

## LESSON 10: RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE KINGDOM (PART 4: Matt. 6:1-18)

### I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** Today we continue our study of the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest preacher that ever lived...Jesus' sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7; cf. Lk. 6:20-38; 11 & 12).
2. **3** Recall we've been considering Jesus' statement: "*For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.*" (Matt. 5:20)
3. Jesus has already given six solid examples of the superior righteousness required in His kingdom.
4. In the process Jesus gets to the "heart" of true righteousness, because true righteousness begins in our hearts! Matt. 15:17-20  
 "If that does not make a person squirm, then he probably is not understanding what he is reading."  
 (John Smith, *The Sermon on the Mount*, p. 34)
5. Through these contrasts, Jesus sweeps away the "spin" and gets to the heart of the true righteousness kingdom citizens must possess.
6. **4** We've already addressed six concrete examples contrasting kingdom righteousness with the unacceptable righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.
  - A. Vv. 5:21-26: murder begins in the heart (**1 Jn. 3:15**: "*Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*").
  - B. Vv. 5:27-30: adultery begins in the heart.
  - C. Vv. 5:31-32: MDR ("One man for one woman for life with only one exception.").
  - D. Vv. 5:33-37: "swearing" (i.e., the taking of oaths).
  - E. Vv. 5:38-42: personal retaliation (Rom. 12:19-21).
  - F. Vv. 5:43-48: to be "*perfect, just as our Father in heaven*" we must love our enemies.
7. Jesus continues His contrast between true righteousness versus the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, however, with one major difference.
  - A. Instead of talking about what they *taught*, He now addresses what they *do*.
  - B. He turns from *moral* righteousness to *religious* righteousness; the scribes and Pharisees not only perverted *morality*, they were also corrupted *religiously*.
    - (1) The three most prominent expressions of Jewish piety: *benevolence*, *prayer* and *fasting*.
    - (2) In each of these activities we need to ask ourselves some questions:
      - ☛ Why do I do what I do? Is it a matter of habit, tradition or heartfelt need?
      - ☛ Is it an attempt on my part to conform to social convention; a desire to gain notoriety and popularity?
      - ☛ Do I expect the praise of men for my deeds, to glorify self; or let the praise and glorify go to God?
      - ☛ What are my motives?
8. **5** As we continue our study of the Sermon on the Mount let's remember:
  - A. What Jesus teaches here (i.e., the concept of what standard our righteousness we must rise to) should challenge us to the very core of our being and permeate how we view every aspect of our lives; every thought as well as every action.

- B. The attitudes and actions Jesus instructs us in His sermon not only separate us from people of the world, but also separate us from the majority of “religious” people (**Isa. 66:2**: “*But on this one will I [i.e., LORD] look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.*”).
- C. **\*\*** We must realize sin originates in the heart before manifested by overt action!! **Jas. 1:14-15**: “*But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*”

