

Refuge City Church — May 5, 2024
“Motivation in Giving” (Matthew 6:1-4)

Introduction

- Jesus spent time bringing clarity to the law and the misconstrued interpretations of it.
 - Focusing on how we are to think and respond in various circumstances; original intent of the law, and our heart condition in regards to it.
- Now He corrects misconstrued living [righteousness]; religious practices that were not being done properly.

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.”

- “*Beware*” = pay attention; be cautious.
- “*Righteousness*” = right standing before God; doing His will in accordance with His Word.
 - We must practice righteousness. We must live in a way that shows the world we’ve been set free [redeemed].
 - **Deuteronomy 18:13**, “You shall be blameless before the Lord your God.”
 - **1 Corinthians 16:13**, “Be watchful, stand firm in the faith...”
 - **1 John 2:29**, “If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.”
 - So we are to be cautious how we do this so as not to draw attention to anyone, including ourselves, but rather the Lord.
- Does this contradict what Jesus taught previously?
 - **Matthew 5:16**, “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.”
 - The answer is no.
 - The emphasis is on *why* you do them [heart], and *who* it’s for [man or the Lord].
 - **2 Corinthians 13:5**, “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!”
- Jesus then offers up multiple examples of areas we can test/examine our righteousness... areas that are extremely important in righteous living.
 - Giving, Praying, and Fasting
 - The first of which we will cover today... how we give.

Matthew 6:2-4, “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.”

- Do not draw attention to yourself... period.

- It doesn't need to be announced. It doesn't need to go on social media, or be blasted in a church directory.
- That simply reveals a heart that needs affirmation, attention, or credit.
 - **Ezekiel 33:31**, "...for with lustful talk in their mouths they act; their heart is set on their gain."
- True righteousness is solely dependent upon serving the Lord and others... not yourself or your ego.
- The idea of giving in order to receive the praise of man, shows nothing more than that you just purchased a gift for yourself [the praise of humanity].
 - If all of humanity falls short of the glory of God, then so will their praise.
- Jesus labeled those who give in such a way as "hypocrites" [actors; stage players].
 - Those who falsely claim to live by a standard when in fact you do not.
 - Those who live this way do all they can to convince themselves and others that you have a sense of righteousness.
 - **Isaiah 29:13**, "...this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me..."
 - Hypocrisy is a result of the fall of man and the sin that clings so closely.
 - There are those that seem to appear righteous, but in fact are only playing a part.
 - Consider Cain: He knew what he ought to do in giving back to the Lord, yet he chose otherwise, and God revealed his heart.
 - **1 Timothy 4:1-2**, "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron."
 - Such hypocrisy robs God, others, and yourself.
 - **Matthew 23:27-28**, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."
- When Jesus says, "do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret" is a call to pursue giving to others in a way that even your own body doesn't know what the other parts are doing :)
 - **QUOTE**: "Keep the thing so secret that even you yourself are hardly aware that you are doing anything at all praiseworthy. Let God be present, and you will have enough of an audience." [Charles Spurgeon]
- What is our ultimate motivation in giving?
 - *Spiritual formation*: giving out of love for God and not the praise of man is a step towards "being perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect." [Matthew 5:48]
- Story #1: Giving for the benefit of others [Acts 4:34-37]
 - "There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet."

- Story #2: Giving for the benefit of yourself [Acts 5:1-4]
 - “But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife’s knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.’”

Conclusion

Amos 5:21-24, “I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

- All these things had been given to the people by God to honor Him, yet they were turned into dull, tasteless offerings because the people’s hearts turned to ‘religious practice’ rather than sincere devotion.
- When we give, we should do so according to the praise of the Lord, not for man.
- So how does the Lord instruct us to give?
 - *Generously*
 - **2 Corinthians 9:6**, “The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”
 - *Sacrificially*
 - **Mark 12:41-44**, “And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”
 - *Responsibly*
 - **Luke 16:10**, “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.”
 - *Willingly & Lovingly*
 - **2 Corinthians 9:7**, “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”
- Remember, God is the only one who knows your heart.
 - Yes, we practice our righteousness in the public eye. Some may judge why we do what we do, yet it is our private heart that is publicly revealed before the Lord.
 - **QUOTE**: “The greatest reward a believer can have is the knowledge that he has pleased his Lord.” [John MacArthur]
 - **Ephesians 2:10**, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”
- Yes, God will reward you. He will bless you. Yet our motivation should be to honor Him in all that we do.