

Matthew 6:1-4. Christ Forbids Ostentation in Giving.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

True charitable giving is done from a grateful heart, not from a desire for human admiration.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:7, Matthew 6:1, Matthew 25:21, Mark 12:41, John 12:3, Acts 10:4, Hebrews 11:6

Topics: "Genuine Faith", "Humility In Giving"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches about the emptiness of good works done with wrong motives, using the Pharisees as an example who sought praise from men rather than God. The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's favor over human admiration, highlighting the need for genuine faith to value God's approval above all else. It challenges listeners to examine their hearts and determine whether they are more concerned with receiving the praise of men or the favor of God in their charitable deeds.

Transcript

The Lord Jesus now began to show the emptiness of the good works in which the Pharisees gloried. He had declared what false views they entertained of the law of God, and now he shows that their best actions were nothing worth, because they were done from wrong motives.

Let us remember that he said, in the early part of the sermon, that except our righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Here is an instance of what their righteousness was. They sometimes bestowed large sums of money on the poor, or on the service of the temple; but their desire was to be seen of men. They did not care so much for God's favor, as for men's admiration. Therefore they took care to have their charities known. They did not literally sound a trumpet before them; but they endeavored as much to attract notice, as if they had sounded a trumpet. They did gain much praise from men, and this was their reward, and their only reward.

We all by nature care for the praise of men more than for the praise of God. The reason is, that we have no faith. We see men, we hear their praise; but we do not see God, nor hear his voice. But when a person has faith, he begins to value God's favor more than the praise of men. To hear every human tongue united in applauding him, would not give him as much delight as the hope of hearing God say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Now the point we should examine is this--Which are we most anxious to obtain, the praise of men or the favor of God?

It may sometimes be best that our charities should be known. David, for instance, gave the gold and silver he had saved for the temple in a public manner. But why? Not to gain praise, but to encourage others to give also. Should we even hide our charities, and at the same time desire that they should be discovered, God would not be pleased with us. He looks at the heart. He wants us to act to him alone. We ought not to think that our charities deserve to have a reward from God. If we do them with this idea they will not be acceptable.

What can we give to God? Nothing worthy of his acceptance. All we can bestow are but like the flowers that the cottager may gather from his garden, and present to the monarch as a slender token of his gratitude for the gift of his cottage, and for his garden, and for all that he possesses. A gracious sovereign would not refuse the gift, if humbly offered, though the flowers were common, and though his own garden contained the rarest and the finest; but if the cottager presented them to gain the praise of his neighbors, or thinking he conferred a great favor upon his king, both the offering and the offerer would deserve to be rejected. And shall those who give money for God's service in such a spirit, be accepted? Cornelius gave alms from the overflowings of a grateful heart, therefore the angel said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up as a memorial before God," (Acts 10:4.) The poor widow gave her two mites with a single eye to God's glory. She gave her heart with them, or it would not have been said of her, "She gave more than they all." Mary poured the ointment on the head of Jesus, under a deep sense of her own unworthiness, and of the preciousness of her Savior; therefore Jesus accepted the service, and has caused it to be remembered through all ages. All we do from a feeling of grateful love to Him, who laid down his life for us, shall be remembered by God, when the costly gifts of ostentation shall be buried in eternal forgetfulness.

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