

# The Weightier Matters

(Justice, Mercy and Faithfulness)

## Introduction

### Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:16-20

- 1. The Pharisees were accused by Jesus for neglecting the “weightier provisions of the law.”**

Matthew 23:23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: **justice and mercy and faith**. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

- 2. We are told that our righteousness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees.**

Matthew 5:20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness **exceeds** the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, **you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven**.

## Who Are These Pharisees?

- 1. These individuals are ones that associated themselves with the “Law” in order to observe it strictly.**
  - A. The priests and scribes determined the inner development of Israel after the captivity.**
    - 1) From the priests came a party known as the Sadducees and from the scribes came a party known as the Pharisees.**

2. **The Pharisees had the greatest influence upon the congregations of their day, to include all acts of public worship, prayers, and sacrifices.**
  - A. **They made sure these things were performed according to their injunctions.**
3. **Their Teachings:**
  - A. **They taught that “every soul is imperishable, but that only those of the righteous pass into another body, while those of the wicked are, punished with eternal torment.”**
  - B. **They taught the existence of Angels and spirits.**

Acts 23:8 For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both.

- C. **They teach that everything depends on fate and on God, and that doing of good is the affairs of man - but fate also cooperates in the transaction.**
  - D. **They looked at politics from a religious point of view.**
    - 1) **Only when their practice of the law in their strict manner was prevented, did they gather together to oppose it.**
4. **Their Practices:**
    - A. **Pharisees avoided non-Pharisees because they were considered “unclean.”**
      - 1) **This is why they had a serious problem with Jesus associating with sinners.**  
**Mark 2:14-17**

- 5. According to history there were seven different kinds of Pharisees:**
- A. The Shechemite Pharisee:**
- 1) He simply keeps the law for what he can profit from it. (As Shechem submitted to circumcision to obtain Dinah — Genesis 34:19).**
- B. The Tumbling Pharisee:**
- 1) To appear humble, he always hangs down his head.**
- C. The Bleeding Pharisee:**
- 1) In order not to see a woman, walks with his eyes closed, and therefore is wounded when he runs into walls.**
- D. The Mortar Pharisee:**
- 1) Wears a mortar shaped cap to cover his eyes so that he will not see any impurities or indecencies.**
- E. The What-am-I-yet-to-do Pharisee:**
- 1) This one, not knowing much about the law, as soon as he has done one thing, asks, “What is my duty now? and I will do it.” (As in Mark 10:17)**  
**Mark 10:17-22**
- F. The Pharisee from fear:**
- 1) Keeps the law because he is afraid of future judgment.**

**G. The Pharisee from love:**

- 1) **Who obeys the Lord because he loves him with all his heart (These Pharisee's were rare).**

**Comparing Pharisaim and Christianity**

1. **The Pharisee was so focused on keeping every letter of the law, that something higher than its letter was completely overlooked.**
  - A. **Therefore, while strictly adhering to the letter, "Thou shalt not kill," they regarded anger and all hasty passion as legitimate.**  
**Matthew 5:17, 21-22**
2. **Jesus' aim was to call men to the law of God as the supreme guide of life.**
  - A. **The Pharisees multiplied minute precepts and distinctions to the extent that Israel was being burdened by instructions so numerous that the law was almost completely lost sight of.**  
**Matthew 12:1-13**

Mark 7:2-4 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, **they found fault**. For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, **holding the tradition of the elders**. When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are **many other things which they have received and hold**, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

- 3. Jesus' aim was to teach men that true piety consisted not in forms, but in substance.**
  - A. Not in the outward observances, but in an inward spirit**
  - B. Not in small details, but in great rules of life.**
    - 1) Pharisaic piety led to exactly the opposite conclusions.**
      - a. Under their influence, the "weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith" were undervalued and neglected!**

Luke 11:42 But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

- 4. Religion should be in man's heart - Not existent in the Pharisee.**  
**Luke 11:37-41**
  - A. Vain and trifling questions took the place of serious inquiry into the great principles of duty!**

Matthew 19:3 The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?"

Matthew 19:7-8 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

**5. The Pharisees sought mainly to attract attention and excite the admiration of men, while Jesus was teaching humbleness and lowliness.**

Matthew 6:2 Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you **as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets**, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

Matthew 6:16 "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For **they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting**. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

Matthew 23:5-6 **But all their works they do to be seen by men.** They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues,

**6. The Pharisees regarded the degraded classes of society as classes to be shunned, not to be won over to the right.**

Luke 7:39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, **for she is a sinner.**"

Luke 15:2 And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "**This Man receives sinners and eats with them.**"

**7. The Pharisees devoted their energies to making converts to their own narrow views.**

Matthew 23:15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, **you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.**

## Conclusion

### 1. Jesus did not think much of these kind of Pharisees.

#### A. They were not interested in the inward, only the outward.

- 1) Therefore, they had a hard time comprehending Jesus' teaching over their personal practices.

### 2. Our righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees

Matthew 5:20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

#### A. Ours must come from the heart.

Romans 6:17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

Romans 10:9-10 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

#### B. We must have a desire as well as a requirement.

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

#### C. We must do everything we do as service to the Lord out of love; because the "word of faith" is in our hearts (Rom 10:8).

### 2. Are we all keeping these "weightier matters" of the Word today?

