

# Christ Apostolic Miracle Ministry Sunday School

**Topic: Your righteousness must exceed that of the hypocrites – Part 1**

**Bible Reading: Matthew 5:13-20**

## Introduction

**Righteousness is acting in accord with divine law of God and moral law that will result in free from guilt or sin. It is the quality or state of being morally correct and justifiable. In Biblical context righteousness can be described as acting according to the terms of the covenant which the Lord has established, doing what is right by obeying His law and adhering to morals. When people faithfully obey everything that God had commanded them; He will be pleased with those people and it will be counted as righteousness. The Bible testified to this fact by saying "Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He has commanded us" Deuteronomy 6:25. **Are you doing the right things so that your righteousness will exceed that of the hypocrites? Do you think that you will be considered righteous in order to inherit the kingdom of heaven? Are you conforming to God's will in word, thought and action?** If not change today; believe in the Lord and remain steadfast to Him throughout your lifetime, so that it will be counted as righteousness for you: according to the Bible passage which says "And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness" Genesis 15:6. Emulate Abraham our forefather by putting your faith in God alone. **If you want to please God and be acceptable in His presence, you must trust in Him and rely solely on Him. Furthermore let the heavens vouch for you that you will inculcate the right conducts/habits in your descendants and teach them to be transparent.****

**Success does not translate into righteousness: Many successful people in the world think that it is their righteousness or smartness that brought them prosperity; but they are wrong because the majority of them are stubborn.** Moses warned the people of Israel about this notion when they got to the land of Canaan by saying; "Do not think in your heart, after the Lord your God has cast them out before you, saying 'Because of my righteousness the Lord has brought me in to possess this land'; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out before you. It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the

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Lord your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Therefore understand that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people"

**Deuteronomy 9:4-6**. Hence, **the distinguished people must quit this mindset that everything that they achieved is due to their righteousness or smartness; rather it is due to the wickedness of their predecessors and the covenants that God had with their forefathers. So, let it sink into their hearts that their exalted/prime positions and their financial stability together with their celebrity status are not due to their righteousness or smartness but the grace of God. Therefore, it is inevitable for them to make efforts so that their righteousness will exceed that of the hypocrites, in order to be admitted into the kingdom of God.**

The Bible stated that "But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" **Isaiah 64:6**. Since our righteousness is like a polluted garment before the Lord, then **mankind must strive and make sure that our good deeds surpasses that of the hypocrites, else we will end up in hell. Our leaders and the people in positions of authority must be cautious and seek the righteousness of God wholeheartedly** because ".....to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more" **Luke 12:48**. Furthermore, they must pay attention to the warning of Jesus Christ our Lord which says "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" **Mark 10:25; Luke 18:25**. **They need to change for better so that they will not end their journey in hell. They must be considerate, and just in all their dealings because God will deal with humans according to their righteousness and He will reward them based on their uprightness.** As it is written "The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me" **2 Samuel 22:21**. **We need to realize that God will reward us for doing what is right and acceptable to Him. He will bless us and restore our captivity if and only if we are innocent.**

**Righteousness belongs of God:** Righteousness belongs to God and He is the One who will assess people and determine whether they are righteous or not. Since God is neither bias nor partial, it means He will evaluate people based on their uprightness. Anyone who wishes to be counted as

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righteous must increase his/her good deeds. Seeking God is a necessity in order to obtain righteousness, and when your righteousness exceed that of the Pharisees you will be counted as one of the heaven bound people. The Book of Job stated that we must ascribe righteousness to Almighty God our Maker; which means humans must attribute justice to our Creator. **God always does right; and this knowledge of righteousness comes straight from God:** according to the scripture which says "I will fetch knowledge from afar; I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker" **Job 36:3**. **Are you one of the people that are condemning the word of God? Are you scraping the truth that righteousness is derived from God? Though knowledge is wide; but will you use your knowledge to show that God is just and right? It is time for the Christians to present profound arguments for the righteousness of their Creator; because riches, honor, prosperity and success can be obtained easily through God.** Ancient of Days alone can make you rich and famous; He is the only Being who can make you important and successful: according to the Book of Proverbs which says "Riches and honor are with me, enduring riches and righteousness" **Proverbs 8:18**. **Let your righteousness transcend that of the hypocrites, if you want to succeed in the land of the living.** For this reason, **do not joke with righteousness but make it your watchword. Put on right living as if it is clothing and do what is good at all times.** Let kindness and justice be your coat and hat: according to the scripture which says "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a turban" **Job 29:14**. **Do you clothe yourself with righteousness or wickedness? Always act justly and fairly, so that you will make heaven.**

