

Sermon on the Mount #06

Who Is Jesus and What Difference does that Make to Me?

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Story of college kids who were challenged to carry Bible . . . soon started carrying BIG Bibles . . .

What was supposed to be a mark of humility became a mark of pride . .

Maybe for you, it's the family knowing that you are a Christian . . . so they

Or praying at work during lunch . . .

Or putting a Bible on your desk . . . or a Christian slogan on the wall of your office, so everyone KNOWS that you are a believer . .

And the truth is, sooner, rather than later, we start doing these "right things" for the wrong reasons, just like those college kids who were carrying their Bibles around so that others could and would see them . . . the right thing, done for the wrong reason . . .

I wonder, if God had anything to say about our tendency to do the right thing for the wrong reason, what would He say? And would you want to know?

W/ that in mind, please open your Bible to Matthew chapter 6

And the truth of the matter is, in this sermon on the mount, Jesus has already told us to let our light shine . . . so that others can see our good works and glorify our Father who is in Heaven . . . so we know that the unsaved, the lost, are supposed to see our good

works . . .

But if we are honest, we'll admit that there are too many times when

There is a real chance that we will miss what true godliness is supposed to look like . . . so today, with that in mind, please turn your attention to Matthew chapter 6, chapter 1 . . . the famous Sermon on the Mount . . .

He just got done say, "**Mat 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.**"

Set stage . . . READ 6:1-18

Who is Jesus? He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament = He is Lord

What Difference does that make to me? People who submit to Jesus seek to please Him

I. In their giving

A. All through Scripture, God has always held the importance of almsgiving . . . of giving to the poor and needy . . .

1. In Deut. 15:11 we are told . . . **Deu 15:11**
For the poor will never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt surely open thy hand unto thy brother, to thy needy, and to thy poor, in thy land . . .
2. **Pro 19:17** He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.
3. I could go on quoting verses . . . again and again God stresses that giving to the poor is a godly thing to do . . .

4. But friends, lets be transparent for a moment . . . much of our giving is less concerned with meeting needs and pleasing God . .
 5. Much of our giving is in fact nothing more than us trying to earn a reputation of generosity and piety . . .
- B. Hypocrites = actors, those whose purpose is to get applause and adoration of other humans
1. Blowing the trumpet in Jerusalem in Jesus' day was a way calling all the citizens together for come urgent need . . .
 2. The trumpets demanded attention, they called for everyone to stop what they were doing and take notice . .
 3. I'm afraid much giving in churches today is just like that . . .
 4. I dare say, we are so concerned that others KNOW what God is doing through Us that it almost becomes what We are doing through God . . . as if He's a bit player in all of this . . .
 5. So & so will give to family, but will make sure that the church knows about the need being taken care of by them . . . even want their names put in the bulletin so God will get glory through them . . .
 6. So & so will give, as long as when we have a building, we name the foyer after them, or put a framed letter of appreciation to this family in a prominated place . . .
 7. Friends, I want a church building . . . but I want it to be all about worshiping God . . . not about worshiping men . . .
 8. And by the way, it's not just the wealthy who can fall into that trap . . . this trap is

- open and avaiable to all of us . . . b/c there just is something inside of us that wants us to be honored . . . and when we give, even a little bit, we want that honor to come to us . . . instead of going to God . . .
9. This is a real danger for all of us . . .
- C. They have received their reward = that's all they're getting
1. Jesus tells us to not let our right hand know what our left hand is doing . .
 2. Which is just a fancy way of saying, "Keep it secret . . ."
 3. Give in a quiet way . . . give so that the only motivation you have is to be used by God to meet a need in someone's life . . .
 4. Give so that the only one who knows about it is God . . .
 5. Those who make a big deal about their giving are SEEKING the praise of others . . . and when they get it, by the way, it is usually deserved . . .
 6. They did give . . .
 7. And they have gotten their reward – the praise of men . . .
 8. Jesus doesn't deny their giving . . . nor does He deny them a reward . . . but that's the only reward they get . .
 9. You can't have it both ways . . . you can't give to get the praise of humans and the praise of God at the same time . . .
 - a. It's either, give to get the praise of men . . . and get the praise . .
 - b. Or give to get the praise of God . .
 - c. And if you give to get the praise of God, you very well may never be

- patted on the back down here on earth and publically thanked for your wonderful generosity . . .
- d. Don't delude yourself . . . don't think that all giving is pleasing to God . . . because it's not . . .
 - e. The real issue is WHY are you giving?
 - f. And the bottom line of the whole deal is that you can be a generous person here . . . I'm serious . . . you can give and give and give . . . and be praised, be thanked, be honored here on earth . . .
 - g. And that's all you're going to get . . . b/c you will get no reward from God . . .
 - h. Yes, your giving may meet needs . . . your giving may have been the answers to some long times spent in desperate prayer . . . I don't doubt that one bit . . .
 - i. But, when you gave to be honored, while God used you to meet a need, you will get no reward from Him . . . b/c you've already gotten it . . .
 - j. But . . .
- D. He promises an eternal reward to those who seek to please Him
1. And we have to admit that sometimes, we want to give in order to receive . . .
 2. And that's not legit . . . true humility and generosity is motivated by a desire to please God . . . not a desire to get something from Him . . .

