

Exceeding Righteousness



- Matthew 5:20

Who is the most
righteous
person you know?



- Think of most righteous person you know....
 - David?
 - Abraham?
 - Daniel?
 - Job?
 - Noah?
- Ezekiel 14:14 (ESV) 14 even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord God.

Who is the most
righteous
person you know?



- Jews at time of Jesus: Pharisees and Scribes

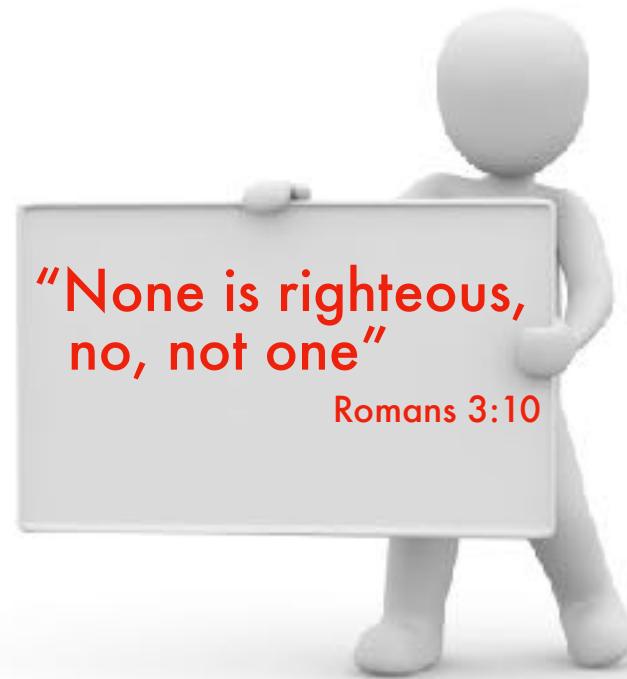
For I tell you, unless your **righteousness**
exceeds that of the scribes and
Pharisees, you will never enter the
kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:20

- Matthew 5:20: For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
- This would have been a radical, shocking statement for the Jews listening to Jesus.

Who is the most
righteous
person you know?

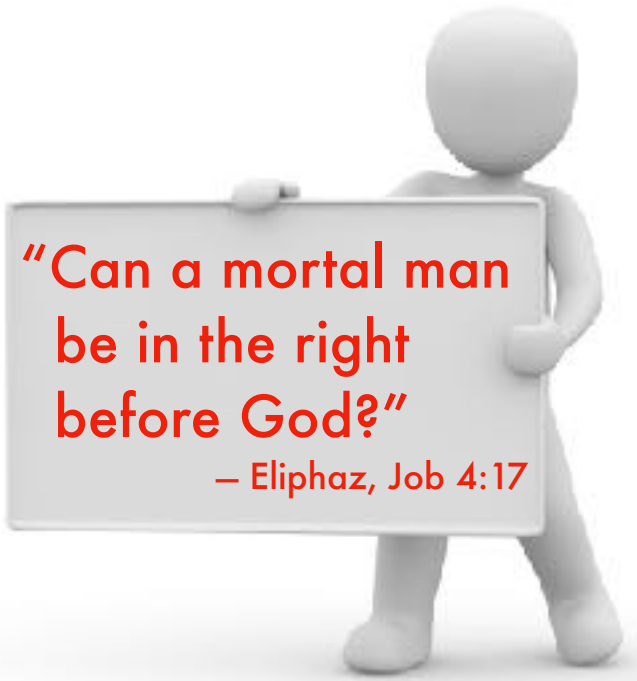
**"None is righteous,
no, not one"**
Romans 3:10



- Romans 3:10-12 (ESV) 10 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

Who is the most
righteous
person you know?

**"Can a mortal man
be in the right
before God?"**
— Eliphaz, Job 4:17

A 3D white figure, resembling a stylized person, is standing and holding a large white rectangular sign. The figure is positioned to the right of the main text, and the sign it holds contains the quote from Job 4:17.

- Eliphaz: Job 4:17-19
 - Can mortal man be in the right before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker? 18 Even in his servants he puts no trust, and his angels he charges with error; 19 how much more those who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed like the moth.

Who is the most
righteous
person you know?

**"How then can a
man be in the
right before
God?"**

— Bildad, Job 25:4



- Bildad: Job 25:4-6
 - How then can man be in the right before God? How can he who is born of woman be pure 5 Behold, even the moon is not bright, and the stars are not pure in his eyes; 6 how much less man, who is a maggot, and the son of man, who is a worm!"

Who is the most
righteous
person you know?

**"How then can a
man be in the
right before
God?"**

— Bildad, Job 25:4



- The kingdom of heaven must be completely out of reach for most people!
 - Such righteousness (they would think) is utterly unattainable!

The Righteousness of the Pharisees

- the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees
 - must be in mindset of people Jesus spoke to
 - Scribes and Pharisees highly respected for their commitment to keeping God's law -- it is all that they did
 - to exceed their righteousness was presumptive
 - How could anyone do that (and live normal life)?

Outwardly Beautiful!



- Matthew 23 (woes, but consider from Jews' perspective)
 - We see them as scowling and angry all the time, testing Jesus
 - vs. 27: outwardly beautiful, righteous
 - inwardly full of hypocrisy and lawlessness



- 1. v. 3: Preach
- 2. vs. 5: do deeds (prayers, alms, fasting)
- 3. vs. 5: broad phylacteries and long fringes
- 4. vs. 6: places of honor at feasts
- 5. vs. 6: best seats in synagogues
- 6. vs. 7: rabbi
- 7. vs. 15: travel sea and land to make proselyte
- 8. vs. 23: tithe mint, dill, cumin
- 9. vs. 29: build tombs, decorate monuments to righteous: wouldn't kill prophets



- The Scribes and Pharisees
 - wanted, above everything, to be righteous
 - therefore strove to keep law perfectly, as defined by scribes
 - This was not the problem with the pharisees


I thank you

I am not like other men

I fast

I tithe of all that **I** get

— extortioners
— unjust
— adulterers
— tax collector



Luke 18:9-12

- The Problems of the Pharisees
 - picture of Pharisee - Lk. 18.9-12
 - “trusted in themselves that they were righteous”
 - trusted = persuaded, convinced
 - not like other men
 - not an extortioners, unjust, adulterers, tax collector
 - fast twice a week, tithe of all
 - “I” (self-glorifying, not God-glorifying)