**Unrighteousness is rampant in the world:** Nowadays unrighteousness is prevalent in the world, people are not seeking God or His righteousness; instead, they are pursuing the perishable wealth. People are not seeking to enter the Glorious Home; instead they want instant gratification and riches of this world. Countless people are proud and they trust in their wealth instead of God. They have forgotten that their earthly riches/wealth cannot make them to enter to kingdom of God; because all wrongdoing is sin before the Lord. Everything that is not in conformity with the commandments of God is wrong, and everything that is wrong is sin in the presence of God: according to the Bible which says "All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin leading to death" **1 John 5:7**. **Stop your wicked actions that can make your admittance into the kingdom of heaven difficult.** It is for this reason that God commanded us not to spread harmful rumors that can tarnish the image of innocent people or help a criminal by giving false evidence;

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despite God's warning it is the norm of the day. Corruption, conspiracy and negligence are widespread in the world today; this conducts does not exclude the judges, the leaders and the pastors; because many of them are giving false testimony or verdict: according to the Book of Exodus which says "You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness." **Exodus 23:1**. How many times have you receive bribe to twist judgment? Are you still cooperating with evil people by lying on the witness stand? When was the last time that you help a guilty person by being a malicious witness? Today is the day that you must repent: according to the Book of Isaiah which says "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." **Isaiah 55:7**. Give up your crooked ways and your evil thoughts. Return to God today, He will forgive your sins and make you to inherit His eternal kingdom. Abandon your wicked way of life and sinful schemes; else you will end your journey in Satan's camp. For this reason, banish the thought of doing wrong from your heart and turn 'a new leaf' that will make your righteousness to transcend that of the hypocrites.

"Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted, who are far from righteousness." **Isaiah 46:12**. The Lord is warning the obstinate people who are not doing what is right, that everyone who acts without personal integrity is utterly repulsive to Him. All who deal dishonestly, and those who act unfairly are detestable to the Lord. God is disgusted with anyone who cheats. As it is written "For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, are an abomination to the Lord your God." **Deuteronomy 25:16**. Do not forget that the Lord hates people who cheat and every unrighteous act is an abomination to Him. Those who act unrighteously will not inherit the kingdom of God but hell. Do not be deceived; the evil/wicked people will never have a share in the blessings of God's kingdom. The Book of Corinthians testified to this fact by saying, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornications, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." **1 Corinthians 6:9-10**. The vices that can make people to miss the kingdom of God are not limited to the aforementioned ones; but all wrongdoing will make anyone to be denied the access to the kingdom of heaven.

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**Topic: Your righteousness must exceed that of the hypocrites – Part 2**

**Bible Reading: Matthew 5:13-20**

We shall continue our discussion by mentioning **the righteousness of God and how He requires righteousness from humans in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.**

### **The Righteous God**

Our Maker is a God of righteousness and He conducts all His activities in righteousness. **The righteousness of God extended to the heavens and the works of His hand are reaping the benefits on daily basis. The righteousness of God is limitless and it is what prevented Satan and the darkness from totally dominating this present world. The righteousness of God is what preserved mankind till this moment and authorized the earth to be in existence until today. The righteousness of God is visible everywhere on earth and the impact can be felt throughout the world. So, it is inevitable for humans to seek the indispensable righteousness of God, in order to enter the Kingdom of heaven.** If you want eternal place of rest in the kingdom of God, then your righteousness must exceed that of the hypocrites.

