

Authentic Faith: Giving—Matthew 6:1-4

- **Intro**
 - Chapters 5-7 reveal that the Jewish faith, with all its devotion and complexity was substandard
 - Chapter 5—their theology was bad (anger, lust, retaliation, etc.)
 - Chapter 6:19 and following—their approach to everyday life was inadequate
 - Chapter 6:1-18—their approach to religious activity/the life of faith/worship was inadequate
 - Chapter 6 = a mirror and a probe that examines and exposes us, allows nobody to escape
 - The worldly man MUST evade deep self-examination b/c to truly know oneself is one of the most painful pieces of knowledge we can acquire
 - Scripture DOES NOT offer a new resolution for us to work hard to attain. It is a divine standard unattainable to us by ourselves. It is a blessing received by faith in Jesus Christ!
 - **3 pieces to the next section—giving, praying and fasting**
 - Authentic faith bears fruit before others, before God and before ourselves.
 - Christian Righteousness that God is after is unlimited, all-encompassing righteousness
- **Point 1—Beware of living a life of faith all for show**
 - v.1—authenticity vs. hypocrisy
 - v.1 = a summary introduction to verses 2-18
 - Difference in MOTIVE—pleasing God versus pleasing self/others
 - Difference in OUTCOME—glory to God versus glory to self (performer)
 - **“in order to be seen by them”**—how does this parallel with you are a city on a hill
 - **“let your light shine” (Matt 5:14-16)**—Jesus speaking to our cowardice
 - **“do not practice your righteousness before men”**—Jesus speaking to our pride
 - **When tempted to hide...shine. When tempted to shine...hide!—A.B. Bruce**
 - Again, he includes us all—those tempted to hide/those tempted to shine
 - **Hypocrisy is the peril of religion:**
 - First type—you aren't a Christian but are pretending to be
 - 2nd type—you are a Christian, but you operate as one hypocritically
- **Point 2—Beware of giving for show rather than sacrificial worship (v.2-4)**
 - v.2—**sound no trumpet**
 - Trumpet sounding before almsgiving as an opportunity for Pharisees to ensure everyone saw them coming and how much they were bringing. Had a tiny little flute and would blow it to get all the poor to come out—but really so everyone would watch!
 - **We may or may not employ something like a “trumpet” but some of us blow our own trumpet deafening loud!**
 - Whatever you do in service or giving—don't toot your horn, just walk in obedience!
 - v.3—**when you give**
 - Totally assumes that God's people give sacrificially
 - “Give” = an action, not an attitude; it isn't mere empathy but physical support!
 - **Leviticus 25:35—If your brother becomes poor and cannot maintain himself with you, you shall support him as though he were a stranger and a sojourner, and he shall live with you.**
 - **2 types of giving:**
 - Structured and scheduled—your regular giving to the church (1 Cor. 16)
 - Spontaneous and unstructured—your giving to the poor and needy
 - **Question not so much about what the hand is doing but what the heart is thinking**
 - **3 options:**
 - We outrightly are seeking to be seen and celebrated by others (Pharisees—Jn 12:34)
 - We maintain anonymity but are secretly congratulating and celebrating self
 - We are authentically desirous of the approval of the Father alone
 - **Do not let the left hand know**—in contrast to the showiness of the Pharisees, Jesus calls his disciples to a secret righteousness/devotion

- Are we willing to be super godly and nobody else know about it? Are we willing to pursue zealous righteousness with God alone as the witness?
- Navigating this space is hard because our sin is subtle and our hearts are deceitful. It is very easy for our egotism to drown out our true altruism/generosity.
- Are we giving out of genuine desire to bless the recipient or are we really looking for some sort of validation for ourselves from others OR from our own selves!
- “in secret”—this is what God is after. Devotion, faith, giving done before only the face of God. Not only are others not seeing, but in a sense, our own selves aren’t seeing it!
 - It’s like a “give it and forget it” mentality. Hard!! We like to keep it on the books. Make sure God has us in the “good guy” category!
 - We do it and forget it! God will see it and reward it!
- Point 3—Beware of Seeking Rewards in the Wrong Places (v.1-4)
 - Hypocrisy and people pleasing removes the blessing and reward of God
 - “they have received their reward”—literally “received in full—like a receipt”
 - There is a reward for our self-righteousness/hypocritical righteousness and that applause and approval will feel good. Problem—the wick on the rewards is SHORT! Seek the eternal reward!
 - Focus is on the source of the reward and, therefore, the quality of it!
 - v.1 — “from your Father in Heaven”
 - If someone’s ingratitude to your gift bothers you, you gave it for the wrong reason!
 - C.S. Lewis—God’s rewards for righteousness are not mere add-ons to the activity for which they are given, but are the activity itself in consummation.
 - We don’t have to run from/be afraid of rewards!
 - Philippians 4:16-17—even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once again. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.
 - Paul is thanking the saints for their monetary support and, within his reasoning, he notes the “fruit that increases to your credit”. That literally is saying, “the profit that accrues to your account.”
 - He has no problem recognizing the the blessing that flows to the believer on the backside of generosity and that such a blessing is worth being jealous for!
 - Proverbs 11:24-25—One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters all himself be watered.
 - It is a blessing cycle—we give, God blesses, we give again, he keeps on blessing. OR, we withhold and God withholds and again and again, all the while, we are missing out!
 - There is a sphere of blessing that GIVING puts you in—to not give is to step outside of it!
- Point 4—Be set free from hypocrisy by the finished work of Christ (v.4)
 - v.4—your Father who sees in secret will reward you
 - Hebrews 4:13-16—And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
 - Christ’s finished work has ALREADY and ETERNALLY secured for us the pleasure, praise and applause of God
 - Christ’s finished work REMINDS us that God sees and knows us as we really are and loves us there—we have NO REASON to pretend and act as something we are not
 - Christ’s finished work RELEASES us from the bondage of pretense and pleasing man to give and serve and sacrifice all for God’s glory and the good of others!
 - Christ’s finished work ENSURES that all who are in him will gain an unrivaled eternal inheritance!