

Matthew 6:1-4: Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Intro: Last Week: Don't merely deny yourself & die to self & don't hit back: But love your enemies.

JMac: Love your enemies, pray for your persecutors, manifest your sonship by loving like your Father in heaven, exceed your fellow men with super natural, Holy Spirit empowered love, & imitate the perfection of your Father.

This Week: This righteousness of the Kingdom that exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees must not be done to be seen by others, but it must be done for God and His glory!

Jesus gives 3 illustrations of how we might be tempted to seek the praise of man: giving, praying, and fasting. And He tells us how to practice these righteous acts in a way that pleases God and therefore are rewarded by God.

1 Corinthians 10:31: So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Who we are in secret (in private) is who we really are, no more & no less. Knowing God as Father empowers this!

1. Jesus Warns You Not To Do Righteous Deeds For The Purpose Of Being Seen By People

Matthew 6:1: Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them

a. Jesus warns His disciples because we're prone to love the praise of men: We're prone to do good deeds so others will see us & think we're great people! We want others to know what we do so that they'll think well of us!

- **Matthew 23:5-7:** They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, ⁶ and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues ⁷ and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others.

- **John 12:42-43:** many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

Do you ever do this? Are there ways I'm doing what I do in my Christian life to be seen by other people? Do I get mad when no one thanks me? Do I get upset when no one notices? Do I take special steps to make sure others know what I do? I'm I eager to do certain religious activities in public, but neglect them in private? **GOSPEL!**

b. We should be practicing righteousness: We should obey God. Our mission statement: **Matthew 28:18-20:** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

- **Titus 2:13-14:** Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

- **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.

c. We should not do righteous works to be seen by others: Our goal and desire should not be the praise of men! We want to be a people who are so transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit that **we are more concerned that people might think too highly of us.** Or even better – we want to be people who are not concerned with what others think about us at all, but we are consumed with a concerned for only this: **What does God our Father say about us & what does God our Father think about us?**

2. Jesus Warns: If You Do Righteous Deeds To Be Seen By People You Won't Be Rewarded By Your Father

Matthew 6:1: Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

a. We should seek to avoid two extremes: 1) Avoid being a monk & totally leaving the world;
2) Avoid blowing trumpets for the praise of men

b. What Jesus' Words here do not mean: You don't have to be a monk and leave the world and be overly paralyzed by the thought of others seeing your good deeds. Jesus expects the world to see our good deeds!

- **Matthew 5:14-16:** You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

- **Luke 21:1-4:** Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, ² and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. ³ And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. ⁴ For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

- **Acts 4:34-37:** There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them & brought the proceeds of what was sold ³⁵ & laid it at the apostles' feet, & it was distributed to each as any had need. ³⁶ Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, ³⁷ sold a field that belonged to him & brought the money & laid it at the apostles' feet.

- **1 Corinthians 11:1:** Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

Randy Alcorn: Though confidentiality in giving records makes sense, it creates another temptation. Many believers take advantage of the veil of privacy by using it as a cloak for their disobedience in not giving . . . R. G. LeTourneau was a great inspiration to me. He gave away 90% of his income, motivating me to raise the bar of my giving. I'm eternally grateful that he told his giving story.

2 Corinthians 8:1-3: We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ² for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³ For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will

c. What Jesus' Words here do mean: Jesus is challenging His disciples to do what they do with a right heart attitude and motive: do good deeds, not to be seen by others, but for the glory of God & for the good of others!

We will miss out on the best, greatest, longest lasting, most satisfying rewards if we do our good works to be seen by men! We will miss out on our Father's rewards!

d. Jesus uses the promise of future reward from your Father in heaven to motivate you to practice righteousness: **Matthew 5:11-12:** Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven

- **Matthew 6:19-20:** Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

- **2 Corinthians 5:10:** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

- **Genesis 15:1:** After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."

C. S. Lewis: Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak.

We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

e. What if the person you are giving money to or receiving your help in some way says: “You don’t really love me, all you care about is your reward in heaven!”

Answer 1: You are not my first love and motivation for all that I do – God is!

Answer 2: To truly be rewarded by God, I must love you as I love myself. And I do! I love you as I love myself, and I pray that God will help me grow in loving you more, and so I give because I love God, and I love you! I wouldn’t want to be in need, so I help you. I find my joy in your joy! And God will reward me for this!

