

# What Makes Your Christian Life Superior to the World?

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Matthew 5:17-20

**<sup>1</sup> What makes your Christian life superior to the world?**

**Let's look at our scripture today from Matthew, chapter 5, verses 17 through 20 to find out. <sup>2</sup>**

**Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. <sup>1</sup> <sup>3</sup>**

**Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>2</sup> <sup>4</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 5:17-18.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 5:19-20.

# **I. What was the Righteousness of the Scribes & the Pharisees?**

**What was the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees? <sup>5</sup>**

The word **righteousness** <sup>3</sup> here means “what is just”, right living in the sight of God and others. <sup>6</sup>

**Who were these people? <sup>7</sup>**

They were the teachers of the Law of Moses. The Scribe was a professional whose occupation was to hand copy the Law. They became recognized teachers because they knew it so well. <sup>8</sup>

The Pharisees were aristocratic laymen who prided themselves in knowing and obeying the Law “perfectly”. Their obedience boarded on the extreme. Because of their efforts, they were respected by everyone else in their culture. They are represented by the Hasidim today! <sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Δικαιοσύνη.



## **So, what was the Law?** <sup>10</sup>

**The Old Testament portion of our Christian Bible was God's Bible, His Law, for His people, the Jews. <sup>11</sup>**

**Our Lord said that not even “the smallest letter” or the “least stroke of a pen” would be changed. This is where we see the “jot” and “tittle” from the King James Version of our Bible. <sup>4</sup> <sup>12</sup>**

**The “Jot”, the Hebrew “Yodh” or “the smallest letter”, is demonstrated like this. From the words אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים is the letter י . <sup>13</sup>**

**The “Tittle” is seen in the words אֱלֹהִים אֱחָד where we have the letters ה and ח. Notice the separation in the second letter! <sup>14</sup>**

**The average Jew tried to obey this Law but couldn't! <sup>5</sup>**

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<sup>4</sup> Matthew 5:18, “Jot” from the Greek ἰῶτα and “tittle” from the Greek word κεφαία.

<sup>5</sup> Romans 9:31 - Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it.

**Our Lord Jesus, however, did fulfill the Law! Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>6</sup> As a result, you and I benefit from it! Colossians, chapter 2, verses 13 and 14, When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. <sup>16</sup>**

**That Law was used to lead us to the Lord! Galatians, chapter 3, verse 24, So the law was put in charge <sup>7</sup> to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. <sup>17</sup>**

**So, Romans, chapter 10, verse 4 could then say, Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. <sup>18</sup>**

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew 5:17.

<sup>7</sup> The King James Version of the Bible translates this, “became our schoolmaster”. The schoolmaster was the adult responsible for seeing that the children got to synagogue school each day.

Jeremiah said, thanks to the Lord's promise in establishing the New Covenant, that someday the Law would be written on your heart! <sup>8</sup>

The Scribes and the Pharisees represented the best life that could be lived under the Law. Yet, they fell so short! <sup>19</sup>

So, what makes your life superior to theirs? <sup>20</sup>

## II. Your Life has the Right Motivation

Your life has the right motivation. <sup>21</sup>

The motivation of the Pharisees was the praise of men. <sup>22</sup>

When they gave an offering, they made sure everyone knew it! <sup>9</sup> <sup>23</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Jeremiah 31:33 - "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts."

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 6:2 - "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.



When they prayed, they made a big production of it! This was shown in Matthew, chapter 6, verses 3 and 4, **And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. When you pray for the admiration of men instead of God, that is as far as your prayer goes!** <sup>24</sup>

When they fasted, they wanted everybody to know how much they were suffering. <sup>10</sup>

So, their righteousness was a show for men instead of a real commitment to God! <sup>25</sup>

**Your motivation must be for the praise of God!**

Lord Jesus tells you in Matthew, chapter 6, verse 6, to make your giving a matter between you and the Lord

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<sup>10</sup> Matthew 6:2 - "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

only. <sup>11</sup> He illustrated what He meant by pointing out that a poor widow made a larger offering with two pennies than the rich people did with a large bag of silver coins because she gave all she had! <sup>12</sup> <sub>26</sub>

Lord Jesus tells you in Matthew, chapter 6, verse 6, to make your prayers a personal petition to the Father. <sup>13</sup> He told the story of a tax collector who was forgiven by God because he was repentant and asked for forgiveness. In contrast, a Pharisee, supposedly the good guy, prayed (loudly) telling the Father all about his good deeds! <sup>14</sup> <sub>27</sub>

Lord Jesus tells you in Matthew, chapter 6, verses 17 and 18, to make your fasting a personal matter, **But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are**

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<sup>11</sup> Matthew 6:3-4 - But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

<sup>12</sup> Mark 12:41-44.

<sup>13</sup> Matthew 6:6 - But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

<sup>14</sup> Luke 18:9-14.



fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Freshen up. Comb your hair. Dress normally. <sup>28</sup>

Next thing that makes your Christian life superior to the world is . . .

### III. Your Life has the Right Nature

Your life has the right nature. <sup>29</sup>

**The good deeds a Pharisee did** were often openly displayed to be seen by men. They would even tithe the plants in their gardens to keep the Law to the letter. The Lord said they would **strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!** <sup>15</sup> <sub>30</sub>

**Your good deeds** should be demonstrated from your inward Christian attitudes, not for open display.

When selecting David to be king of Israel, Samuel was told, **Man looks at the outward appearance, but the**

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<sup>15</sup> Matthew 23:24.

**Lord looks at the heart.** <sup>16</sup> The fruit of the Spirit developed and demonstrated in your life means more to God than mere church attendance! <sup>31</sup>

The final thing that makes your Christian life superior to the world is . . .

## **IV. Your Life has the Right Source**

Your life has the right source. <sup>32</sup>

**The source for the Pharisee** was the Old Testament Law and its corresponding traditions. <sup>33</sup> But Galatians, chapter 2, verse 16 says this source no longer justifies. <sup>17</sup> <sup>34</sup> Matthew, chapter 23, verse 3 says that the Pharisees didn't even obey the Law that they had very well! <sup>18</sup> <sup>35</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> I Samuel 17:7.

<sup>17</sup> Galatians 2:16 - a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

<sup>18</sup> Matthew 23:2-3 - The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.

**Your source** is the Lord's sacrifice on the cross! Romans, chapter 3, verses 21 through 24 reads, **But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.**

**You are considered righteous not because of your good behavior but because of what Lord Jesus did for you!** <sup>36</sup>

**Have no doubts that you are pleasing to God. When you trust Lord Jesus for your right relationship to God, you are fitting right in with His plan for your life!**

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