## II. Discussion: (continued from Lesson #9)

### 6. **6** Jesus teaches on benevolence: **Matt. 6:1-4**

- A. The Law of Moses put a great deal of emphasis on generosity (**Deut. 15:7-11**):
- Prov. 29:7**: “*The righteous considers the cause of the poor, but the wicked does not understand such knowledge.*”
- Psa. 41:1-2**: “*Blessed is he who considers the poor; the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. 2 The LORD will preserve him and keep him alive, and he will be blessed on the earth...*”
- B. Notice verse one issues a warning! **Matt. 6:1**: “*Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.*”
- (1) Why the warning? This is a very real threat!
- “Take heed” means to take every possible precaution to guard against this sin! Because it is a common fault of all men...including me and you!
  - “the pursuit of righteousness has often been corrupted into self-righteousness. Pride is a constant threat when striving for perfection and it must be battled by following the precautions Christ proceeds to list.” (Chumbley, p. 114)
  - “The sin which Christ here reprehended is far more grievous than is commonly supposed, and, we may add, far more prevalent, many of the Lord’s own people being guilty of it. It consists of making men, rather than God, the judges and approvers of their actions. And do not we often fall into this snare?” (Pink, p. 149)
- (2) We need to remember something about Jewish society in the times Jesus lived.
- It was a “‘society without social security or welfare, voluntary charity and donations for the destitute formed a key part of ancient Jewish life’ (Blomberg, 116).” (Chumbley, p. 114)
  - That could mislead us to think “*alms*” are not as important in our society today because we have more services to help those in need (e.g., insurance, welfare, Red Cross, etc.) to care for the indigent.
  - However, that doesn’t let us off the hook! **Needs abound!** Philippines, Zimbabwe, India, preachers & Christians in the U.S. who lack insurance: 1 Jn. 3:17; Matt. 25:31-46
- (3) Jesus introduces what many claim is a discrepancy here.
- Earlier He said, “*Let your light so shine before men...*” (5:16).
  - Here He says, “*Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men...*”
- (4) The supposed discrepancy is easily explained from the perspective of motive.
- “Doing good works ‘before men’ is not the same as doing them ‘to be seen of’ men. Works done ‘before men’ are done to glorify God; works done ‘to be seen of men’ are done to glorify the doer.” (Chumbley, p. 114)

- (b) The former is done with the right motive (i.e., *'to glorify God'*), the latter is done with the wrong motive (i.e., *'to be seen of men'*).
- (5) **7** Many today mimic the self-righteousness of the Pharisees regarding benevolence:
- Philanthropic organizations pat themselves on the back (e.g., Clinton Foundation, Bill Gates, etc.).
  - Presentation of awards recognizing philanthropic activities (advertising value!).
  - Name dropping (e.g., "I gave so much to so and so.").
- (6) Such seeks the accolades of men and not the approval of God. It was part of the problem with Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11; They wanted the approval and accolades of men at a bargain price!).
- (7) **8** Self-righteousness loves to show off! (e.g., Pomp, pageantry of the Catholic Church.)
- (8) Self-righteousness does what it does to get noticed; and when we get noticed by men that's all we're getting! **Matt. 6:2:** *"Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward."*
- (9) Think about it: When we seek nothing from God (i.e., do it to be seen of men), we shouldn't be surprised when we receive nothing from Him!
- "God hates pride even when it parades as mercy." (Chumbley, p. 115)
  - "Not only can sin be committed in the absence of a bad deed (5.22, 28), it can be committed in the presence of a good one (vv 1,5,16). 'You can call attention to yourself in religion with such emphasis that you succeed in announcing only your spiritual death' (Jones, 204)." (Chumbley, p. 115)
- (10) The metaphor Jesus uses for one drawing attention to his charitable deeds is interesting: *"do not sound a trumpet before you..."* (v. 2).
- We have a similar expression in our language (i.e., "tooting your own horn").
  - I always remember what one preacher said long ago: *"He who tooteth not his own horn, the same shall not be tooted."*
  - He was not promoting "horn tooting," but rather making an observation about an unfortunate attitude among some Christians.
  - Let God do the 'horn tooting' for us! **Matt. 6:3-4:** *"But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly."*
  - He knows all! He appreciates our charitable deeds and will reward us far more than men ever will! **Contrast:** a plaque vs. recognition in eternity!
  - "When men choose the applause of men rather than the applause of God, how petty they prove themselves to be." (Smith, p. 51)
  - "So we must not understand Christ as here forbidding all charitable actions which may be seen by others, but rather understand Him to mean that we should perform them as unobtrusively as possible, making it our chief concern to aim at the approbation of God therein." (Pink, p. 150) (cites Acts 11:29-30; **Heb. 6:10:** *"For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister."*).

