

Sermon On the Mount



Lesson 8

Good Works in Secret (Matthew 6:1-8)

Introduction

In His “Sermon on the Mount”, Jesus taught His disciples to have a righteousness which exceeded that of the Pharisees (**Matt. 5:20**). In Matthew 6:1-18, Jesus specifically discusses 3 acts of righteousness:

Almsgiving (Charitable deeds)

Prayer

Fasting

The Basic Principle Governing Acts of Righteousness (v.1)

What is the scope of verse 1? Does it refer to almsgiving (charitable deeds) alone, or **all** acts of righteousness?:

Some manuscripts, upon which the KJV and NKJV are based, have the Greek word **eleemosunen** translated “**alms**”, or “**charitable deeds**”, which would make this verse refer specifically to almsgiving, or charitable deeds. On the other hand, older manuscripts, upon which the ASV and NASV are based, have the Greek word **dikaiosunen** translated “**righteousness**”, which would make verse one speaking in general terms, establishing a basic principle to be applied to ALL acts of righteousness

Textual support seems strongest for **dikaiosunen** (we will discuss this in class), making verse 1 an introductory statement concerning all righteous acts.

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- 1) Assuming that verse 1 applies to ALL acts of righteousness, what is the basic principle and thesis concerning the practice of righteous acts? (Matt 6:1)
 - 2) Are we to completely avoid acts of righteousness in public (e.g. almsgiving, praying, fasting)? (Matt 5:16)
 - 3) What should be the motive for our acts of righteousness?

- 4) What is our reward when we do acts of righteousness for the purpose of being seen by men? (Matt. 6:2, 5, 16)

Charity That Pleases God (Matt. 6:1-4)

- 1) What does almsgiving mean?
- 2) Are there people in need of our charity today? Is the situation different today?
- 3) Is it our responsibility to help those in need? (Matt 6:19-24, Gal 2:10, 6:10)
- 4) What was the problem with the way the hypocrites gave alms?
- 5) What reward did the hypocrites receive, if any?
- 6) Does Jesus condemn all public giving? (Acts 2:44-45, 4:34-37)
- 7) What do you think Jesus meant by “not letting your left hand know what your right hand is doing”?

Prayer that pleases God (Matt 6:5-8)

- 1) What was the problem with the way the hypocrites prayed? What was their reward?
- 2) What should our motive be when praying? What is our reward when praying properly?
- 3) Is Jesus condemning all public prayer? (Matt 11:25, John 11:41, Acts 27:35)
- 4) Can the mere reciting of memorized prayers be vain repetition?
- 5) Is persistence in prayer vain repetition? (Luke 11:5-10; 18:1-7)
- 6) Jesus says God knows what we need even before we ask. Why then pray even once?