

Sunday, August 30, 2020 am

TEACHINGS OF JESUS (18)
Sermon on the Mount (17)
Righteous Giving
Matthew 6:1-4

Welcome back. Over the course of the past few months we have been examining the Sermon on the Mount as we study the teachings of Jesus. We have noted the theme of this sermon is found in Matthew 5:20, *“Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees...”* The past 7 lessons have been dealing with how the religious leaders had corrupted the LOM in many ways (adding to it, changing it, manipulating it, etc.) to establish their own righteousness. We noted how His audience might have asked, “How do we need to let our righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, religious leaders who are devoted to the teaching and keeping of the Law”. Jesus said, “Let me show you how with a series of, “You have heard...but I say to you...” examples (6 of them).

Jesus has illustrated that our righteousness needs to not only follow the law of God, but it must also be from the heart. But Jesus is not done. After this, Jesus notices another major flaw in their “righteousness”, namely it was outward and seeking the praise of men. This is addressed in Matthew 6:1-18. We will devote the next 3-4 lessons to this section. Today, we address righteous giving.

I. Take heed (1)

- a. “Take heed” (KJV, NKJV) or “Beware”- (NASB) a warning or caution – to be on guard, continually alert. Jesus is saying here to pay attention to your actions AND attitudes.
- b. “Charitable deeds” – NKJV, “righteousness” – NASB –
NOTE: This is a significant variant (difference) in ancient Greek mss that our NT is based upon. Time will not permit a discussion of such things here (we will address this in my class on the reliability of the Bible). But let me say here that the difference has no bearing on doctrinal truth, which is true of ALL variant readings. IN this case, the difference only affects whether vs. 1 applies to the first 4 verses or this entire section (vs. 1-18).
Likely, the proper reading is a continuation of Jesus dealing with corrupted righteousness
- c. The point - don’t do what you do to be seen of men – whether it be charitable acts, in your prayers, fasting or anything else. (Cf. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 – without love, no matter what we do, we are nothing).
- d. IF you do, you have no reward in heaven! That is pretty strong! If your motives are merely outward – you will NOT inherit heaven! Jesus will repeat this in vs. 2.

II. How to do charitable deeds (2-4)

- a. That we are called upon to be charitable goes without question (both under the LOM and the Law of Christ)
 - i. Deuteronomy 15:7-8 – poor among your brethren
 - ii. Deuteronomy 24:17-22 – instructions when harvesting to leave some for the poor, including the stranger. They were reminded that they were strangers in Egypt as well.
 - iii. Luke 6:38, Jesus taught, *Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.*”
 - iv. Ephesians 4:28 – work so that you have to give to him who has needs
 - v. 1 Timothy 6:17 – ready to give, willing to share
 - vi. 1 John 3:17 – whoever has this worlds goods and sees his brother in need...

- b. **Do not sound a trumpet as the hypocrites do** – do not brag or make it something about people seeing you do this.

Apparently, that was the motivation behind some of the “charity” of some of these leaders (self-righteousness – e.g. “I’m giving you this, not because you deserve it, but because I’m such a good person.”; “God said I have to give to the poor, so here it is.”

ALSO, some of the Jewish leaders believed that by giving they earned salvation.

The apocryphal book of Tobit says, “For almsgiving saves from death and purges away every sin” (Tobit 12:9). (Remember, this book was rejected as being inspired.), but it was part of Jewish tradition and their commentary on the law.

- i. If the only reason you give is because of the accolades you receive, it is not proper giving (1 Corinthians 13:3). You are wasting your time with God.

- ii. Observations: This is not saying you are wrong if someone finds out or knows what you give. NOR is it about whether you should give in public. If you are able, you can – and perhaps motivate others.

Consider how we are to let our lights shine (Matthew 5:16). Proper giving sets an example. Consider Barnabas in Acts 4:36-37.

That is not the point. It is about our pride – seeking the praise of men. Elevating yourself above the poor, etc.

- iii. Observation: Beware of subtle boasting – pretending that you not bragging (“This is why I did this...”), but deep down you are seeking praise for it.

- iv. Jesus said, “*They have their reward!*”

- c. **Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.**

- i. True giving is about providing relief to one who has a genuine need, and you do what you can for them. You do it because it is the right thing to do – and nothing else! You do it because you CARE!

- ii. Clearly here Jesus is using figurative language. How can a right hand KNOW what the left hand is doing? Thus, Jesus is saying, in contrast with the prideful and showy giving of the hypocritical leaders (He used the term hypocrites which means actors or pretenders) - when you give be private about it. Be humble as you share with others. Do it for the sake of the act, and not for personal praise.

- iii. Some considerations:

1. One source dealing with the left and right hand observed this – don’t draw attention as you give – it would be like quietly slipping something into the hand of one you are helping. No fanfare or attention.
2. This is not saying to give without planning or thought (blindly and irresponsibly). It is simply about making it known to others
3. Our text further says, **Let it be done secretly** – this elaborates on the previous point. Giving is to be done with discretion. Consider anonymous giving – sometimes people will find a way to give to another without it being known who. They want no praise, just to help someone.
OR they may help someone and tell them to keep it quiet.
4. You might also consider one who gives because of the benefit for them – Example: Giving for the tax deduction – AGAIN, note it not wrong to take the deduction (if its there), but is that the ONLY reason you are generous and give?
- One might be seeking self-praise in his giving - not just feeling good for doing the right thing, but patting yourself on the back for how wonderful you are (cf. Luke 18:11-12)
5. When you give – do so and forget about it! Move on!

- iv. **God sees what you are doing and will reward you accordingly and openly.**

1. Consider that we will give an accounting for what we do and how we do it.
2 Corinthians 5:10 – we will give an accounting whether good or bad.
Consider also Matthew 25:34-46 – and what God takes note of.
2. Proverbs 19:17 – *He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, And He will pay back what he has given.*
3. Can you ever outgive God? No! HE knows all and He knows how to bless and when.
BUT remember, He also knows your REAL motives. So are you giving expecting to receive something in return? (See Matthew 5:42)

And thus we see the first area where Jesus identifies the outward and prideful motives of the hypocritical leaders. Again, Jesus says, “You are better than that”. Let your actions show that you genuinely wish to please God and are grateful for all that He has done. How you share with others is a pretty good indicator. Think about it!