- (11) To do as the scribes and Pharisees did in this regard is to act as a hypocrite!
- Hypocrites are so very destructive to the truth and God's cause. Everyone hates fake righteousness.
  - 9** A hypocrite is not just a person who doesn't practice what they preach. Matthew's gospel also identifies hypocrites as those who: **1**) love to be noticed and commended, **2**) do good works to glorify self (vv 2,5,16, 23:5), **3**) operates by a double standard by excusing himself in what he condemns in others (7:1-5; 12:27; 23:4; 27:63; 28:11-14), **4**) in the name of God, breaks God's word (15:2-9), and **5**) masks wickedness as sincerity (22:15-17).
  - "Few hypocrites are consciously hypocritical; in fact, they generally view themselves as the only true believers. The scribes and Pharisees didn't believe they were hypocrites (23:13)—they were sincere in their hypocrisy (2 Tim. 3.13). And therein lay the lethality of their sin." (Chumbley, p. 116)
- (12) Jesus uses an interesting word regarding hypocrites: "*they have their reward*" (v. 2).
- The word "*have*" (*apecho*) "is the ordinary commercial term for a receipt that indicated one had been fully paid: 'reward' (*misthos*, pay for service) referred to wages that had been earned. When hypocrites are applauded they have been 'paid in full' and should expect nothing more (Jn. 5.44)." (Chumbley, p. 116)
- (13) **10** Why is hypocrisy so *often* and so *vehemently* condemned in Scripture?
- The hypocrite is the most important thing in his life. In essence, he makes a god out of himself!
  - It shouldn't be surprising that Christ's most scathing denunciations are reserved for the hypocrite who breaks the very first commandment: "*You shall have no other gods before Me.*" (Ex. 20:3; Matt. 23: Jesus calls them "*hypocrites*" seven times!)
- (14) **11** Jesus says, "...let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing" (v. 3) This doesn't mean we go out of our way to do benevolence surreptitiously or even anonymously.
- It means we are doing it for "God's eyes only."
  - The correct attitude is exemplified clearly by the sheep of Matthew 25:31-46; "the righteous are represented as being totally unaware of their own benevolent deeds" Hendricksen, 321). God sees the good we inauspiciously do. He knows what is in our heart (His omniscience is mentioned ten times in vv 1-18) and is not unrighteous to forget any work done for His sake (9.22, Heb. 6.10)." (Chumbley, p. 117)
  - "The point is simply that just as we are not to give for the approval of men, neither are we to give for the approval of ourselves." (Smith, p. 51)
  - "Our giving is to be neither before men, waiting for the clapping to begin, nor before ourselves with our left hand applauding the right hand's generosity, but before God who both sees and rewards." (Smith, p. 52)
  - "Secret is a relative term that approaches the motive of our heart. If someone else sees or discovers the amount given, the spiritual value is not destroyed if our motives are right. Jesus divulged the amount given by the poor widow (Mk. 12:42-44; Lk. 21:2-4; cvt). Paul publicized the generosity of the Macedonians (cf. Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 11:9; cvt). Neither the widow nor the Macedonians gave with any intention or desire

for publicity. Their hearts and motives were pure. They gave to be seen only of God. They sought only his praise and received a rich abundant reward.” (Smith, pp. 51-52)

- (f) **\*\*** “Those who quietly glorify God in this life will be publicly glorified by Him in the next (Rom. 2:7).” (Chumbley, p. 117)

**Rom. 2:7:** “eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality;”

- (g) We must be patient! **Psa. 27:14:** “Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!”
- (h) “The Divine reward, in the day to come, will be given ‘openly,’ before an assembled universe. ‘Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall every one have the praise of God’ (I Cor. iv. 5).” (Pink, p. 151)

**I Cor. 4:5:** “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.”

C. **12** Showing benevolence to those in need is both an act of righteousness and an act of kindness.

- (1) The Greek word for “alms” in Matthew 6 is the same word from which we get the English word “righteousness” (also expresses the idea of acquittal) (Vine).

(a) Right: God wants us to be generous to the needy because it is the **right** thing to do! **I Jn. 3:17:** “But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?”

(b) Acquittal: God wants us to be generous to the needy because it makes us **acceptable** in His sight! **Matt. 25:40:** “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’”

- (2) Regarding YOUR benevolence: What will the Lord say to you on the Day of Judgment? Matt. 25:40? And **Matt. 25:23:** “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.”

