

## "The Danger of Hypocrisy"

### Part 2

#### Matthew 6:1-15

**Introduction:** Before we get started into our study on the Sermon on the Mount again tonight we need some review so as to get our minds prepared for the lesson tonight. The Sermon on the Mount has a twofold purpose:

1. For those who belong to the kingdom it gives to us the instructions as to how we are to live in the midst of a lost and sinful world.
2. To those who are lost the sermon completely strips them of all self righteousness so they might see their need of a Savior.

Let me quickly review where we have been so far. In **Matthew 5:3-16** we looked at the proper attitudes of those who belong to the kingdom and along with that we saw two results of exercising the attitudes which Jesus spoke of when He said,

1. *"Ye are the salt of the earth"...*
2. *"Ye are the light of the world"...*

Then in **Matthew 5:17-19** we saw that God's is the standard by which our lives are to be measured. We then came to **Matthew 5:20-48** where we listened as Jesus corrected the false teaching of the religious leaders and at the same time we saw the standards for those who belong to the kingdom. In these verses He is calling us to rise above all others in our lifestyles and the standards which we live by.

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So in **Matthew 5:1-48** we find the attitude and standards which are to control the lives of kingdom people. Now, I said before these attitudes and standards can only be lived in our lives when we die to self and allow the Holy Spirit to live the life of Christ through us. You and I cannot, on our own, live the standards that are required by Jesus in these verses. It can only be done in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now as we come to **Matthew 6:1-18** we find the standards for 3 religious practices.

1. The Standard for Giving.
2. The Standard for Praying.
3. The Standard for Fasting (self control).

### **I. The Standard for Giving (6:1-4)**

Before we dive into the verses let me again refresh your mind. Last week we started into this section but we only touched upon a few thoughts.

1. We considered the word "*hypocrite*". The word is found 3 times in this section. The word came to be used to describe an actor on a stage who was pretending to be someone he wasn't. He would hide behind a mask and pretend to be someone else. That is exactly what a spiritual hypocrite is. They are someone who pretends to be caring, loving, spiritual, honest, sincere, and the list goes on. They will act one way on the exterior but it is really only a mask they use to cover their true identity.
2. We also considered the "*circle of blessing*" which is a principle that is taught in the Word of God. When we give to the church and then to the poor and the needy we step into a "*circle of*

*blessing*" in which we are blessed of God. We are blessed in 3 ways 2 of which we looked at last week. First we are blessed as we are used of God to help others; secondly we are blessed as we see God replenish to us that which we have used for Him.

### **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.*

*<sup>25</sup> The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself*

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

The person who is generous with the blessing which God has given them will be blessed in seeing God replenish their supply.

3. We also considered the word "*alms*" in 6:1-4 which really refers to "*any righteous acts*". Here in this passage it seems to be directed to giving to the poor and the needy. We also considered the word "*when*" found in verses 2 and 3 which tells us the Spirit of God presupposes that as children of the King we are generous with the blessing He has given to us. As children of the kingdom we are to live like our treasure is in heaven and not on earth so therefore we then use what God has entrusted to us so that it furthers the kingdom.

Now we are ready to step into the verses that are before us.

### **A. The Warning (6:1)**

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

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As we come to this verse the first thing we see that we need to pay close attention is the warning. The words "Take heed" are the same as saying "Beware". Jesus is telling His disciples here to be careful of falling into the sin of hypocrisy. The warning here makes me ask a question, "Why such a bold warning?" All of us have been guilty of hypocrisy at one time or another but where does the danger come in? The danger is because of the consequences and the fact that God hates hypocrisy.

Let me take you back to the Old Testament to show you how God sees hypocrisy. The nation of Israel had fallen into hypocrisy. They were playing the part of a holy people when they were really consumed in sin.

### **Isaiah 10:1-6**

*Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed;*

*<sup>2</sup> To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!*

*<sup>3</sup> And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?*

*<sup>4</sup> Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.*

*<sup>5</sup> O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.*

<sup>6</sup> I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

### **Isaiah 65:2-5**

<sup>2</sup> I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;

<sup>3</sup> A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick;

<sup>4</sup> Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;

<sup>5</sup> Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

Smoke in the nose is irritating and that is what God says about hypocrisy. The danger is that hypocrisy has consequences and one of those consequences is our Father's discipline. That is why Jesus gives such a bold warning in the beginning of this section.

