

Different On Purpose: No Applause Needed Matthew 6:1-4

Passage

Matthew 6:1-4 Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. "Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Righteous Acts Can Be Spiritually Dangerous If Done For Human Recognition

Assertion

- Jesus begins bluntly: "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them..."

Possible Objection

- But wait, aren't we supposed to let our light shine? Didn't Jesus just say that in Matthew 5?

Application

- Before we do any good act this week, pause and ask: "Who am I doing this for, God or people?"

- Why it Matters: We can't always control visibility, but we can interrogate motivation.

- 1 Samuel 16:7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

When Recognition Is The Goal, Reward Is Reduced To Applause

Assertion

- Jesus continues: "Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward."

Possible Objection

- Is it really that bad to want appreciation? Isn't that just human?

Application

- Intentionally do one meaningful act of obedience this week that no one else will ever know about.

- Why it Matters: We are retraining our heart to value God's reward over human recognition.

- John 12:43 for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

Hypocrisy Happens When Generosity Becomes Performance

Assertion

- Jesus uses strong language: "When you give to the needy, sound no trumpet... as the hypocrites do..."

Possible Objection

- Were people actually blowing trumpets when they gave? That seems exaggerated.

Application

- Confess and confront one area where our spiritual life has become more about image than integrity.
- Why it Matters: Spiritual growth requires truthfulness about our motives, not just activity.
- Luke 12:1-3 In the meantime, when so many thousands of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another, he began to say to his disciples first, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.

True Righteousness Seeks The Hidden Approval Of God

Assertion

- Jesus gives the alternative: "Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing..."

Possible Objection

- Is Jesus saying we should never tell anyone about anything good we do?

Application

- Develop a consistent rhythm of "secret obedience" that becomes part of our normal walk with God.
- Why it Matters: We are forming a heart that is free from the need to be seen.
- Matthew 10:42 And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."

God Sees What Is Hidden And Rewards Accordingly

Assertion

- Jesus ends with this promise: "Your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

Possible Objection

- If no one sees it, does it really matter?

Application

- Remind ourselves daily: "God sees this," especially in moments when no one else does.
- Why it Matters: This shifts our focus from external validation to divine affirmation.
- 1 Corinthians 15:58

Conclusion

- So here's the real question this text presses on us: Who is our audience?