**-OR- Matt. 25:41:** “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:’”

7. **13** Jesus teaches on prayer: **Matt. 6:5-15**

A. “The disciples asked Jesus, ‘Teach us to pray.’”

- (1) This affirms proper prayer is not instinctive, but is a learned behavior.
- (2) It is not acquired by haphazard or sporadic practice, but by disciplined devotion (Lk. 18:1-8).
- (3) Prayer can be hazardous to our spiritual health if we don’t follow Jesus’ instructions.
- (4) “...what sort of creatures are we that we need this caution? Think of it—praying to God, in order that we may be seen of men! In how many ways does the evil of our hearts lead us away from godly simplicity and sincerity.” (Pink, p. 153)

B. **14** Note Jesus’ response did not include posture, place, time or attire of prayer.

- (1) He focuses on the heart and the proper things to include in prayer.

- (2) He presents a model prayer. “Jesus did not say, ‘pray this prayer,’ but ‘pray in this way.’” (Smith, p. 54)
- C. We have no greater privilege than prayer! Think “Starbreather”!  
 “There is no activity more vital to the spiritual well-being of every man than prayer. And there is perhaps no blessing taken any more lightly than prayer. ‘Man is at his greatest and highest when upon his knees. He comes face to face with God’ (Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* II:45).” (Smith, p. 52)
- D. **15** No wonder the principles governing charitable deeds also govern prayer; because prayer can be a means of communicating with God or of impressing men.
- (1) In vv. 5 & 6 Jesus condemns hypocritical prayer.
- (2) In vv. 7 & 8 He cautions against paganistic prayer.
- (3) In vv. 9-15 He gives a model prayer.
- E. The instruction warning against hypocritical prayer applies to all of our prayers, whether public or private: “*when you pray*” (v. 5)
- (1) Note it is not posture in prayer, but pride in prayer that concerns Jesus.
- (2) “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful (Jas. 5.16) whether or not he prays prostrate (26.39), kneeling (Acts 21.5), sitting (2 Sam. 7.18) or standing (Lk. 18:13). One posture is not intrinsically holier than another. Conversely, there is no posture that makes the prayer of the proud acceptable to God. ‘Prayer that has another agenda, whether it be showing off our skill with language or trying to preach to our fellow worshippers, fails to qualify as real prayer’ (Gardiner, 123).” (Chumbley, p. 118)
- F. “*when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray...*” is parallel with “*when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 that your charitable deed may be in secret;*” (vv. 3-4).
- (1) Prayer is always private, whether it is given in a public gathering or when we are all alone.
- (2) “We should never assume any position or use any language meant to promote self. Prayer is ‘to be undertaken with a single eye on God, not with a side glance at people who could be impressed’ (Morris, 141).” (Chumbley, p. 118)
- (3) “Entering the closet and closing the door was a figurative way of saying, Shut out from thy mind all thoughts of the creature and have respect unto God alone; be not occupied with those present, but with Him who is invisible.” (Pink, p. 154)
- (4) Jesus is not talking about a literal closet, He is warning us about our tendency to: 1) put on a show for others, and 2) let our minds wander and stray from our focus on God. It really does require a lot of practice and mental discipline.
- G. **16** “A cousin to hypocritical prayer is pagan prayer.” (Chumbley, p. 118) i.e., “vain repetitions”
- (1) This doesn’t mean we cannot repeatedly use the same words or ideas in our prayers.
- (2) “It appears to be an onomatopoeic word (one formed by imitating the sound made by its referent) that referred to the meaningless prattle the pagans called prayer. Believing it was the squeaky wheel that gets the grease, pagans ‘by endless repetition and many words [would] try to tire out their gods and weary them into granting requests’ (Vos, 59; Seneca called this ‘fatiguing the gods, *Epistulae Morales* 31.5; 1 Kgs. 18.26).

