# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

January 19 & 20 '08

**"Reboot" Series**

***When its time to adjust the "default" settings…***

This Week's Message: **"It Ain't About the List"**

Pastor Mark Burch

*Matthew 5:20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.* (ESV)

"Just give me the list – and I'll do it!"

That phrase might be the exasperated cry of a person desperately trying to please another, and in far too many cases, it is how we have approached our relationship to God. We have reduced our "friendship with God" down to a sterile formula of "do's and don'ts" and as long as we have checked off all the items on the list, we feel fairly secure.

But Jesus blows this kind of "list" Christianity out of the water, when He shreds the Pharisees for their attention to minute details of the law, but hearts that are cold and distant.

What if Jesus was more concerned with your heart attitude than with your adherence to a list of rules? Novel thought?

Do you have questions about Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount? Send them to sermonquestions@willowparkchurch.com and then listen to future messages for the answers!

# HOME GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

History (Making it Personal)

1. Legalism has run rampant in the church of every generation. Talk about how you have seen legalism at work in your own life or in the church.
2. Why do you think it is easier for us to live by a "list" type Christianity than by a grace-based relationship?
3. What would your family relationships be like if there was a long list of "HAD TO DO'S" - but there was little love. What happens to that list when there is abundant love??

Digging Deeper (Looking to the Bible)

4. Read Matthew 5:17-21 and talk about why Jesus may have started out this way. What was there about His life that made people think He might be disregarding the law?
5. "But your master doesn't…" was a line that was used of Jesus many times as He "broke the rules". Matthew 12:9-14 is one of many confrontations Jesus had about Sabbath rules. Talk about what is taking place in this text. The principle of "doing good" was being supplanted with the legalism of "keeping the Sabbath". What do you think Jesus was trying to get through to these people?
6. Read Matthew 23. This text represents to us the "righteousness of the Pharisees" and all it's dark side. What is the key issue behind Jesus' frustration and anger with this group?
7. How have we today been like them?
8. Read through Romans 8:1-17 and talk about the freedom that there is in walking in step with the Spirit. What will our relationship to the "law" be like if we are in step with the Spirit? Why is it easier to just follow a "list"?

Taking It Home (Application)

9. The overall context of this sermon is to set a whole new worldview in place – a new gird – or a new set of defaults. Until we are "programmed" to respond with the mind of Christ, we will continue to default to our old operating system. Talk about what is involved with setting and keeping our "defaults" as they need to be. What helps you?
10. George Barna writes: If our goal as believers is to be fully obedient to God, and to become change agents in society through our collective commitment to His principles, our first pursuit must be to ensure that we as Christians have a mental framework that leads us to view the world through a Christian lens.
11. Talk about what it will take for us to establish that "mental framework"? What are you doing to ensure that your worldview is actually a God-honoring one?
12. Finally, pray for one another, and for the many people who see Christianity as nothing more than a "religion" of rules and regulations and who need to step into the joyful freedom of a love relationship to the Father through Jesus Christ.
13. Pray also for our membership meeting on January 27th, where we are going to talk about some of the "big" dreams that are on the horizon, and how we believe God wants WPC to make an impact in our city and region.