**God loves righteousness:** Our God is absolutely righteous and He loves righteousness, virtue and morality. The Lord our God always does right and He wants justice done. **The righteous God loves justice and good deeds, therefore those who are honest will enjoy His blessings.** The Bible testified to this fact by saying "For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright." **Psalm 11:7.** **Do you qualify to be among the decent people who will behold the face of God? Are you worthy to be among the virtuous people who will experience the favor of God during their lifetime? Do you think that you can be counted as one of the godly people who will live in His presence forever? If not, change today to enjoy the goodness of the Lord in the Land of the living.** Do not forget that God loves righteousness and the earth is full of the unfailing love of God. The reason why the world is filled with endless love of God is because He loves righteousness and justice. **So, practice justice and fairness in order to receive the kindness of God. Despite the fact that atrocity is rampant among mankind and our wrongdoings has no limit; God still fills the earth with mercy and goodness because of His righteousness.**

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**The righteous God fills the world with grace due to His love for righteousness and justice:** according to the Book of Psalms which says "He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." **Psalm 33:5. Emulate your Creator by loving whatever that is just and good. Always do whatever that is right and fair, so that you will partake in the constant love of God that fills the world.** Inasmuch as the Lord's faithfulness extends throughout the earth, the prophecy concerning Jesus Christ was fulfilled. **Jesus Christ like His Father loved virtue and morality but hated wickedness. He loved righteousness and justice but hate evil, so God anointed Him above the heavens with oil of jubilation. The Lamb was chosen due to His love for what is right and hatred for what is wrong; God poured out more power and authority on Him than any other king, in a manner that earned Him the title 'the King of kings'.** The Bible corroborated this fact by saying "You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions." **Psalm 45:7. You must love justice and hate evil, if you want God to pour oil of joy on you.**

**God established His throne with righteousness:** The heavenly throne of God was built on righteousness: His throne was founded on righteousness and justice; **it is for this reason that mercy is shown in all His works.** The heavenly kingdom of God is ruled by justice and fairness with love and faithfulness leading the way: according to the scripture which says "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; mercy and truth go before Your face." **Psalm 89:14.** The Book of Psalms also confirmed that **God rules with righteousness and fairness; since the composition of His heavenly throne are righteousness and equity.** As it is written, "Clouds and darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne." **Psalm 97:2. The darkness of this world will not overcome you, if you are truthful and considerate. So, always do what is right and be fair in all your dealings if you want the grace of God to be revealed in your life.**

Since the heavenly throne of God was established with righteousness and justice; everything He does is glorious and majestic, and His power to bring justice will never end. **The righteousness of God is eternal and His goodness continues forever among His works, because all His deeds are spiritually beautiful and splendid.** The Bible attested to this fact by saying "His work is honorable and glorious, and His righteousness endures forever." **Psalm 111:3. If you want the great and powerful work of God to manifest in**

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**your journey this year, do what is right and truthfully obey His instructions. You must have the assurance that God will always do what is right even if you cannot comprehend and immaterial of the circumstance. It is time for Believers to proclaim throughout the globe that the teachings of the Lord are true and reliable. The Christendom need to convince the Gentiles that the justice of God is eternal and His impartiality is forever right, because all His laws are perfectly fair: according to the Bible passage which says "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is truth." Psalm 119:142. You must obey the instructions of the Lord in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.**

**God rules with righteousness: The Lord is our God and He will rule forever as King because His royal power brings about justice. The scepter of the kingdom of God is a scepter of equity; therefore the kingdom of God will last forever because He is using His authority for justice. If you want to last forever in the kingdom of heaven do what is right and just. If you want your reign/tenure to last, use your position/authority for justice. As it is written "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom." Psalm 45:6. Leaders and politicians must learn from this passage that if they want to last in office, they must rule their people with justice and fairness must be their watchword: It is then that God will proclaim them innocent from their accusations and judge in their favor. Since God is fair and honest in His judgments, He will defend their just cause and their detractors will be disgraced: according to the scripture which says "For you have maintained my right and my cause; You sat on the throne judging in righteousness." Psalm 9:4. God will judge in favor of the honest leaders and politicians; and they will be justified.**

**God will also bring justice for all mistreated people. He will do what is right and fair for all the exploited people. Righteous God will bring vindication to the people who are wronged by others: according to the scripture which says "The Lord executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed." Psalm 103:6. The Lord will do what is right and fair for all the people that are suffering under a bad government/power. Do not worry if you are being treated unfairly because God will vindicate you today. God will judge in your favor without delay by giving you your rights that have been withheld since ages and He will penalize your oppressors; because He is the Judge of the judges who will judge the entire world. He will judge the world fairly and treat all nations with justice. He rules the world with**

