
Third Presbyterian Church
Bible Study/Sermon Review
Sermon on the Mount – Lesson 18
“Giving to the Needy”

Matthew 6:1-4 (NIV)

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.

1. How do you feel when a wealthy individual gives a large sum of money with the stipulation that a building be named after him or her? Can such a gift be God led even though it's done in public, why or why not?
2. What motivates people to give money to churches or Christian ministries? What motivates you to give money to the church?
3. The Sermon spoke about how giving financially is the easy part but when we are called to give/sacrifice our time/talents by walking with another person is the hard part of giving. Do you believe this to be true? Why or why not.
 - a. Sometimes we may have the money but God calls us to give the time/talents instead of the money. What in these instances do you think God is doing in us and the recipient of the gift of our sacrifice?
4. Why do you think many people more apt to give money to an organization than to a needy individual?
5. Is it hard for you to receive gifts/resources from people? Why or why not?
6. In response to the sermon, has your willingness to receive gifts/resources from someone changed?
7. What steps could you take to ensure that your giving is not done for show?

Workshop: Some churches encourage showy giving? For example, they will ask that you form lines based on your financial giving, \$100 line, \$500 line, \$1000 line and so on..... or they will have giving campaigns the list donors in the order of their financial giving. Discuss if you have witnessed this or something like this in your church experience. How do you feel about this personally and in light of the context of Jesus' teaching today? What would be your comment in love be to these ministry practices?

8. Share your greatest takeaway from this sermon and how will you change as a result of this takeaway?

K. The Right Motive for Giving, 6:1-4

(6:1-4) **Introduction—Motive:** what a man does matters greatly to God. God expects men to be kind and to do good in the world: to help others both through personal involvement and through giving generously and sacrificially.

But there is something else that God expects, something of critical importance: God expects a man to have *the right motive*. Just why a man does good and shows kindness matters greatly to God. It matters so much that a person's eternal fate is determined by his motive. Because of this, Christ warns us about right and wrong motives.

1. Alms—doing good and giving (v.1).
2. The wrong motive (v.2).
3. The right motive (v.3-4).
4. The reason (v.4).

DEEPER STUDY #1 (6:1-18) Christian, Duty

1. (6:1) Alms—Service—Giving: there is the giving of alms—doing good and giving to others. The word "alms" means righteous acts; giving in order to meet the needs of the poor. To the Jew, giving alms and righteousness meant the same thing. Giving alms was the greatest thing a Jew could do; it was the first act of religion. It was considered to be the very embodiment of righteousness, so much so that the two words began to be used synonymously. Giving alms merited and assured one of righteousness and salvation. Christ warned there is great danger in giving and doing alms. Take heed and guard yourself. Do not give for recognition or you will lose your reward.

Thought 1. There are two important lessons in this verse.

- 1) Man must guard and be alert to the deception of giving and doing good before men. A person's heart can be deceived. The sin creeps up on man; it is insidious and subtle. It will keep a person from receiving anything from God.
- 2) A person must give alms and do good. It is a duty of the Christian. In this passage alone Christ says four times, "Do alms."

2. (6:2) Motive: there is the wrong motive for doing good. Christ takes for granted that the believer gives and does good. What Christ strikes at is the motive of the human heart for giving and doing good.

1. Giving for recognition is the wrong motive for giving. Recognition is said to be sought by blowing one's own horn in two places: (1) in the synagogue before religious people, and (2) in the streets before the public.

Thought 1. There are several wrong motives for giving and doing good.

- 1) A person may give for recognition and prestige: to be praised by men during life and to be remembered by men in death. A person may desire the applause of men: their thanks and appreciation, honor and praise, esteem and glory.
- 2) A person may give for self-applause, self-satisfaction, and self-admiration: to feel comfortable with what he has done and to see himself at his very best. He may wish to boost his ego and to glory in himself.
- 3) A person may give out of obligation: to fulfill his sense of duty.

- 4) A person may give to secure the recognition of God: to feel that God is pleased and favors him because he has done good.

Thought 2. It is not always wrong to give alms when men see us. This cannot always be helped. It is wrong to give alms *so that* men may see us.

Thought 3. The point is not that a person should hold back from doing good, but he should guard against how he gives and does good.

"But all their works they do for to be seen of men" (Matthew 23:5).

"Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts" (Luke 20:46).

2. Giving for recognition is characteristic of hypocrites. Giving out of the wrong motive is hypocritical. The word "hypocrite" (*hupokritēs*^{PWS: 2055}) means an actor who puts on a show, who plays a part on stage; a mask, a fake picture; appearing to be something one is not.

- a. It is "sounding a trumpet" *before oneself* (Matthew 6:2): blowing one's own horn for self praise.
- b. It is "sounding a trumpet" *in the synagogue*: blowing one's own horn in the church and before the religious; it is seeking the praise of the religious (Matthew 6:2).
- c. It is "sounding a trumpet" *in the streets*: blowing one's own horn before the public, seeking the praise of the public (Matthew 6:2).

"And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12).

"How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John 5:44).

"He that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction" (Proverbs 17:19).

"It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory" (Proverbs 25:27).

"Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord" (Obadiah 4).

3. Giving for recognition is rewarded on this earth only. A person receives the recognition of men only. There are two rewards for a wrong motive: the recognition of men and temporary self-satisfaction. Note the words, "they have their reward." This is an accounting statement: it means just what it says—payment has been made in full. One has received his payment and reward; he has received all he will ever receive. There is to be no reward—no reward whatsoever—from God (see note—"Matthew 6:4).