- (3) Christians are to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17; Lk. 18:1-8) but a prayer’s length does not determine its effectiveness.
- (4) The essential thing in prayer is not the quantity of words, but the quality of the heart doing the praying (Matt. 15:18; 23:14).
- (5) \*\* Vain repetitions: many view prayer something akin to a rabbit’s foot, a magical charm.
- ☛ “Break glass in case of fire” attitude toward prayer.
  - ☛ Catholic rosary service,
  - ☛ Buddhist prayer wheels (show picture from China),
  - ☛ Describes rote prayers using the same words and phrases repeatedly without giving it proper thought!
- H. **17** Much speaking in prayer is unnecessary! **Matt. 6:8:** “For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.” **Think ‘parent!’**
- “This poses a dilemma for many, for if God knows what we need before we ask (v 32), why ask? The answer is that prayer is a Divinely prescribed act that invites God’s response (v 12, 24.20, Acts 8.22, Jas. 5.17-18). He bestows certain blessings only in response to His children’s requests. Prayer is not a battering ram by which we gain entrance to God’s blessings, but a corridor through which He bestows on us what He wants to give us.” (Chumbley, p. 119)
- I. Jesus has shown us how not to pray, now He turns and shows us how to pray (vv. 9-15).
- (1) **18** Ironically, many have done to Jesus’ model prayer what Jesus has just warned us against: vain repetition, a rote ritual.
- (2) Many people who don’t know diddly about the Bible can quote all, or at least portions, of the “Lord’s Prayer.”
- (3) Reflects the rabbit’s foot or good luck charm view of so many concerning this prayer.
- J. Jesus says: “In this manner, therefore, pray” (v. 9). So, it is unequivocally a model prayer; not a prayer to be recited from rote memory.
- K. **19** This prayer has two sections and in each section Jesus addresses three concerns:
- (1) \*\* Section one: vv. 9-10; contains three clauses addressing the things of God:
- (a) **Things of God #1: Matt. 6:9a:** “Our Father in heaven”
- ☛ The Jews typically did not address God as “Father” as they thought it implied a far more intimate relationship than they believed possible between God and man.
  - ☛ “By using this term, Christ closes the gap between God and man and emphasizes the family tie that exists between Him and His people. He is not a capricious despot who can only be approached under the threat of death (Est. 4.16), but One as accessible as a loving and caring Father (7.7-11, Rom. 8.15).” (Chumbley, p. 120) (**Heb. 4:16:** “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”).
  - ☛ “‘In heaven’ balances the closeness gained by ‘Father.’ God is our Father, but He is not our buddy. He is the great Almighty One who ‘dwells in the heavens’ (Ps. 123.1); near us, but above us.”

- ☛ Let us never forget God is always to be approached with reverence and awe! Never casually or on an equal plane with man. Our familiarity with the 'Father' must never degenerate into casualness.
- (b) **\*\* Things of God #2: Matt. 6:9b:** *"Hallowed be Your name."*
- ☛ It is surely significant that the very first thing in acceptable prayer, does not concern our needs, but is the exaltation of, and reverence for, God.
  - ☛ "Hallowed" is from *hagiazō* meaning to make holy. "Hallowed be thy name" means more than that we should speak God's name reverently. God's 'name' stands for God's character...To hallow His name is to dedicate oneself to all that He is (Isa. 29:23-24)." (Chumbley, pp. 120-121).
  - ☛ "In Exodus 20:7, among the most ancient of laws was one to protect the 'hallowedness' of the name of Jehovah." (Smith, p. 55)
  - ☛ Today's society takes a very casual approach to God. Such an attitude provides a crumbling foundation that always leads to lackadaisical service, error and infidelity.
  - ☛ "Hallowed be Thy name': how easy it is to utter these words without the slightest thought of their profound and holy import!" (Pink, p. 162) **Think Starbreather!**
- Psa. 145:1-3:** *"I will extol You, my God, O King; And I will bless Your name forever and ever. 2 Every day I will bless You, And I will praise Your name forever and ever. 3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; And His greatness is unsearchable."*
- (c) **\*\* Things of God #3: Matt. 6:10:** *"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*
- ☛ The "kingdom" has certainly "come" in the sense Jesus built His church (Matt. 16:18) and it is sometimes referred to as the "kingdom" (Dan. 2:44; Col. 1:13).
  - ☛ But the "kingdom" in the New Testament is multidimensional: 1) Jesus said the kingdom is "within you" (Lk. 17:20-21), and 2) Paul referred to "His heavenly kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:18) referring to the eternal aspect of God's kingdom.
  - ☛ Therefore, it is not wrong to pray for the kingdom to "come" in these senses. "The church has been established, but God does not yet rule in the hearts of all. Until He does, this petition will remain relevant. And what is necessary for the kingdom to come in this way? God's will must be obeyed on earth as readily and completely as it is in heaven...Heaven is always the pattern for earth (16:19); the obedience found there is to be duplicated here." (Chumbley, p. 121)
- (2) **20 Section two:** vv. 11-13; contains three petitions dealing with the needs of man:
- (a) **Needs of man #1: Matt. 6:11:** *"Give us this day our daily bread."*
- ☛ Note our needs are secondary to the praise and honor we owe our Creator God!
  - ☛ "We cannot pray aright unless the honour of God be dominant in our hearts." (Pink, p. 162)
  - ☛ "Give" does not indicate our food comes as a free gift unaided by our endeavor, just that ultimately it is a gift of God (**Acts 14:17:** *"Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."*).



