

Matthew Lesson 06

Matthew Chapter 6

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Memory verses for this week: *1 Pet 2:15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:*

Introduction: In last week's lesson, we studied about the beatitudes. The Sermon on the Mount was one of Jesus' great teachings, and we should strive to be more like those that Jesus commended. (Meek, peacemakers, taking persecution well, and being a light unto the world.) We begin Chapter 6 with an admonition to pray correctly.

I. The Correct Way of Alms Giving and Prayer

Mat 6:1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

Mat 6:2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Jesus addressed the practice of some in Israel who made sure their good deeds were quite visible. The word translated as alms (elehmosunh *eleemosune*) is a reference to giving, or donating to the poor.

Jesus was not criticizing giving to the needy. He criticized the motives evident of those who did it to be seen. He alludes to how the hypocrites made a fanfare about their charitable giving at the synagogues and even out on the street. Their motive was to receive glory of men.

Jesus said, they already had their reward. What ever acclamation they got, that was it. They would get none from God. The reference to sounding a trumpet refers to making a big deal over their giving. However, in the east, there are reports of some who actually blew trumpets to announce their good deeds.

Alms mean righteous acts. Jesus begins this teaching by giving instructions on how we should perform our righteous acts. The number one thing we should not do is to give alms in order to be seen of men. There have always been some men who do religious activities in order to impress others. But if we give our alms with the wrong spirit, there will be no reward from our Heavenly Father. Jesus says to not give them like the hypocrites do. They did it to be seen, and this was condemned by Christ. These that prayed like this wanted to be seen of men. When the two men went to the temple to pray over in Luke chapter 18, we found that the one who was self righteous was not justified.

Luke 18:10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

Luke 18:11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

Luke 18:12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

Luke 18:13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

Luke 18:14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Mat 6:3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

Mat 6:4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

Jesus teaches that when we go to pray, we should pray in secret and God will reward us openly.

Mat 6:5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Mat 6:6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Mat 6:7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

The hypocrite loved to be seen of men when they prayed. They thought long prayers would attract the attention of God. It isn't the length of our prayer that touches the heart of God, but the spirit in which we pray it. Prayers should come from the heart and be prayed in faith. They should be sincere and prayed from a secret place. God sees all, and will see our prayers in secret and reward us openly.

Matthew Henry said this about the hypocrites and their rewards.

It is a reward, but it is a present reward, they have it; and there is none reserved for them in the future state. They now have all that they are likely to have from God; they have their reward here, and have none to hope for hereafter. It signifies a receipt in full. What rewards the godly have in this life are but in part of payment; there is more behind, much more; but hypocrites have their all in this world, so shall their doom be; themselves have decided it. The world is but for provision to the saints, it is their spending-money; but it is pay to hypocrites, it is their portion.

II. The Model Prayer

Mat 6:8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

Mat 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Mat 6:10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Mat 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread.

Mat 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Mat 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Mat 6:14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

Mat 6:15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Many call this the Lord's Prayer, but is really a model prayer. The Lord's Prayer is truly the one prayed over in

John Chapter 17.

God truly knows what we are in need or prior to us asking. Jesus directs us to pray for several things. In verse 10 it speaks of praying for the Lord's Kingdom to come. And to pray that God's will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Verse 11 tells us to pray for our daily bread. While this speaks of our physical food, we need to also pray for our spiritual food also.

Mat 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Verse 12 teaches us to pray for forgiveness of our debts as we forgive those who are debtors to us. Verse 13 says we should request leadership of the Holy Spirit that we might not be tempted but that we would be delivered from evil. Verses 14 & 15 tells us that if we want to be forgiven our sins, we must forgive those who have sinned against us. Some say "I will forgive you, but I won't forget." That is not true forgiveness. True forgiveness means removing the debt from being owed, and then forgetting that it ever happened. That is the way God forgives sin.

Psa 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Psa 103:13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

Psa 103:14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

Our Lord then touched upon a condition for divine forgiveness. If we will forgive others, God will forgive us. If we will not forgive others, God will not forgive us. It is as simple as that. It behooves us therefore, to examine our hearts to see if there is bitterness, a retaliatory spirit, or lack of forgiveness on our part toward others. Right fellowship with our heavenly Father, to this degree, is predicated upon right fellowship with those around us.

III. How We Should Fast

Mat 6:16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Mat 6:17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

Mat 6:18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which

seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

Fasting was something done a great deal by the Lord's people during these days. It says in Luke Chapter 18 that the Pharisees fasted twice a week. We read that earlier in the example of the Pharisee and the publican's prayers.