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righteousness and he will decide what is fair for the nations: according to the Bible passage which says "He shall judge the world in righteousness, and He shall administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness." **Psalm 9:8**. **God will judge the world with justice and punish the wicked. He rules the world in fairness, and judges the peoples with equity.**

**Righteousness is a necessity for mankind:** The Bible stated that "Lord who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart" **Psalm 15:1-2**. **It is clear from the passages that only the honest people who walk with integrity and strength of character will be allowed access to the heavenly temple of God. Before you can inherit the kingdom of heaven, you must live blamelessly, practice righteousness, and acknowledge the truth in your heart. The prerequisite to abide forever in the presence of God are: obey God in everything and always do what is right; let your words be sincere and true. Anyone who doesn't want to end his/her journey in Satan's camp or partake in second death must walk innocently, practice righteousness and speak the truth from a sincere heart.**

**How many people in the world are judging uprightly? Are the prominent people not talking to oppose justice due to their selfish interest/ambition? Are the rulers of the nations giving a just decision? Is corruption not prevalent among mankind at this age? Are the leaders giving fair verdicts? As it is written "Do you indeed speak righteousness, you silent ones? Do you judge uprightly, you sons of men?" **Psalm 58:1**. Do the rulers and leaders know the meaning of the word "justice?" They must realize that God will reward everyone proportionally to their moral character and spiritual integrity. God will reward people based on their righteousness and uprightness: according to the scripture which says "Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His sight" **Psalm 18:24**. **Start practicing righteousness, because God will be good to those who do what is right and He will reward them. For this reason, let your righteousness surpass that of the hypocrites so that you will be rewarded with admission into the Kingdom of Heaven.****



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### Topic: Your righteousness must exceed that of the hypocrites – Part 3

#### Bible Reading: Matthew 5:13-20

We shall continue our discussion by mentioning that paying tithe alone cannot make people to inherit the kingdom of heaven, and filthy sacrifice is not acceptable to God.

#### **Paying tithe is not a guarantee to make heaven**

**Many people think that paying their tithe on time will make them to inherit the kingdom of God, this notion is wrong. Countless pastors and Believers have the mindset that as long as they continue to pay their tithe, then they are heaven-bound. So, this publication is not to discourage people from paying their tithes, rather it is to enlighten them that paying tithe alone is not enough to make them worthy of inheriting the kingdom of heaven.** Henceforth, your righteousness must exceed that of the hypocrites in order to enter the Glorious Home.

**Tithe is holy and belongs to God:** The Bible stated that ten percent of everything that we harvest is holy and it belongs to God; **it comprises the tenth of our land's produce, including that of the fruit trees, planted seeds/vegetables, mining activities and fishing activities:** according to the scripture which says "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy to the Lord." **Leviticus 27:30**. The tenth of your domestic animals also belong to the Lord; and **if you are a salary earner, ten percent of your wages belongs to God. 'In a nutshell' ten percent of your bonus, dividends, wages, gifts, gratuities and tips belong to the Lord.** The Bible testified to this fact by saying "And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the Lord." **Leviticus 27:32**. **God gave the priests and the Levites the tithe; which means they have the right to collect tithe from their Brethren: however He directed them to pay tithe from the tithes that they collected from their Brethren. The tenth of the tithe collected must be used to take care of the widows, orphans and the needy:** according to the Book of Numbers which says "Speak thus to the Levites, and say to them: 'When you take from the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it to the Lord, a tenth of the tithe.'" **Numbers 18:26**. **How many**

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**pastors/priests are paying a tithe of the tithes paid by their parishioners? Does the pastor of your church realize that it is a must for him to give a tenth of the tithes collected back to the Lord as a sacred offering? Do you think your pastor is using the tenth of the tithes collected to take care of the widows, orphans and the needy among the congregation?**