- ☛ “Daily” encourages us to have a constant dependence upon God. We are to live one day at a time and not worry about tomorrow (Matt. 6:34).
  - ☛ Ingratitude is a common and grievous sin! **Rom. 1:20-21**: “...they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful...”; **Jas. 1:17**: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”
- (b) \*\* **Needs of man #2: Matt. 6:12**: “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”
- ☛ “And” links this to what Jesus just said. To truly live we need bread to sustain our physical bodies and God to sustain us spiritually.
  - ☛ Sin here is likened to a debt we owe God; we owe Him our obedience.
  - ☛ Present obedience can never compensate for past sins. Thus, we have nothing to retire our past debt.
  - ☛ When we ask God for forgiveness, we are asking Him to cancel our debt of trespasses (cf. Matt. 18:22-35; 10,000 talents [~\$12.5 billion] vs. 100 denarii [~\$5,800]).
  - ☛ Forgiveness is neither *automatic* nor *unconditional*: “as we forgive our debtors.”
  - “Forgiving another doesn’t earn forgiveness, but an unforgiving spirit can block forgiveness. This point is so critical that Christ returns to it in a postscript (vv 14-15) and a parable (18.23-35).” (Chumbley, p. 122).
- Matt. 6:14-15**: “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”
- ☛ Just as God does not unconditionally forgive us of our sins (i.e., requires confession and repentance); we cannot forgive others unless they too meet the conditions of forgiveness (Matt. 18:15ff; Lk. 17:4).
  - ☛ However, even if the offender evidences no signs of repentance, we must not harbor any malice or seek revenge (Rom. 12:19-21).
- (c) \*\* **Needs of man #3: Matt. 6:13**: “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”
- ☛ “Temptation is inevitable (Jas. 1.13), but Christians have the privilege of asking God to keep them from anything that may bring them into contact with sin (24.20, 26.40). (Chumbley, pp. 122-123)
  - ☛ Prayer is a potent weapon when Satan is knocking on our door! Matt. 26 (Jesus’ prayer in the garden of Gethsemane.).
  - ☛ The choice is ours! **Jas. 1:13-14**: “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.”
- Gen. 4:6-7**: “So the LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.’” Cf. 1 Cor. 10:13
- L. **21 Doxology**: i.e., words of praise to God: **Matt. 6:13**: “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

**\*\***“To God belongs the kingdom—He alone is the sovereign Ruler; to Him belongs the power—He alone has the strength to provide for man’s needs; and for these reasons, to Him belongs the glory (v 9)—forever (Eph. 3.21).” (Chumbley, p. 123)

