Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Giving Without Hypocrisy
Scripture: Matthew 6:1-4
Code: 2229

Giving Without Hypocrisy
Let's pray together. Lord, how we're convicted in our hearts when we hear You say "forgive them just as I have forgiven you." We are so prone to carry our grudges and bear our hurts until we can hurt back. Lord, help us to not be justice hearers of the word, but doers. Not just those who name the name of Christ, but those who live up to that name, those who obey the standard. Lord, we've had so much to fill our hearts already this morning wit the beauty of music of prayer. Thoughts about ministries and people. Our hearts, Lord, should be well prepared for what it is You have to say to us Your word. And so Father we ask Your special grace, grace of understanding, the grace of a willing and obedient heart that we might hear and apply what the Spirit says. Give grace to the speaker, the one who preaches that he may be the voice from on high. We pray in Christ's name and all for His glory, Amen.

Take your Bible, if you will, and look with me at Matthew Chapter 6, Matthew Chapter 6. It's with a great amount of joy that we have involved ourselves in a continuing study of Matthew's gospel. Finding ourselves again this morning at the beginning of the 6th Chapter, a marvelous, exciting, and thrilling portion of Scripture. One literally replete with spiritual truth. One setting a standard that is so high that none of us can attain it, and yet all of us must and are able to in the confident assurance of the present power of Jesus Christ.

What the flesh cannot do, God's spirit in us can do. And so what we offer you today as we again look at the Scripture and one particular emphasis that our Lord makes is not some human approach. Not some resolution. Not some grit your teeth and try to do it, but what we offer to you is a divine standard that in terms of human ability is unattainable. But by virtue of faith in Jesus Christ in the indwelling life of Christ in His blessed Holy Spirit becomes within the grasp of every believer.

Jesus came into the world and particularly in Matthew 5, 6, and 7, He set a standard that was unheard of to the people of His day. They had a religion, they thought it was biblical. It was at least sophisticated and certainly complex, but it was substandard. It didn't make it. Their theology was inadequate. That was clear from Chapter 5. Their attitude toward mundane things is an inadequate. That's clear from Chapter 6, verses 19 and following. And their attitude toward their religious activity was inadequate. That's clear from Chapter 6, verses 1-18 and that's where we are.

Jesus comes to the Pharisees and the scribes and those who adhere to the system of traditional religion passed down by the rabbis and says in effect, "you have emasculated the divine standard. You have torn it down and you have reconstituted a standard you can keep that is nothing but human. And so I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets. I am come to reaffirm them. I am not come to aside one thing of God's law. I am come to reassert it. I am come to re-establish that which has always been established in God's mind." And so we saw in Chapter 5 that he said your theology is inadequate. You've got the wrong doctrine about hate, anger, murder, divorce, swearing, telling lies, taking oaths, you've even got the wrong theology of love. And he re-established what God's view was.

Later on as I said in Chapter 6, verse 19 He tells them they have the wrong approach towards the things of this life. They shouldn't be anxious for what they eat or drink or wear. They have the wrong approach to theology and the wrong approach to things. But here in the middle section, verses 1-18, He tells them they have the wrong approach to worship. He says the problem your worship is phony. It's hypocritical. Look at verse 1. "Take heed," or beware, "that you do not your alms," or really the text says "your righteousness," dikaiosune, your deeds of righteousness, your righteous acts "before men to be seen by them."

Stop right there. He says the problem with your religion is, it's a show. And the word seen is theatomi from which we get theatrical. And then in verse 2, He calls them hypocrites and that's hupokritase. And you know what that means? An actor on a stage. You're nothing but an actor on a stage doing what you do for the applause of the people who watch. Your religion is just as bad as your theology. And He picks out three elements of their religion to attack. One is their giving, two is their praying, and three is their fasting.

Their giving is the element of religion that deals with others. Their praying is the element of religion that deals with God. Their fasting is the element of religion that deals with themselves and the mortification of their flesh. So He really sums up the whole area of religious responsibility. Whatever it is that I am in my worship, it should be coming from the depths of a pure heart not hypocrisy. Your giving is phony, your praying is phony, and your fasting is phony. And so He really unmasks hypocrisy.