3. But He does promise that if we do this . . . if we give to others in a quiet way . . . in a way that only He knows about . . .
4. He promises us a reward . . . an eternal reward . . .
5. Those who are following Jesus . . . who call Him Lord and mean it . . . they are willing to forgo a little human recognition . . .

II. In their praying

A. We cannot pray like:

1. The hypocrites who want others to admire them
 - a. Sometimes I hear people who change their voices when they pray . . . boy, I dislike that . . .
 - b. And more importantly, God dislikes it . . .
 - c. In the synagogue of the day, public prayer was customarily led by a male member of the congregation who stood in front and prayed out loud . . .
 - d. You realize how that man could easily succumb to the temptation of praying for the audience and not praying for God . . .
 - e. The acceptable cliches . . . the right tone . . . the right words . . . the not stumbling over words . . . thinking of the next phrase so the congregation would be amazed at his ability to have the right words said the right way . . .

- f. All so when he was done, the people would say, “Oh my, what a prayer! Much better than the guy who prayed last week . . .” . . . YUCK . . . and you may quote me . . .
- g. But this didn’t only happen in the synagogues . . . often the people of Jerusalem would take time out of their day to pray during the time of the afternoon sacrifice . . .
- h. Right out in front of God and everyone, they would stop what they were doing to turn and pray toward the Temple as the lambs were being slaughtered . . .
- i. And those opportunities to look pious were really quite gratifying . . . I mean, “Oh, hush . . . he’s praying over there . . .”
- j. Friends, let’s confess to one another, let’s not be too hard on the people of Jerusalem back then . . . b/c we have the same problem . . .
- k. We bow our heads at a restaurant Sunday afternoon, and know that people are watching us, so we keep our head bowed extra long, even though we finished praying . . . or start praying for other things, like our missionaries, etc., so the people watching us will think that we are REALLY spiritual . . .
- l. Anyone who’s done any praying with any other human being, be it publically at church, or in a small

- group of two or three ladies . . . if you’ve ever prayed out loud with another human, you’ve faced the real temptation of talking so that HUMAN could hear you more than talking so that GOD would listen to you . . .
- m. Used big words we never really use much . . . got sounding pretty good, too . . .
- n. And if you were out to impress people, you probably did . . . congratulations . . . human praise is what you were shooting for, and that’s all you will get . . .
- o. That is the full reward . . . no praise from God and certainly no answered prayers . . .
- p. Now, Jesus is not prohibiting all public prayers, and we know this because 1) He prayed publically, and 2) the early church prayed publically – Acts 1:24; 3:1, 4:24, etc. . .
- q. So, let me ask you this . . . do you pray more frequently and more fervently alone with God or do you pray more frequently and more fervently when you are in a group?
- r. Do you love the secret place of prayer? Or do you long for the spot light?
- s. Are your public prayers simply an overflow of your private prayers?
- t. And friends, if we pray longer and harder in public than we do in

- private, we are hypocrites, plain and simple . . .
- u. Could it be that we don't have more answered prayers because we are less concerned about bringing our requests to God than showing off before humans?
- v. If we are more concerned about what people think about our prayers, or we don't even pray privately, but pray publically, we are hypocrites . . .
- 2. The pagans who want God to work deals with them
 - a. Some of the pagans thought if they named all their gods and addressed their petitions to each of them, they would be more likely to get their prayers answered . . .
 - b. Listen to yourself pray sometime, you might shock yourself . . .
 - (1) the same old phrases . . .
 - (2) the same old idle repetitions . . .
 - (3) talking without even having our minds or hearts engaged in it . . . no wonder God doesn't answer us . . .
 - (4) [Ecc 5:2](#) Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

- c. Now, you have to be careful . . . Jesus is not telling us not to pray . . . He's hitting the over and over and over again rut that we often fall into . . .
- B. How we must pray because God is a Great King
 - 1. That God would glorify Himself – v. 9
 - a. Touch on the term “Father”
 - (1) [by His death and resurrection, Jesus won us the right to be reconciled to God, making God our heavenly father . . .](#)
 - (2) [Joh 20:17](#) Jesus saith unto her, **go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.**
 - b. Touch on term “our”
 - c. Name . . .
 - 2. That His Kingdom would come – v. 10
 - 3. That His will would be done on this earth . . . so
 - a. We must commit ourselves to knowing His Will
 - b. We must commit ourselves to living His Will
- C. How we must pray because God is our Heavenly Father
 - 1. That He would meet our physical needs – v. 11
 - 2. That He would forgive us our sins – v. 12
 - 3. That He would strengthen us in testing – v. 13

- III. In their fasting
 - A. Fasting: going without food in order to draw closer to God by demonstrating your commitment to Him
 - B. When you fast, act normally so no one but God will know what you are doing

Genuine godliness is centered on God. Anything else is a sham . . . is counterfeit . . . true godliness has God at the center of it all . . .

So let me ask you . . . how much of your religious good deeds are you doing in order to be admired by the rest of us peons?

Let's be honest, some come to church in order to be seen at church

. . .

Some give in order to be recognized from the pastor . . .

Some carry Bibles into work in order to be known as a "really spiritual" person . . .

Some fast and let everyone know that they are not eating today because they are fasting . . .

Friends, all of those actions are distasteful to God because they are all good things, done for the wrong purpose . . . and He knows the difference . . .