

# Matthew 5:16-18. Christ Forbids Ostentation in Fasting.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

---

*Christ warns against ostentation in fasting, emphasizing the importance of moderation, humility, and performing religious duties in secret.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 16:18, Matthew 6:16, Luke 21:34, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Colossians 3:23

**Topics:** "Fasting", "Humility"

---

## Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches about the importance of fasting as a duty, cautioning against pride and seeking human praise when fasting for personal sins. He emphasizes the need for moderation in food and drink, warning against excessiveness that can lead to spiritual downfall. Mortimer highlights the significance of performing religious duties secretly and boldly confessing faith in Christ, regardless of others' opinions or ridicule, urging believers to always act in the presence of God.

---

## Transcript

There was another duty upon the performance of which the Pharisees prided themselves--fasting. Some of them fasted twice a week. On those days they neglected the care of their persons, and went abroad that men might see they fasted, and admire them for their religiosity. In the day of a public fast for the sins of the nation, men should not conceal that they fast; but, like the king of Nineveh, who repented at the preaching of Jonah, they should set an example of penitence and self-denial. But when men fast for their own sins, then they ought to conceal the deed, and not seek to obtain human praise.

The scriptures teach us that fasting is a duty. It brings down the spirits, and sobers the mind; and, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, disposes the soul for prayer and meditation. But there are some people, whose health is so delicate, that it would be injured by long fasting. It surely cannot be a duty for them to fast, for they would thus be less fit to pray.

But all should beware of excess in food, which drowns the soul, and renders it sensual and stupid. It is written concerning one of the most wicked cities of old, "Pride, FULLNESS OF BREAD, and abundance of idleness was in her and her daughters," (or inhabitants.) This fullness made them haughty, and brought on their destruction. (Ez. 16:48, 50.) Let none think that they are too pious to stand in need of such a warning. Christ warns his own disciples against gluttony and drunkenness--"Take heed lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with excessiveness and drunkenness." (Luke 21:34.) Constant moderation in food and

drink is as important to the soul as to the body.

But when we fast let us beware of PRIDE; for as dead flies spoil the most fragrant ointment, so pride mars the most self-denying actions. We should perform religious duties secretly, when we are among those who will think highly of us for observing them. This rule applies to fastings, prayer, reading the scripture, and doing good. But when we are among those who would ridicule us for religion, then is the time boldly to confess our Master, and to show that we are not ashamed of him. How easy it is to speak against vain amusements, to quote the scriptures, and to make pious remarks in the presence of religious people--but how difficult, when surrounded by scoffers, to be faithful to Christ! We need a lively sense of the presence of God, that we may always act as in his sight, neither courting the smiles of our fellow-creatures, nor fearing their frowns; neither seeking their applause, nor shrinking from their ridicule. Let us labor to be accepted of Him, to whom we must each give an account. In that solemn hour how worthless will the praises of our fellow-creatures appear, their censures how harmless!

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/favell-lee-mortimer/matthew-516-18-christ-forbids-ostentation-in-fasting/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**