

## "The Danger of Hypocrisy"

### Part 1

#### Matthew 6:1-15

**Introduction:** Tonight in our study of the Sermon on the Mount we have come to Matthew chapter 6. Now in order for us to understand the context of what we are about to step into we need to do a review of where we have been in Matthew 5.

As we have considered before the book of Matthew presents Jesus as the King of the Jews. The Sermon on the Mount which is the greatest sermon ever preached addresses the standards for those of the kingdom and at the same time the sermon shows the unsaved self righteous person how far they are from reaching God's standards and their need of a Savior.

Now in **Matthew 5:3-12** Jesus addressed the proper attitude of kingdom people with His teaching of the Beatitudes. Then in **Matthew 5:13-16** Jesus pointed to the outward manifestation of a kingdom attitude which is seen in two words, salt and light. Jesus then went on and in **Matthew 5:17-19** and explained that God's Word is the foundation for all the kingdom standards. Then Jesus entered into **Matthew 5:20-48** where He addressed the false teaching of the religious leaders. In this section Jesus put forth the standards by which we as people of the kingdom are to live by and at the same time He made it very clear to the religious leaders they were not even close to the standards that God required.

So in **Matthew 5:20-48** Jesus is addressing the teaching of the scribes and the Pharisees and now as we come to **Matthew 6:1-15**

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Jesus is going to address the religious practice of the scribes and the Pharisees. These verses can be divided into 3 sections:

1. **The practice of giving - (Matthew 6:1-4)**
2. **The practice of prayer - (Matthew 6:5-15)**
3. **The practice of fasting - (Matthew 6:16-18)**

Let us remember that the religious leaders had poisoned the minds of the people through their teaching but they also poisoned the minds of the people through their religious practices.

Now I want to take a moment here and show you something that is very important in the Sermon on the Mount and if you are not careful you can easily miss an overall picture that Jesus is setting forth here.

In **Matthew 5:20-48** Jesus gives to us the standards of the kingdom by which we are to live by. We could actually say within those verses we find the theology for the kingdom. Now when our theology for life lines up with kingdom theology then our religious practices will fall right in line (**Matthew 6:1-18**). Also when our theology for life is in line with kingdom theology then our view of worldly wealth and money will fall right in line also (**Matthew 6:19-24**). Then when we again practice kingdom theology the anxieties that consume the minds of the unsaved world, (like the everyday worries about basic needs) will have no part in our lives for we will understand that God is our Provider (**Matthew 6:25-34**).

Jesus covers all areas of life in this sermon and everything rests upon the proper theology. If we do not get **Matthew 5:20-48** correct then our religious practices will be empty, we will not have the proper perspective on worldly wealth and money, and we will be consumed with

anxiety as we go through this life. It all goes back to having a foundation in Biblical theology. The Word of God is the absolute Truth and we live by it no matter what the world says and when we do our lives will bring honor and glory to our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **I. The Practice of Giving. (6:1-4)**

As we approach this section there is a key word that is repeated 3 times that we must pay very close attention to.

It is the word "hypocrites". **Notice 6:2, 5, 16.**

The word means "*someone who pretends to be someone or something they are not*". Hypocrites are people who pretend to be someone they are not. They can pretend to be caring, loving, sincere, and righteous and the list goes on and on. The word actually came to be used of someone in a play who wore a mask and played the part of someone else.

First of all let me say that in the text before us it was a reference to the religious leaders.

#### **Matthew 5:20**

*20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

Here in this verse Jesus told the crowds that if their righteousness did not exceed the righteousness of the religious leaders they would have no place in the kingdom. In our section of chapter 6 that very same thought is being carried right through. He is saying that if your religious practices do not exceed the religious practices of the religious leaders you can have no place in the kingdom. The word

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hypocrite is pointing to the religious leaders as well as any others who were pretending to be something they were not.

### **Notice Matthew 6:1**

The words "**Take heed**" are translated 7 other places in the New Testament as the word "**beware**". The idea is to be on constant alert. Now Jesus places these words here because everyone one of us has practiced hypocrisy at one time or another and every one of us has the potential of falling back into it again. It takes a constant attentiveness to keep hypocrisy out of our lives. This warning not only is for verses 1-4 but also applies to verses 5-18.

### **Notice Matthew 6:5**

The first word "**and**" is a connective.

### **Notice Matthew 6:16**

The word "**moreover**" is also a connective.

So the warning goes with the entire section of 6:1-18.

### **Notice Matthew 6:1 again.**

We need to consider another word here before we go deeper. It is the word "**alms**" and this word refers to "**any righteous act**" and it also has the idea that the "**righteous act**" is done for the needy or the poor.

Therefore, the idea behind the use of the word here is giving to the poor or to the needy and it can also be seen as giving in general. In other words it can be applied to tithing.