I thank you


I am not like other men

I fast

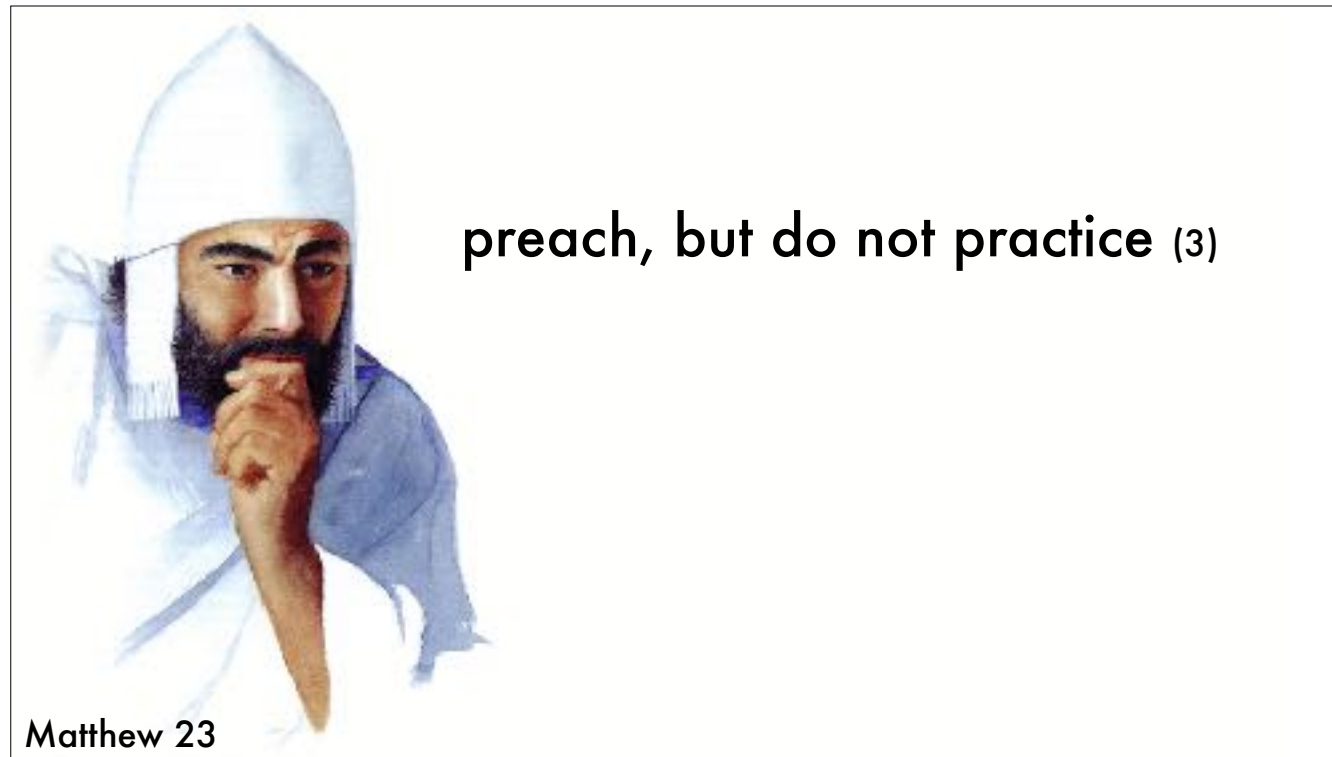
I tithe of all that **I** get

— extortioners
— unjust
— adulterers
— tax collector

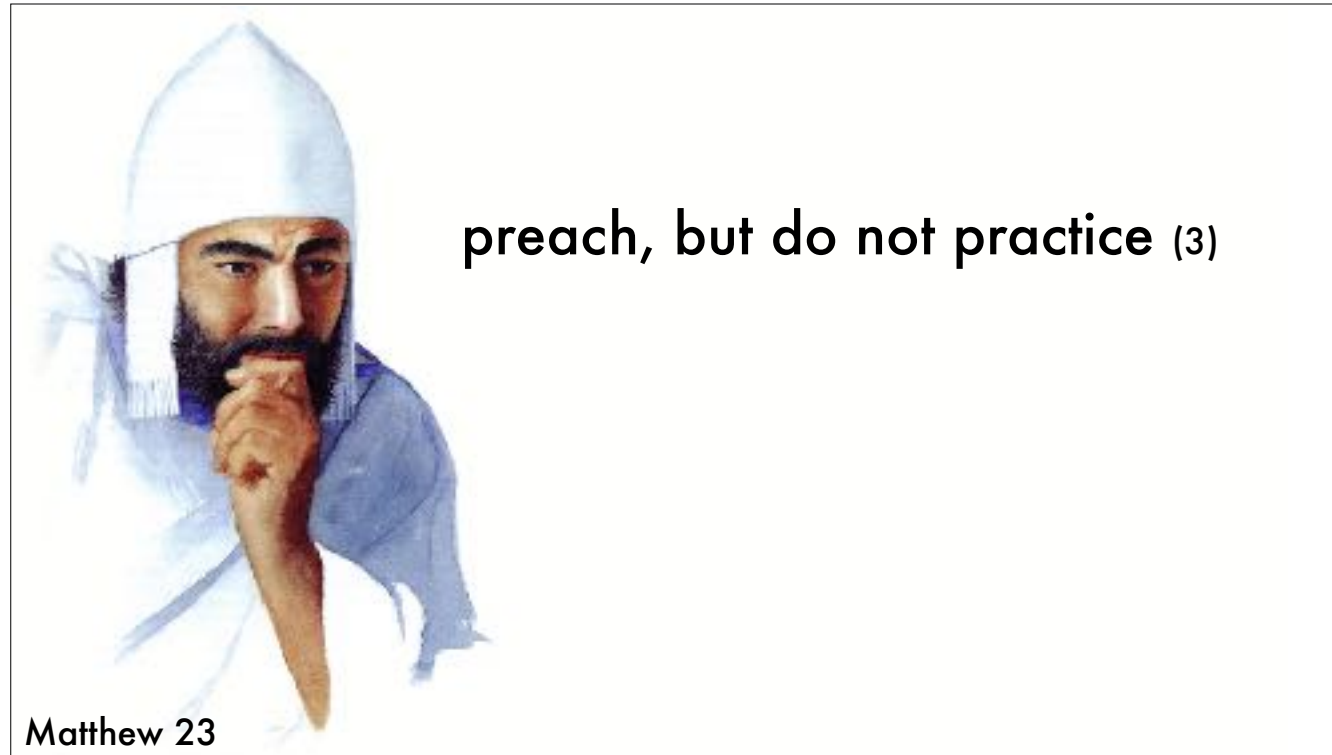
Luke 18:9-12



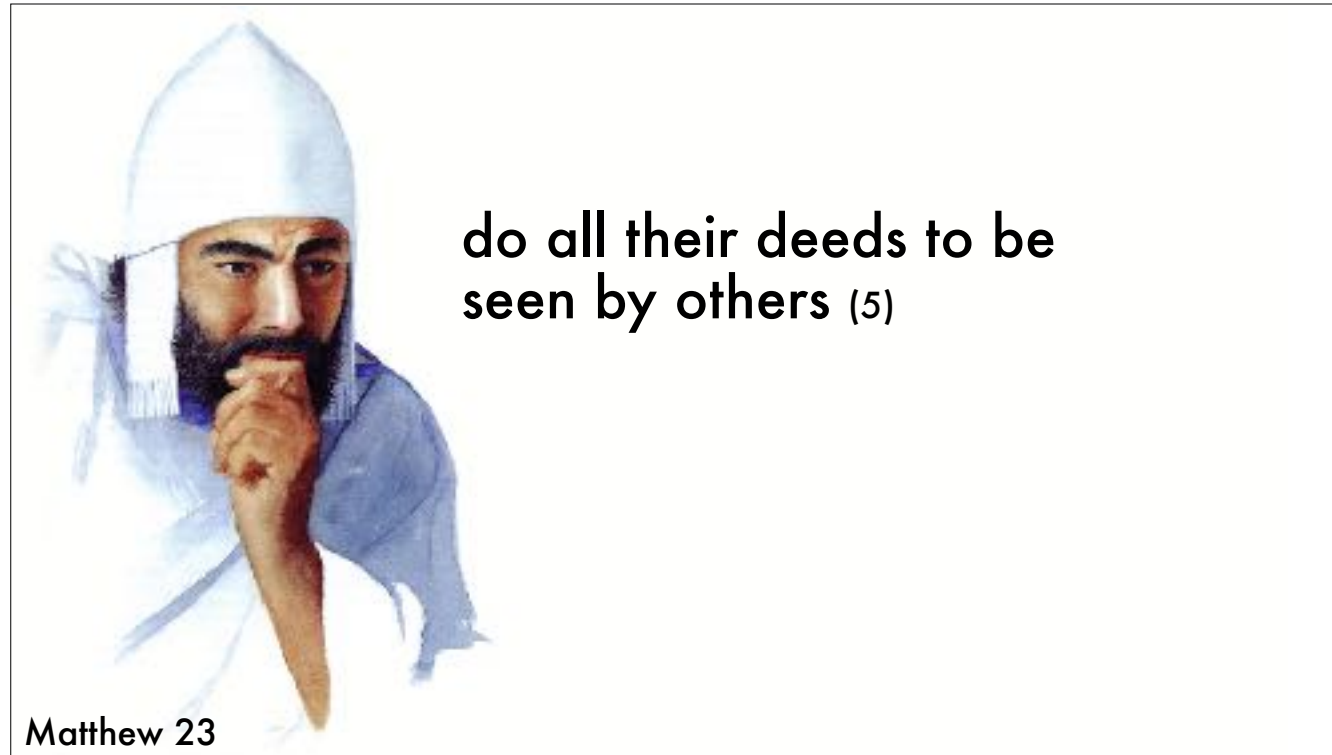
- Contrast with Character Jesus described
 - Seen of men -- loudly
- God, be merciful to me a sinner.
- Mt. 6:9-13



