hasidim Jews were heavily influenced by the Greek culture and in many ways lived as Greeks. The Hasidim Jews were known for one thing in particular, and that was they insisted on strict observance of Jewish ritual (ceremonial) laws. This put their focus on what was seen by men.

- 1) Before the time of Christ they broke off into two groups, the Essences, which latter split off from the Jews and the Pharisees
 - 2) The Pharisees had gained much power and political clout and were also included in the Sanhedrin.

- b. The Pharisees by the time of Christ were known for their insisting that the law of God be observed as the scribes interpreted it .

- 1) This type of thinking held up man's opinion over the word of God and sought to suit the needs of the day with human wisdom. This lent to the making authoritative tradition rather than truth.
 - 2) This kind of thing reeks of our current relationship between Lobbyist and congressman.

- c. The Pharisees were also know for their special commitment to keeping the laws of tithing as well as ritual purity. Matt 23:23-26; Mark 7:1-13; Luke 11:37-42; 18:12

- 1. For money and what is seen by men.

- d. The Pharisees placed limits on their contacts with other Jews

- 1. Although they had to deal with the Sadducees they kept their distance.

- a) The Sadducees (also members of the Sanhedrin) believed only in strict observance of the Law of Moses and usually rose to power because of their wealth and position in society.

- 2. They couldn't eat in the home of a non Pharisee

3. And by mere definition the word Pharisees means separated ones.

1) Separated to the extent that they looked down on other people

Mark 2:16

16 When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to His disciples, " Why is He eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?"

Luke 7:36-39

36 Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. 37 And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, 38 and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner."

Luke 15:2

2 Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

Luke 18:11

11 "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

e. The Pharisees observed the Law carefully as far as appearance went, but their hearts were far from God.

Matthew 15:1-8

1 Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, 2 "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." 3 And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?

4 "For God said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,' and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH.' 5 "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God," 6 he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition. 7 "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you:
8 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS,
BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.

f. The Pharisees were basically hypocrites

Matthew 23:23

23 " Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe the mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.

Matthew 6:2

2 "So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

Matthew 6:5

5 "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

Matthew 6:16

16 " Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

Matthew 23:5-7

5 "But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. 6 "They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, 7 and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men.

*Their walk didn't match their talk

g. The Pharisees trusted in their own righteousness

Luke 18:9

9 And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: ...*Speaking of a Pharisee Verse 10

D. So Jesus is basically saying that right standing with God will not happen using the Scribes and Pharisees as your bench mark.

1. God wants real relationship with His people not religious bureaucracy.

2. And the only bench mark for God's people is Jesus.

a. Peter makes this clear in Acts 4:11

11 " He is the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, THE BUILDERS, but WHICH BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone.

b. Both the Scribes and the Pharisees wanted to control both ends of the level so-to-speak

Conclusion:

Jesus wants us to understand that to balance our lives spiritually we must put the other end of our level on Jesus which is the word of God John 1:1

Is Jesus your bench mark?

Do you take all the measurements for your life using Him as your standard?

Or do you try to find your boundaries in Scribal and Pharisaical tendencies

Maybe your trying to get God to fit your mold instead of fitting into His.

If we are to enter the Kingdom of heaven and keep our place there we must find our place with Jesus as our standard.