Luke 18:12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

True fasting is a separation from fleshly desires with a sincere desire to serve and glorify the Lord with our lives. True fasting brings the body into subjection. It denies the physical and uplifts the spiritual. It should be a personal matter between the soul and God. They hypocrites wanted to be seen of men for fasting as well as praying. But we are to do things out of a pure heart and in secret. When we do it this way, God will bless and reward us openly.

IV. The Correct Place to Lay Our Treasures

Mat 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

Mat 6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

Mat 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Many people are so busy laying up treasures on earth that they have no time for God. We are warned that if our love is on things down here, that is where our heart will be also. Treasures laid up in heaven will last forever. What we do in the service of God is all that will last and endure the test of time. Our tithes and offerings should be brought to the church and let the church distribute them as needed. That way the glory all comes back to the church rather than the individual.

J. Vernon McGee said this about giving to God's Work.

A great many folk think that money cannot be used in a spiritual way and that when you talk about money, you are talking about something that is only material. However, our Lord says that we are to lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven. How can we do that? Well, instead of putting it in a bank in Switzerland, put it in heaven by giving it to the Lord's work down here—but make sure it is in the *Lord's* work. You ought to investigate everything you give to.

Make sure that you are giving to that which will accumulate treasure for you in heaven. If it is used for the propagation of the gospel and to get out the Word of God, it becomes legal tender in heaven, and that is how we gather treasure in heaven.

Perhaps you are saying, "But I don't give for that reason." You ought to, because our Lord said, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." That is a laudable motive for giving. And He gives the reason: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If you get enough treasure laid up in heaven, you are certainly going to think a lot about heaven. But if it is in the bank, your thoughts are going to be on the bank. There is an ever-present danger of worshiping mammon rather than God.

Mat 6:22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

Mat 6:23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Mat 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

We are warned to serve God and serve him only. If we have a selfish eye towards the world, we will serve the carnal nature. But if our eye is directed and centered on the things of Christ, we will be a body full of light. It warns in verse 23 if we be full of evil, we are full of darkness. We cannot serve 2 masters. God is either our master or we are serving Satan. There is no middle ground. People in the world like to straddle the fence, but that does not work with God. I heard former Prime Minister of England Margaret Thatcher once say that she liked to make her positions clear on all issues. She said if you straddle the fence, you get hit from rocks being thrown from both sides. If you get on one side, then you know where your opposition is coming from. We as Christians need to be on God's side. I love what Joshua told the people when they would not commit to serving the Lord with a whole heart.

Josh 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

V. Faith in God Will Cure Anxiety

Mat 6:25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Mat 6:26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

Mat 6:27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

Mat 6:28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

Mat 6:29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Mat 6:30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Mat 6:31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

Mat 6:32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

Mat 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Mat 6:34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

I don't think as Christians we are forbidden to look ahead and plan, but when we plan so far ahead that we leave the Lord out of our plans, we are wrong. Many don't even consider spiritual matters when they decide what job they will take. No job should be accepted without a clear conscience that God is in that decision. If God can clothe the fields and feed the birds of the air, how much more will we take care of us.

I heard a message on the radio this week where the preacher pointed out that he never heard of a bird wearing itself out trying to build a bigger nest than the other birds. Or never saw a dog worried about a bone for next week. Yet we drive ourselves crazy trying to be prepared for times when we may no longer even be alive. Our greatest trouble in this life is our lack of faith. We need to ask God to increase our faith. God tells us if we will seek first

the kingdom of God, all the other things will be added unto us. Verse 34 says not to even worry about tomorrow. Today is all we need to be concerned about.

Jesus taught, "*but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.*"

Here is the culmination of this entire section. It precludes both problems discussed in the chapter: wrong priorities and worry about not having enough.

Jesus directed us to make the things of God (and that which is right) the first priority in our lives. Then He promised, "*and all of these things shall be added unto you.*"

What is clear is when we seek the things of God and His righteousness *first*, God has *promised* to provide the necessities of life. There may even be reference to the nicer things of life referred to earlier in the section; if not in this life, certainly in the next. When we make our priorities what they ought to be and live accordingly, God will provide and bless.

We have enough things to be concerned with today without worrying about tomorrow. The greater, overarching principle is to put the Lord and the things of God first in our lives (including His righteousness) and He will meet our every need. That precludes worry and is the essence of living by faith,

Jesus has touched upon two major problems pertaining to handling money in life.

The first is to invest in heaven rather than seek wealth in this life. The other is to seek the things of God first and He will meet our needs. Actually, the essence of this whole lesson in a positive action is "*seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*"

J. Vernon McGee had this short comment about verse 34.

"Take ... no thought for the morrow" means no *anxious* thought. He takes care of the flowers and the birds, and He will take care of you. But the important thing is to put Him first in our life. As someone has said, "Today is the tomorrow that we worried about yesterday." How true that is for many of us!

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.