

Lighthouse Bible Church
May 20th, 2012 Morning Service
Matthew 6: 1 – 4
‘Hidden or Hypocritical Giving’ Part #1

Stand – Read – Pray

This account is early in Jesus’ ministry. He had just been tempted for 40 days in the wilderness and he leaves Nazareth and comes to Galilee and lives in Capernaum.

There He began, it says in **Matthew 4: 23** to preach in **their synagogues, preaching the gospel and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.**

Then it says in **Matthew 4: 24 – 25** **His fame went throughout all Syria and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments and those who were demon possessed, epileptics, and paralytics and He healed them. Great multitudes followed Him.**

And when He sees the multitude He goes up on a mountain and begins to teach them in what is known to us as the sermon on the mount. And in chapter 6, here, He is teaching them about true worship to please God as opposed to hypocritical worship to be seen by men.

Hypocrisy has been a part of religious worship since the fall of mankind and it is illustrated all throughout the Old and New Testaments. It is described by Jesus in **Matthew 15: 7 – 9**: when He says **Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying ‘these people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips but (what) their heart is far from Me and in vain they worship Me..**

And it is going to continue, **1st Timothy 4: 1 – 2** says until Christ comes. It says **in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons speaking lies in hypocrisy.**

All throughout the sermon on the mount Jesus has been exposing the hypocrisy of the religious leaders in their attitudes, in their false teaching of the law, with regard to their view of murder, adultery, divorce, taking of oaths and how to treat others.

And now Jesus is about to expose their hypocrisy in the way that they worship God and He is going to do it in three areas. Their worship in Giving, their worship in Praying and their worship in Fasting.

By the way, these are 3 acts of worship that we as believers today are called to do and we too can do them from the right perspective of true worship to God or to be seen by people in hypocrisy.

We can do the right acts of worship but we can do them with the wrong motive, to be seen by men, and consequently it is meaningless to God. So this becomes very practical for us today in evaluating our own worship before God. He starts out in Verse one.

Verse One: take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

Verse one is kind of a summary of what He will be saying in verses 2 – 18. He says **don't do your charitable deeds**, whatever those may be, and in this case it is giving, praying and fasting, **before men to be seen by them.**

That phrase **to be seen** is one word in the Greek and it is the word *theamai* and it is where we get our English word theatre from. He is saying ‘don’t let your religious acts of worship be like that of an actor on a stage who is performing and trying to make an impression on those who are watching’.

He says, if you do, you will **have no reward from your Father in heaven**, you will have just the applause of people. Our charitable deeds and our acts of righteousness may be seen by men, but they should never be done to receive the recognition or applause of men.

Isn’t that what **Matthew 5: 16** said **let your light so shine before men that they may SEE your good works and** (what) **glorify your Father in heaven**. That is the purpose and motive behind any good work or charitable deed that is done.

In other words the followers of Jesus are to be seen doing good works to glorify the Father in heaven and not doing good works to be seen by men for their own glory. But that is exactly what we see the religious leaders doing here in our passage and what Jesus denounces and calls hypocritical acts of worship.

These charitable deeds of righteousness fall into 3 categories that affect every area of our Christian life. The Giving ‘outward’, the Praying ‘upward’ and the fasting ‘inward’. They deal with our possessions, they deal with our petitions and they deal with our physical body. So let’s look at them starting in Verse 2.

Verse two: therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men...

Notice a key word in this passage is **WHEN**, when you do your charitable deed, **WHEN** you pray and **WHEN** you fast. The assumption is, as a follower of Christ, that you are going to do these things. And you can look all throughout the Old and New Testament and see all three of these being done repeatedly.

He says in Verse two that **when you do a charitable deed** don't do it to be seen by men. This charitable deed, in the context here, is that of giving something to the poor by way of food, clothing or money.

Again, he says **WHEN** you do your charitable deed. The idea is that you **ARE** going to give to those in need. God has always used His people to meet the needs of those who can not on their own.

Proverbs 19: 17 He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord and He will pay back what is given

Proverbs 21: 13: Whoever shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard

Proverbs 28: 27: He who gives to the poor will not lack...

There were two things that the Jews believed about giving. One was that it gained you favor with God (*Tobit 12: 8 – 9*) and the other was that it was a means of attention, applause and recognition from people. That is the issue to which Jesus is addressing here in this passage.

Notice how Jesus explains how the **hypocrites** would do their charitable deeds of giving. By the way, the word hypocrite is the word *hupocrites* in the Greek and it means an actor under an assumed character and when you apply that to the idea of being seen by men, *theomai*, where theatre comes from, you have a hypocrite in his giving that wants to be something he's not.

But that is the way the Pharisee's were, they wanted to be seen by men, they wanted attention drawn to themselves in their giving, under the assumed appearance of righteousness when they were something else in their hearts, because they loved the attention of men.

John 12: 43 says the Pharisees loved the praise of men more than the praise of God and in many cases nobody but God knew that. They pulled off their hypocrisy and notice how they did it in Verse 2.

Do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets that they may have the glory from men...

There is some debate as to whether He is talking about a literal trumpet or just using that as an analogy about someone who is drawing attention to himself as if he were blowing a trumpet.