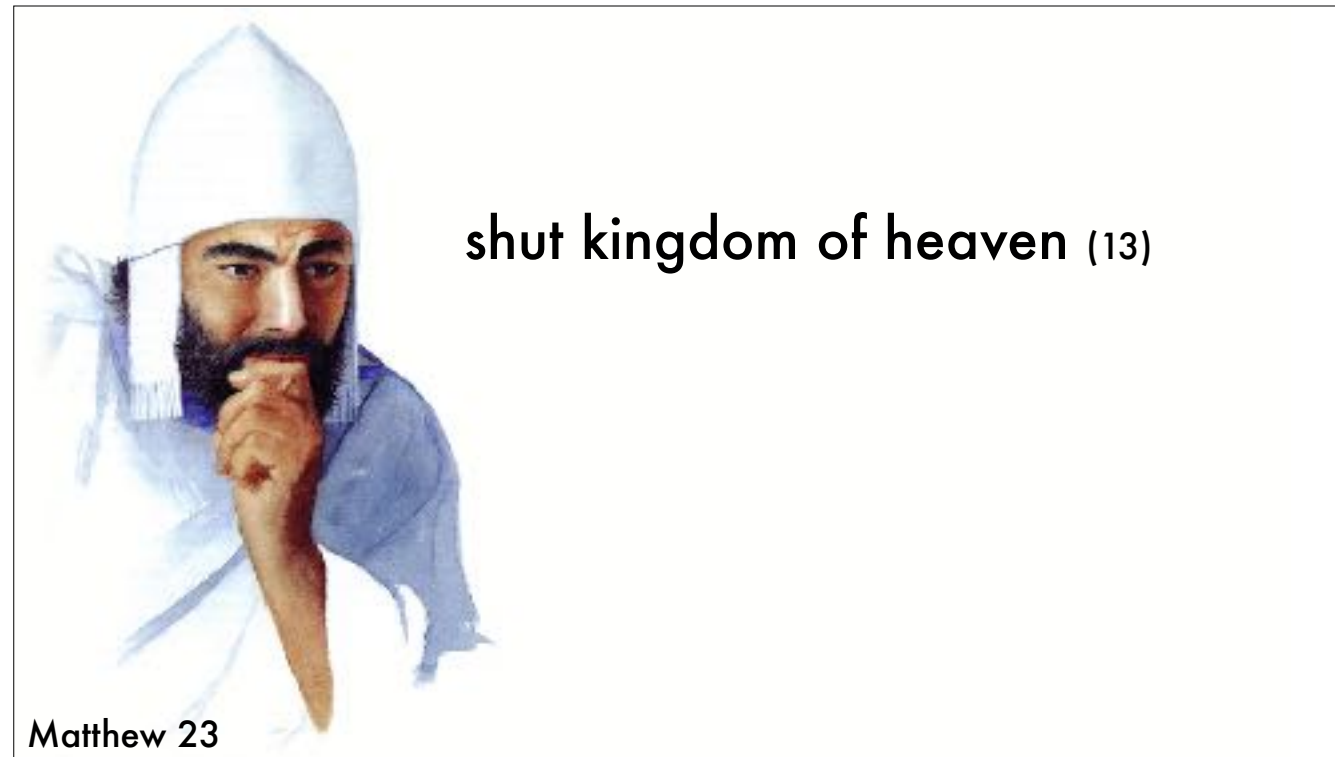
- Don't practice what they teach (2-4)
 - Matthew 23:2-4: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, 3 so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. 4 They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger."



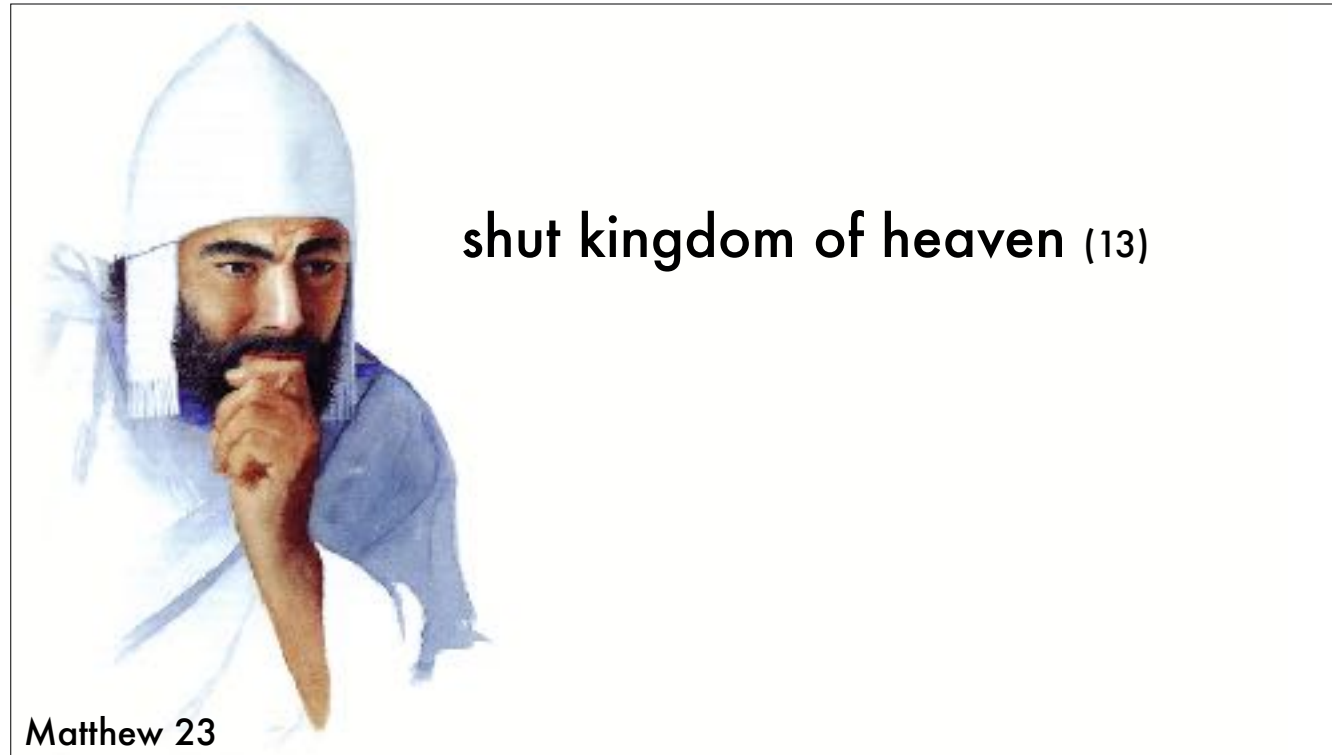
- teach tradition as doctrine - Matthew 15:6 (make word of God void)
- lowered the standards of the law; nullified important aspects of law
- made law easier in some ways
- impossible in others
 - esp. if not full time job; "ordinary" people couldn't do it
- Jesus warned about "relaxing" the least commandments and teach (Matthew 5:19)



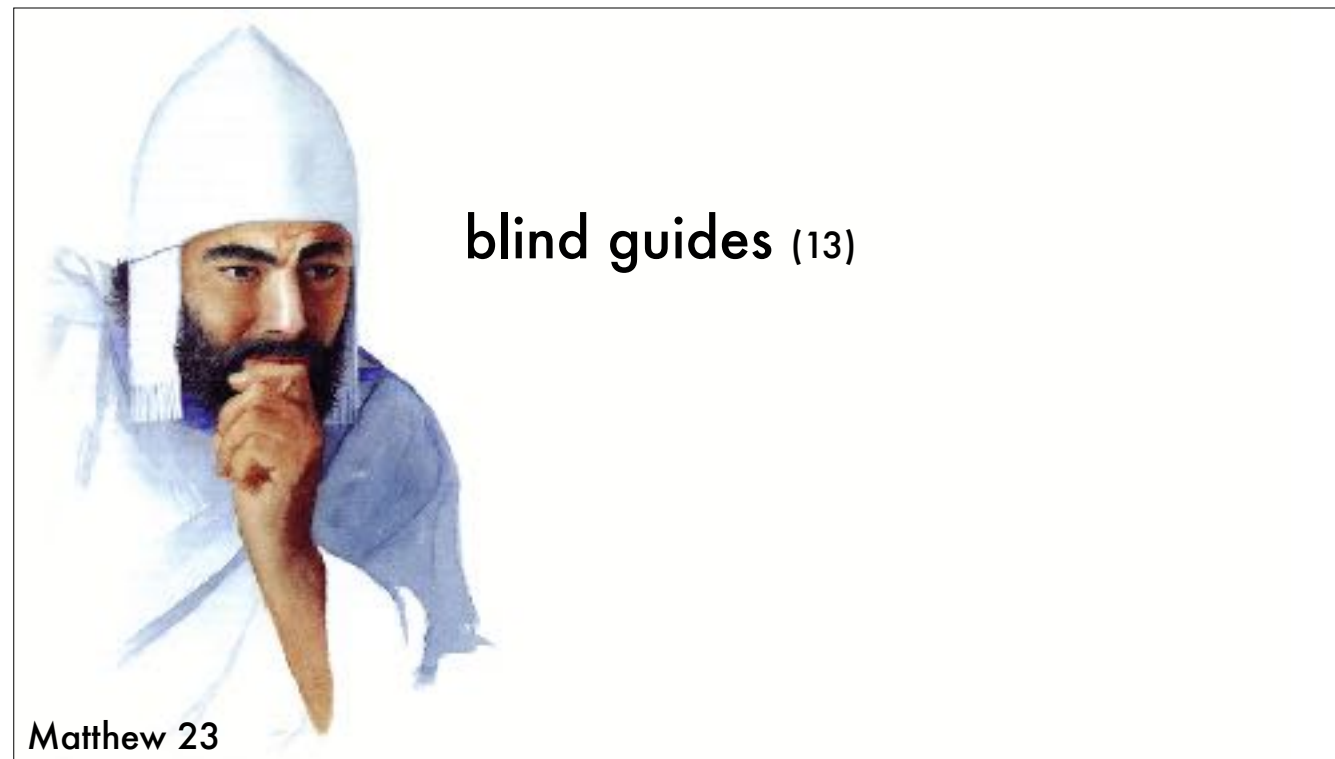
- do all deeds to be seen by others (5)
- glory from men
- External conformity
 - dress in a way that shows their status
 - sit in places that shows their piety
 - like to be honored by special titles
- pride — greatest, exalts himself



