

Public Piety

Matthew 6:1-18

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Texts:

Matthew 6:1-18,

1. Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.
2. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.
3. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,
4. so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.
5. And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.
6. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.
7. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.
8. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.
9. This, then, is how you should pray: “Our father in heaven, hallowed by your name,
10. your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
11. Give us today our daily bread.
12. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

14. For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

16. When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show when they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

17. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,

18. so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Giving To The Needy

Matthew 6:1, Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

I. We are not to do our righteousness before men to be seen of them, to gain their admiration and accolades.

A. It is vital in Christian service that we carefully consider both what we do and why we do it!

B. Secrecy is not the point. Matthew 5:16, “In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” Motivation is the point.

Matthew 6:2, So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

I. If we give alms to the needy to be praised by men we have our reward and need look for none from God.

A. Imagine forming a parade with trumpets to march across the street to give \$5.00 to the salvation Army at Christmas. There are many ways of “blowing our own horn.”

B. Jesus also said this was done by hypocrites in the synagogues (comparable to our churches).

C. It is assumed that followers of God give alms to the poor. Jesus did not say “if” you give alms. “He said “when you give alms.”

D. Our obligations to the needy are not fully met by church budgets. Helping the needy has an individual component.

E. Remember that praise of men is very fickle. God’s promise is dependable.

Matthew 6:3, But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

I. This idiom indicates that our righteousness is to be done quietly, not with ostentatious display.

Matthew 6:4, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

I. Quiet benevolence . . .

A. assures purity of motive.

B. protects the privacy of the recipient.

C. protects the benefactor from continual solicitations for other donations.

D. provides an opportunity for development of Christian love between giver and receiver.

E. pleases Jesus!

Matthew 6:5, And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

I. Attention now turns to prayer, but the point is the same. Religious service is not to be motivated by self-aggrandizement and seeking the praise of men.

A. If we seek the praise of men, and get praise, we have what we were looking for and need not expect any further reward from God.

Matthew 6:6, But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

I. To avoid the appearance that our prayers are being offered to gain praise of men, Jesus advised private prayers.

A. This certainly does not forbid public prayers as in worship, but it does forbid selfish motives in our prayers.

Matthew 6:7, 8, And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many

words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

I. We are not to use meaningless vain repetitions to prolong our prayers.

A. We are not heard in heaven because of our long prayers.

B. Long monologues are not required to gain God's attention!

C. Repetitions are not forbidden. Vain repetitions are forbidden. We repeat the Lord's Prayer almost every Sunday. How can repeating the Lord's Prayer become vain?

D. Gentiles chanted the same words over and over endlessly by rote.

II. God knows what we need even before we ask about these things in prayer.

A. Prayers are not to give God information.

B. In prayer we thank God for his gifts, petition for God's help, and praise God for his wondrous greatness.

Matthew 6:9-13, This, then, is how you should pray: "Our father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Luke 11:2-4, He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our

daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.”

I. “After this *manner* therefore pray ye,” not necessarily always with these exact words. This is a model for us to go by as we pray to the father.

II. “Our Father who art in heaven,”

A. The Bible presents God as a loving Father, never once as a mother.

B. The teachings of Christ present God as “Father” no less than 160 times.

C. God is everywhere with his primary abode being heaven, a higher plane.

1. Acts 17:28, ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

2. 1 Timothy 6:13-16, In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time – God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

III. Hallowed be thy name.

A. God's name is to be honored and regarded as holy, sacred.

B. Exodus 20:7, "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

IV. Thy kingdom come.

A. The church kingdom which began on Pentecost following the ascension of Christ was then future.

B. The heavenly kingdom, the home of the soul to which the saved of earth aspire, will be realized following the universal resurrection from the dead. This was and is future.

C. The doing of the will of God on earth has also obviously not yet been realized, so the abstract definition of God's Kingdom, "the royal reign of God in everyone's heart" is still in the future as well.

V. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth . . .

A. If and when that happens the kingdom of God will have come on earth.

B. Christians are to work toward that end.

VI. Give us this day our daily bread.

A. Jesus did not teach us to pray for our second million, but for our daily needs.

B. Notice that we should not pray for “my” daily bread, but for “our” daily bread evidencing a genuine interest in mutual needs of others as well as our own needs.

VII. And forgive us our debts (trespasses) as we also have forgiven our debtors.

A. “Have forgiven” is past tense in grammar.

B. We ask God to forgive us in the manner and to the extent that we have already forgiven others.

1. Mark 11:25, “And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

2. Matthew 7:2, “For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”

3. Mark 4:24, “And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.”

4. Luke 6:38, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”

C. Christ did not expect his disciples to live sinless lives and knew they would need forgiveness.

D. 1 John 1:8, If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

VIII. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

A. Temptations are dangerous and mankind is weak.

1. **Matthew 26:41, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”**

B. **1 Thessalonians 3:5, For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our efforts might have been useless.**

C. **James 1:13, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:”**

D. **1 Peter 5:8, Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.**

E. **1 Corinthians 10:13, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”**

IX. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

A. These words were omitted in the Revised Version because they do not appear in Greek manuscripts until several hundred years after the Gospels were written.

B. This doxology states that the kingdom, all power, and all glory eternally belong to God.

1. This is a true statement, possibly adapted from I Chronicles 29:11 and recited in worship; so, eventually some scribe probably added it while he was copying Matthew.

Matthew 6:14, 15, For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

I. To be forgiven we must forgive!

A. Forgiveness has two components, the human and the divine.

B. Acts 7:58-60, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

C. Acts 22:16, And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.

D. Luke 23:24, Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

E. Acts 2:36, 37, “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” When the people heard this, they were cut to the

heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Fasting

Matthew 6:16-18, “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show when they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

I. The hypocritical Jews made a show of their fasting in order to be admired by their observers. They had their reward and did not need to look for rewards from God.

II. Christians were to fast secretly with no outward indication of the fact that the disciples were fasting. God then will reward the people who sincerely fast.

A. Are Christians to fast?

B. If so, when and for what purposes?

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Questions

1. We are not to do our _____ before _____ to be seen of them, to gain their _____ and _____.

2. It is vital in _____ that we carefully consider both _____ we do and _____ we do it!

3. If we give _____ to the _____ to be _____ by men we have our reward when men _____ us and need look for _____ from _____.

4. What are some ways in which we “blow our own horns?” _____

5. Is giving to the needy optional for the Christian? Give reasons for your answer. _____

6. Our _____ is to be done _____, not with _____.

7. Give five advantages of “quiet benevolence.” _____

8. _____ is NOT to be motivated by
_____ - _____ and _____ the
_____ of _____.

9. Since God knows what we need before we ask, why do we need to pray? _____

10. In view of Matthew 6:7, 8, is it wrong to repeat the Lord’s prayer two or three times a week? _____

11. In prayer we _____ God for his _____,
_____ for God’s _____, and _____
God for his _____.

12. In the Bible God is referred to _____ times as Father and _____ times as Mother. What does this tell us? _____

13. God is in _____ and his name is to be _____.

14. In what ways can we now pray, “Thy kingdom come?” _____

15. What are the differences between “Thy kingdom come” and “Thy will be done, as in heaven, so one earth?” _____

16. We are to pray for _____ daily bread, not _____ daily bread.

17. We ask God to _____ us in the manner and to the extent we have _____.

18. _____ are _____ and _____ is _____.
Christ does not expect his _____ to live _____
_____ and knew we would need _____.

19. To be _____ we must _____!
_____ has two _____, the _____
and the _____.

20. Are Christians to fast? If so, when and for what purpose? _____

