

SERMON-BASED STUDY: WHEN RIGHT GOES WRONG

Matthew 6:1-8, 16-18, ESV – *“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.*

²*“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁵“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

⁷*“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*

¹⁶*“And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

Notes:

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- 5.

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week’s teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

ENGAGE WITH THE MESSAGE

- 1 This week we were reminded that Jesus “wants our real.” What does it mean to be real with Jesus?

2 Why is doing the right things with wrong motives a problem?

3 We were also reminded to give humbly, to pray to God, and to approach spiritual tests courageously. Which of these do you find most difficult? Why?

DIGGING DEEPER

A **1 Corinthians 13:3, NIV** – ³ *If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.*

1 Corinthians 16:14, ESV – ¹⁴ *Let all that you do be done in love.*

4 Looking at the passages above, we see the importance of motives. Why do you think motives are so important to God?

5 Why does Paul say that love should be the “ultimate motivator” in the things that we do?

6 Is Paul saying that we should not give sacrificially? Why or why not?

B **Luke 18:9-14, ESV** – ⁹ *He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: ¹⁰ “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ ¹³ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

7 According to the passage above, did the Pharisee have grounds for thinking highly of himself? Explain.

8 How does Jesus turn this story upside down?

9 In what ways does this parable impact your perspective on what it means to be righteous?

TAKING IT HOME

This week, we learned that we need to do the right things with the right motives. Jesus reminds us in Matthew 22:37-39 what our motives should be. How are you doing with your motives? How are you doing loving God? How are you doing loving others? Share with your group or accountability partner what God has been showing you. Pray for one another as you seek to be disciples who do the right thing with the right motives.

PRAISES AND PRAYER REQUEST

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

2 Kings 4:33

Isaiah 58:5

Matthew 23:1-7

Romans 7:15, 18-19