

The Forgotten Jesus Podcast

S7E33

Righteous Living - Matthew 6:1-4

Description – Join us today as we discuss the question: How can we live in a way that honors and points people to God, but not become prideful in what we do for Him?

Matthew 6:1-4

“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in heaven. ² So whenever you give to the poor, don’t sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. ³ But when you give to the poor, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

We’ve just come out of Matthew 5 where Jesus has said 6 times, “You have heard it said... But I say to you...”

Now in Chapter 6, Jesus warns his disciples to be careful on how we live out our christian lives.

We will live out right living before God. But we have to be careful to stay humble while doing so.

“Practice your righteousness” - not our Imputed righteousness from God through Christ. This is our living a righteous life.

“Grace is always against earning, never against effort” - Dallas Willard

The big 3 categories:

1. Giving
2. Prayer
3. Fasting

Jesus is going to show us that there’s a thread of hypocrisy that if we’re not careful can overshadow how we live our righteousness out.

Jesus says when you give, don’t sound a trumpet as the hypocrites do. Jesus assumes that Christians will be generous givers. There is no such thing as a stingy Christian. It doesn’t say “if” you give, or “I sure do hope you’ll give...”

There were 5 different categories of Pharisees in the 1st century:

1. Shoulder Pharisees - those who were worried about the outward appearance of their faith
2. Stumbling Pharisees - stumbled around to show their imperfection before God
3. Bleeding Nose Pharisees - would turn their heads up when they saw a beautiful woman to avoid lust, and would often run into walls.
4. Announcing Pharisees - They would announce what they were going to do for God before doing it.
5. Accounting Pharisees - Kept track of all they did for God, "just in case he forgets all that I've done..."

Hypocrite comes from the Greek, The Greek term *hypocrite* derives from *hupokrisis*, which originally meant to give an answer. In classical Greek, a hypocrite could serve as an interpreter of dreams, an orator, a reciter of poetry, or an actor. The term described "one who expounds, interprets" and specifically in Attic Greek referred to "one who plays a part on the stage," a role-player or actor in the theatre

In biblical usage, the theatrical metaphor intensified. In the New Testament, the term is used in the sense of a "pretender" whose words and actions contradict actual reality. Hypocrisy in the narrower sense of playing a role is highlighted in the New Testament, especially in the teaching of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels. Jesus criticized hypocrites for being pious in public, more interested in human praise when they gave alms, prayed, and fasted than in God's reward. The theatrical language remains embedded in the concept—just as an actor performs a character on stage, the hypocrite performs virtue before others while concealing inner corruption.

Martyn Lloyd Jones said, "Ultimately, the only reason we please men and women around us, is that it pleases ourselves. We are merely concerned with self-gratification."

Jesus is saying you only get one, you can't have both. Either you get the praise of man, or the approval of heaven.

So how do we reconcile what we're reading here in Matthew 6, with what Jesus says in Matthew 5:16?

Matthew 5:16

¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

It seems like there's an apparent contradiction, but there's not. The first is for those who are afraid and want to retract. The second in Matthew 6 is for those who struggle with approval and their appearance.

To give with two hands means we receive with one hand, and to give with another hand.

You're giving in secret, when no one is watching, and no one other than God and you will know. Jesus isn't interested in what you do. He's interested in why you do what you do.