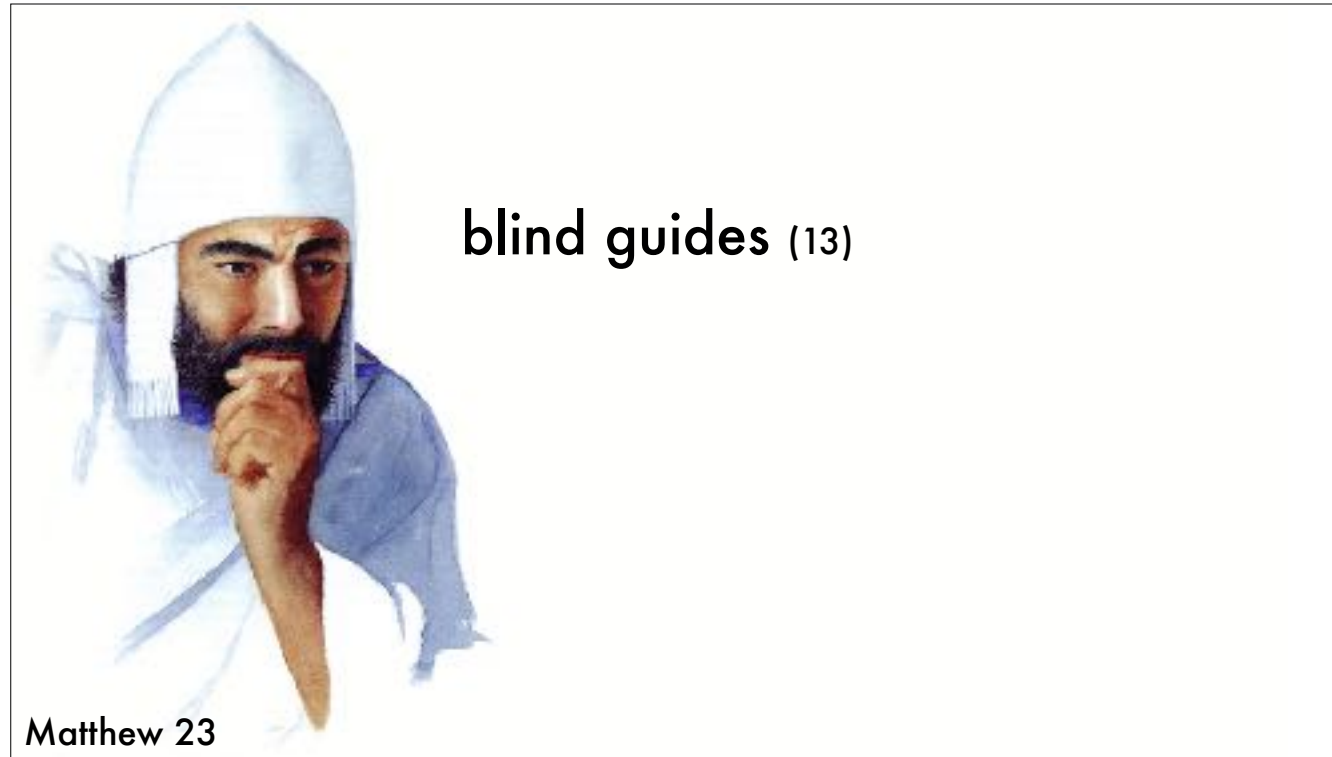
- shut kingdom of heaven (13)
 - Matthew 23:13-15 (ESV) 13 “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. 15 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.



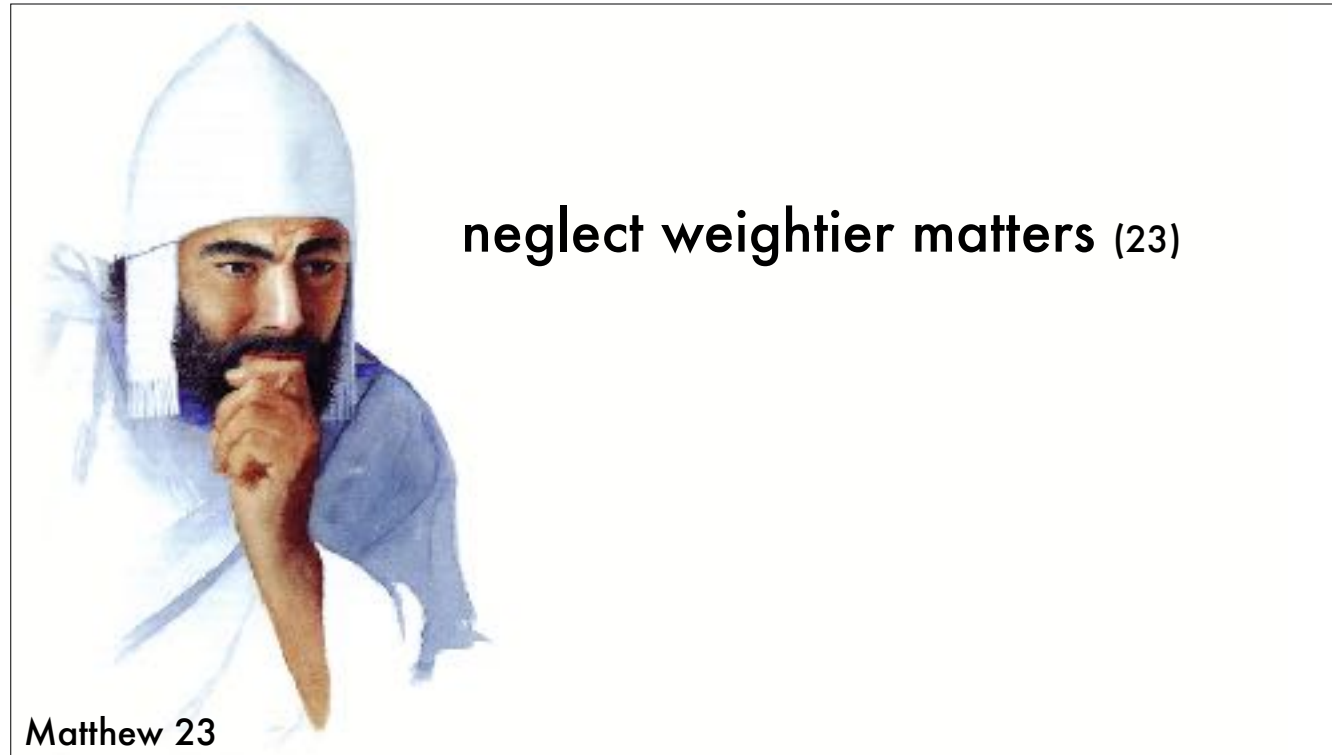
- instead of helping people to know God, they prevent it
- teaching was about their traditions, not the word of God
- own righteousness - Rom. 10.3
- This helps us understand why Jesus' teaching is so radical, he's opening the door to the kingdom of heaven!



