

Contrast of Teachings

D. Contrasting Jesus' teaching with the Pharisees' – Matthew 5:21-48

1. Introduction

- a. The Pharisees lived the letter of the law, the overt act. Jesus taught that the mental attitude was as important as the overt act.

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- b. The Pharisees contrasted their righteousness to other people's righteousness. Jesus said they must compare themselves to God's perfect righteousness.

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2. Matthew 5:21-26 – Murder and conflict
 - a. Matthew 5:21 – Jesus quoted Exodus 20:13, implying that the Pharisees considered only the physical act to be murder. 1 John 3:15
 - b. Matthew 5:22a – Jesus pointed out that the mental attitudes of hatred and anger also violated the Law against murder and should bring death.

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- c. Matthew 5:22b – Anger is a sin as deserving of death as murder itself.
- d. Matthew 5:23 – Presenting an offering at the altar was worship. Having a hateful thought created a barrier to that worship.
- e. Matthew 5:24 – For his sacrifice to be acceptable to God, a believer had to first seek reconciliation with anyone he had offended.

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- f. Matthew 5:25-26 – Jesus said that adversaries had to quickly agree before the conflict escalated and the punishment was compounded.

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3. Matthew 5:27-32 – Adultery and divorce
 - a. Matthew 5:27 – The Pharisees taught that the only way to commit adultery was through the physical act.
 - b. Matthew 5:28 – Jesus taught that every lustful thought was sin and violated the Law.
 - c. Matthew 5:29-30 – Jesus used exaggerated speech (hyperbole) to declare the importance of totally avoiding the adultery of lustful thoughts.

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- d. Matthew 5:31 – The Mosaic Law permitted divorce for a wife's unfaithfulness (Deuteronomy 24:1-5), but the Pharisees used the law to provide excuses for them to divorce for any reason.
- e. Matthew 5:32 – Jesus taught that anyone who divorced his wife except for unfaithfulness caused her to commit adultery if she remarried. She was still under her marriage vows.

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4. Matthew 5:33-37 – Concerning oaths (promises)
 - a. The Pharisees were so dishonest that they had to back their promises in the name of a higher authority, such as *heaven, earth, Jerusalem, or your head.*
 - b. Jesus told them to not make oaths but simply be faithful to their word.

Contrast of Teachings

5. Matthew 5:38-42 – Vengeance

- a. Matthew 5:38 – The Law said punishment must equal, not exceed, the crime.
- b. Matthew 5:39 – Jesus warned to not be vengeful. In fact, they should allow others to take advantage of them to glorify God and open the door to giving the Gospel!
- c. Matthew 5:40 – Jesus said to give more than is demanded.

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- d. Matthew 5:41 – A Roman soldier could require a Jew to carry his things but only for a mile. Jesus told them to choose to go two miles instead, to be salt and light.
- e. Matthew 5:42 – The Pharisees were selfish; Jesus taught gracious generosity. Jesus taught that all should be done to God's glory and to trust Him for all needs.

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6. Matthew 5:43-48 – Love

- a. Matthew 5:43 – Leviticus 19:18 said nothing about hating enemies; therefore, Jesus was refuting the oral tradition of the Pharisees. Christ required love for everyone.

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- b. Matthew 5:44 – Contrary to any teaching anywhere in the world, Jesus taught them to love their enemies. He provided the ultimate example on the cross when He prayed for the enemies who put Him there. Luke 23:24

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- c. Matthew 5:45 – Jesus wanted believing Israelites to represent their Father. Again, He rejected the Pharisaic interpretation of the Law.
- d. Matthew 5:46-48 – Simple observance of the Law's externals could not make a man as perfect as the Father. Instead, God gives each believer Jesus' perfect righteousness as a free gift at the moment of salvation.

Contrast of Teachings

7. Observations from Matthew 5:21-48
 - a. God did not design the Law to bring man into a right relationship with Him but to point out man's need to have a right relationship. The Law is a mirror to our souls, but only Christ can fix our spiritual problems.
 - b. The Pharisees destroyed the Law's design through wrong interpretation.

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- c. Because of their false interpretation, the Pharisees came to believe that keeping the external aspects of the Law bought the righteousness God demanded.
- d. Christ used six examples to demonstrate the Pharisees' wrong interpretations. Then, He gave the proper, divine interpretations.
- e. Improper interpretations always lead to improper applications, a problem the Lord addressed in the next section.

Wrong Application of the Law

E. The wrong applications of the Law – Matthew 6:1-7:6

1. Matthew 6:1-4 – The wrong application of the Law in almsgiving (charity)
 - a. Matthew 6:1 – Doing things for the approval of man is improper motivation. The correct motivation must be to glorify God.

Wrong Application of the Law

- b. Matthew 6:2 – The Pharisees thought that sounding a trumpet made their prayers and fasting effective because they prayed and fasted to gain man's notice and approval.
- c. Matthew 6:3 – The Pharisees regarded almsgiving, prayer, and fasting as the principle expressions of righteous living.
- d. Matthew 6:4 – Giving in order to be seen by man does not reflect God's grace.

