

Practicing Righteousness for an Audience of One

Sunday, October 23/22 --- Matthew 6:1-18

*“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.” – Mt. 6:1*

*“Pray then like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.’” – Mt. 6:9-10*

*Jesus doesn’t say that these outward things don’t matter. Giving money to those in need, praying to God day by day, and fasting when it’s appropriate – he assumes that people will continue to do all of these. What matters is learning to do them simply to and for God himself.*

*N.T. Wright*

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1. Introduction

- a. *“Let your light shine” compared with “Beware of practicing your righteousness before others”*
- b. Admiring a sunset vs Admiring ourselves admiring a sunset

2. The Pattern of Matthew 6:1-18

- a. When you give/pray/fast...
- b. You must not be like the hypocrites...
  - i. The Sin of Image Management
- c. They have received their reward...
  - i. We will get what we love
  - ii. The reward for focusing on Jesus is MORE JESUS
- d. But when you give/pray/fast, do it this way...

3. A Life Surrendered to Him

- a. Our Value is in Christ
- b. The Lord’s Prayer – a pattern for living

**Discussion Questions:**

*Jesus warns against practicing our religion before others to be seen by them. How easily we can fall prey to 'image management' in our expressions of faith. But what matters more to God in our giving (vs. 2), praying (vs. 5) and fasting (vs. 16) is our motive... to live and breathe for an audience of one (God).*

- *How is your integrity? Does your inward experience of faith match your outward actions?  
Have you ever asked a friend to be brutally honest with you in this?*
- *Is the prayer that Jesus gave us (6:9 – 13) the framework for your daily praying?*

*Challenge: Take any area of your spiritual life and see if you catch yourself doing something 'in order to be seen' by others. If you do, confess it to God. Then do it by Him, for Him and unto Him.*