

Give Alms in Secret

As we begin Mathew Chapter 6 we examine what a proper _____ with God looks like in our actions. We'll examine how our actions in serving God demonstrate the _____ of our relationship with God. We'll look at examples of practicing righteousness, and we'll see how God _____ them to be, how we, like the Pharisees, can mess them up in our _____, and how the Holy Spirit can guide us back to righteousness that pleases God.

6 "Take care not to practice your righteousness in the sight of people, to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

It isn't the _____ of people that's the problem, but the motivation to be _____ doing good that is the problem. And, Jesus lets us know that if we seek glory for _____ from others through our righteousness, then we have no _____ from God.

We don't illuminate ourselves, we glorify God.

Earlier in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had encouraged us to let our relationship with Him shine forth in righteousness, in good works (Mathew 5:14-16)

Well how can we both _____ practice our righteousness in the sight of people, and at the same time let people _____ our good works and glorify our father in heaven?

If you're really living the way that God has intended you to live as a Christian, then

_____ about you is going to declare "there's something _____ about this person" to everyone around you (1 Pet 2:12). Unbelievers should be _____ that following Jesus is a better way of life by observing the way that we live our lives. The light of our life should encourage others to follow Jesus, when they are given the opportunity. And, by definition, this means that the way that we live our lives, as followers of Christ is _____.

So, we are both encouraged by Jesus to hide our works, and encouraged to let our works show. What's going on?! The answer is in the _____ for our acts of righteousness: why are we doing these good works in the first place?

The kind of works that are like a city on a hill that cannot be hidden, drawing people to God; the kind of excellent behavior that causes even unbelievers to glorify God, the kind of works that are evidence of a living and active faith within us are those works _____ by the Holy Spirit. He inspires us to do good works out of _____ for God, and to use the spiritual gifts that He has _____ in us as believers. When we do the good works, the ministry toward people, _____ by God and _____ because of the gifts that God has given us, then God gets the Glory, for His work being _____ on earth by His servants. As long as your _____ motivation, in your heart, is that God is glorified, there's no problem. But we're really good at _____ to ourselves about our motivations (Jer. 17:9). Jesus is telling us is to avoid _____ by doing as many works as possible in secret. We must always be _____ not to steal God's glory.

God takes Glory seriously

3 Examples:

Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, when he grew too prideful, and refused to give God the glory. Result: The most powerful king, besides King Jesus, who has ever lived, was driven insane, and brought low like an animal, eating grass in the field. (Daniel 4). Belshazzar of Babylon: He knew the story of his father Nebuchadnezzar, and yet still he committed this defiling of the consecrated vessels of the temple.

Result: God's judgement was swift, because this king knew better (Dan 5:30: **30 That same night**

Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed.) King Herod: King Herod accepted praises as a god, being familiar with the Law as tetrarch of Galilee. Result: Acts 12:23 **23 And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died.** Herod ate the attention up...and was eaten up himself. He was punished for not transferring the glory he was being given to God. How ironic that the man who was _____ to be immortal died only days later.

²“So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, so that they will be praised by people. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

Notice that Jesus says “_____you give to the poor”, not “if you give to the poor”. Almsgiving was a central part in expressing love for God in Judaism, and it’s clear from these verses and many other examples in the New Testament, that Jesus _____ this to continue in the Christian community as well.

The Church has the responsibility to take care of the poor. **James 1:27 27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.** One of the ways that we let the world know that Jesus loves them is to _____ their needs. We let our love _____ to point them to Jesus (James 2:14-18). If we are giving to get a warm fuzzy feeling, or to “earn points with God” or “look good” to others, then it’s not God we’re serving, it’s _____. And no-one can do enough good works to _____ their way into heaven. The only work that _____ is Jesus’ work on the cross. Salvation is by the grace of God alone, through what He has done, and by faith alone in what He has done.

Jesus uses this _____ of giving to the poor specifically because it’s something that’s usually possible to do somewhat in secret. But the Pharisees were literally sounding a trumpet in front of themselves as they magnanimously gave out of their abundance, in order that they would be _____ by all the people. In the ancient world, the names of donors, and the scale of their generous gifts were often inscribed on stone monuments—and of course, we still see this today...We need to make sure that our _____ isn’t like that of the Pharisees—to gain the praises of people, or like them, this will be all that we receive.

³But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

The point of this statement is that our giving, whenever possible, should be done with such a tight circle of secrecy, that it _____ the possibility of building up one’s own image even in our own eyes. The right hand and the left hand are much closer to each other than the right hand is to our own head or our own eyes. In other words, give and forget about it, don’t spend time dwelling and patting yourself on the back for the gift. If you do this, you will really _____ any possibility of public acclaim, and any possibility of letting yourself get _____ up with pride.

Reward

⁴so that your charitable giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

Jesus goes out of His way, in the lengthiest sermon recorded in the gospels, to mention this, because it’s important. How we live our lives down here for Jesus is _____ correlated to our situation in heaven forever. And, remember that the “Awards Ceremony” isn’t among a bunch of sinners, but it’s at the Bema Seat Judgement in heaven, among all saints who have lived during the last 2,000 years, and it will be very _____. And that’s why Jesus spends so much time talking to citizens of Heaven about _____ in the Sermon on the mount, his instructions to Citizens of Heaven.