Wrong Application of the Law

2. Matthew 6:5-15 – The wrong application of the Law to prayer

- a. Matthew 6:5 – The Pharisees had made prayer a public act that proved their righteousness to men.
- b. Matthew 6:6 – Praying in a private place allows a believer to shut out the distractions of the world so he can concentrate on praying to God the Father.

Wrong Application of the Law

- c. Matthew 6:7-8 – Jesus condemned the pagan use of the meaningless sounds that constituted their special prayer language. There is no prayer language.
- d. Matthew 6:9-13 – The model prayer
 - 1) Matthew 6:9 – This prayer was an example and was not to become meaningless repetition or a good luck charm.

Wrong Application of the Law

- 2) Matthew 6:10 – The context of this prayer request was the fulfillment of God's covenant promises to Israel.
- 3) Matthew 6:11 – The request for God to supply daily physical needs demanded dependence on Him for daily life.
- 4) Matthew 6:12 – No man should expect God's forgiveness if he is unwilling to forgive others. Matthew 6:14-15

Wrong Application of the Law

- 5) Matthew 6:13 – The prayer closed with adoration of God in recognition of dependence on Him to avoid temptation.

Wrong Application of the Law

3. Matthew 6:16-18 – The wrong application of the Law to fasting
 - a. Matthew 6:16 – The Pharisees fasted on Mondays and Thursdays, supposedly to commemorate Moses' ascending and descending with the Law from Mt. Sinai. Actually, they fasted to be seen and admired by men.

Wrong Application of the Law

- b. Matthew 6:17-18 – Jesus did not rebuke the act of fasting but the Pharisees' motivations and public display.

Wrong Application of the Law

4. Matthew 6:19-24 – The wrong application of the Law to priority
 - a. Matthew 6:19 – *Storing treasures on earth* referred to self-righteous acts done for the approval of men, which is the only approval such a person will ever receive.
 - b. Matthew 6:20 – One was to *store treasures in Heaven* to receive the Father's approval.

Wrong Application of the Law

- c. Matthew 6:21 – A person's heart follows his primary focus in life. His use of his treasure (money, investments, free time) shows His heart's focus.
- d. Matthew 6:22 – The eye pictures perception. If the eye is motivated to accumulate light (truth), then the entire body is filled with light.

Wrong Application of the Law

- e. Matthew 6:23 – If seeing the light (truth) does not motivate the soul, pursuing darkness results in even greater darkness, a slippery slope to increased depravity.
- f. Matthew 6:24 – This interpretive key to understanding this section emphasized the impossibility of maintaining divided loyalties. No one can serve God and anything else.

Wrong Application of the Law

5. Matthew 6:25-34 – The wrong application of the Law destroyed hope. Worry never profits either temporally or eternally.
 - a. Matthew 6:25 – Jesus gave the command to not worry because man is incapable of controlling everything in his life.
 - b. Matthew 6:26 – The Father sustains helpless animals incapable of providing for themselves. Certainly, He will care for His children.

Wrong Application of the Law

- c. Matthew 6:27 – Worry cannot add a single day to life.
- d. Matthew 6:28-30 – Jesus taught that if God provides for the least of animals and plants (and He does), He will certainly provide for His image bearers.
- e. Matthew 6:31 – The conclusion to this section, *Do not worry* (Greek: *me MERIMNAO*), is a strong prohibition. DO NOT WORRY!!! EVER!!!

Wrong Application of the Law

- f. Matthew 6:32 – A full understanding of God would allow the believer to relax and trust Him to provide every daily need.
- g. Matthew 6:33 – Jesus told believing Israel to prioritize the coming eternal Kingdom of God so they could deal correctly with the details of this fleeting life.

Wrong Application of the Law

- h. Matthew 6:34 – Each day has its own problems so the believer was to remain focused on God. He was saying, “Don’t ruin today by worrying about tomorrow.”

Wrong Application of the Law

6. Matthew 7:1-6 – The wrong application of the Law to judging
 - a. Matthew 7:1 – Contrary to the teachings of the Pharisees, Jesus said not to be judgmental about the conduct, thinking, motivation, and interests of others unless they violate God's clear standard for sin.

Wrong Application of the Law

- b. Matthew 7:2 – Those eager to pass judgment would receive judgment from others as well as God's punishment.
- c. Matthew 7:3 – The self-righteous hypocrite like the Pharisee failed to practice self-examination and deceived himself by judging others.

Wrong Application of the Law

- d. Matthew 7:4-5 – Jesus taught that thorough, honest self-examination must come first if one wanted to accurately critique others. Philippians 1:9-10
- e. Matthew 7:6 – Using discernment, Jesus anticipated that the Pharisees would reject these truths.