

# Come and Become pt 4 : Yeah, But

(Recap)

## **-Hot or not.com:**

-in the year 2000 an internet phenomenon hit the scene... Hot or not .com. a website where people everywhere could rate other people's attractiveness from 1 -10.

**-you could know with the precision of a number how hot you were, and how you measure against others.**

*-last week I showed you the highest rated picture yet,,,,, this week I show the oldest living member of the site :)*

**-Maybe you have not put your photo on a website to be rated, but we are familiar with Wondering How WE RATE.**

-we compare ourselves to our siblings 1-10

-we compare ourselves to our coworkers. 1-10

-compare our lawns 1-10

-compare our families to others we know 1-10

**-How we rate matters to us.**

## **-In Jesus's day people were also worried about how they rated**

-but instead of Hotness they fixated on Religious Morality.

-the Old Testament has 613 laws,,, so this provided plenty of things that they could focus on doing and not doing.

-And the way to really be SOMEBODY IN THAT CULTURE was to follow those 613 rules better than other people.

-certain people like the Pharisees seemed to do really well at that. They thought they were 10's they were societies favorite and they thought they were God's favorite

**-We have been talking about The Sermon on the Mount. Jesus' inaugural message to the Jewish people, and to us today.**

-So, Jesus showed up in that setting (full of supposed morally hot people) and told people to Repent, because God's Kingdom had come near to them.

-those who thought they were 10's got angry.....

-Jesus' invitation to repent was issued to everyone equally. There was no person or group that needed Repentance more or less. (still true today)

**-Then after we have repented and committed to the idea of following Jesus, the first instruction was to be SALT and LIGHT.**

-So God invites us after repentance to Join Him in Good Deeds that Heal the World.

## ***The Million Dollar question***

-That brings us to where we are today: *AT THIS POINT* in his *SERMON*

-By the way Jesus is talking people are beginning to wonder, **WHAT ARE THE RULES,,,,,**

-(Jesus) What system do you endorse for measuring Righteous ?

- *it sounds like you are describing a new Hottness Standard*

***-If we are to repent and go a new way, what is the new way?***

**-Jesus, are you getting rid of the Old System for Moral Hottness? (Ot Law)**

*(that is the question ringing in the crowds mind,, so Jesus answers it)*

-Matthew 5:17-20 Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you until Heaven and Earth disappear, not the smallest letter not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the Kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

## **Question 1: What does it mean that Jesus came not to Abolish the Law and Prophets but to Fulfill them?**

-What is the Law and Prophets?

-another way of saying the Old Covenant (old testament) (gen. - Malachi)

-The LAW: the Religious rules of the covenant, given by God through Moses

-the prophets, was the writing of Ancient Israelite prophets whom God spoke through

-he spoke to them to call Israel back to faithfulness to the law

-In Jesus' day the Law and Prophets was The Bible.

-so what we call the OT, they called The Law and the Prophets (Jewish scripture)

-there was no New Testament yet, Jesus and his followers were living it out right then

-For us today, the Jewish Scriptures or the Old Testament includes the books of Genesis through Malachi.

-Jesus came saying and doing a lot of really radical things. Many wondered if he was disregarding the Scriptures. (Genesis - Malachi,,old covenant)

-they are wondering if Jesus is against the rules Moses set up

-So early in this sermon, Jesus says: "I am not abolishing the law,,,,, I am fulfilling the law"

**-Abolish:** -to dissolve, to destroy;; to overthrow, to annul,, to subvert;;; to halt on a journey

-Imagine Genesis - Malachi as a Journey God was leading his people on.

-Jesus says “my plan is not to Halt that journey”

-it is not to deprive it of its success

-i am not seeking to overthrow it (as if it were a failed government)

-i am not going to annul it, like an ill advised agreement.

-The things Jesus has been saying and doing were indicating to people that God was up to something NEW in the world.

-but they didn't understand how this new thing fit into the framework of their scripture

-So Jesus is explaining how his actions and teaching relate to the Old Covenant.

**-Fulfill:** -to complete, to fill to the top: so that nothing shall be wanting, **fill to the brim; to carry through to the end,**

-The Old Testament prophets predicted a servant of God who would Establish God's Kingdom on Earth.

**-Jesus was saying he fulfills those prophecies**

*-the prophecies created an empty container of expectation,,,, Jesus filled it. (fill cup to brim)*

-The Old Testament Law (the rules) contained all of these things that had to be done to be please God.