**Paying tithe does not mean access to heaven: Many people have the mindset that as long as they are faithfully paying tithe, they will inherit the kingdom of heaven; but they are wrong. Do not confuse paying tithe with admittance into the kingdom of God. Anyone that pays tithe will be blessed without measure and such person will have enough to cater for his/her needs. God will bless people who pay their tithes beyond their needs and they will have surplus:** according to the Book of Malachi which says, "Bring all the tithes into the store, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this, 'Says the Lord of hosts' If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it." **Malachi 3:10**. Though paying tithe is a necessity for Christians, but **paying tithe alone will not make anyone to possess the kingdom of God; unless his/her righteousness exceed that of the hypocrites. Paying tithe will only make the authority of abundance of the Lord to be established in your life. If you are considerate, and you don't want the pastors or the church workers to starve, then pay your tithe. Paying your tithe will make God to forbid Satan from causing emergency event/s to siphon your resources.**

Therefore, **woe on the people who focus on payment of tithe: but neglect more important moral and spiritual provisions of the Law. Anyone who fails to pay attention to the important matters like justice, mercy and faithfulness is a hypocrite.** Jesus said "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone." **Matthew 23:23**. **Teachers must not abandon teaching people fairness, compassion and fidelity. Majority of the pastors/priest in the world are concentrating their energy only on tithe; this trend is spreading at an alarming rate and it must be curbed. At this end time the pastors/priests must not omit the important teachings of the law from their sermons. It is the obligation of the leaders of Christianity to encourage people to give a tenth to God, to be fair and kind to others. They must realize that anyone who neglects justice**

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**and love of God is a hypocrite:** as stated in the Book of **Luke 11:42**. Paying tithe is right, but do not ignore the more important things, else you will be denied access to the kingdom of heaven.

### **Sacrifice will not make you to possess the kingdom of God**

**Countless people in the world think that they can bribe the Lord with sacrifices or offerings. They are wrong because God can neither be deceived nor bribed; so, quit your nauseous way and start doing what is acceptable to the Lord. They need to know that building churches will not make you worthy in the presence of God. Donating large amounts of money to churches or orphanage, or buying vehicles for them, will not make you to inherit the kingdom of God; unless you quit your sinful lifestyle and wickedness. Remember the Bible stated that you cannot remain in sin or continue to practice iniquity and expect the grace of God to increase in your life Romans 6:1. Flee from sins, and you will have share/portion in the kingdom of God.**

**God loves a cheerful giver:** God loves a cheerful giver, those who give willingly and not reluctantly. **If you want your sacrifice or offering to be acceptable, quit worldliness and give without hesitation:** according to the Bible passage which says "So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver." **2 Corinthians 9:7**. **Therefore, sing praises to the Lord every time that you are offering a sacrifice to Him. It is important to thank God and offer sacrifices to Him with songs of praise.** As it is written "I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord." **Jonah 2:9**. **Do not forget to give your offerings from a pure heart and a thankful voice; else it will not be acceptable to the Lord. For this reason, always use the best things to sacrifice to the Lord. You must neither swindle the Lord nor attempt to cheat Him by using unworthy or defective things to sacrifice to God.** The Book of Malachi confirmed this fact by saying "But cursed be the deceiver who has in his flock a male, and takes a vow, but sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished—For I am a great King, 'Says the Lord of hosts,' And My name is to be feared among the nations." **Malachi 1:14**. **Do not belittle your God by using imperfect items to sacrifice to Him, else you will be penalized. Using corrupt or worthless things to sacrifice will bring the curse of the Lord, so desist from this evil practice.**

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**God prefers mercy to sacrifice:** The offerings of numerous people are neither acceptable nor pleasing to the Lord; because they are dishonest gains. The sacrifice of many is not appealing to God and they don't make Him happy, because they are realized from corruption. The gifts that many Christians are presenting at the altar of the Lord are abominations, because they are products of bribery and exploitation. The Lord sounded the warning by saying "For what purpose to Me comes frankincense from Sheba, and sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet to Me." **Jeremiah 6:20.** It is time to change; because God is delighted in dutiful steadfast love plus goodness and not sacrifice. God wants faithfulness in the covenant relationship rather than sacrifice: He wants people to know Him and be acquainted with Him instead of burnt offerings. The Book of Hosea corroborated this fact by saying "For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." **Hosea 6:6.** Since the Lord desire loyalty and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. Are you loyal to God or Lucifer? Are you familiar with your Creator or the vanity of this world? Are you showing love to the people around you? Are you having compassion on others? If not, change today.

