

Matthew 6:1-18 WEB

- (1) “Be careful that you don’t do your charitable giving before men, to be seen by them, or else you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.
- (2) Therefore when you do merciful deeds, don’t sound a trumpet before yourself, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may get glory from men. Most certainly I tell you, they have received their reward.
- (3) But when you do merciful deeds, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand does,
- (4) so that your merciful deeds may be in secret, then your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

- (5) “When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Most certainly, I tell you, they have received their reward.
- (6) But you, when you pray, enter into your inner room, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.
- (7) In praying, don’t use vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking.
- (8) Therefore don’t be like them, for your Father knows what things you need, before you ask him.

- (9) Pray like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.
- (10) Let your Kingdom come. Let your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.
- (11) Give us today our daily bread.
- (12) Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.
- (13) Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.’

- (14) “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
- (15) But if you don’t forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

- (16) “Moreover when you fast, don’t be like the hypocrites, with sad faces. For they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen by men to be fasting. Most certainly I tell you, they have received their reward.
- (17) But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face;
- (18) so that you are not seen by men to be fasting, but by your Father who is in secret, and your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

Sermon on the Mount / Sermon on the Plain (Section 3)

for March 9, 2008

Alms, praying, and fasting. Are you seeking treasure on earth, or are you seeking to lay up treasure in heaven?

6:1

In some translations, verse one speaks of giving alms (charitable giving), and some translations speak of practicing your righteousness before others. "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" (Matthew 6:1 ESV). In every translation, Jesus says we are to be careful, beware, take heed, to ourselves in this matter.

6:1-4

Charitable giving, merciful deeds (alms).

This section and 6:4-6 (prayer) and 6:16-18 (fasting) are very similar. The Lord tells "you" what not to do, and then what to do, and the reward of both. What does He tell **you** not to do, what does He tell **you** to do, and what are the potential rewards mentioned? Read Galatians 6:7-8 and 2 Corinthians 4:18.

6:5-6

Praying. Notice that the Lord is not speaking to hypocrites in these verses. He is speaking to you, giving you instructions.

6:7-8

Praying. Don't use vain repetition. Don't think that the words in verses 9-13 are somehow magical and that repeating them over and over will somehow cause God to hear you and do what you want Him to do for you.

Do you think verse eight means that we shouldn't tell, or we don't need to tell our heavenly Father what we need? Read Philippians 4:6.

6:9-13

The Lord's Prayer. Perhaps because some have used these words as vain repetition in praying, others have set them aside totally and made no use of this prayer. The Lord says, Pray in this way. What do you think He means when He says this?

Look up "holy" in the dictionary.

To pray for these things in this prayer, what are you really asking for, and do you really want these things? and what are you not asking for, and are you content to not have them? Also notice the words "our" and "us" in this prayer. How is that different from using the words "mine" and "me" to pray this prayer?

Try for a week, each day, to pray this prayer *in your own words* to the Lord, from your heart.

6:14-15

Read Matthew 18:21-35. Following is a story told by Corrie Ten Boom who, with her sister, had been in concentration camps in WW2. The story takes place in Germany in 1947, after the war, where she had gone to speak to people about forgiving.

It was at a church service in Munich that I saw him, the former S.S. man [*who had been one of the most cruel guards in the camp*] who had stood guard at the shower room door in the processing center at Ravensbruck. He was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time [*Corrie's sister, Betsie, died at that concentration camp.*]

[*This former cruel Nazi guard had recently been saved. He did not remember Corrie, but she did remember him.*] He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. "How grateful I am for your message, Fraulein." he said. "To think that, as you say, He has washed my sins away!"

His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people in Bloemendaal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I

saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him.

I tried to smile, I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me Your forgiveness.

As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.

And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on His. when He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself.

6:16-18

Fasting. What is fasting? what is the purpose of fasting?