One historian says that the Persians had a system by where some of the poor were given a small horn or trumpet and when they collected the alms from someone they would blow a trumpet in honor of the person giving it that would bring attention to them.

Another writer said that the alms collection bins in the temple and synagogues were horn shaped. They were small at the top and large at the bottom and when someone put their money into the horn they would do so with such force as to make a lot of noise from the horn.

Whatever the meaning, Jesus says, when you act like that, when you give for the purpose of impressing others or for letting others know of your generous giving with the idea in mind of getting some type of recognition, He says **you have your reward.**

Even if someone never says anything to you about your giving but you want them to see you giving, then you want the recognition and honor from people more than God and **you have your reward** and that reward is **the glory of men**. Whether it is actual or perceived in your heart, that is all you get and nothing more and you forfeit the blessing and reward from God.

Verse 3 - 4: but when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing that your charitable deed may be in secret and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

Again, the idea is that you WILL give but you will give with the proper heart attitude. Whether it is to the local church which you belong to or to someone you see in need inside or outside the church.

He says when you give, you do it without drawing attention to yourself or desiring to be seen by people or expecting some type of recognition. You give asking nothing in return. You give to meet a need and do not expect anything in return. You give out of a heart of love for God and for others.

Isn't that what Jesus did in **2nd Corinthians 8: 9** when it says **for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might become rich.**

One writer said 'we should give with the sole intent and desire of pleasing God only. When a good work has been done, we should dismiss it from our minds and not congratulate ourselves' *A.W. Pink on Matthew page 150.*

Listen, there is nothing wrong with giving in public, the issue is never the place of giving but the attitude of the heart when the giving is done. Before we move away from the area of biblical giving and move on to the issue of biblical praying and fasting, I want to share something with you about biblical giving. It is one of the most common questions I am asked about.

So I would like to just introduce the topic of biblical giving today and look at it in greater detail next week. We have been truly blessed as a church by the generous giving of many here and as our savings and checking grow, we want to continue to be good stewards of the money that has been entrusted to us and to use those resources wisely.

As we grow as a church and expand our ministries, we want to be accountable to God and be accountable to you and to be wise stewards of what is given and how to use it, so we are putting together, as you know, a more formalized budget so that you can see exactly what the financial needs are and how that money is being used.

Marva and Debbie have done a great job in documenting all of our income and expenditures and in maintaining the integrity of what is given, as do those who count the offerings week to week.

We want to be good stewards of our money and our possessions as a church and individually in our own lives. Sometimes, because we live in such economic uncertainty, the tendency for some people today is to put their trust and hope in the **uncertainty** of our **money** or our **riches** or our **possessions** or our **material wealth** or in our **jobs** or in what **we have** and in what we have **saved**. Because, as we all know, those things can be taken away from us at any time, right.

We tend to lay up more treasures on earth than we do in heaven and remember how Jesus finished that sentence in **Matthew 6: 21** **where your treasure is (what) there your heart will be also.**

One writer said ‘people in our society are wealthier than any civilization in the history of man. Sadly, they rapidly squander their blessings on things that cannot last. If our treasure reveals the condition of our hearts, this generation is in serious spiritual trouble. Our buying habits show little concern for anything of eternal value’ He goes on to say ‘perhaps the saddest observation of all is that the spending habits of people in the church differ little from those of the world’.

That is why Paul told Timothy in **1st Timothy 6: 6 – 10** *Read*

We need to put our giving and what we possess and what we do with our possessions into a proper perspective whether we are in difficult financial times or whether we are in economically prosperous times.

Our perspective needs to be one of trusting in God and not on the uncertainty of our economy or the uncertainty of our riches. Paul says later in **1st Timothy 6: 17** **don’t trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.**

That is why the writer of Proverbs says in **Proverbs 11: 28** **he who trust in his riches will fall.** And if you do happen to be blessed with financial or material riches **Ecclesiastes 5: 19** **says as for every man to whom GOD HAS GIVEN riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his portion and rejoice in his labor, this is the Gift of God.**

In **Proverbs 10: 22** it says **the blessings of the Lord make one rich and He adds NO sorrow with it.**

We, as a church, want to be good stewards of what we possess and to handle everything from a biblical perspective when it comes to finances and your giving to the church and our receiving and using of what is given.

We also want to encourage you to be a good steward of what you possess and what you give, and in order to do that, we want to equip you by looking at our individual giving and financial stewardship through the lens of scripture, by looking at the biblical perspective of giving.

As we do that we are going to answer 5 important questions about giving. **Why** should we give, **how** should we give, **when** should we give, **how much** should we give and **to whom** should we give.

Closing prayer

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Verse One: Charitable deeds before men

Matthew 5: 16

Verse Two: Don't be like the Hypocrites

Proverbs 19: 17, Proverbs 21: 13

Proverbs 28: 27, John 12: 43

Verses 3 – 4: The Father sees in secret

2nd Corinthians 8: 9, Matthew 6: 21

1st Timothy 6: 6 – 10, 1st Timothy 6: 17

Proverbs 11: 28, Ecclesiastes 5 19

Proverbs 10: 22

Application / Notes

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