

Richmond Hill Baptist Church
October 16, 2011, **not a fan #5: More Than Rules**

Prelude & Prayer Time

Call to Worship: *Come People of the Risen King*

Welcome: Welcome to Richmond Hill. It is good to see you. If you are a guest please fill out a Connect Card. Let's greet one another.

Sing: *I Saw the Light, You Are Holy, Revelation Song*

Children's Corner:

Announcements:

1. Ladies Retreat: Oct 21-22, Canmore
2. Fall Festival: Friday Night
3. Youth Mystery Night: Saturday Night
4. Men's Retreat Highlights (Leon S, Willy Z, John E)
Questions: What did you enjoy the most at the retreat?
What did you gain from the retreat?

Offering & Offertory: Choir

Sermon: **not a fan #5: More Than Rules**

Today we are going to talk about this idea that following Jesus is more than rules – it is more about relationship.

When I was in Grade 7 I had Mrs Strother for math class. You need to know that Mrs Strother's husband was the pastor of Beulah Baptist Church. This was one of our sister churches in the area. It was also a small struggling church that from my perspective tended to be legalistic. Mrs. Strother liked rules and she had a lot them.

One day some of my buddies did something funny in Mrs. Strother's math and I burst out into some laughter. Well that was unacceptable. She called me up in front of the class and gave me the rule sheet and instructed me to write our rule #15 100 times. Rule #15 said: "I will not be loud in class." I guess laughter fell in this category.

I took my rule sheet and back to my chair and promptly crumpled it up. I felt that she was being a little heavy handed with me since she knew my dad was a pastor and she was using my as an example of what not to do.

When I crumpled up the Rule Sheet; she was infuriated. She quickly came back to my row and informed me that this was her only rule sheet left and that I would go home, iron it, and return tomorrow.

I wrote out 100 times "I will not be loud in class!" I took the rule sheet, unfolded it, and slammed it in my math book and called it good. The next morning I turned in the rule sheet with my rule written out 100 times. Later in the day Mrs. Strother pulled me out of my Spanish Class and informed that the un-ironed rule sheet was not acceptable.

She promptly gave me two options: suspension from school or go to the home economics room and iron out the rule sheet.

I chose option 2: Home Economics. However, I did not realize the class was in session full of girls. I almost opted for option 1, suspension, instead I swallowed my pride and ironed the rule sheet in front of the girls. I did not know how to use an iron. I had never ironed anything before. As I am trying to iron out the rule sheet Mrs. Strothers made sure that I did not burn the rule sheet.

There is no doubt that Mrs Stother's was making an example out of me. Her class was not a lot of fun and I am sure her church wasn't either.

In John 8 we are introduced to someone who broke the rules. We are not given her name. She is simply known as the woman caught in adultery. Jesus is teaching in the temple and the Pharisees brought this woman before Jesus.

John 8:1-11

But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ² At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. ³ The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group ⁴ and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" ⁶ They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. ⁷ When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." ⁸ Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. ⁹ At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. ¹⁰ Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" ¹¹ "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

Three Big Ideas:

1. Rules Can Be Cumbersome.

Matthew 23:1-4

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: ² “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. ³ So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. ⁴ They tie up heavy loads and put them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

Speeding Ticket: Police Office Hypocritical, Consequence.

2. Rules Don’t Inspire Grace.

Generally rules come with consequences. According to the Law of Moses adultery was a capital offense punishable by death. The Pharisees and the crowd were prepared to stone this woman.

Speeding Ticket: Continued, I talked with a Police Office friend, Justice of the Peace, Ticket was improperly filled out and dismissed. I received grace.

C. S. Lewis, the late Oxford and Cambridge university professor who was also author of the popular Narnia series of books, was once asked what belief was unique to the Christian faith. “Oh, that’s easy,” he replied, “it’s grace.” Every other religion makes rules the basis of a person’s right standing with God. But in the Christian faith the rules first point out how a person has fallen short of God’s standard. That realization leads a person to God’s grace. Then those same rules serve as direction to live out lives of gratefulness. This is done not to earn anything, but in gratitude for what has been freely given.

3. Rules Don’t Keep Us Around.

Let’s check out the DVD clip for this week: **DVD: Week Five Sermonette**

The woman caught in adultery was more than likely one of those kids that grew in church/synagogue but something happened along the way and she quit going.

Ken Ham in his book *Already Gone: Why Your Kids will quit church and what you can do to stop it*, has statistically demonstrated that we have lost the younger generation. He offers two recommendations:

1. Live Out Your Faith
2. Defend Your Faith, Explain the Why

When you tell your kids to not tell lies. Help them understand that it is one of God's 10 Commandments. Help them understand how important trust is. Help them understand that Satan is the father of all lies and that he loves deceit. Help them understand that the truth is not just a concept but a person. Jesus said, I am the way the truth and the life. Help them understand the why. Don't just say do this because I said so. Sooner or later they'll check out and do it their own way.

When Marisa and I got married some formal rules established.

We vowed to take care of each other in sickness and health.
We vowed to be faithful to each other as long as we both shall live.

Along the way some other informal rules have been established like when you get up at 5 am don't turn on all the lights and when you dry off after a shower or bath don't drip water all over the place. Great rules.

If I saw my marriage as a bunch of rules it would be miserable but because I love my wife I do certain things out of love, honour, and respect for her. It is about the relationship.

Fans generally focus on the Rules, Followers focus on Relationships!

Fans will keep the rules even if it hurts someone else. Jesus broke the Sabbath rules to help and heal others.

Relationships are critical. When Jesus was asked what is the most important rule. He said: Love God and the second: Love Others!

RHBC Vision Statement:

*"We are one of Calgary's dynamic churches, overflowing with new believers and growing disciples, who passionately participate in following Christ. We serve God and one another, **build lifelong relationships**, and eternally impact our community and world."*

Don't get me wrong rules are important! God is holy and he wants us to be holy.

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. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, 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. ¹⁹ Anyone who 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 practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you that unless

your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:48

Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

God word is a guide for life. It has some rules that are designed to help you avoid some of the pitfalls and land mines that are prone to destroy us. We choose to follow God's rules because we want to love and honour Him. Not to earn His favour.

Let me bring this idea of **More than Rules** full circle:

John 8:9:

At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. ¹⁰ Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" ¹¹ "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

Seesaw: High Grace, High Expectations!

Grace is a beautiful thing!

We have all broken the Rules. Thankfully God can help us iron out the wrinkles and make things right.

Become a follower of Jesus. Accept God's grace and then live Holy Lives by the grace of God!

Response: *Grace Like Rain*

1. Trust Christ.
2. Confess your sin. How about the sand!
3. Ask God to help you Follow Him.