Thought 1. The person who gives out of a wrong motive fails at several points.

- 1) He fails to give "of himself." He gives money and he gives things, but calculates exactly what he can give in order to meet the need; but he never becomes personally involved. He never gives of himself.
- 2) He seldom puts the need or the needy person first. Satisfying his own motive, and having his own need met is put first.

- 3) He is always hurt, disappointed, unhappy, and sometimes even angry if his giving is not recognized and praised.
- 4) He is never permanently satisfied with what has been done. Why? Because Christ and the genuine giving of himself is the only permanent satisfaction for the human heart.
- 5) He has accepted the recognition that lasts only briefly. The prestige and honor, thanks and praise of men is only temporary.
 - a) The man who gives in this life soon fades in the memory of men. His giving fades into the background. Men move on to other things.
 - b) Once gone, the man who gave in this life knows nothing of the thoughts and words spoken in his behalf. He stands only before God, accountable to Him alone.

Thought 2. Three things can be said about the person who chooses man's reward over God's reward: (1) he has chosen the poorest reward; (2) he has cheated himself; and (3) he can expect no more. What a terrible fate! To have no more reward than what this world offers. Imagine! No hope and no expectation of a better future—nothing beyond this world.

"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away" (1 Peter 1:24).

"Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish" (Psalm 49:12).

"For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him" (Psalm 49:17).

"Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it" (Isaiah 5:14).

"As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame" (Hosea 4:7).

3. (6:3-4) Motive: What is the right motive for doing good and for giving? "Let not thy left hand know what thy right doeth." What a descriptive way to say it!

1. Give unconsciously. Pay no attention to what you are giving and doing. Do it out of an inner compulsion to give and help, out of intense love, out of genuine concern. Keep your mind on the need, not on what you are doing and the benefits you may receive. Do not harbor such self-centered thoughts. Just love and care and be concerned as you give and do good.

2. Give secretly, quietly, privately. Do not let others know what you are giving and doing. Keep it quiet—say nothing. Keep a low profile; stay out of the center ring of applause; avoid recognition if possible. Fleeing recognition is critical. The other members of a person's body—his hand, that is, his family—must not even know.

What is so desperately needed is a realistic view of the world. The world is a place of pain and suffering and sin and death—a world that needs to be saved and brought somehow to a state of incorruption. When a person faces the real truth of the world, he forgets himself and sets out to meet the needs of the world through the power of Christ. There is just no time for becoming entangled in the affairs of this world and seeking the applause of men. There is only time to minister. Taking time to applaud one another means there is another need that is going to be unmet.

There is only one right motive for giving and doing alms: to help those in need.

- ⇒ A person knows and lives with an awareness of the misery, misfortune, and desperate plight of the world.
- ⇒ A person loves and cares so much that he *wishes* to help those who need help.
- ⇒ A person literally *throws himself* into meeting the needs of the world and helping all he can.

Thought 1. There are three forceful lessons in this point.

- 1) A person is to be immersed in God and in the needs of the world. There is no time for centering attention upon himself if he wishes his life to be focused on God and to be spent saving his world.
- 2) There is only one way the needs of the world will be met: we must all get out into the world where the needs are. There is no time for the right hand to be explaining and receiving applause from the left hand.
- 3) The servant of God is to be obsessed with his call and ministry to the world. He does not become entangled with the affairs of this world and the applause of men (2 Tim. 2:4). He quietly and diligently goes about pouring himself into helping others.

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" (Matthew 19:21).

"But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you" (Luke 11:41).

"Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" (Luke 12:33).

"Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me" (Luke 18:22).

"And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19:8).

"And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that ye may live with thee" (Leviticus 25:35).

"If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother" (Deut. 15:7).

"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee" (Deut. 16:17).

"She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy" (Proverbs 31:20).

4. (6:4) Alms— Giving: there are two reasons for doing good quietly and secretly.

1. God sees in secret. God sees secret giving and secret alms or deeds. Nothing passes His attention. He knows the motive and the acts of every man, every single motive and every single act.

"I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jeremiah 17:10).

"Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:24).

"The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him" (Nahum 1:7).

"But if any man love God, the same is known of him" (1 Cor. 8:3).

Thought 1. Note the words "Thy Father." If God is truly a person's Father, then the person must give and do good just as his Father dictates. *Anything less is disobedience and displeasing.*

2. God rewards openly. Note the words, "[God] Himself shall reward thee openly."
 - a. It is God Himself who shall reward a person.
 - b. It is to be an open reward—a reward seen by all. A person is to have a personal moment before God when He shall receive his reward. This is the picture painted by Christ (see note 2 Cor. 5:10; cp. Matthew 10:32; 1 Cor. 4:5; Hebrews 11:6).

Thought 1. The faithful person will be rewarded as a son, not as a servant. *His Father*, not *his Master*, will reward him.

"For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me" (1 Cor. 9:17).

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing [demonstrated by serving Christ]" (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (2 John 8).

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

"The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether....Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward" (Psalms 19:9, 11).

"So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth" (Psalms 58:11).

"Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him" (Isaiah 40:10).

"Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him" (Isaiah 62:11).

"I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jeremiah 17:10).

"Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:24).

DEEPER STUDY #1

(6:1-18) **Christian, Duty:** Christ discussed the three great duties of religion to a Jew—the giving of alms (Matthew 6:1-4), prayer (Matthew 6:5-15), and fasting (Matthew 6:16-18). His concern was threefold.

1. That men give, pray, and fast.
2. That men do these works with the *right motive* and *guard against hypocrisy* when doing them.
3. That men receive their *reward* from God the Father.

Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Matthew.