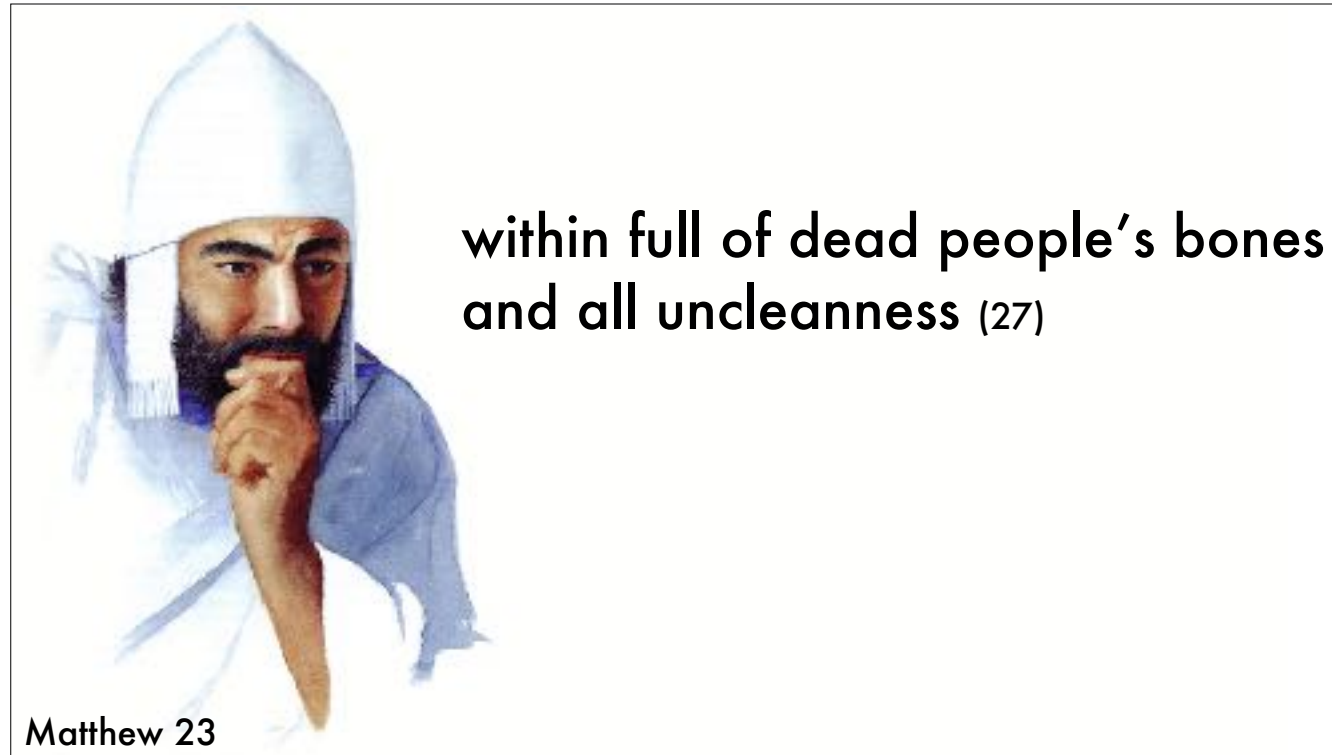
- Blind guides (13)
 - Matthew 23:16-22 (ESV) 16 “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ 17 You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? 18 And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ 19 You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? 20 So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. 21 And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. 22 And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.



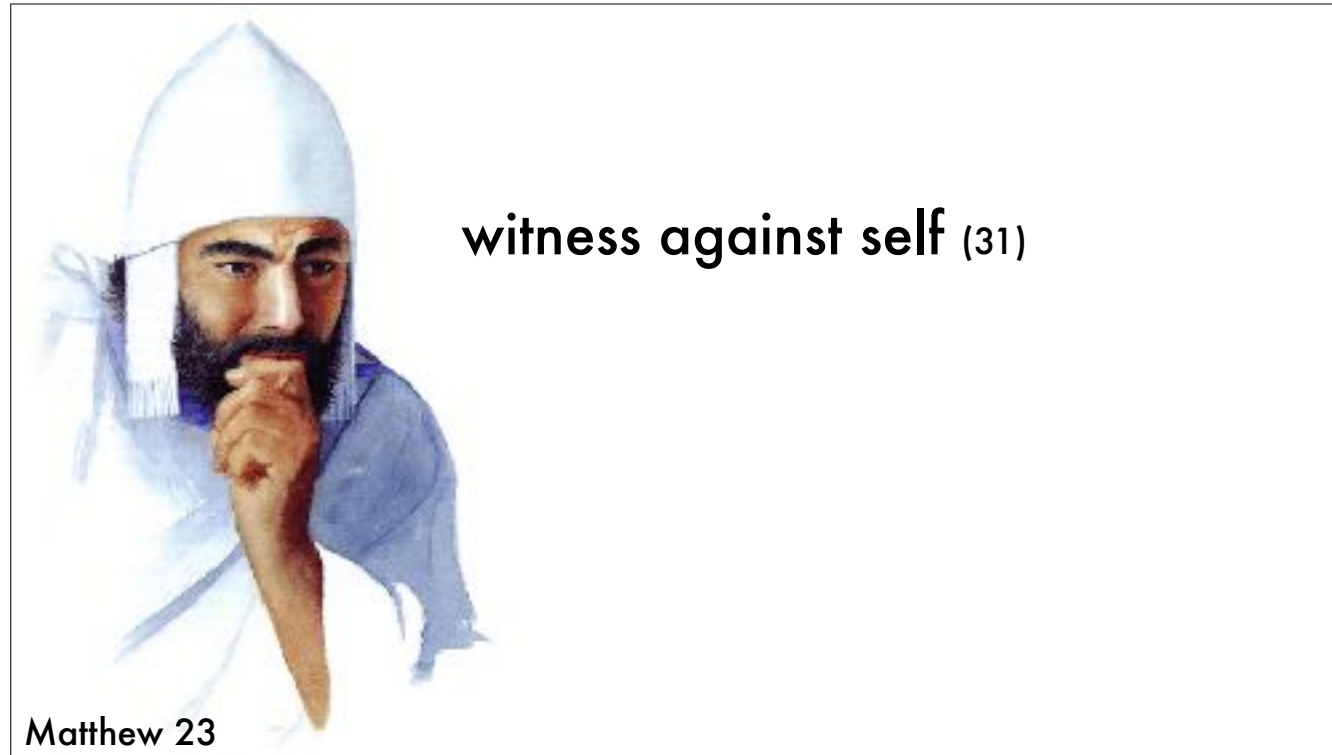
- Instead of helping people understand the depths and meaning of the law, they obfuscated it.
- What looks like nuance is really nonsense
- Actually undermined the people's ability to make good choices, know what was right.



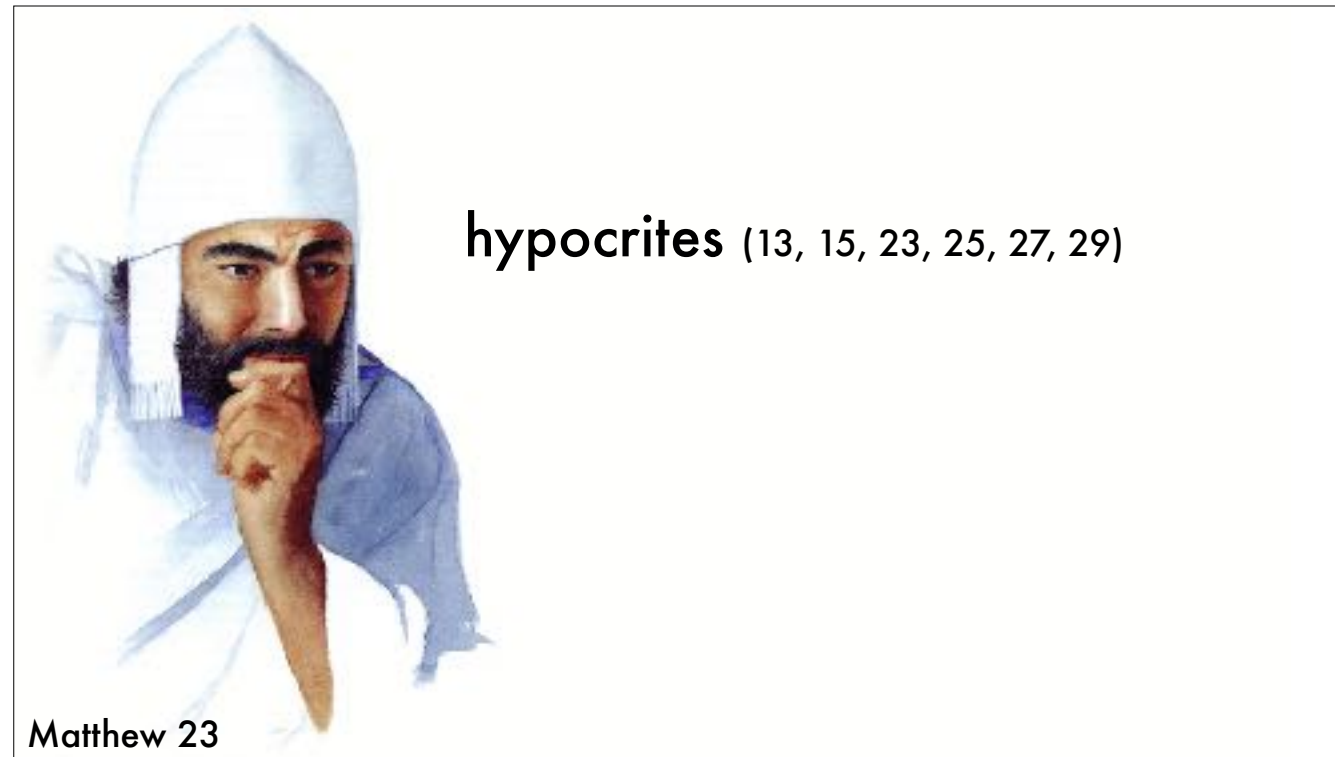
- lack of balance - Mt. 23.23-24
 - tithe smallest of amounts (which is okay)
 - justice, mercy, faithfulness
 - strain gnat and swallow camel



- inwardly corrupt - Mt. 23.25-28
 - clean on outside, inside full of greed, self-indulgence
 - clean inside, then outside may be clean
 - whitewashed tombs, outwardly beautiful
 - within full of dead, all uncleanness



- witness against self (29-36)
 - build tombs and monuments for prophets and righteous
 - we wouldn't have killed them
- sons of those who murdered them
- prophets, wise men, scribes sent: you'll kill



- Therefore -- hypocrites - Mt. 23.13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29
 - Pharisees were probably not conscious of their own hypocrisy
 - An excellent warning for us
 - Notice emphasis on
 - glory of men not glory from God
 - blind not sight
 - lack understanding of the law in real meaningful ways for life.
 - outward not inward
- Their HEART - Mt. 15.18-20



**For out of the heart come
evil thoughts ...
these are what defile a
person**

Matthew 15:19,20

- Their heart: Matthew 15:18-20
 - But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.
 - 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.
 - 20 These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”



- 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.



