

PP The King and His Kingdom-The Commands for a Disciple of Christ
Part 20-Matthew 6:1-4 **7/1-2/2017**

Thomas La Mance wrote: “Several years back, I was...in the living room listening to the radio when my dad came in from shoveling snow. He looked at me and said, ‘In 24 hours you won’t even remember what you are listening to now. How about doing something for the next 20 minutes that you’ll remember the next 20 years? I promise that you’ll enjoy it every time you think of it.’ “‘What is it?’ I asked. ‘Well, Son, there are several inches of snow on Mrs. Brown’s walks,’ he replied. ‘Why don’t you go see if you can shovel it off and get back home without her knowing you did it?’ “I did the walk in about 15 minutes. She never knew who did the job, and my dad was right. It’s been a lot more than 20 years, and I’ve enjoyed the memory every time I’ve thought about it.”

Jesus began this great sermon teaching His disciples the **character** He is going to form in them
 Poor in spirit, mournful over sin, meek of heart, hungry and thirsty for righteousness, merciful,
 pure in heart, peacemakers, joyful in persecution

In **5:13-16**, He taught them the **calling** for all His disciples: salt of the earth, light of the world

In **5:7-20**, Jesus taught them the **condition** every one of His disciples must have, righteousness

And then in **5:21-48**, He gave six examples of the **conduct** of His disciples, demonstrating a
 righteousness greater than the Pharisees and scribes

We must have hearts that move us to peace and not murder; purity and not lust; faithfulness
 not divorce; truthfulness and not lies; surrender and not revenge; and love instead of hate

Jesus begins now to lay out the **commands** He has for His disciples

This is what He requires for those whose hearts have been made righteous through Christ

God will never ask us to do what He will not give us the want and power to do!

The Apostle Paul made this incredibly clear, and The Living Bible words it well

PP *“Dearest friends, when I was there with you, you were always so careful to follow my instructions. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to do the good things that result from being saved, obeying God with deep reverence, shrinking back from all that might displease Him. For God is at work within you, helping you want to obey Him, and then helping you do what He wants.”* **Philippians 2:12-13 TLB**

Knowing this-God will give us the want to, and the power to do what He commands, let’s look at
 the first of Christ’s commands for His disciples in **6:1**

PP 1-Look at your heart

“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.” **6:1**

Some might wonder at this because of what He said in **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.”* **Matthew 5:16**

We must live out our righteousness before others that they may see and be amazed at God

The issue is what is motivating us, why are we are doing what we are doing

Jesus warns about those who do religious things *‘in order to be seen by them’*

PP The ‘why we do it’ is as important as the ‘what we do’

PP So *'Beware'*, pay constant attention to what is motivating you, making sure we are not being motivated *'to be seen by them'*

How many of you like theater, or enjoy going to Broadway shows?

PP The phrase, *'to be seen'* is all one Greek word, and it gives us our word *theater*

We must not put ourselves on the stage for all eyes to be drawn to us

If we live for others praise and honor, then we *"will have no reward from your Father Who is in heaven."*

All we do is for God to be made famous, to get the credit, to be lifted up and honored

But the truth is, we have an incredible ability to rob God of glory, diverting it to ourselves

And the more religious the activity, often the more we see this happening

The three religious pillars of Judaism were giving to the needy, praying, and fasting

And Jesus addresses each, beginning with giving to the poor

PP 2-Give with a pure heart

"Thus, when you give to the needy..." 6:2

Let's establish a critical truth right now: giving to the needy is not an option for the Christian

Jesus didn't say, *'If you give to the needy'* but *'when'*

The question to ask ourselves is *Am I an active and generous giver to the poor and needy?*

Giving to the poor was held so high by the Jews, but corrupted so severely

PP *'Greater is he who gives alms than he who offers all sacrifices.'*

In fact, the Jews used the same word for righteousness that they did for almsgiving

They taught one could be made righteous by giving to the needy

PP *"It is better to give alms than to lay up gold. For almsgiving saves from death, and purges away every sin"*¹

There is only one way to be made righteous and that is through the death and resurrection of

Jesus Christ, but the Bible is clear that God desires us to be generous to the poor

Yet we must give with pure motives

"sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others." 6:2

Notice in 6:2, the word *'hypocrites'*, appearing again in verse 5 and 16

The word originally designated a stage actor who put on different masks to switch roles

We use the word to describe someone who says one thing and does another

PP Jesus used *'hypocrites'* to describe those who did the right things but from corrupt motives

There is no evidence that the Jews literally blew a shofar to announce their giving to the poor

It seems more a proverb that means, *do not toot your own horn*, bring yourself praise

The scribes and Pharisees gave in order to gain what they craved...honor and praise

There were, in the Court of Women in the temple, 13 trumpet-shaped boxes for the Jews to give

Their coins were not perfectly round, and if one flipped one into that rounded opening just right, it would reverberate all the way around as it dropped into the box

When putting in the heavier, valuable coins, the noise echoing around that room grabbed the attention of all near to see who was giving so heavily

