

ASTONISHED prt 12

Matthew 6:5-15

Man's recognition fades but our Father's reward is forever.

- **INTRO:**

We are in a series on Jesus sermon on the mount where He is teaching kingdom principles

- The crowds were astonished, that's why we named this series Astonished – we want that too
- We are in the section where Jesus says on 3 occasions, WHEN YOU... (give, pray, fast)
- Today is PRAY... WHEN YOU PRAY.
- The big idea that is conveyed in all three of these is...

Man's recognition fades but our Father's reward is forever.

- We don't want to do the right things for the wrong reasons – we innately desire the Father's rewards and the Son tells us how to go about receiving them.
- We all live for reward. Every one of us.
- Whether we admit it or not, we wake up chasing something that promises to make us feel significant, secure, or satisfied. For some it's the applause of the crowd or the next promotion.
- For others it's financial success, the perfect family image, a sense of control,
- or just that quiet feeling of "I've got this."
- We chase these rewards down a thousand different roads—because deep down, we were made to live for glory and joy.
- The problem is, when we chase them apart from God, they become little gods. They demand our loyalty, steal our peace, and in the end... they all fade. Nothing wrong with wanting rewards but the way, there is just something wrong with chasing them apart from the Lord.
- But Jesus shows us a better way. In the Sermon on the Mount, He doesn't tell us to stop wanting reward—He redirects our desire to the only reward that lasts: the approval and blessing of our Father in heaven.

OPEN:

- On a scale from 1-10, rate your prayer life.

- (Consider: consistency, time, sense of connection with Him, is it rewarding, quality)
- Jesus will teach us today how to move from a 1 to a 3, from a 3 to a 5, from a 6 to a 7, etc.
- How do you get from a 3 to a 5 or a 6 to an 8?
- Jesus will teach us today – Our eyes need to be set on the Father’s rewards – namely presence and provision... now lets’ be astonished.

Vs 5 *“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.*

- This doesn’t mean to not pray in public
- They **ONLY** pray in public – no private heart felt praying
- They did the right thing but with the wrong motive.
- Their reward was like a medal you won in 5th grade field day event that ended up in a drawer as a kid and is now in a box in your mom’s attic.
- In Jesus’ day, the religious leaders lived in a theocratic culture where **winning at religion** was everything. Temple worship, public piety, and climbing the religious ladder—that was the currency of status and respect. Today, the game looks different, but the goal is the same: **we still crave the praise of people**. We chase success, or at least the *image* of success—bigger houses, nicer cars, impressive titles—often buying things we don’t need with money we don’t have to impress people we don’t even like. Different road. Same heart issue. We, too, are tempted to perform for human applause.
- This reward of recognition is fleeting – it’s like an addiction – the high feels good for a minute but then it’s gone and only another high will fix it.
- But God’s reward isn’t like that – you don’t (can’t) impress him, you don’t perform for him – He loves you despite you, not matter what you’ve done or not done. Its unconditional –

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

- Jesus is starting to drill down on the ‘why’ as well as the ‘how’
- The rewards: there are eternal rewards we won’t know the fullness of until we receive them in glory, but there will be rewards NOW that no one can take from you.
- We are to pray with expectation – sitting on the edge of your seat praying – the co laboring with the God of all creation – we know He will come through.

Vs 7 *“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words.*

- Empty phrases – the gentiles saw ‘gods’ as distant and the only way to get their attention was through impressing them – the gods needed to be persuaded or coerced through religious performance and long speeches.
- Jesus' model prayer was 65 words in the original language.
- Luke’s rendition was 48
- The Lord is wanting you to:
 - Come overwhelmed with life.
 - Come with a wandering mind.
 - Come messy.
 - BE YOU

Vs 8 *Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*

- Why pray then if God knows what we need? Because prayer is way more than having our needs met. Could you imagine what it would be like (and perhaps some of you do) to have parents that met all your needs (food, shelter, clothing, transportation, college, etc.) but never had a relationship with you? That would be damaging to our souls.
- Actually, just hearing Jesus say that God knows what we need before we ask should lead us to awe filled worship. It should astonish us that God sees your need before you realize you should pray about it.

How do we pray with the Father’s rewards in mind?

1 Praise (He is worthy)

Vs 9 *Pray then like this:*

- Like a baby learning language, we learn how to communicate with God by listening to his words first.

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

- Father (Abba) is familial - it is relational - its the baseline and foundation for the rest.
- Prayer is not as much about engineering our words it's about enjoying the relationship.
- Hallowed - set apart, revered, other than - shares the root for HOLY
- Name - God's "name" represents His *whole character, reputation, and authority*

There are over 100 names of God in the Bible

- Each name reveals a different aspect of God's character — Provider, Healer, Shepherd, Warrior, Father, King, etc. The Bible uses them situationally to show who God is in different circumstances.

