

Give to the Needy

Matthew 6:1-4

Overview

- **Beware of Practicing Your Righteousness to be Seen**
 - Jesus is making a turn in the sermon on the mount from the internal to the external
 - He address three common practices – giving, prayer, fasting
 - He warns of doing things to be seen by others instead of as joyful obedience to God

- **Giving to the needy is commanded by God**
 - The kind of giving in view here is Arms giving; giving to the poor & needy.
 - Dt. 15:11; Pr. 14:31; 21:13; Acts 4:34; Gal. 10

- **Giving can become all about the giver**
 - The Greek word hypocrite here means play-acting
 - The trumpet is probably metaphorical –point is that its a loud instrument used to get peoples attention
 - As they gave they were blowing their own trumpets – hoping their giving would be noticed ‘that they may be praised by others’
 - Jesus tells them: “Don’t be deceived into thinking God is pleased with that kind of 2 faced religion. He sees what’s going on inside as they do their impressive acts.”

- **Give secretly and sacrificially out of love for God and you will be rewarded**
 - The image of one hand not knowing what the other is doing indicates a certain self forgetfulness rather than self congratulation
 - The great encouragement for us from Jesus is that our heaven Father will see it. God knows what we do – and how we do it; and he will reward us.
 - In context, it seems the reward is personal recognition from Christ for faithfulness (cf. Matthew 25:14-30).

Questions

Discussion Starter: *Our city is often a place to “jockey” for position, a place to be seen. Why do you think this is the case?*

1. Read Matthew 6:1-18. What is similarities do you see between these verses and what we’ve previously studied in 5:21-48? What differences do you notice?
2. Jesus warns us to be careful in practicing our righteousness before others, yet in 5:13-16, he tells us to “let our lights shine before others.” How do you explain Jesus’ words?
3. What are some tangible ways you’re tempted to practice your righteousness before others? Why are you tempted to do so? Why is it wrong to do so? What helps you fight this temptation?
4. Jesus says “when you give to the needy” not “if you give to the needy.” What does this tell us about the importance of giving? To help, read Deuteronomy 15:11; Proverbs 14:31; 21:13.
5. How is giving to the needy compelled by the character of God and the gospel?
6. Who are the needy? What are ways we can give to them? Where possible, share personal examples.
7. What does it mean “they have received their reward”?
8. Why should our “giving be in secret” and what is the reward for doing so?

9. Why is it important to remember Jesus is not commanding generous acts but a generous spirit?

Accountability Question: *Are there areas of your life you're practicing your righteousness to be seen by others? Are there areas where you need to be more generous? How have you been encouraged by the giving of other members of Restoration Church?*