**You were washed,
you were sanctified,
you were justified
in the name of the Lord
Jesus Christ and by the
Spirit of our God.**

1 Corinthians 6:11

- 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.



For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good.

Matthew 12:34-35

- To have true righteousness
 - it must begin with in my heart
 - it must seek God's righteousness and glory always
 - it must understand the reason, the meaning of the law
- Matthew 12:35: The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.

**Unless your
righteousness
exceeds**

Matthew 5:20



- Your righteousness exceed
 - still subject to law, try to follow completely
 - exceed = abound, overflow
- surpass not in degree, but in kind
 - It's not that righteousness has "steps" ...
 - if I sin less (more purity)
 - if I sacrifice more
 - if I do more good things
 - not a slightly higher degree
 - but a different, and better way in the kingdom.

**Unless your
righteousness
exceeds**

Matthew 5:20



- Surpasses everything imagined by the Pharisees:
 - Christ's way is more challenging and more demanding,
 - more rewarding than any mere legal system.
- Thayer: "Abounding" is used of a flower going from a bud to full bloom.
- from the heart
- motivation is Love of God

**Unless your
righteousness
exceeds**

Matthew 5:20



- Hunger and thirst for righteousness (Mt. 5:6)
- 1 John 5:3: For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.
- New Covenant (not like old): Jer. 31.31; Heb. 8.10
 - “Law into their mind, and on heart will I write them.”

**Unless your
righteousness
exceeds**

Matthew 5:20



- Transformed Heart
 - exceed because we strive to do all of law (to minutest detail), but with the right motive, the right heart, and the right love
 - then enter kingdom

Righteousness

the state of him who is as he ought to be - Thayer

the character or quality of being right or just - Vine

- What is righteousness?
 - (This is hard, in some ways)
- Defining the word...
 - Thayer: the state of him who is as he ought to be
 - Vine: the character or quality of being right or just
 - Closely linked with law, obedience

Righteousness

the state of him who is as he ought to be - Thayer

the character or quality of being right or just - Vine

- Thayer's definition intrigues me
 - It doesn't focus merely on correct/incorrect actions
 - It implies that our Father has a clear expectation of who we ought to be
 - (like Him?)
 - God is righteous means that
 - He is always who He ought to be;
 - and therefore does what He ought to do
 - for the appropriate reasons.

Righteousness

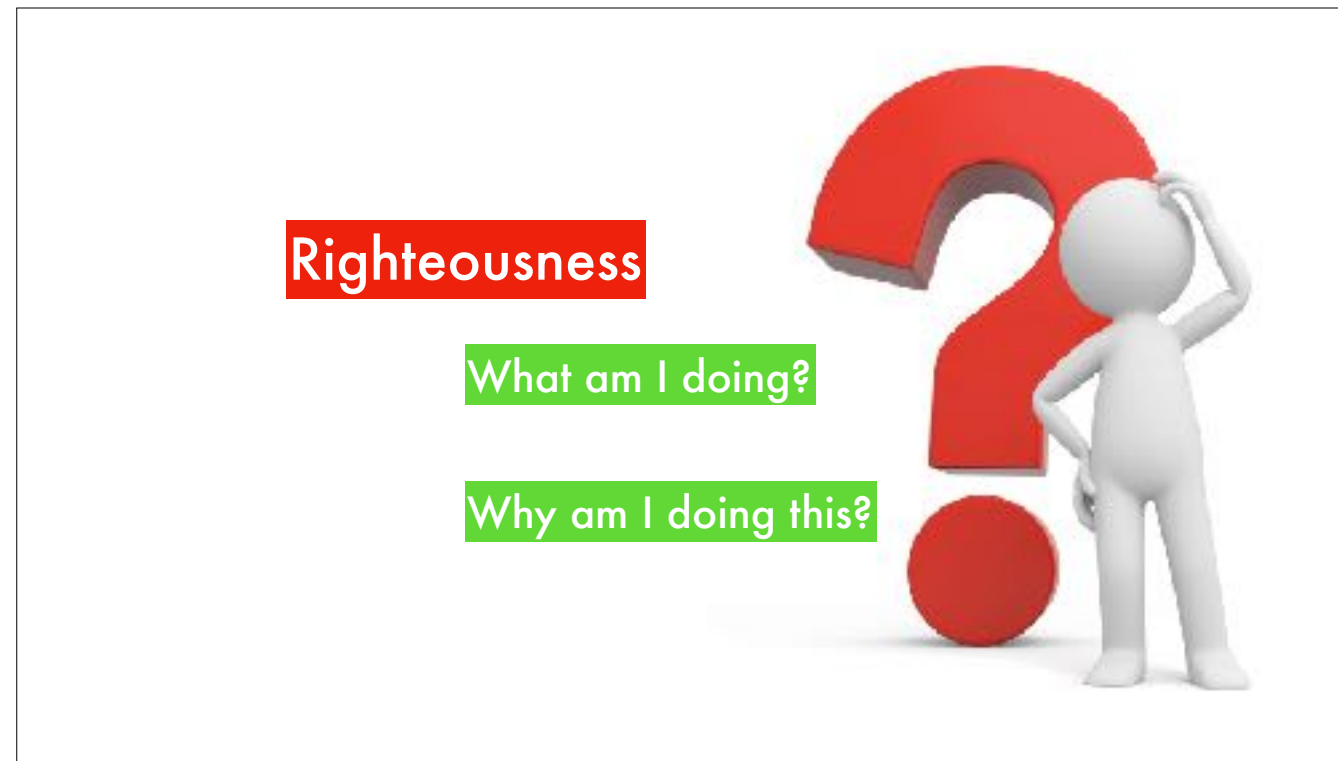
What am I doing?



- Righteousness is not just a matter of WHAT you do or don't do
 - Pharisees (and many of us!) stop at the WHAT
 - Pharisees only concerned about the act itself
 - leads to rampant hypocrisy and self-blindness
 - Often defined by our own interpretations, traditions, and not God's righteousness.



- Amos 5:21-24 “I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. 22 Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. 23 Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. 24 But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.



- True Righteousness is a matter of what is in one's heart
 - WHY do I do what I do?
 - must understand what these motives, thoughts, desires lead to and mean in our lives.
 - Jesus: emphasize that it is the desire in man's heart and mind to do these things that is really and ultimately reprehensible in the sight of God.
 - An intelligent knowledge of the reason...

Righteousness

What am I doing?

Why am I doing this?



- Old Covenant (which Jesus came to fulfill, not abolish)
 - not just to prevent doing wrong things,
 - but to lead us positively,
 - not just to do right,
 - but also to love it.
- This is why God hated the feast days of the ancient Israelites... doing things, but without heart.