"The name of God is the sum total of His revealed attributes, the essence of His infinite majesty." **A.W. Tozer**

"The name of God is His nature, His character, His person, His glory, all that He is as revealed to us." **Charles H. Spurgeon**

- **Yahweh (YHWH / LORD)** — "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14)
The self-existent, eternal, unchanging One. He needs nothing and depends on no one. This name alone carries explosive power — the same God who spoke the universe into existence and sustains every breath.
- **El Shaddai** — God Almighty / All-Sufficient One (Genesis 17:1)
The unstoppable, mountain-strong God who has more than enough power and resources for every need. He is never limited, never weak.
- **El Elyon** — God Most High (Genesis 14:18-20)
Supreme over every ruler, every problem, every force in heaven or earth. Nothing and no one outranks Him.
- **Jehovah Sabaoth** — The LORD of Hosts / LORD of Armies (1 Samuel 1:3; Psalm 46:7)
Commander of the heavenly armies and every angelic host. This is the warrior name that makes demons tremble and battles turn in an instant.
- **Jehovah Jireh** — The LORD Will Provide (Genesis 22:14)
The God who sees ahead and supplies exactly what is needed — even when it costs Him everything (as on the cross).
- **Jehovah Shalom** — The LORD Is Peace (Judges 6:24)
The source of perfect, unshakable peace in the middle of chaos.
- It's worship
- Worship is the response of all we are to the revelation of all God is. OR worship is a reflex to revelation
- Worship-based prayers set the foundation for something other than "me" prayers, because they start with a "Thee" focus. This changes the nature of how we pray.

2 Providence

Vs 10 *Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

- This is surrender. After worshipping him, (how big He is) we (how small we are) surrender to Him, preparing us to ask for our needs to be met.
- We often attempt to use prayer to get our will done in heaven rather than His will done on earth.

Isaiah 55:8–9 (ESV) *8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

- Again, another wink toward the omniscience of God. If we really believe that his ways are best, that he is for us, then our hearts will always want His will to be done over our own will.
- “In prayer, God will always give you either what you asked for or what you would have asked for if you knew everything He knows.” Tim Keller
- We want to seek his face more than his hand -
- But when you get his face, more often than not, you get his hand

3 Provision (we are needy)

Vs 11 *Give us this day our daily bread,*

- Bread is a symbol of provision. Whether its food, water, shelter, whether its direction, wisdom, understanding, whether its relational, mental, spiritual, whether its strength, resilience, perseverance... not matter WHAT it is – we need it every single day. Our prayers to Him are to be every single day because our needs are every single day.
- **Does guilt rob you of praying for your needs?** “I’m not worthy. I only come to him when I’m in need, I don’t deserve it anyway, others need it more than me...” Do NOT let that mentality rob you of relationship and astonishment when God blows your mind with answered prayer that leads you to more worship... Hallowed by your name!

Hebrews 11:6 (ESV) *6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*

4 Pardon

Vs 12 *and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

- Confession is key

1 John 1:9 (ESV) 9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

- Look at this reward:

James 5:16 (ESV) 16 *Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.*

5 People

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

- Forgiven people forgive people
- One way to understand sin; if there were two of you, they wouldn't get along. Gavin Ortlund
- **The more you rejoice in your own forgiveness, the quicker you will be to forgive others**

VS 6:14–15 14 *For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

- This is not to suggest that God will withdraw justification from those who have already received the free pardon He extends to all believers. Forgiveness in that sense—a permanent and complete acquittal from the guilt and ultimate penalty of sin—belongs to all who are in Christ (cf. John 5:24; Rom. 8:1; Eph. 1:7). Yet, Scripture also teaches that God chastens His children who disobey... Believers are to confess their sins in order to obtain a day-to-day cleansing (1 John 1:9). This sort of forgiveness is a simple washing from the worldly defilements of sin; not a repeat of the wholesale cleansing from sin's corruption that comes with justification. It is like a washing of the feet rather than a bath (cf. John 13:10). Forgiveness in this latter sense is what God threatens to withhold from Christians who refuse to forgive others (cf. 18:23–35)." John MacArthur.

6 Protection

Vs 13 *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

- We have an enemy
- We are in a battle that never ceases on this side of heaven
- We were not simply born into the world, but born into a war.
- We do not wrestle with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual HOSTS OF WICKEDNESS IN HEAVENLY PLACES.
- We are praying to be battle ready.

- We can practice this prayer today and move the needle from a 3-5.
- And enjoy the Father's rewards

Man's recognition fades but our Father's reward is forever.

APPLICATION

1. Make up your mind today He is worthy to be sought and you NEED Him
2. Pray expecting His rewards – Edge of your seat praying
3. Pray the Lord's prayer, the Psalms and other Scripture
4. Journal your prayers
5. Practice it together with other believers

QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS:

- 1 We all chase rewards—whether it's applause, success, comfort, or control. Looking at your own life right now, what 'reward' are you most tempted to chase for the praise of people instead of the approval of the Father? What does that chase tend to cost you (peace, joy, relationships, etc.)?
- 2 After hearing Jesus' teaching from the sermon on the mount, which part of the Lord's Prayer (Praise, Providence/Surrender, Provision, Pardon, People, or Protection) do you sense God inviting you to grow in most this week? What would it look like for you to pray with the Father's reward in mind?