

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Matthew 5:17-20**.
- B. In last Wednesday night's Bible class, Wayne asked, "Why was He rejected?"
- C. In tonight's lesson I want to summarize all of the answers given to that question.
- D. Please turn in your Bibles to Mt. 5:17-20.

I. THE PROBLEM OF THE PHARISEES.

- A. Jesus said that He will fulfill the Law, not abolish it (Mt. 5:17).
- B. Jesus would not want to abolish the Law, because He could not use it to prove who He was: the promised Messiah.
- C. The Law is more permanent than the earth itself (Mt. 5:18). So anyone who does not keep and teach the commandments will be least in the kingdom of heaven.
- D. So, the problem of the Pharisees was fulfilled Law, and it is to that "higher calling" we are concerned with tonight (Mt. 5:20).
- E. Jesus is telling us that there is more to serving God than just "commandment keeping" (Mt. 5:21,27,33,38,43).

II. THE PHARISEES AND COMMANDMENT KEEPING.

- A. Scripture text: Matthew 23 :15.
- B. Joe Beam has said:
 - Convert a man to doctrine, and you will make a legalist out of him;
 - Convert a man to the church, and you will make a sectarian out of him;
 - Convert a man to another man, and you will make a follower of men out of him; but,
 - Convert a man to Christ, and you will make a Christian out of him.
- C. If we convert a man to another man, he will become a follower of men:
 1. We cannot give someone our faith.
 2. Only the word of God can give faith (Rom. 10:17).
 3. Therefore, we must teach the Bible, not what we say or think.
 4. The Pharisees were converting men and making them like themselves, not what God wanted them to be.
 5. We have a higher calling! Let's convert men to Jesus!
- D. Scripture text: Matthew 23 :23.
- E. If we convert a man to doctrine, he will become a legalist:
 1. We, as Christians, must be about the Father's business (Lk. 2:49).
 2. Matthew 7 tells us of people who were very busy but not about the Father's business.
 3. The Pharisees fell into the same trap, as the Father's business was not getting done.
 4. People who don't come to worship, don't know the Father's business;
People who only come to worship, don't know the Father's business;
People who do not know the Father's business, have a religion that is a luxury, not a necessity.
 5. But we have a higher calling! Let's convert men to Jesus.
- F. Scripture text: Matthew 23 :25-28.
- G. If we convert a man to the church, he will become a sectarian:
 1. We are not Church-of-Christ-ers! We are Christians who are members of Christ's church.
 2. Our Christianity must be real, through and through. This refers back to what Wayne said this morning about being real (1Jn. 1:1-4).
 3. Let us hope that no one here is converted to the church building.
 4. Pharisees in a sense were, because of v25-28, and-take a look at Mt. 23:16-22.

5. We have a higher calling! Let's convert men to Jesus.

III. THE HIGHER CALLING.

- A. The whole focus of tonight's lesson is that commandment keeping by itself will not get us into heaven.
- B. We have a higher calling! We must be able to rise above "commandment keeping" and have love.
- C. Paul said that love is the greatest of Christian gifts (1Cor. 13:13).
- D. This work is also the power of the greatest commandment (Mk. 12:30).
- E. Out of our love we obey, serve, learn about, and follow Christ.
- F. We cannot let our Christian living be like a Hollywood set of buildings, just a covering with no substance.
- G. He cannot let our religion become like that of the Pharisees; pious, but boastful, egotistic, "big show" form of Christianity. We must be real.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Tonight's question is, "Do you love Jesus?" If so, you will "keep His commandments." Remember; love comes first, it is the higher calling.
- B. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.