

"To Be Or Not"

Matthew 3: 4 - 10

December 8, 2010

"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)

The Lord Jesus Himself Has Told Us That True Righteousness Is Not A Ritual But A Nature, (Chpt. 3 - 12)

- Section 1: A Nature Of True Righteousness Has Been Displayed, (Chpt. 3 - 4)
 - True righteousness as a nature is displayed in genuine repentance, (Chpt. 3)
 - Genuine repentance has never been an entitlement, (vs. 4 - 10)
 1. Genuine repentance is an altered lifestyle, (vs. 4 - 6); *"They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, DESTITUTE, AFFLICTED, MISTREATED— of whom the world WAS not worthy— WANDERING about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. "* (Hebrews 11:37-38)
 - ✚ An altered lifestyle focuses on the message and not the messenger, (vs. 4); *"And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people PREPARED."* (Luke 1:16-17)
 - ✚ An altered lifestyle will be noticed by those who encounter it, (vs. 5); *"You are the light of the world. A city SET on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light SHINE before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. "* (Matthew 5:14-16)
 - ✚ An altered lifestyle intently leads others to the source of righteousness, (vs. 6); *"And Peter said to them, "REPENT and be BAPTIZED every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38-41)*
 2. Genuine repentance is not a program, (vs. 7 - 10)
 - ✚ Programmatic perspectives focus on benefits not brokenness, (vs. 7 - 8)
 - a. The benefit of public recognition, (vs. 7a); *"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. "* (Matthew 6:5)
 - b. The benefit of tradition's security, (vs. 7b); *"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. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! "* (Matthew 23:23-24)
 - c. The benefit of "fire insurance," (vs. 7c); *"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. "* (Matthew 23:15)
 - d. The discounting of genuine repentance, (vs. 8); *"Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." "* (John 6:26-27)
 - ✚ Programmatic perspectives presume divine favor with no need for repentance, (vs. 9 - 10)
 - a. The presumption of divine acceptance by tradition, (vs. 9); *"They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, "* (John 8:39)
 - b. The discounting of impending judgment upon inherent wickedness, (vs. 10); *"And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' "* (Luke 13:7)

- Genuine repentance has to be the only standard of measure, (vs. 11 - 12)
- True righteousness as a nature is displayed in faithful obedience, (Chpt. 4)
- Section 2: A Nature Of True Righteousness Is Promoted By Formative Discipline, (Chpt. 5 - 7)
- Section 3: A Nature Of True Righteousness Must Be Applied, (Chpt. 8 - 9)
- Section 4: A Nature Of True Righteousness Is Divinely Expected, (Chpt. 10 - 12)