

Surpassing Righteousness - Matthew 5:17-20

- A. Have you ever been at a job and watched someone in a position above you work, & the more you saw their work you thought, “If I were given that position, I would...” “I could make things better...” “If they would put me in that position, I would surpass what we’re doing now...”
- B. As a Christian, you have that opportunity... If you have ever cringed at hypocrisy and have become frustrated with how people are living.. Here is your challenge. Listen to the lesson Jesus teaches on surpassing righteousness...
- C. There is a contrast here, not in Jesus establishing something different than that law, but how two people approach the law... One corrupts the law with self-righteousness, the other reveres the law in fulfilling it, even the least of what is said...
- D. The Pharisees had a righteousness of their own (**Rom 10:1-3**), one which boasted in the law and they could teach it, but it lacked application (**Matt 23:1-4; Rom 2:17-24**)....
- E. The Pharisees would talk about murder and forget the hatred, animosity, bad feelings, and ugly rumors... They would avoid adultery, but they would not mind watching it... They would fast and pray in front of anybody, but were not drawn to God.
- F. In Jesus, as the “righteousness of God”, we have one who fulfills the commands of the law, and we need to give the same reverence to all that God has said... Obedience to His commands are an extension of what was emphasized in the Old Testament in **Deut 6:5**, “*love the Lord your God with all...*”
- G. A great way to distinguish between Pharisee righteousness and righteousness in the Lord is the statement “*ye have heard*” followed by “*but I say...*” which is often used in the sermon on the mount.
- H. A lot of Christians have a zeal for doing what they want to do. That is the righteousness we need to get rid of in the church. We need to know God’s righteousness and look not at his commands as “*grievous*”, or “*burdensome*”, but look at them as a privilege out of love in our heart (I Jn 5:3).
- I. Surpassing righteousness is all about pleasing the Lord and being excellent rather than average....

1. Pleasing God Must Be The Highest Priority

- A. Jeremiah 9:23,24 We need to understand and know God... It is not what I want, not what I enjoy that matters, it is all about what pleases God...
- B. Ephesians 5:8-10 states that we should be children of light, because God is light (1 Jn 1:5), “*proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord*” (v.10)...
- C. Jesus pleased his Father (Jn 8:29; 12:27,28; 17:4), and so should we (Col 3:17, 1 Cor 10:31).
- D. We are reminded that “*they that are in the flesh cannot please God*” (Rom 8:8). God does not want anything wedged between Him and us (2 Cor 6:14 - 7:1)...
- E. Remember 2 Cor 5:9, “*Therefore we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him*” There is no higher priority...

2. Being Excellent, Not Average

- A. It is amazing the people who are impressed with statistics... They are interested in averages (batting averages, number of times people eat out per month, hrs. of TV watch per week, etc.)
- B. Being average may be acceptable to the world, but it is NOT for the disciple! Example: The church at Laodicea (Rev 3:14-16).
- C. Being average means half the people are better than you, half the people are worse than you, and that means you are the best of the sorry of the sorry of the best... To surpass righteousness, average is unacceptable (Mt 5:20, “*no wise enter the kingdom of heaven*”)...
- D. Average is “conforming”. Excellence “transforming” (Romans 12:2).
- E. **EXCELLENCE** is our admonition (**Phil 1:9,10**)...
- F. Who do you look for in the scriptures if you want to be the best Christian? The Pharisees? lukewarm

- Aaron? doubting Thomas? fearful talent man? shaky Peter (which most of us are like)? Gullible Eve?
- G. Why not look at Job (**Job 1:1**), Hananiah (**Neh 7:2**), Moses (**Num 12:3**), Enoch (**Gen 5:24**), a woman like **Prov 31:10-31**, a man like **1 Tim 3:1-7**???. These are excellent people, not average. The Bible teaches that Christians are not like everybody else. As is often the case, the true picture of righteousness is ruined because Christians have failed to show excellence, but rather show the average...
- H. Excellent people are **Matt 5:13,14**, **Phil 2:15**, **Tit 2:14**, and **1 Pet 2:9,10**. They are people who live godly, righteously, soberly while in the world (**Tit 2:12**)....

3. Where Does the Christian Need Excellence?

- A. **OCCUPATION** - The disciple must be MORE diligent, MORE honest, MORE faithful in every part of his/her occupation... *"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might"* (Ecc 9:10).. Every day, every hour, every minute, do your best, to the glory of God (Col 3:17)... Be good at what you do. Try hard at what you do. Appreciate what you can do...
- B. Being excellent is not necessarily being the boss, though excellence can lead to that... Your responsibility is stated in Eph 6:5-8. Excellent work is not just when the boss is around, but when God's around, which is all the time, *"with good will"*.... Knowing that whether you are the boss or the employee, God is going to give the final check...
- C. **MORALS** - Christians are not to be average morally... Average is being like everybody else... Morality is not determined by numbers, votes, or polls, but on average most things are determined to be moral based on the numbers of participants... No matter how many watch it, wear it, say it, or go to it, it does not determine what I should do...
- D. The excellency of a Christian related to morals is to come out of that garbage (**2 Cor 6:17**) and show what is the better way to live, *"perfecting holiness in the fear of God"* (**7:1**)... If you are tired and frustrated with the hypocrisy and ugly behavior, what **DO** ye **MORE** than others in your morals??
- E. **MARRIAGE** - A psychiatrist reports that 5 - 10% of all marriages enjoy a good relationship. That proves most marriages are average.
- F. There should not be a more enjoyable human relationship than two people who are Christians in marriage. It is not an existence. It is to be and excellent relationship... Unless the Lord builds the house, your marriage will not be excellent (**Ps 127:1; Prov 24:3,4**)... No Christian should want anything less or accept anything less of their marriage than excellence...
- G. If you' have a relationship that exists off of arguments, fussing, smart remarks, silence, selfishness, and you are wondering how much longer do I have to live with this person, then you are not letting God build the house... Excellent marriages are made when each man and woman pays attention to what God says the man and the woman should be to each other in marriage...
- H. Two ways your marriage becomes excellent: (1) **Commitment to Grow** - Make solid the vow of staying together for life, with respect, appreciation, and desire to grow together... (2) **Communication** - The average couple will build walls as thick as the walls of Jericho. If your marriage cannot confess its faults (**Jas 5:16**), it is not excellent... If it cannot speak the truth in love (**Eph 4:15**), it is not excellent... If it cannot share decision-making, but criticizes a decision made, your marriage is not excellent...
- I. An excellent marriage talks often with purpose. It wants to know, to understand, to help, and to strengthen. What **DO** ye **MORE** than others in your marriage?
- J. If you are part of the average crowd, get out of it. Repent. Prove what is the *"good and acceptable and perfect will of God"* (**Rom 12:2**)... Surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees by respecting the law, show the excellencies of God, come to the top, approve of and do the better things, do more than others, do not be afraid to be different, and work in proportion to your ability....
- K. What is necessary to be righteous and excellent is often hardest. Therefore people say, "If I can enjoy doing it. I'm not going to do it".. Being righteous is tough because of sacrifice, godly sorrow, repentance, guilt, admission of sin, losing self, etc., but the promise God gives to those who want to be right are blessings in Christ (Eph 1:3)...