-613 moral / religious rules and laws

**-Jesus was saying that he was the fulfillment of all of those.**

*-those laws created an empty container of expectation ,,,, Jesus filled it (fill cup to brim)*

**-The Old Testament was full of all kinds of Rules and expectations.**

-they were the picture of what God expected from Israel.

**-Jesus filled all those expectations.**

-Since Jesus filled those two cups to the Brim, there is now no need and no room for us to add to that cup.

*-Its not nullified, but the journey has been completed (fulfilled).*

**-Catch this:** Jesus said, “I am telling you about a new standard of righteousness.”

-God has been doing things one way and that is changing

-but not because the old standard was bad

-but because that cup has been filled

-Jesus was the fulfillment of everything the Old Testament called Israel to be.

-Now, Jesus establishes the new standard of what God is calling all Humanity to be.

*-(Use a bible and show people)*

**-Here is the Old Testament** : aka the Jewish scriptures (law and prophets)

-this was the law that God used to govern his people, Israel

-Jesus fulfilled this. It is no longer our governing law.

-it is great history.            -it still shows us God and his interaction with his people.

-so there is much we can learn there

-the rules in this part of your bible were for another people and another time,, quite frankly for another purpose

**-it has value, if you know how to use it properly, but it is not law anymore**

-hebrews 8:13. (obsolete and vanishing)

-romans 7:6. (released us from the law, bound to christ)

-romans 10:4. (christ is end of law).

-galatians 3:24 (law was guardian until christ)

**-this is the New Testament:** this is our bible

-the new testament is the commands and teaching of Jesus in the gospels, and letters written by the Apostles to explain the commands of Jesus to the early churches.

-this is our standard now.    -this is the law of God that we live by now

-this is what is binding now

-this is The Authoritative Word of God for us now.

**-According to Jesus the Old Testament Law is not our law. Jesus IS OUR LAW.**

--Jesus filled those cups (he completed the the journey of the Old Covenant, and started a New One.)

-Now we obey Jesus,,, he is our master, our teacher,,, He is our Law

## **Question 2: How can our Righteousness exceed that of the Religious Hotties of Jesus' day?**

-Most of these religious leaders could quote the first 5 books of the OT!

-they never skipped prayer times

-they wore big phylacteries: what is a phylactery??? Imagine if your forehead had a fanny pack...

(your Christian t-shirt is nothing compared)

-they followed all the dietary laws to a "T"

-If they accidentally swallowed a gnat, they would make themselves throw up,,, not kosher

-they had to keep their beards a certain way (women also)

-when they tithed, they even got a 1/10 of the herbs growing in their garden

-they fasted 2 days every week

-they had figured out the exact number steps they were allowed to take on the Sabbath before it was considered work,,, & they never violated it

-These guys made sure that in every visible and measurable way they were as close to a 10 as humanly possible.

-they were God's moral hotties

-So how can we exceed their level of Righteousness.

-righteousness: in a broad sense: *state of him who is as he ought to be,,,,* **correctness of thinking feeling, and acting**

-That last definition gets us closer to understanding why Jesus said what he did about these Religious Leaders.

-In Matthew 23 Jesus said something to the Pharisees:

-you are like **pretty painted tombs**. You look good on the outside, but inside is grotesque: death,,, rotting,,, stench.....

*-Jesus!!! You kiss your mom with the mouth,,, You ARE TRIPPIN.*

-Why is Jesus calling them pretty painted tombs?

-they were counting steps on the sabbath to demonstrate a "desire to obey" but they missed the point entirely!

- instead of resting and honoring God,,, they were working harder on the Sabbath by trying to demonstrate that they didn't work on the Sabbath,,,

**-they did it all TO HONOR THEMSELVES.**

-These people had found ways to arrange their actions to look like they really loved God. But in fact they really Loved Themselves.

-while their actions looked holy their hearts were full of selfishness, greed, pride, envy,

**-The central point of God revealing himself to Humanity: We would learn to understand God's desires; and conform ourselves to them.**

-The Pharisees had learned to understand God's desires but then conformed the desires accommodate themselves.

-they read God's law and rather than recognizing their shortcomings they simply explained the law in a way that made them look right.

-whether we are talking about Anger, Lust, or Greed, idolatry..... the Pharisees would **assume they were righteous**, and then find a way to explain the law that proved their assumption.