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Now I am not going to get into the verses in great detail tonight because there is another word that we need to pay very close attention to and we shall use this word to consider the very subject of "giving" whether it be to the poor, to the needy or just in general.

### **Notice Matthew 6:2**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> word of the verse is the word I want to focus upon. It is the word "**when**". Jesus says, "**When you give**" He does not say, "**If you give**". The same thought is also found in 6:3. You see it is expected that all of God's people give in tithing, to the poor and to the needy.

So I want to talk about giving for the remainder of this study. I know that in many churches the subject of giving is a very sensitive subject and the reason for that is people do not understand the Biblical principle of giving. So let us see what the Bible has to say.

### **A. The Biblical System of Giving**

#### **1. It is to be on a regular basis.**

#### **1 Corinthians 16:1-2**

*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.*

*<sup>2</sup> Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*

Paul told the believers at Corinth they were to set aside **weekly** that which was to be given to the church. But when it comes to giving to the poor and the needy they were to give as God brought the needs before

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them. Giving to the poor and the needy is over and above giving to the church.

Now there is one thing we must keep in mind when we give back to God, He does not need our money. The universe will not stop turning if we were to stop giving. God was here before we gave anything and He did just fine. He did not create man because He needed man to give Him money.

Then that brings up a very important question, "Why does God expect us to give?"

## **2. The circle of blessing.**

Now I want you to listen very carefully to what I am about to say. The Bible teaches over and over again that when we give back to God **we will be blessed**. That can be as we give to the church or as we give to the poor and the needy. I am not saying we give to get rich nor am I saying that the Bible teaches we will be rich (in material wealth) if we give back to God. That is TV theology and it is found **nowhere** in the Bible. There is not one promise in the Bible that tells me if I give all of my money to a certain ministry that I will get multiple times more money back than I gave.

There is however a principle in the Bible that tells us if we give then God will replenish our supply so we may give again. **Thus the blessing is not that we are given back multiple times more than we gave but the blessing is twofold:**

- 1. We are blessed because we are being used by God to meet the needs of others.**

**2. We are blessed as we are given the privilege of seeing God replenish our supply so that we may continue to give.** With this thought let me just say God does not say He will give back to us the very same amount that we gave. He may give back much less than we gave but we are still blessed because we were used of Him and He still provides for us to be able to give again.

Let me show you some verses which will make the circle of blessing clear.

### **Proverbs 11:25-26**

*25 The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.*

Let me explain this verse. In verses 25 we are told that the liberal soul shall be made fat. The person with the liberal soul is the one who is generous with that which God has given him. He shall become fat because as he helps others with what he has God will continue to replenish his supply. The one who waters shall be watered himself. This is the very same principle. The bottom line is that when a person is generous they are blessed of God.

*26 He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.*

The one withholding corn here is greedy. He has an abundant supply of corn but he refuses to share it with others. It would be the same as you and I taking any extra money we have and stashing it away and at the same time knowing that there were people around us that God has made us aware of and they have needs that we could help with. This person receives no blessing.

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But the second part of the verse tells of the man that has abundance and he sells his corn this man will be blessed. How is he blessed? When he sells his corn he takes the money and he buys more seed and plants that seed and the next year he has more to sell. Therefore he is blessed as God replenishes his supply and as he is used of God to meet the needs of others.

Let me show you the verse that precedes **Proverbs 11:25-26**.

### **Proverbs 11:24**

*<sup>24</sup> There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.*

Let me explain this verse if I could; the one who scattereth is the one who increases. The picture is of a farmer and when he sows his seed it gives back to him far more than he ever placed in the ground. For example if you plant one kernel of seed corn you get many ears of corn. The verse continues and speaks of someone who is greedy and puts away more than he actually needs. Instead of sowing the extra seed he hoards it away. This man will find himself in poverty. The idea is that he will not experience the blessings of God on his life.

Let me show you one more passage that teaches the very same principle.

### **John 6:5-12**

*<sup>5</sup> When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?*

*<sup>6</sup> And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.*



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*<sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.*

*<sup>8</sup> One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,*

*<sup>9</sup> There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?*

*<sup>10</sup> And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.*

***<sup>11</sup> And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.***

*<sup>12</sup> When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.*

***<sup>13</sup> Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.***

Jesus gave to the disciples and they then gave to the needy. If they had hoarded what they were given they would not have been given any more but as they were generous with what they received they then received more. When it was all over they had more than they started with even after they had given so much away.

**Conclusion:** From these verses we can clearly see that there is a circle of blessing which we enter in when we are generous with what God has given to us. The person who loses when you do not give generously is you. You are outside the circle of blessing. Next week we will get into the verses and we will see how we are to give.