**God takes no delight in sacrifices and offerings:** God is not delighted in sacrifices instead He prefers paying attention to His word and obeys His instructions; because His law is more valuable than offerings. Sacrifices and offerings are not what please the Lord, gifts are not what He demands, but hearken and obedience: according to the scripture which says "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; my ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require." **Psalms 40:6.** For your sacrifice to be acceptable: offer it from a pure heart and obtain it from an honest way: since doing what is right and fair pleases God more than offering. The leaders of Christianity must realize that God valued uprightness and equity than sacrifice. Wealthy people need to know that the Lord demands virtue and impartiality rather than offerings. As it is written "To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." **Proverbs 21:3.** What God require from mankind is obedience; because obedience is better than sacrifice and paying attention is better than fat of rams: according to the Bible passage which says "So Samuel said "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice and to heed than the fat of rams?" **1 Samuel 15:22.** Amend your ways before it is too late; since

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**obedience is better than sacrifice and submission is better than offerings. The only sacrifice acceptable to the Lord is a sorrowful spirit and a remorseful heart.** The Bible attested to this fact by saying "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart— These O God, You will not despise." **Psalm 51:17**. **Always come before the Lord with a broken and repentant heart else your sacrifice/offering will be rejected.**

**Sacrifices and offerings cannot wipeout sins: The sinful behaviors of people and their vices cannot be purged by sacrifices, unless they repent and change. The wicked things that many Christians have performed cannot be erased by offerings.** God illustrated this phenomenon by saying "And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever." **1 Samuel 3:14**. **Do you fall into the category of people whose guilt will never be removed? Are you ready to repent so that your prayers will be answered? We need to realize that the sacrifice of the wicked is offensive to the Lord. The Lord is disgusted by gifts from the evil doers, but He is happy when the honest people pray.** The Bible stated that "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is His delight." **Proverbs 15:8**. **If you want your prayers to be the joy of the Lord, then be faithful. If you want God to favor your prayer, do what is right.**

**Do not bring filthy sacrifice: People should stop bringing blood-stained money and embezzled funds as offerings to the Lord; because they are detestable to Him. Proceeds of bribery, exploitation and lottery are an abomination to God. Do not sacrifice with gains of corruption because any earning from dishonest ways are disgusted to the Lord:** according to the scripture which says "You shall not bring the wages of a harlot or the price of a dog to the house of the Lord your God for any vowed offering, for both of these are an abomination to the Lord your God." **Deuteronomy 23:18**. So, pay attention to the warning in the Book of Isaiah which says "'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?' says the Lord: 'I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs and goats.' 'When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies -- I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting...'" **Isaiah 1:11-15**. **This is a wake up call for the Christendom, because their sacrifices are worthless and their offerings are disgusting to the Lord. He**

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cannot stand the evil that they are doing during their crusade or on Sabbaths and other times of worship. It is useless to bring their offerings, since their sacrifices and their religious gatherings are detestable to Him because they are all corrupted. The word of the Lord is to stop bringing their meaningless gifts until they repent: since their celebrations, assemblies and special days for fasting are all sinful and false; therefore He wants no more of their pious meetings. They need to change and reconcile with their Maker. Beloved let us depart from our corrupt and violent ways. We need to stop shedding the blood of innocent people, so that God will listen to our prayers. We must acknowledge that repentance and obedience are the qualities/conducts that will make us to inherit the kingdom of heaven and not our sacrifices/offerings.

**Topic: Your righteousness must exceed that of the hypocrites – Part 4**

**Bible Reading: Matthew 5:13-20**

We shall continue our discussion by mentioning the characteristics of the hypocrites and how the hypocrites will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

### **You must surpass the righteousness of the hypocrites**

Anyone who intends to inherit the kingdom of heaven must be morally right and justifiable in every way. The uprightness of such person must exceed that of the pretenders. Only the people whose virtues transcend the righteousness of the phony Christians will be admitted into heaven. If you desire to rest eternally in the kingdom of God, then your decency and integrity must be better than that of the hypocrites. It is when your good deeds (or goodness) beat that of the Pharisees that you have the assurance to rule and reign with Jesus Christ.