**M. 22 Summary on prayer:**

- (1) **\*\* Sincerity in prayer:** Prayer must be offered from the heart in all sincerity! **Matt. 6:5:** “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.”
  - (a) “They love themselves more than God and desire praise more for self than for God.” (Smith, p. 52)
  - (b) Surely, we can appreciate how awful and pitiful that is!
- (2) **\*\* Solitude in Prayer:** **Matt. 6:6:** “But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”
  - (a) “Jesus calls on his disciples to isolate their spirits to talk with God in intimacy. They are to pray as if only for the ears of God.” (Smith, p. 53)
  - (b) Public prayer is approved (Acts 4:23ff; 12:5; 1 Tim. 2:8). “A man’s secret place may be public as long as his heart and motive are right. We are to shut out the world and others while shutting ourselves in with God. Jesus promises that sincere prayer directed to the ears of God will meet with reward!” (Smith, p. 53)
- (3) **\*\* Simplicity in Prayer:** **Matt. 6:7:** “And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.”
  - (a) Jesus condemns prayer characterized by mechanical repetition. Repetition per se is not wrong, but *vain* repetition (empty phrases) is.
    - (i) “Prayers that are all words and no meaning, all lips and no heart, are repulsive.” (Smith, p. 54)
    - (ii) Vain prayers leave us in a state of spiritual starvation, while effective prayers lead to spiritual health.
  - (b) The Gentiles had the concept of prayer that if they said enough words their gods would eventually wear down and hear them (e.g., the prophets of Baal, 1 Kgs. 18:26; worshipers of Diana, Acts 19:34).
  - (c) We don’t have to worry that we weary God with our prayers! He is ready and willing to hear us! **Lk. 18:1-8:** “He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart...”
  - (d) Neither do our prayers have to be long and flowery to be effective (tax collector in **Lk. 18:19:** “God, be merciful to me a sinner.”).
- (4) **\*\* Security in Prayer:** **Matt. 6:8:** “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”
  - (a) We can pray confidently because God is our Father and takes delight in His children! **1 Pet. 5:7:** “casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

**Psa. 145:18-19:** “The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. 19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them.”

**8. 23** *Jesus teaches on fasting:* **Matt. 6:16-18**

- A. Fasting involves self-discipline; physical abstinence to focus and concentrate on the spiritual.
- B. The Jews thought it strengthened their prayers by demonstrating their seriousness.
  - (1) “The one fast prescribed under the Law of Moses was the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16.29-31, ‘afflict yourselves’ is generally understood to have included fasting; Acts 27.9).” (Chumbley, p. 124)
  - (2) “By the time of Christ, Pharisaic custom was to fast twice a week (Lk. 18.12). Though Christ fasted for nearly six weeks in the wilderness (4.2), His practice and that of His disciples differed noticeably from others (9.14-17).” (Chumbley, p. 124)
  - (3) Hypocrites use fasting, like charitable deeds and prayer, as a means of self-promotion.
    - (a) They went so far as to contort their facial expressions to make sure everyone noticed their “suffering for God’s sake”! Matt. 6:16
    - (b) “Trying to look religious, they only succeeded in looking ridiculous.” (Chumbley, p. 124)
  - (4) Jesus assumes His followers will fast (“*when you fast*”), but He does not specify the frequency, length, occasion or method; His concern (as in charitable giving and prayer) is one’s motive.
    - (a) As with benevolence and prayer, fasting is to be between the person and God.
    - (b) All of our dealings with God others may witness are to be performed in an unpretentious way; in a way where we are not seeking to draw attention to ourselves.

**III. CONCLUSION: 24**

- 1. Lord willing, we’ll continue our study of the Sermon on the Mount in the future.
- 2. Christ’s teaching here sounds through the ages as the greatest and clearest challenge to all vaneer, all pretension, all double-mindedness, and all hypocrisy in religion.
  - A. The world hates hypocrites, and rightly so.
  - B. How many million upon millions of people shut off their minds to the truth because of hypocritical Christians?!
  - C. Let us never contribute to that awful picture by being hypocrites ourselves.
- 3. Invitation (Matt. 11:28-30)

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