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Matthew 6  
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### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Can you think of any reasons why someone would do their charitable deeds to be seen before men? What's the motive?
2. Do you or the people you know spend much time thinking about eternal rewards? Why or why not?
3. How do most people feel about hypocrites in the church? Does Jesus agree? What can we do to lessen hypocrisy?
4. From what Jesus said about prayer, what can you learn or incorporate into your prayer time?
5. What would you say you treasure? What would other people that know you say you treasure? How do they know?

### **Teaching Notes:**

#### **Chapter 6 covers a few differing important topics for Jews.**

Just like we talked about last week...we are seeing these statements in light of Jesus establishing a new kingdom with heavens values and mission.

The topics that He is addressing are core things for the Jews.  
These are also important topics for our spiritual life with applications outside of just these areas.

The first verse is the key for the rest of the chapter:

**Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.**

Take heed...to bring near, turn to, give attention...

Do not do things to be seen by people.

The first part addresses the normal practice for Jews.

Their giving was done publicly and in front of people.

Their praying was done publicly and openly.

Their fasting was done publicly and obviously.

But the problem is not really doing it in front of people.

The problem is the motive of our hearts.

**Why are you doing what you are doing?**

They are doing it to be seen.

They care most about what people think about them.

They want to be respected, they want to be admired, and they are not doing their charitable deeds with a pure heart.

Their motive for helping others is how it makes them look.

This is an earthly motivation.

But what should our motivation be?

Jesus tells them that there is a reward...(dues paid for work, fruit)

**We are not just doing good things because they are good.**

We are doing this to be rewarded for the Lord.

We serve the Lord, the true King.

There is just doing right because it is right, or helping others because we want to be helpful.

**But Jesus is saying in His kingdom, serving is rewarded.**

It is rewarded by God.

There is an ongoing theme of rewards in the Scripture.

But we are being rewarded by the King.

We have an audience of One.

There is a reward for persecution endured. Matthew 5:12

There is a reward for building with integrity on Christ's foundation that survives. I Cor 3:14

The work and love that you have given Him. Hebrews 5:10

Abounding work in the Lord I Cor 15:58

As well as different crowns for faithfulness and service,

**But these rewards are based on our motives...**

And if your motive is to be seen, God sees that and lets that be it.

But God's rewards are better.

**2** Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. **3** But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, **4** that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

**This was a real practice...tooting your own horn.**

If you want man's glory, that's all you get.

This is what the hypocrites do.

Jesus is not shy about saying that there are hypocrites.

These are fakes and actors.

Actors play a role to be seen by a crowd.  
Real people live real life in relationship.

**He says don't let one hand know what the other is doing.**

It is hyperbole...

...but maybe your giving is so normal and showing mercy...  
...it is so normal, you hardly even know that you are doing it.

When we give, don't give to be seen, give as you serve the Lord

**5 “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.**

Again, He starts with the don't.  
Don't be like the hypocrites...there are known hypocrites.  
What do they do?

They stand on the corner and pray to be seen.

And again, is there a reward in prayer? A blessing?  
The blessing for them is people think they are spiritual.  
But God doesn't, so they miss out on God's blessing.

Again a bit of hyperbole and a little reality...

**6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.**

Pray without a bunch of people looking at you or seeing you.

**Are you praying to be seen?**

Football players, Tebow, who prayed for all to see?  
Is the motive to openly testify of their faith or to be seen and admired spiritually.  
**Do I want the glory or do I want glory to God?**

You don't have to be seen by people to be rewarded...  
Focus on being seen by God, He is the one that truly rewards.

And there is more about prayer...

**7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.**

Vain repetitions? Empty words. Stammer, repeat over and over

This is what the heathen would do.  
Those who don't have a real relationship with God.

Chanting, memorized prayers, hail mary's, etc.  
Maybe even prayer "filler"...adding words to lengthen.

**Also, God doesn't hear your pray based on a lot of words.**

**8** "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. **9** In this manner, therefore, pray:

Pray is a pretty simple thing that people often complicate.  
Prayer is the way we talk to God.

When you talk to your friend do you repeat or chant thing?  
Do you try to have a big long speech or fancy words?  
Do you tell them things they already know?

And here Jesus gives us an example.  
It is similar to when they ask, Jesus teach us to pray in Luke 11.

Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.

The first words are unifying and familial...Our Father.  
God is a perfect Father and yet He is a Father in heaven.  
He is not of this world either.  
Hallowed by your name...holy or set apart or specially unique.  
It begins with unity and relationship and worship.

**10** Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done  
On earth as *it is* in heaven.

This is an attitude of submission to the kingdom of heaven.  
A desire to be part of His kingdom here and now.

**11** Give us this day our daily bread.  
**12** And forgive us our debts,  
As we forgive our debtors.

Simply asking for daily provision and forgiveness, but also acknowledging that we also choose to forgive others.

**13** And do not lead us into temptation,  
But deliver us from the evil one.  
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

This first part is a desire on our part to be holy...  
...but asking for help in our surroundings.  
We desire to stay away from temptation.  
This also means I should not choose to put myself in temptation.

Ends w/worship...His kingdom power, and glory eternally.

It is such a simple prayer...  
The prayer begins and ends with worship and submission to God.  
It has a relationship focus with God and forgiveness and w/others.  
Asking for daily provision and help with spiritual life/holiness.

**14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

**Added on to the prayer is a heavy conditional statement.**

Be forgiving and you will be forgiven.  
Demonstrate unforgiveness and you will not be forgiven.

Not sure what more explanation should be given?  
You must forgive to be forgiven.

**Forgiveness was and is a big issue.**

**It can be thought of as the cancellation of a debt.**

They owe you for how they treated you, but you cancel that debt.  
You let go of the desire to make them pay or think they owe you.

**Forgiveness can be seen as the decision to let go of anger or resentment...but emotion is hard to change.**

It may begin with the decision to no longer act on those emotions.  
When I choose to forgive something, I am letting it go.  
I am letting God deal with it and or them.

I may still have the emotions or feelings, but I am responsible for my actions in asking God to change my heart, and help me change.

It is not fake it til you make it, it is not acting on your emotions but you faith in God who calls us to love and forgive.

**16 “Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your**

face, **18** so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Again, He goes back to the hypocrites...

They fast and look sad.

They make themselves look miserable to get attention and impress people with their discipline and spirituality.

Just like there is in prayer, fasting has rewards, but they are from God.

Fasting may help you grow closer to God or farther away.

Fasting may help you loosen the grip of distractions of the flesh or it may help you become more fleshly minded.

God's reward are open whether what you do is in secret or not.

Next "do not" is regarding treasures and touches on rewards too.

**19** "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; **20** but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Regarding treasures first Jesus says...not on earth.

Earthly treasures are temporary, can be destroyed or stolen.

In other words the stuff you store up here doesn't last.

It can be devoured, damaged over time or someone can steal it.

**Earthly treasure is vulnerable.**

**But in heaven it is eternal, protected, and safe.**

And Jesus says our hearts are attached to our treasure.

Wherever you are putting your treasure...

...here or heaven, your heart will follow.

**You will treasure the place where you put your treasure.**

What are your values?

What are the things that are most important?

What do you think or worry about most?

What do you try to protect most?

If your greatest concerns are the things of the kingdom of heaven-

...Then your focus will be thinking about the King.

Conversely, if you are worried about your treasure here...

God's kingdom will seem like an interruption and inconvenience.