**Hypocrites will not make heaven: The hypocrites will be penalized in this world and they will miss the kingdom of heaven.** The Bible stated that the company of the godless will be barren and they will be sterile. The mob of pretenders will produce no fruit or nothing good: according to the scripture which says "For the company of hypocrites will be barren, and fire will consume the tents of bribery." **Job 15:34**. **Change today, if you don't want to be barren of good things of life. If you want to be fruitful throughout your existence**

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**depart from hypocrisy; because the joy of the defiled is brief.** The joy of the godless will be temporary and they will be happy only for a while: according to the Book of Job which says "That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment?" **Job 20:5.**

**Since no wicked person will be happy for long; improve your righteousness, so that your hope will not evaporate:** according to the Bible passage which says "So are the paths of all who forget God; and the hope of the hypocrite shall perish." **Job 8:13.** **Seek God and be upright in your ways else your future will be hopeless and you will be denied the opportunity to come into the presence of the Lord.** The Bible testified to this fact by saying "He also shall be my salvation, for a hypocrite could not come before Him." **Job 13:16.** **Since no hypocrite can stand before the Lord, let your righteousness exceed that of the pretenders so that you will appear before the Lord and dwell with Him forever.**

**Those who test the Lord and ruin others are hypocrites:** **Anyone who is probing the Lord is a hypocrite. People who are testing or tempting the Lord are nothing but show-offs.** Jesus confirmed that anyone who is testing the Lord is a hypocrite when the Pharisees tried to entrap Him concerning payment of taxes to Caesar. As it is written "But Jesus perceived their wickedness and said 'Why do you test Me, you hypocrites?'" **Matthew 22:18.** **Are you among those who are investigating the Lord? You must never try to trap the Lord or ruin the reputation of others else you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. It is time for you to stop using gossip to destroy your neighbors. Abstain from using baseless rumors to ruin other people and start being resourceful.**

The Bible corroborated this fact by saying "The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbor, but through knowledge the righteous will be delivered." **Proverbs 11:9.** **To prove that you are not a hypocrite you must not gossip to bring down your rivals or spread rumors to ruin others because of your selfish interest. Do not allow jealousy to make you to misbehave like the Pharisees** who said that Jesus was using the authority of the ruler of demons to exorcise demons from people. The Book of Matthew narrated this fact by saying "But the Pharisees said, 'He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.'" **Matthew 9:34.** **If you are tarnishing the image of people in any way, you are a hypocrite. If you are causing the downfall of others because of your**

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**selfish ambitions, you are a hypocrite and no hypocrite will enter the kingdom of God.**

**The self righteous people are hypocrites: The sanctimonious people who are making hypocritical show of religious devotion, piety and righteousness are hypocrites. The people who are snug and judgmental, especially if their actions prove that they are much less holy than they pretend to be are hypocrites.** Jesus mentioned them in the Bible by saying "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but you do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." **Matthew 7:3-5.** **The passage clarify that the holier-than-thou people are hypocrites.** Christ made reference to the warning of prophet Isaiah by saying "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you saying 'These people draw near Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'" **Matthew 15:7-9.**

**Are you one of the hypocrites who are worshipping God with lip-service? Are they teaching man-made rules as doctrines in your church? Are your pastors teaching man-made ideas instead of the commands of God? We are advising you to beware of hypocrisy that is rampant in the world,** just like how Jesus warned His disciples in the Book of Luke. The Bible stated that "In meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first of all, 'Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.'" **Luke 12:1.** **Be on guard against the pervasive, corrupting influence and teaching that is widespread in the world. Beware of hypocrisy that is like a cancer which is spreading to every aspect of Christianity. Dishonest teaching that is producing self-righteousness is a strategy of Satan to fool people and lead them astray.**

**Perversion of statutes is hypocrisy: Countless churches have distorted their mode of worship because of vanity of this world. Many leaders have twisted or misused the statutes of God because of personal gain. Several priests and Christians have misapplied or misinterpreted the law of the Lord because of vain-glory.** The Savior of the world illustrated with examples some of these cases. Therefore, **whenever you give alms let it be between**



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**you and your Maker instead of announcing it publicly.** The Scripture stated that "Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets that may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward." **Matthew 6:2.**

**Do you always call attention to your acts of charity? If so cease today, so that you will be honored by the Lord. If you are one of the people who like to pray publicly in order to be noticed and applauded; it is time to change your attitude because it is hypocrisy:** according to the Bible passage which says "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward." **Matthew 6:5.** **Always pray in your room or a private place instead of public places, and do not use meaningless repetition or long prayers so that your prayer will be answered.**

