

Godly Giving

Jesus taught many topics during the Sermon on the Mount. Today we continue our discussion by talking about Godly Giving.

Introduction

We started a series of teachings a few weeks ago on the Sermon on the Mount. This is a passage of scripture that spans 3 chapters of the gospel of Matthew. Jesus addresses many topics that have direct relevance to a life in Christ. He teaches about marriage and divorce, prayer, fasting, giving, heart attitudes, and more.

Today we are continuing with Matthew 6:1-4 and Jesus' teaching about godly giving.

Let's read Matthew 6:1-4:

Matthew 6:1-4

(1) "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others 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 others. Truly I tell you, 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.

Jesus tells us to be careful not to practice our righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If we do, we will have no reward from our Father in heaven. There are three things we can learn from this passage.

Motivation Is Important

The first thing we learn from this passage is that motivation is important. Jesus is not saying that we should never do good deeds in front of others. That is often difficult. When we help someone, whether by giving them something or assisting them in a task, it is often done out in the open. Others will see your kindness and sacrifice.

Jesus is simply saying that we should not do these things for the wrong reasons. If we give to the needy just to make ourselves look good, then our giving is not truly motivated by love. It is done for our own edification and glory, not the Lord's. This leads to pride.

When we give to others for the sake of being seen and praised, we are essentially putting ourselves on display. We are saying, "Look at me! I'm such a good person because I'm giving to the needy." This is pride, and it is something that does not please God.

You give God all the glory and praise by giving to the needy and assisting less fortunate people from your heart because it is the right thing to do.



Nothing is Secret From God

The second thing we learn from this passage is that nothing we do is kept secret from God. Jesus is telling us that God sees everything we do, even the things we do in secret. He knows our motives, and he will reward us accordingly. So, if we want to receive a reward from God, we should give to the needy out of love, not for the sake of being seen.

When we give to others in secret, we are not thinking about ourselves or how we will be perceived. We are simply thinking about the needs of the person in front of us. This helps us to be more selfless and compassionate.

This ties in with our motivation for doing good and our overall heart attitude. God sees everything we do and hears everything we say. Hebrews 4:13 says:

Hebrews 4:13

(13) Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Anyone looking for praise and glory from people because of the good things they do and the donations they make has already received their just rewards and will not receive any praise from God. These are people who are making their giving about themselves, not the person in need.

The Christian's reward is in Heaven, not here on Earth. Eternity with God in Heaven is our reward when we give God all the glory for what we give and do here on earth.

Pleasing God

The third thing we learn from this passage is our giving pleases God. Jesus reminds us that our ultimate goal should be to please God, not people. If we focus on pleasing God, then we will not be concerned with what other people think of us. We will be free to give to the needy without worrying about being praised or rewarded by others.

John 12:42-43 says:

John 12:42-43

(42) Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; (43) for they loved human praise more than praise from God.

We see people every day that are trying to please other people and receive recognition for it. Some people thrive on praise and recognition from others above all else. Some people are more worried about what others will think of them than God. We must act each day as if we have an audience of one, God. The Lord's praise and love for us is truly all we need to seek. The praises and glory of man are short-lived. God's reward is eternal.

Proverbs 5:21-23 says:



Proverbs 5:21-23

(21) For your ways are in full view of the LORD, and he examines all your paths. (22) The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them; the cords of their sins hold them fast. (23) For lack of discipline they will die, led astray by their own great folly.

Be sure to not be ensnared by your own desires for fame, glory, or recognition when you give to the needy or help the less fortunate.

Conclusion

Jesus is not saying that we should never give to the needy or help the less fortunate when others are watching. He is simply saying that we should not do it for the sake of being seen and praised by others. When we give to the needy in secret, we are doing it for the right reasons: because we love God and want to help those in need.

The secret of godly giving is our heart attitude and motivation to give out of love, not for the sake of being seen. When we give in this way, we are pleasing God, and we will receive a reward from him.

We can apply this passage to our own lives in a few ways. When you give to the needy, do it quietly and without fanfare. Do not worry about what other people think of you. Focus on pleasing God with your giving.

When you do these things, you will be practicing the secret of godly giving. You will be rewarded by God, and you will make a difference in this lost and dying world.