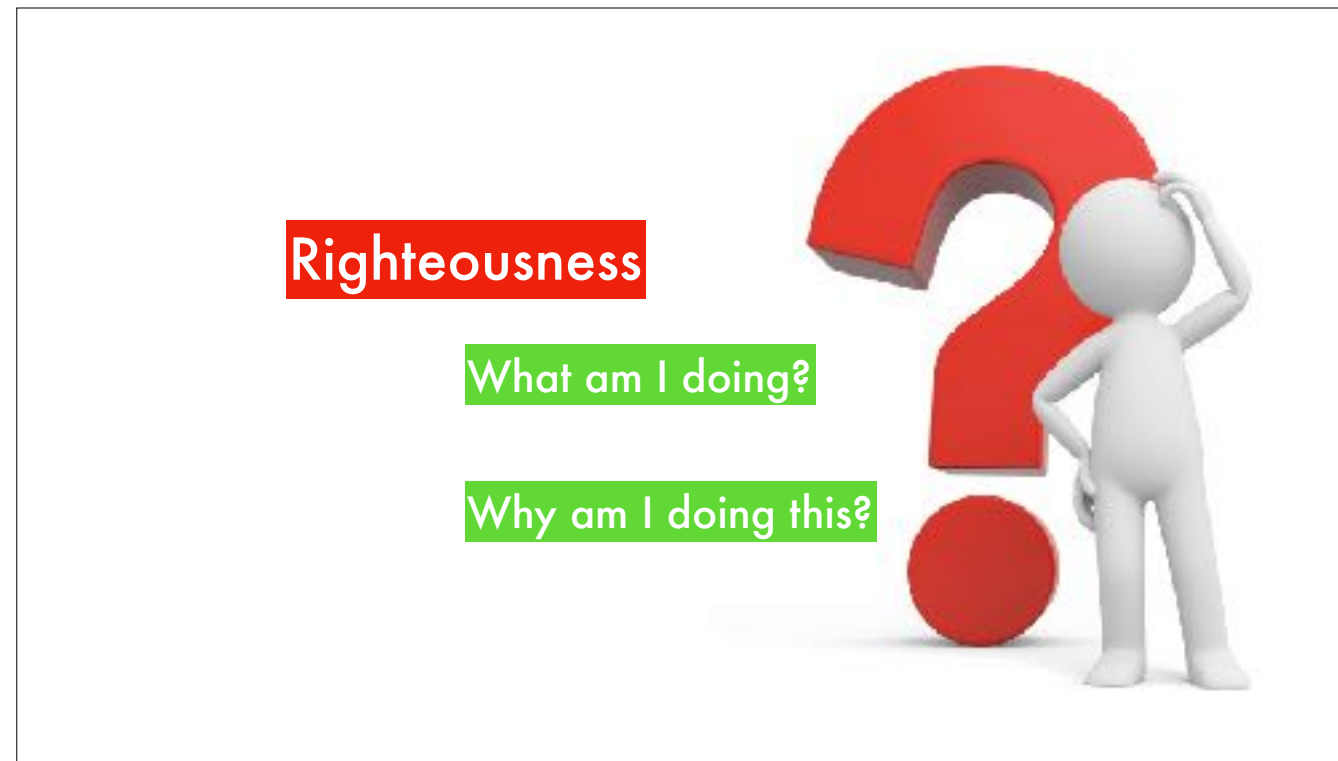
Righteousness

What am I doing?

Why am I doing this?



- lovers of righteousness (hungering and thirsting)
 - not just avoiding wrong; or forced to do right
- development of spiritual character: “to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph. 4.13).



- As examine before bed
 - not murdered, committed adultery: thank God all is well
 - Has God been supreme in my life today?
 - Has my life glorified Him?
 - Do I know Him better?
 - Is there anything in me which is unChristlike, thoughts, imaginations, desires, impulses?

For Jehovah is righteous; He loves righteous deeds

Psalms 11:7

Righteousness

What am I doing?

Why am I doing this?

Who am I?



- Righteousness is not just WHAT I do, or WHY I do it, but WHO I AM.
 - God is often spoken of as being righteous
 - Psalms 11:7: For JEHOVAH is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face.

For Jehovah is righteous; He loves righteous deeds

Psalms 11:7

Righteousness

What am I doing?

Why am I doing this?

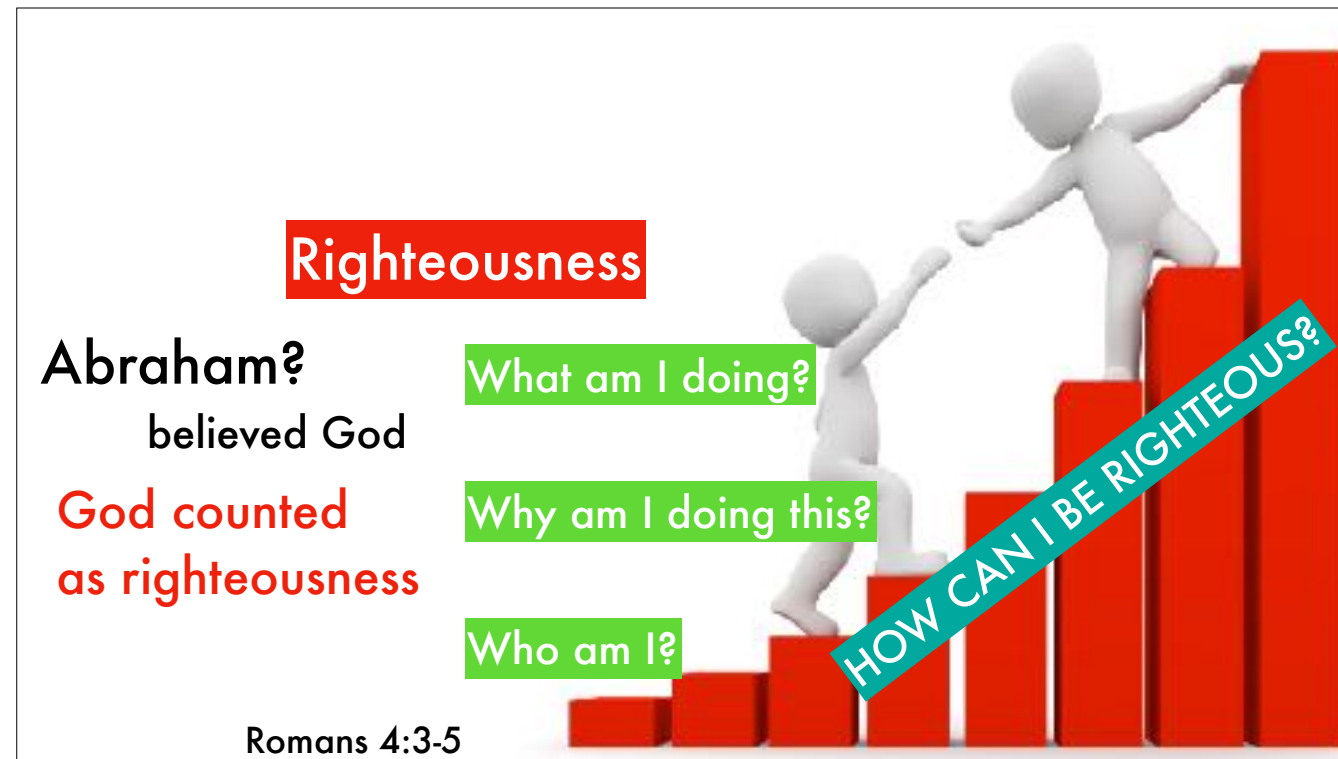
Who am I?



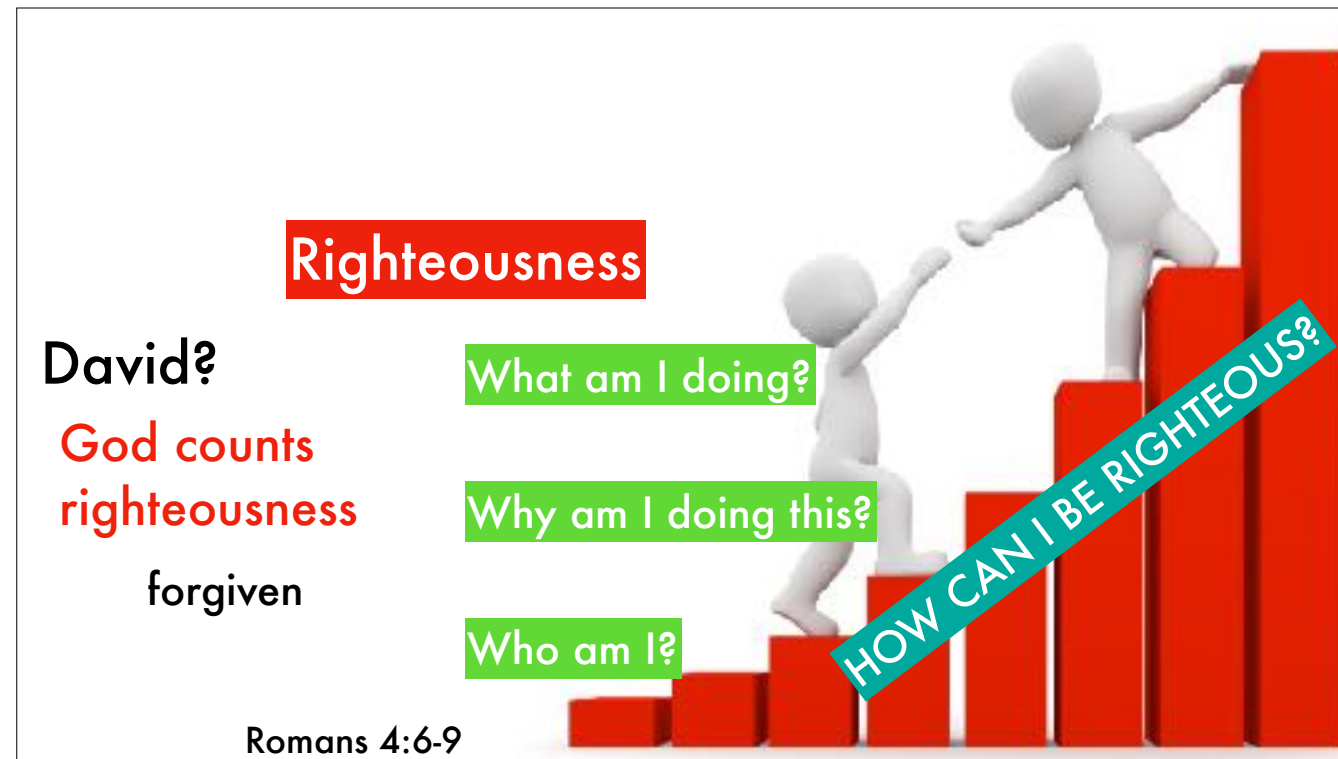
- So righteousness in me, is about who I am (who I ought to be).
- Seen in the Character mentioned in beatitudes
 - poor in spirit; mourn; meek; hunger and thirst for righteousness; merciful; pure in heart; peacemaker; rejoice in persecution
- Those who enter the kingdom of heaven have the same Character as their Father... righteousness defines me.



