

Introduction:

- I read about a person who went to a concert at a beautiful old art-deco theatre. At the end of the concert, this person noticed two ushers standing near his seat who were applauding harder than anybody else in the whole place. The man said that he was thrilled with this particular concert because of the talent and virtuosity of the musicians. It thrilled him even more to see these two ushers standing there applauding more vigorously than all of the concert goers. His experience was somewhat diminished when he heard one usher say to the other, "Keep clapping. If we can get them to do another encore, we get overtime!"
- It appeared that these two ushers were serious music lovers
- It turned out they were only applauding so long and so hard because it would mean a few more dollars in their pockets.
- There are people who do good things for the wrong reasons
- *“Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. When you give to someone in need, don't do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.”* (Matthew 6:1-4, NLT)

I. The Change Up

- A. The main section of the discourse found in Mt 5:20-48 was devoted to setting out a 'righteousness' greater than that of the scribes and pharisees.
 1. *“For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”* (Matthew 5:20, NKJV)
 2. Jesus is still after the heart of the people...to be more than their teachers had been.
- B. The discourse/sermon now changes to warn against a wrong kind of 'righteousness' vs 6:1 which is undertaken to gain human approval and not to be conformed to the will of God. Jesus is always after the heart of the matter.
 1. Those who practice this kind of righteousness, a 'righteousness to be seen, are called 'hypocrites'. A word that occurs often in Mt. 6 times in chapter 23.
 2. Hypocrite - In classical Greek it spoke of an actor. A person playing another's part. Not the real person that is seen. *“The jarring contradiction between precept and practice.”* Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (p. 1236). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.
 3. Pharisaical righteousness focuses on external and not inward depth.
 4. The disciples are not to be like them (scribes and pharisees).

- C. The focus of this chapter moves from the heart change which shapes a righteous behavior to the actual practice of 'righteousness' that flows out of a changed heart/God like heart.
- D. The basic framework of this passage, 6:1-18, is formed around three matching contrasts that believers are expected to be practicing.
 1. giving - 6:2-4
 2. praying - 6:5-6
 3. Fasting - 6:16-18
- E. Jesus lays out the right way and the wrong way living these three prominent religious practices.
 1. The wrong way in each case is a matter of outward show looking for human approval.
 2. The right way is that of secrecy, which only God can see.
 3. Jesus does not have issue with people doing them. He expects it. His issue is with the way they are done.
 4. And Matthew records Jesus as expounding more on the topic of prayer vs. 7-15.

II. The Curve

- A. Let your deeds shine or do them in secret. *"In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father."* (Matthew 5:16, NLT)
 1. This verse says, let your good deeds shine! .vs Matthew 6:1-4 which declares 'act in secret.'
 2. So lets note two huge differences between these two verses.
 - a) Mt 5:16 was talking about the whole character and the lifestyle of the disciple while the subject in 6:1 is talking about religious/disciple duties or expectations. The later makes for an easier route to be a religious hypocrite. This is particularly true of a culture that embraced this type of faith activity and thus made them easily conned by what they saw.
 - b) This passage in 6:1-4 is about the deliberate search for public recognition whereas in 5:16 was a serious search for true discipleship that focused on essential qualities. Those qualities when possessed by the disciple will inevitably shine! You can't hide them! IL. They are like a city on hill side. That kind of light cant be hidden. The shining light of the disciples lifestyle is that people glorify God, and not men.
- B. You get to choose your reward
 1. One of the under lying question of this passage is the motivation for doing. Let's face it, rewards greatly motivate people.
 2. There is the reward from man and the reward from God. One you receive instantly! The other you receive in the future.
 3. The one from heaven is on a majorly different level compared to the one the hypocrites seek which is public approval and self-congratulation.

4. The heavenly reward is most clearly seen in Mt 25:21, 23 "*Enter your masters joy.*" That is the reward we risk losing if we are distract from the Master reward to embrace the praises of men.

III. Come on Lefty!

- A. How must I live, that is the question.
- B. Do the discipline. One of the common spiritual disciplines of God's people was giving to the poor. Already endorsed in 5:42.
 1. It was a religious duty commanded in scripture by God.
 - a) Dt 15:7-11***
 - b) "*They share freely and give generously to those in need. Their good deeds will be remembered forever. They will have influence and honor.*" (Psalm 112:9, NLT)
 - c) Lev 19:9 leave part of the harvest for the poor.
 - d) Dt 14:28-29; 24:19-21; 26:12-13
 2. Jesus lays out how to do that.
 - a) Don't do it publicly do it privately
 - b) Don't do it openly do it secretly. The word for sweets in vs 2 are narrow alley ways. The streets used in vs 7 are wide open highways for all to see. But the challenge was that in the narrow places the Pharisee 'sounded trumpets' to announce their deeds.
 - c) Jesus declares let these spiritual practices be done in such a way that your left hand does not even know what your right hand is doing!
- C. Choose your reward carefully. Vs 2 "*All their reward*" - Hebrew, is often a technical commercial term for receiving payment in full: the transaction is concluded and there is nothing more to expect. RT France
- D. Live for the audience One!
 1. The word 'your' in verse 4, 6, 18 is singular which emphasizes the disciple private relationship with God.
 2. God sees in 'secret.' In the OT this was usually a bad thing but in this context it is quite refreshing to the disciple.

Conclusion:

- I close with this:
 - Lets not be people pleasers living for the praises of men.
 - Lets be God pleasers living for an audience of One!