

## Fulfilled: Exceeding Righteousness

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Matthew 5:20

### Opening Discussion:

1. When you think of really righteous or holy people, who comes to mind?
2. If someone told you that going to heaven meant being more righteous than the most righteous people you know, how would that make you feel?
3. What are some ways people respond to moral standards they can't live up to?
4. What does it look like for our righteousness to exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees?

Our \_\_\_\_\_ will never be \_\_\_\_\_ to earn the favor of God, but those who place their faith in Jesus will become \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ righteous.

### Explore the Passage

#### 1. Unless your \_\_\_\_\_ exceeds . . .

- Righteousness: rightness or right standing before God
- Exceeds: goes over and above, goes beyond

#### 2. That of the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ . . .

- Scribes: professional scholars who copied, memorized, and taught Scripture.
- Pharisees: a conservative religious and political part who were committed to the Hebrew Scriptures and for the most part taught the law correctly.

*The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you.*

#### **Matthew 23:2-3**

*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. **Matthew 23:23***

- It can be easy for us to dismiss the Scribes as Pharisees as hypocrites with only an exterior righteousness, but the truth is, that often describes us.

#### 3. You will never enter the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

- This is a serious and eternal matter.
- How, then, can anyone enter the Kingdom of Heaven?

**19** Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. **20** For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. **21** But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— **22** the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, **25** whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. **26** It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. **27** Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. **28** For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. **Romans 3:19-28**

- Matthew 5:20 is written to help us see our need for \_\_\_\_\_ righteousness and to help us understand the \_\_\_\_\_ righteousness God then calls us to live out.
- Because we cannot be righteous, we come to God for mercy and grace. Through mercy and grace, God counts us as righteous and then goes about the task of making us who we never could not be in the first place.

### **Fill in the Blank Answers:**

#### **Opening Discussion**

Our best will never be enough to earn the favor of God, but those who place their faith in Jesus will become truly and completely righteous.

#### **Explore the Passage**

Righteousness, Scribes, Pharisees, Kingdom, Heaven

Matthew 5:20 is written to help us see our need for external righteousness and to help us understand the internal righteousness God then calls us to live out.