



### Matthew 5:13-20 New Revised Standard Version

<sup>13</sup> “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

<sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup> People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

<sup>17</sup> “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup> For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. <sup>19</sup> Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

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**“Religion is a strange, wonderful thing. More crimes have been committed in the name of righteousness than any other notion.” –Tom T. Hall**

When Jesus addressed his followers in what has come to be known as the most popular sermon in history, he did not attempt to reinforce what already existed. Far from a keeper of the status quo, Jesus invited hearers to become more than who and what they had been. He challenged the common views and opinions of his day, and encouraged would be followers to a different standard by which to measure their loyalty to God. More than adherence to a listing of dos and don'ts, Jesus' words prove that righteousness is more than a way of thinking or a method by which people can separate themselves from others.

1. **Jesus calls us to a righteousness which is unashamed and unhidden.**
2. **Jesus calls us to a righteousness that looks out for the wellbeing of others.**
3. **Jesus calls us to a righteousness that is constantly striving and maturing.**

**Prayer Pebble:** Lord, help my righteousness to be a genuine expression of your presence in my life. Amen.