

REJECTION OF THEIR PRACTICE
Giving, Praying and Fasting
Matthew 6:1-18

²⁰ *...unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes & Pharisees, you'll never enter the kingdom of heaven."*

Rejection of their tradition 5:21-48

Their traditions **tamper** with what God requires.

6 areas– tradition weakens God's desire for His people.

Their rules aren't good enough to fulfill God's demands.

Problem is a **HEART** problem!

True religion is about the **HEART**,
NOT legalistic ritual!

They're clinging literally to the letter

They think they can "✓the □!"
while missing the spirit.

6 areas: **Murder** 21-26

Adultery 27-30

Divorce 31-32

Oaths 33-37

Retaliation 38-42

Love for Others 43-48

Rejection of their practice 6-7:6

6 areas of concern about their practice

Rejection of traditions:

"You have heard... but I say to you"

Now he changes, to **practices** of their religious leaders:

1st 3 contain 1 basic message:

Their practice is a show!

Notice parallel expressions in these 3 warnings:

They are hypocrites (= fakes)

v 2 – *"as the **hypocrites** do in the synagogues & in the streets."*

v 5 – *"you must not be like the **hypocrites**... they love to stand & pray in the synagogues & at street corners."*

v 16 – *"like the hypocrites"*

They do it to be seen by people:

v 1 – *"before other people in order to be seen by them"*

v 2 – *"that they may be praised by others"*

v 5 – *"that they may be seen by others"*

v 16 – *"that their fasting may be seen by others."*

They have received their reward

=> people's praise,

NOT God's approval!

v 2 – “they have received their reward”

v 5 – “they have received their reward”

v 16 – “they have received their reward”

Do your religious deed in private

v 4 – “so that your giving may be in secret”

v 6 – “go into your room & shut the door & pray to your Father who is in secret”

v 18 – “that your fasting may not be seen by others, but by your Father who is in secret”

Your Father will see in private

v 4 – “your Father who sees in secret”

v 6 – “your Father who is in secret

... who sees in secret

v 18 – “your Father who is in secret

... who sees in secret”

Your Father will reward in private

v 4 – “your Father... will reward you”

v 6 – “your Father... will reward you”

v 18 – “your Father... will reward you”

CONCERNING ALMSGIVING 6:1-4

“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.”

“Sound no trumpet before you”

When they gave it was a loud, noisy affair—designed to attract attention

Our giving should be quiet—without fan fare.

What does he mean?

“Don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing?”

Implications for US?

CONCERNING PRAYER 6:5-15

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 & shut the door & pray to your Father who is in secret. & your Father who sees in secret will reward you

⁷“& 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. ⁹Pray then like this:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread, ¹²and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

What does it mean to go into our room, shut door to pray?

What does that say about corporate prayer at church?

How did **they** pray?

What are pagans' empty phrases they heap up?

How might people imitate that today?

What are implications of *"Your Father knows what you need before you ask?"*

So, why ask?

What are the elements of proper prayer?

What's the priority?

Your glory

Your name

Your kingdom

Your will

Our needs

Our forgiveness

Our protection in temptation

Why the concluding emphasis on forgiveness?

Their prayers *didn't* focus on forgiveness

In their self-righteousness, *"they didn't need it!"*

What's Jesus saying to them?

Grace-treatment leads to grace-treatment!

Starts with recognition of *our* need!

Concerning fasting 6:16-18

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."

In their religious show, they want everyone to see how they "suffer for God!"

When you fast, clean up and dress up, so it doesn't become a show of *my* suffering.

Authentic fasting is about intense focus on seeking God's will—more important than eating!

Implications for us?

DISCUSSION: How should Lord's words affect OUR lives?

How should WE apply words this week? What will change?

How can we live counter-culturally—against flow of culture?

Concerning wealth 6:19-24

Concerning faith 6:25-34

Concerning judging others 7:1-6