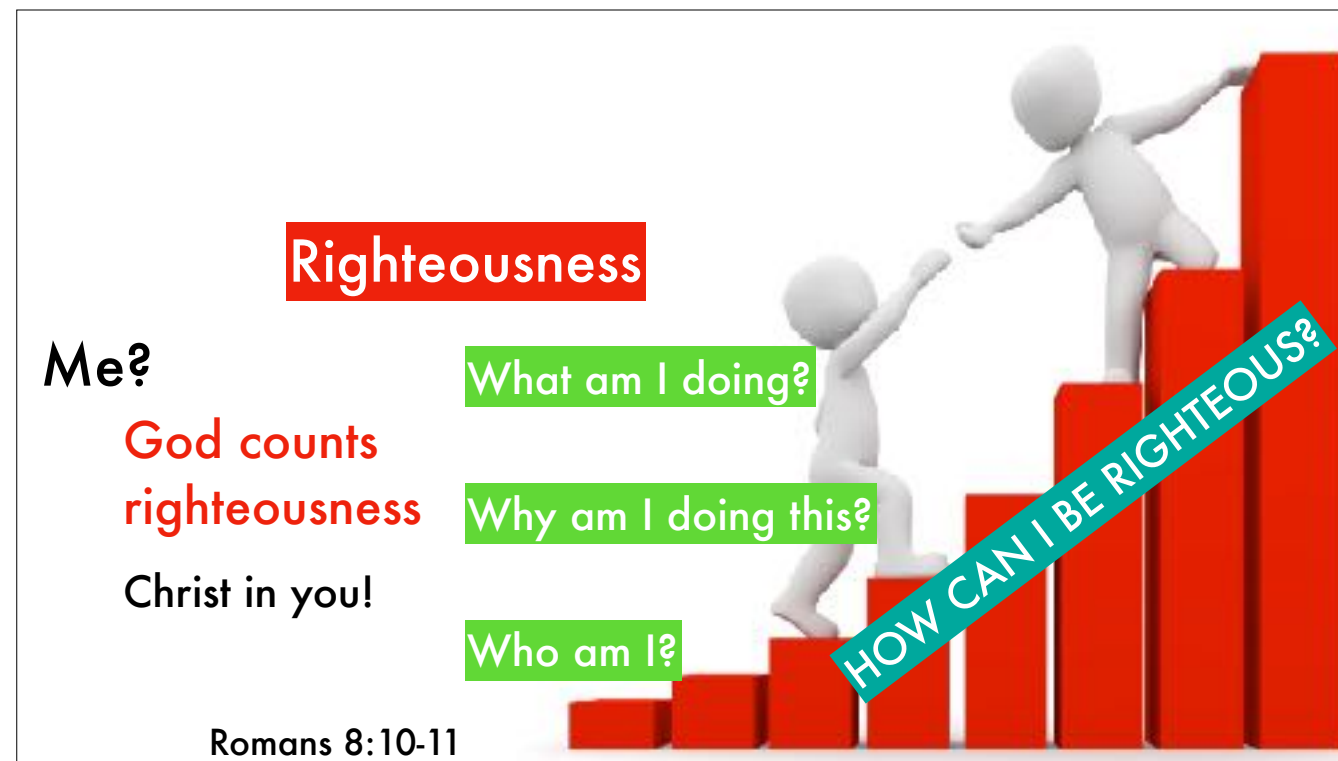
- How can I be ever be righteous?
 - bar has been set very high for us too!
 - If I try to attain righteousness on my own, I will surely fail.
- True Righteousness... not about me at all (Romans 4:3-9)



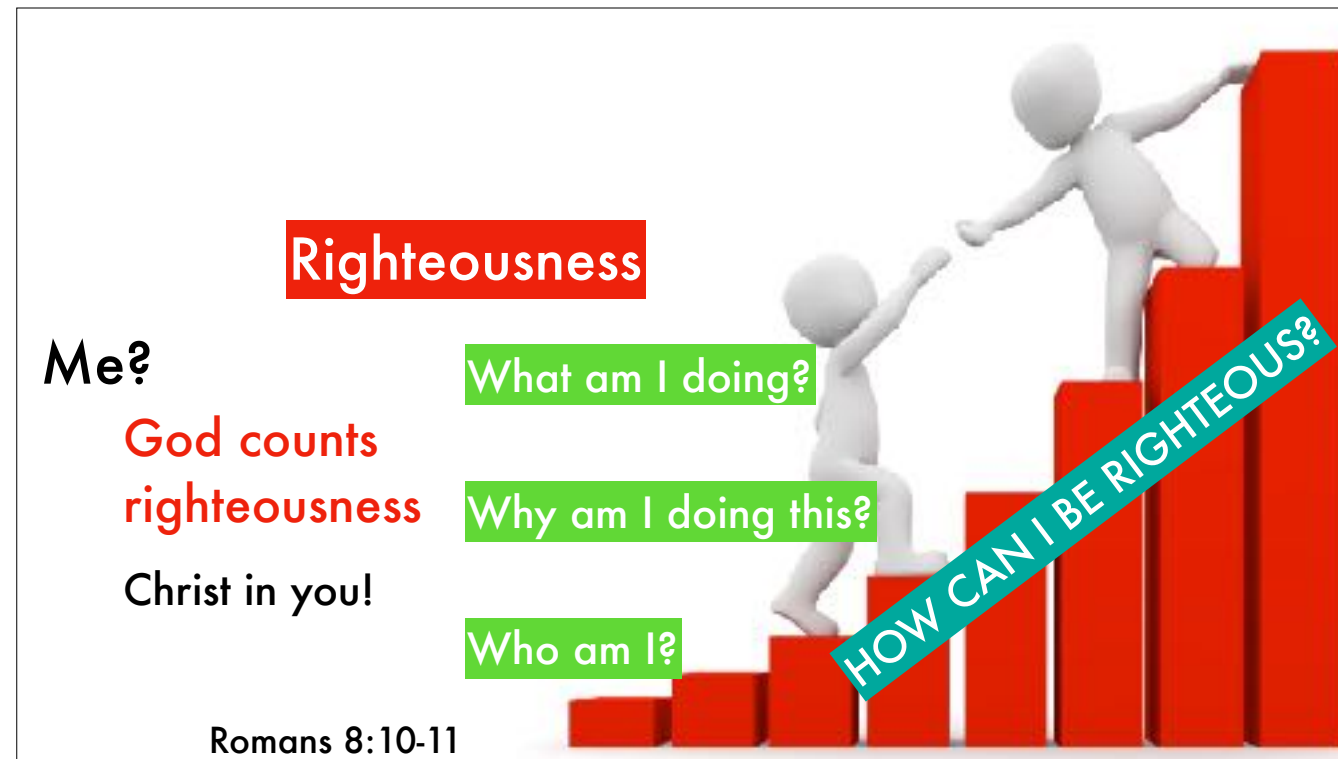
- Abraham
 - 3 For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” 4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. 5 And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,



- David
 - 6 just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works: 7 “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; 8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.” 9 Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness.



- Christ
 - Paul's point is that God counts righteousness to us when we believe; and when he forgives our sins (baptism)
 - Romans 8:10-11 (ESV) 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.



- You can be righteous!
- You can enter the kingdom of heaven today!
- Jesus has made this possible through His sacrifice.
- Believe, Repent, Baptized

**We implore you on
behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.**

2 Corinthians 5:20



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Exceeding Righteousness

Matthew 5:20

Synopsis: Jesus' first shocking statement to the Jews is that their righteousness is to exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees and Scribes. To them, this is a very high standard of righteousness. In this lesson, we'll consider the righteousness that Jesus would have us pursue and find that it is only possible through Him.

"Let all that you do be done with love."