*-Illustration: My suit:* I used to buy suits that fit,,, now I make my suit size the standard,,, when the suit gets tight I lose weight,,, When it gets to LOOSE,,,, (*lets be honest, that's never happened*)

-I adjust myself to meet the standard rather than adjusting the suit (or the standard) to meet what I am. (that is how it should work). (obviously not with clothes but with God's law)

*-Example:* Jesus said to a Religious leader: God's law says love your neighbor like you love yourselves. The Religious leader replied ,,, "YES, BUT *who is my neighbor*"

-he wanted to come up with a complicated, specific definition that allowed him to continue to love the people he already loved and hate the people he hated (without looking or feeling guilty)

-At all of these different points God's Law confronted God's people. But rather than being confronted by the truth, the Religious Leaders were experts at saying "Yes, But".

-then they would come up with an explanation that made them appear righteous and made the sinner someone else.

**-“Yes, But”, is still alive and well today.**

-Rather than being confronted and shaped by Jesus' commands, we are tempted to shape our understanding of his expectation around what we do.

*-its not really a lie because.... -it isn't technically an affair*

*-its not really pornography..... -I dont "hate" them.....*

*-its not an addiction, its just....*

*-i know the new testament teaches \_\_\_\_\_ but wouldn't God want me to be happy*

***-those are all attempts to fit the suit to us, rather than fitting ourselves to the suit***

-We get mad at certain groups of people for trying to rewrite the standards of society. But if we are honest, we often try to explain God's expectation in a way that condones what we do.

-Here is why the Religious Leaders interpretation of God's law was so focused on externals things that could be counted, measured, done, or not done.

-with enough effort their actions could be controlled but they could not change their hearts

**-they could keep from committing actual adultery, but they knew what their thoughts were like**

-Bitterness, Selfishness, and all kinds of dark things ruled their hearts.

**-they didn't have the ability to change their own heart.**

-We don't have the ability to change our own hearts either.

-that is why we try to manipulate God's Law to fit us rather than the opposite

-many of us have tried,,, and we know that we lack the ability to change what lives in our hearts.

-if we are filled with anger, and disdain for people we don't know how to change that

-It can be easier for me to try and adjust the whole world to fit me than to change my own heart.

*-There was Hope for the Pharisees and there is hope for us today.*

**-We can be honest about the places where God's Law confronts us, because our Righteousness no longer depends on our ability to follow the law.**

-Jesus met the requirements for Humanity and offers you his righteousness if you trust him and follow him.

-Romans 8:1 says there is NO CONDEMNATION for those who are in Christ

-So now we can look Honestly at God's expectations, and look honestly at where we are, without condemnation.

**-we can say "that is MY SIN, and my sin is punished in Christ on the Cross."**

*-That's good news, but IT GETS EVEN BETTER.*

-What you do flows from your Heart. It comes from who you are inside.

-Jesus has a solution for that as well.

-When we trust and follow Jesus we are Born Again.

-we experience a spiritual "heart level" rebirth

-The Holy Spirit of God comes to live within us,,, giving NEW LIFE to our INSIDES

-Many bible writers write about our New Heart and our Rebirth.

-Ezekiel 11:19-20 I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. 20 Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

-2 Corinthians 5:17 says that "if anyone is in Christ there is a New Creation, the old has gone and everything has become new"

-Until we experience Rebirth through Jesus, we will never see any hope for Real Change.

-because of that people will be tempted to FIT GOD (and his standards) TO THEMSELVES RATHER THAN THE OTHER WAY AROUND.

-We don't have the ability, in and of ourselves, to change ourselves.

-we are weak. -we often lack not just the ability to be good, but even the desire!

-When we come to Jesus with Repentance and Faith to Follow him, he does in us what we cannot do ourselves.

-we come,, then through him,, we start to BECOME

*-He puts a new heart in you. There is a new creation that takes place in you.... Then new actions will flow from a New Heart that has New Desires....*

## **Closing:**

-That is why Jesus called for a Righteousness Even Greater than the Pharisees.

-we can look at the Commands of Jesus, without trying to understand them in certain way that condones us. **(no yeah buts)**

-we can look at our life and BE HONEST about how far we are from the expectation

-because our righteousness is a Gift from Jesus,,, and a result of an inner transformation of the heart that comes from God's spirit.