Seeking praise is so deeply woven into many of hearts

¹ Tobit 12:8-9

I was the speaker at a Christian camp on one occasion, and during afternoon free time, I went down to the lake and fished the shore

While watching the people in the boats catching nothing, I suddenly began catching fish, but I made sure to let the fish fight and splash, causing everyone to look at me as I was bringing in 5-6 bass and perch

Suddenly the Holy Spirit whispered in my soul, *Do you see what is going on in your heart?*

The gospel penetrated with clarity and conviction, and I began praying earnestly about this propensity to gain praise from others

I am so thankful that God is doing the work of transforming my heart so that I will despise attention, and not clamor for praise and recognition

What Jesus says about those who give in order to gain praise and honor from others is

“Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.” Matthew 6:2

Spurgeon said of this, that no one can expect to take his or her reward twice

If what is motivating your giving is earthly praise and honor, then that is the only reward you get

PP *‘have’* here was used for a ship holding off from shore

It means that God holds back from the full, bountiful reward He would have given to the generous because their motives were for themselves

The selfish lose what they could have had...their ship will never come in, losing rewards

The reward they *‘received’* is paid in full here on earth, yielding nothing in the life to come

PP In fact the word *‘reward’* here actually means *pay for service*...get what you had coming

You will get the praise of people, but no honor and praise from the Heavenly Father

The great temple that Jesus often visited had a special, out of the way room called the Chamber of the Silent

It was a place where humble Jews could give without being noticed, and where the poor could go to receive without being ashamed and humiliated

People gave and others were helped, and the identities of neither were ever known

Back in 1997, we were struggling financially not knowing how we would pay for our bills, when we received in the mail \$800 cash

There was no return address, it was postmarked Lehigh Valley, and to this day we do not know who our benefactor was

That is beautiful giving, and the Lord has given our family opportunities to do the same thing

Jesus instructs us how to give in way that is pure in heart

“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.”

6:3-4

Some take this pretty far, giving cash-only in the church, so nobody knows who it is, or making sure to put a check or cash in the offering plate so it makes no noise

What He is teaching though is this: give to the needy with pure motives, without the self in mind

You don’t give to the church to get your name on a brick or a building named after you

You give to those in need without the thinking that you did your good deed for the week, and now you can get on with living your life for you

Or without the internal ledger, I gave to you last year and you are need again, I’m not giving

There are people I would be hesitant to accept anything from, because with it comes an ‘I owe you’, where you are clearly in their debt, not financially but relationally
 Some give and now the receiver owes respect, honor, the duty of telling others of the good deed
 There are some who give of time, talent or treasure and if you don’t thank them enough, they get upset and hurt

Friends, Jesus makes clear what giving with self-forgetfulness looks like

PP *“Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’”* **Matthew 25:34-39**

PP 3-How to give with a pure heart

There are two powerful, almost hidden truths that Jesus gave that can motivate pure giving

PP a-Our Heavenly Father is Watching

“And your Father who sees in secret...” **6:4b**

There is not one thought, one action, one time of giving or withholding that God does not see
 Now most of us know that, but we need to realize something else, and I’ll illustrate it first
 At one point this past week I was writing this sermon, and Andy was a few feet away, asking me questions of superheroes, a normal part of our interaction
 I was studying and trying to be a good day, but answering him with grunts and monosyllables
 Finally, he says, *You’re not listening to me are you dad*
 I answer that I was, partially, so he asked me to tell him what he had been saying...not good!!
 Now use my imperfect parenting to shine a light on God’s perfect Fatherhood
 There is not ever a moment in the day that we do not have God’s full attention!
 There are 7.5 billion people on earth, but we don’t each have a 7.5 billionth of God’s attention
 You have all of it, I have all of it, and He always *‘sees in secret’*, nothing getting by Him

My father used to often come to patio door and make sure my friends and I were not up to shenanigans in the pool...used to drive me crazy...but it worked!

For some, it might be irritating or frightful to know God is watching over us with full attention
 To be a sinner that stands before the blazing, glorious, Holy God is a most terrifying prospect
 The sight and attention of God is, and will be to all who reject Jesus Christ, most fearful

PP There will be a horrible day when all will call out *“to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him Who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb’”* **Revelation 6:16**

But to us who have been covered in the blood of Jesus, God’s all-seeing attention is welcomed, because we have come to understand the second truth Jesus gave

PP b-Our Heavenly Father loves to reward His children

And Christian, the reason is this: you have a God Who loves to *‘reward you’*

It is trusting your divine accountant so well you don't need to check the ledgers

It is to meet every need we are able to meet and leave the bookkeeping to God

It is to give with self-forgetfulness, how, because you know God sees everything and will reward

PP ***"As for the rich in this present age...do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life."*** 1 Timothy 6:17-19

PP ***"Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his deed."***
Proverbs 19:17

The disciples of Jesus must learn to live from their hearts, checking their motivation

Giving to the needy is not optional, but it is directional...it cannot be for our honor and glory but genuine act of love and desire to give God glory

For God sees with full attention everything we do and think, and He is ready to reward and bless His children for eternity

Amen?

Pray