Righteousness Exceeding The Pharisees
Matt. 5:17-20

Introduction:
A. Pharisees were the most strict and zealous of Jews. (Matt. 23:15,23; Acts 26:5)
   1. Not wrong to compass land and sea to make proselytes - if make them children of God. (Mk. 16:15).
   2. Not wrong to be strict - if strict in all of God's will. (Matt. 23:23,24).
B. Pharisees condemned Jesus and disciples as Sabbath-breakers. (Matt. 12:1-10)
   1. “Work” of (cf. Ex. 20:9,10) did not include all kinds of activity–Pharisees knew it. (vv. 5, 9-12)
   2. “Work” meant employment; working for a living. (cf. 2 Thess. 3:11; 1 Cor. 9:6)
C. Pharisees unmercifully condemned the guiltless disciples - broke neither letter or spirit of Law. (Matt. 12:7)
   1. They were both harsh and inconsistent -- would mercifully excuse guilty David (v. 4).
   2. Neither David nor disciples justify setting aside law in the name of compassion. (Note: Consequences)
D. Pharisees condemned for strictly binding perversions and traditions, not of the law itself. (Matt. 23:2-4)
   1. Jesus expected disciples to strictly keep and teach the law. (Matt. 5:17-19).
   2. Jesus expected their righteousness to exceed that of the Pharisees in real matters of the law (v. 20)
E. Jesus uses six subjects to illustrate what He meant by righteousness exceeding the Pharisees:

Discussion:
I. Murder.
   A. The Pharisee's righteousness. - “Do no murder” (overt act). (v. 21)
   B. The Righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees’. (v. 22-26).
      1. Uncontrolled anger and hatred is murder of the heart. (cf. 1 John 3:15).
         a. “Raca” scorns the mind = empty head; “Fool” scorns character = morally worthless.
         b. As anger and scorn progresses so does the danger: judgment, council, hell.
      2. Settle differences long before they lead to violence.
         a. Be reconciled. (vv. 23,24)
         b. Be agreeable. (vv. 25,26).
II. Adultery.
   A. The Pharisee's righteousness. (v. 27).
   B. The Righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees’. (vv. 28-30).
      1. Uncontrolled passion is adultery of the heart.
      2. Take any measure necessary to control passions. (vv. 29-30).
III. Divorce.
   B. The Righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees’. (v. 32).
      1. “Makes her an adulteress” (ASV), like “Make him a liar” (1 Jn. 1:10)
      2. Any remarriage results in adultery, except for innocent party.
IV. Swearing.
   A. The Pharisees' righteousness--do not swear falsely. (v. 33)
   B. The Righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees’--swear not at all. (v.34-37).
      1. Some think this forbids the every day frivolous swearing of that day.
      2. Seems to me only safe thing is to swear not at all by anything.
      3. Christians should have reputation that “Yes” would be “yes” and “No” be “no” without having to swear.
         If would only tell truth under oath then he is not truthful enough.
      4. “What ever more than these of evil one”–Makes distinction between what one says under oath and what
         he says at other times--not as careful.
V. Retaliation.
   A. The Pharisees' righteousness. (v. 38).
   B. The righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees’. (vv. 39-42).
      1. Used a judicial law for personal application.
      2. Still right for state, not individuals. (Rom. 12:19-13:4)
VI. Love.
   A. The Pharisees' righteousness. (v. 43).
   B. The righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees'. (vv 44-48).
      1. Loving only neighbor no better than others.
      2. Loving enemy makes perfect in love as the Father.

Conclusion:
A. Do not worry about being too strict, but be sure are strict in right things.
B. It is necessary that we do exactly what the Bible on all subjects. (Lk. 4:4)