**Whenever you are fasting, do not appear disheveled, instead have your bath and cream your body; so that your fasting will neither be obvious to others nor noticed by men; but your heavenly Father who will reward you openly:** as it is written "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward." **Matthew 6:16.** **Do not be a hypocrite by neglecting your appearance or looking miserable so that people will admire you for your fasting. If you want to be rewarded for your fasting do not put on a gloomy or somber face like the hypocrites. This is the reason why the fasting of numerous people are neither acceptable nor their prayers answered.**

**In addition several Christians are violating the commandments of the Lord because of their culture. Numerous churches are breaking the command of God due to their tradition. Many countries across the globe are disobeying God under the guise of National identity.** Jesus sounded this warning to the people of Israel: according to the Bible passage which says "He answered and said to them, 'Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?' **Matthew 15:3.** **Are you one of the hypocrites who fail to comply with the direct command of God? We are at the end-time you must observe all the statutes of the Lord to prove that you are not one of the hypocrites, in order to be admitted into the Kingdom of heaven.**

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## Characteristics of the hypocrites

There are several characteristics of the hypocrites mentioned in the Bible; however we will only state some of them because of time constraint.

- **Those who lock people out of the kingdom of heaven are hypocrites. They are not going into the kingdom due to their misconducts and they are preventing others who are trying to enter by misleading them.** Jesus Christ rebuked them by saying "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in." **Matthew 23:13**. **Are you one of the pretenders who are distorting the word of the Lord to suit their purpose thereby misleading others?**
- **Those who are taking advantage of the widows and the needy are hypocrites. If you are making unfair demands on people who cannot resist because they think you are godly, or those who will not oppose your views because of your position, then you are a hypocrite.** The Bible stated that "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widow's houses and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation." **Matthew 23:14**. **Stop exploiting people if you want to inherit the kingdom of heaven.**
- **Those who can go to any length to evangelize and win souls; but after the people are converted to Christianity they will make the newly converted people twice as bad as themselves through their false teachings and strange doctrines are hypocrites.** As it is written "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves." **Matthew 23:15**. **Are your conducts increasing the chances of people to enter the kingdom of heaven or hell?**
- **Those who are living double lives are hypocrites. The people who are plundering the helpless and preying on the underprivileged are hypocrites.** The scripture described them by saying "Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence." **Matthew 23:25**. **Do you know that you are a hypocrite if you are full of greed and uncontrolled desires? If you belong to the class of people who**

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enriched themselves by cheating others and pleasing only themselves, then you are a hypocrite.

- **The people who cover up their vices and mistakes are hypocrites. Those who conceal their wrongdoings in order to be exonerated by perfunctory investigation will not make heaven, unless they repent. You are a hypocrite if you have a deceptive appearance, whereas your heart is filled with evil and your thoughts are wicked.** As stated by the Book of Matthew; "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like white washed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." **Matthew 23:27. You must neither hide nor disguise your faults or wrongdoings, instead, confess and renounce your sins:** according to the Book of Proverbs which says "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy." **Proverbs 28:13.**

Finally the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector clarify this issue. A Pharisee and a tax collector went to the temple to pray. The Pharisee stood ostentatiously (conspicuously) and prayed that I thank you God that I am not greedy or dishonest or a cheater, or an adulterer like everybody else: most importantly I am not like the tax collector over there; because I fast twice a week and pay my tithe.' However the tax collector stood at a distance very remorseful and prayed that 'God have pity on me, for I am a sinner.' **Jesus said the tax collector and not the Pharisee was in right standing with God and he went home justified.** For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. " **Luke 18:9-14. If you look down on others you are a hypocrite and no hypocrite will enter the kingdom of heaven.** For this reason, "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he may gain much, if God takes away his life?" **Job 27:8. Even if the hypocrites have enormous wealth in this world where will they spend their eternity? The future of the hypocrites is hopeless even if they gained so much during their existence, because they will not come into the kingdom of heaven. It is now clear and evident that your righteousness must surpass that of the hypocrite, if you desire to rule and reign with Christ.**

**The Seal: Matthew 5:20: For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."**