

## As the Hypocrites

Matthew 6:1-8

- If we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and have fellowship with Him - as one of His disciples
- We do things for Him
- We do things because of Him
- We do things as a result of His commands
- We do what He did
- A follower would have to do that
- Or they wouldn't be a follower
  
- A follower of Jesus can also do things that appear to be for Him
- But are really for self
- To be seen of others
- So they think well of us
  
- Our passage of the day commands us not to do this
- To guard our motivations and to ask ourselves why we do things
- Our primary desire should not be "looking good" to others
- And so, we should take some steps - many of them outlined in this scripture - to avoid the temptation - to look good, to appear pious, to seem Godly, without actually being Godly
  
- Matthew 6:1-8 is where we find this wisdom
- To avoid behaving "As the Hypocrites"
- And that is our theme of the day
  
- How we appear to men is important (to some degree or another) to all of us
- We don't want people to think poorly of us
- We would rather they see us in a good light
- This is not necessarily a big problem
- But it can be, especially if we think more about how we appear than who we really are
- Because who we really are is the most important thing
  
- That becomes apparent as we begin our passage of the day...

Matthew 6:1

1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

- We should define our terms from the beginning
- Alms are charitable activities of a religious nature
- It could be charitable giving or a donation
- Alms are good deeds intended to help others
- Certainly it is right to do charitable things to provide care for people, right?
- Why?
- Because people are valuable
- God sent His son to die for people
- God loves people
- We are His followers, we ought to love people and give ourselves for them
- Of course, if we have opportunity, we should give money as well
- Because we want to help
- It is right to help
- It honors God to help
- With what motives should we do this?
- Certainly not, to be seen
- Our Father rewards those who obey Him in giving
- But not when we do so to be seen
- There is further explanation in the next verse...

Matthew 6:2

2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

- It's obvious that some people in this day - and in our day too - give to be applauded
- There are announcements and television interviews and photo ops and press releases planned
- So that anyone watching and listening will think well of the giver
- But this notoriety is the only reward a person with this motivation receives
- This is not the reason any believer should have for helping others
- To make a charitable donation for the reputation's sake is something hypocrites do
- The proper motivation is doing good because someone needs it
- Because it will be a genuine help
- And because God wants us to help people

- So, what should we do instead?

#### Matthew 6:3-4

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

- Giving can, and often should, be done secretly
- Make a personal donation anonymously
- Let it be seen of no one
- And let men thank God for the money, as he provided us with the strength to earn it
- This kind of giving, not done to receive praise of men, will be rewarded
- Not by the applause of impressed crowds, but by God himself
- Who, it says here, will reward us openly
- What about prayer?
- The passage goes on...

#### Matthew 6:5

5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

- Hypocrites use prayer in a similar way
- They want to appear pious to others
- They put their religiosity on display
- And whatever boost to their reputation they receive in doing it
- Is all they receive
- There is another way...

#### Matthew 6:6

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

- When we pray, we are seeking God for something
- We want him to intervene in our lives or in the lives of others

- And we pray believing He will do it
- We want Him to hear us, not others
- Obviously, some prayers are meant to be public
- Particularly when we gather to seek Him a group, a congregation in the local church
- But the vast majority of our prayers are to happen in this prayer closet
- Our prayers are meant for Him, not our reputation
- We want Him to hear, not others
- And so we shouldn't make a show of it
- There's more...

Matthew 6:7-8

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

- Repetitive, meaningless prayers are common in the religious world
- Prayers that are said as a duty
- They are repeated to accomplish some religious purpose, but not to reach the God of the universe
- And whether it is the volume of words spoken or the eloquence of them, they actually accomplish nothing
- Except, maybe, to impress someone
- But God is not interested in this kind of prayer
- He knows our needs before we ask
- He knows our motivations
- He knows our thoughts
- And our prayers should reflect this
- Prayer should be sincere
- Filled with faith
- Given in sincerity
- And never a religious show
- That is what hypocrites do...

*Christopher Harper, Take Note 2025*