### **Matthew 6:1a**

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men" - When we first look at this section of the verse it looks to be in contrast with a verse that we considered earlier in our study of the Sermon on the Mount.

### **Matthew 5:16**

<sup>16</sup> Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

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Here in Matthew 5 Jesus tells us that our good works are to be seen by other people and then in Matthew 6 we are told not do our righteous acts before men. What is the difference?

In Matthew 5 the exhortation is given in the context of us being the light of the world and as the light of the world we are to shine. This means that we are to live in a way that is contrary to a world that is lost in darkness. In other words our lives should give evidence that we are no longer of the darkness but are now children of God. So the theme behind the exhortation would be a changed life or a life controlled by the Holy Spirit.

In Matthew 6 the hypocrisy Jesus warns about comes not from a life controlled by the Spirit but instead a life controlled by the flesh.

### **Matthew 6:1b**

*"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them:"*

The deed referred to here is not done out of a heart controlled by the Spirit. It is not out of a heart of compassion and mercy. It is a heart that is controlled by the flesh and the deed done here is done only for the reason of self glorification.

Before we go on let me just stop here and remind all of us of the dangers of the flesh. Our flesh is all about doing everything for us. The flesh desires all of the attention and desires to be in control at all times. But to be controlled by the flesh is to be out of fellowship with God.

### **Romans 7:18a**

*<sup>18</sup> For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing:*

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We have talked about this before but it needs to be said again; the flesh will only submit to one thing and that is the cross. You can change your surroundings, you can change your clothing, you can change all of your friends and the flesh is like a chameleon in that he will adapt to whatever surrounding he is placed in. He is still the same old sinful flesh and that will never change until we receive our glorified bodies.

But he will submit to the cross.

### **Romans 6:6-11**

*<sup>6</sup> Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed [made powerless], that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

*<sup>7</sup> For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

*<sup>8</sup> Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:*

*<sup>9</sup> Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.*

*<sup>10</sup> For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*

*<sup>11</sup> Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

These verses contain the key to overcoming the flesh and that is to reckon ourselves dead unto sin but alive in Christ which is to live in the power of the resurrection.

**Notice Matthew 6:1 again**

When we give for the purpose of being seen by others, then the applause of others is our reward. God is not indebted for what you have done if you do it for the applause of men. You will receive nothing from God.

### **B. The Proper Way to Give (6:2-4)**

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

The idea here is that we are not to give and then draw attention to what we have done. Some people actually believe the religious leaders had some sort of horn which they blew when they gave to the poor or they gave to the temple. The point is however they were giving only for the reason of personal glorification.

#### **Notice Matthew 6:3**

Here is the way which giving is to be done. We are to give in a way that our left hand does not even know what our right hand is doing. There are 2 thoughts here:

##### **1. Our giving is to be very discrete.**

There are people who announce every time they give and they keep record of everything they have given. I know this because I have had people tell me all about what they had done for others and the church over the years. Let me just say that if you keep a personal record of all you have given or you go about telling others about what you have given then there are no eternal rewards waiting for you efforts.

##### **2. When we give in a way that the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing then it is not possible for us to applaud ourselves because it takes 2 hands to clap.**

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### **Notice Matthew 6:4**

When we give discretely there is the promise that our Father will reward us openly. Now that open reward will take place at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

### **2 Corinthians 5:10**

*<sup>10</sup> 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.*

### **1 Corinthians 3:12-14**

*<sup>12</sup> Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;*

*<sup>13</sup> Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.*

*<sup>14</sup> If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.*

### **Conclusion:**

As believers our lives are no longer about us but now it is all about Jesus Christ and we are to decrease and He is to increase. John the Baptist said this of Jesus;

### **John 3:30**

*<sup>30</sup> He must increase, but I must decrease.*

Paul had the same idea when he was in prison at Rome.

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## **Philippians 1:20-21**

<sup>20</sup> *According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.*

<sup>21</sup> *For to me to live is Christ,*