Answer 3: The rewards we seek are naturally connected to the righteous deeds we do to earn the rewards:

C. S. Lewis: We must not be troubled by unbelievers when they say that this promise of reward makes the Christian life a mercenary affair. There are different kinds of rewards. There is the reward which has no natural connection with the things you do to earn it and is quite foreign to the desires that ought to accompany those things. Money is not the natural reward of love; that is why we call a man mercenary if he marries a woman for the sake of her money. But marriage is the proper reward for a real lover, and he is not mercenary for desiring it.

f. My motives are never totally perfectly pure: True, confess sin, aim for right motives, do the good anyway!

3. Jesus Gives An Illustration Of How Not To Give To The Needy

Matthew 6:2: Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

a. Jesus assumes that His disciples will give to the needy: We should care about the poor and needy! We should be a generous, hospitable, giving people! Olney Baptist Church you are! And may we continue to grow in this!

b. When you give, don’t make a big show of it so others see you give: Matthew 6:2: Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others.

c. The only reward you will get if you desire the praise of men for your good deeds is the praise of men and no more: Matthew 6:2: Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

4. Jesus Instructs You To Give To The Needy In Secret So That Your Father Will Reward You

Matthew 6:3-4: But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

a. Don’t focus on yourself when you give to the needy: Don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing! You’re not thinking about yourself and how great you are and how generous you are! You are self forgetful!

Matthew 25:37-39: Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?' ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you ³⁹And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' **(Brian Davis Story: No food, woman provided)**

b. Don’t focus on others knowing about your giving when you give to the needy: Let your giving be in secret!

c. Focus on your Father knowing about your giving when you give to the needy: Your Father sees in secret!

- **Psalm 139:7-8:** Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!

- **Hebrews 4:13:** And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

d. Boast, rejoice in, and rest in your relationship with your heavenly Father: Jeremiah 9:23-24: Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands & knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, & righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD."

Sinclair Ferguson: In the context of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus directs us to an altogether different reason for the spiritual hypocrisy he sees in the Pharisees. Notice that in Matthew 6:1-18, God is called "Father" on ten different occasions. Throughout this section of the sermon, our Lord hints that the real trouble with the heart of the hypocrite is that he does not know God as his heavenly Father! He is insecure before God and, therefore, seeks security in what his fellow men think about him. He is unreal in his activities before men because he has no real relationship with God. The more you read the Gospel narratives, the more you will become convinced that this was a chief reason for Jesus' controversy with the Pharisees. He was not against disciplines in the Christian life. The reason he reserved his strongest condemnations for Pharisees was because they distorted the character of his Father, and turned him into a tyrant, a slave driver who did nothing but place restrictive burdens on his people. By distorting the image of God, they "shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces". They did not know God as Father at all, and they hated the thought that he should show mercy to sinners who had broken his law.

Lloyd-Jones: The supreme matter in this life and world for all of us is to realize our relationship to God. One almost apologizes for making such a statement, and yet I suggest that the greatest cause of all our failures is that we constantly forget our relationship to God. Our Lord puts it like this. We should realize that our supreme object in life should be to please God, to please Him only, and to please Him always and in everything. If that is our aim we cannot go wrong. Here, of course, we see the outstanding characteristic of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Is there anything that stands out more clearly in His life? He lived entirely for God. He even said that the words that He spoke were not of Himself and that the works He did were the works which the Father had given Him to do. His whole life was given to glorifying God. He never thought of Himself; He did nothing for Himself; He did not obtrude Himself. What we are told of Him is this, 'A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench.' He did not raise His voice aloft. In a sense He seems to be there unseen and trying to hide Himself. We are told about Him that 'he could not be hid', but He seemed to be trying always to do this. There was a complete absence of ostentation. He lived entirely and always and only for the glory of God. He said constantly in various ways: 'I seek not My own honor but the honor of Him who has sent Me.' And He put it negatively in this way: 'How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?' 'That is your trouble', He says in effect. 'You are so concerned about man. If only you had a single eye to the glory and honor of God, then all would be well.'

2 Corinthians 8:9: For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Jesus is the only One Who ever lived & practiced perfectly sinless righteousness in all He ever did, thought, said, or felt. & all will perfect motives all the time! And He gave the greatest gift, Himself, to the most needy of people!

Christ's Righteousness Is Perfect Pure
And Seen By God, Earth's Only Cure
All Things Well, He Did Secure
And Died To Make Salvation Sure
Then Rose From Death So Lives Endure
For Righteous Praise From God Assure

We Do Our Good For Him Not Your
Notice Of Our Deeds Obscure
We Die To Pride It's Sin Manure
And Give To Others Like Him Pure
So Boast In Christ Alone Mature
Father's Rewards Are Our Allure!