What He's trying to do, you see, through all the Sermon on the Mount is to drive them to the realization that they're inadequate, they can't help themselves, they've missed the boat, they desperately need a Savior, and of course, He will then offer Himself to them. That's the same message He has for you. The world is full of religious people and some of them are here in our church right this morning. Religious people who are lost, religious people who's religion is a sham, a masquerade, a fasad.
In dealing with this, the first element that He talks about is giving; giving. And you will notice that He says in verse 1, "Take heed," or beware, "that you do not your righteous deeds before men to be

seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thy alms," that has to do with giving, we'll see it in a moment, "do not sound a trumpet before thee as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets that they may have glory from men. Verily I say unto you they have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. That thine alms may be in secret and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee."

In other words, He says, now when it comes to your giving it's hypocritical, but it ought not to be so. So He tells them what's the problem and then He offers them the solution. Now when you get into the area of giving folks, you really open up at least in our day a real can of worms. I don't know if there's ever been, in fact, I'm sure there has in a time in the history of the church when there's been a greater bombardment for our money from "Christian causes" than there is today.

With all of the capacity of mail and direct mail and all of the capacities for producing products and with all the airwaves of radio and television and media, it is so hard for us to avoid being literally drowned in a sea of needs from many well meaning Christian organizations. And just knowing how to give is very difficult, very difficult. But we do know in the Bible there are two kinds of giving. Basically, two ways that giving is to go in terms of Christian giving. One is systematic, structured, regular giving to the church. We know the Bible teaches that. 1 Corinthians 16 tells us that we are the first day of the week to lay by and store as God has prospered us. And we studied that in great depth in 1 Corinthians 16 and we decided that the store there is the church. And that the believing people are to weekly, every week, not just now and then or periodically or semi-annually or whatever, when you think about it, but we are every week to face the reality of the stewardship of money. And I believe that's why God wants us to do it every week, so that every week we again take stock of the level of stewardship as it relates to our funds.

So 1 Corinthians 16 says "On the first day of the week you lay by and store." That is systematic, structured as you purpose in your heart. But there's a second kind of giving. That's giving to the poor and needy. That's unstructured, unspecified, and spontaneous and it is over and above the giving to the church. Throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament, you have that kind of giving where the needy person crosses your path and you are to reach out your heart to that individual. Now beyond those two things, the Bible knows nothing about giving to the church and to the needy. Those are the perspectives Scripture gives us. Now I have to admit this morning, I'm going to preach to you about giving. Usually people like to know when the preacher's going to preach on giving so they can go visit Aunt Martha or play golf or leave town or do something else.

But I hope you don't have that view. I really think that giving has been an unpopular subject because it's been abused, number one, and number two, because people have the wrong understanding of what it's all about. You see, you have to begin with this. God doesn't need your money. All right? Doesn't need it. Gets along fine without it. In fact, do you realize that God got along throughout all

eternity before He ever made you without your money? That's right. Do you know that God ran the whole universe before there were any people in it? It didn't cost Him a penny.

You know, God can do anything He wants. He doesn't need a penny from you. Doesn't need a cent. So don't think you've done Him a big favor. That isn't the point. The point in giving is not that God is up there saying, boy, you know, Michael check the bank book. I mean, can we advance the kingdom according to plan this week or not? God is not in that...he's not doing it that way. God is not at the mercy of us. So you want to know from the very beginning God does not need your money. Now the thing you must realize is that you need to give it. That's all. Paul essentially that to the Philippians when He said, I thank you for your offering. I didn't need it, but you needed to give it because when you gave it you put yourself within the framework of God's blessing.

You see, giving is all about getting. Giving is all about being blessed. God says release it that I may multiply it to your account. It's the blessing that is the issue. There's a cycle of blessedness. And maybe I could illustrate with a couple of Scriptures. First, and there are many, but first would be Proverbs 11, verse 25. "The liberal soul shall be made fat. And he that watereth shall be watered also himself." Now there's a principle. The more you give the more you get. You water, you get watered.

The next verse, he applies it to withholding grain. If a farmer withholds the grain and never sows the grain in the ground or never sells the grain to get the money to buy the seed to plant again, he'll starve to death. There is a cycle, right? You grow the grain. You sell the grain. You get money. With the money you buy seed. You plant the seed. You grow the grain. You sell the grain. You get the money. You buy the seed. You plant, and then around and around and around. The whole thing depends upon your faithfulness to sow the seed.

As you scatter resources, do you realize a farmer takes everything he has and throws it in the dirt and operates on faith that God will give him a return. God gives him a return and that's the cycle. That's the illustration. "The liberal soul shall be made fat." Then backing up to verse 24 is the point. "There is he that scatters and increases and he that withholds more than is fitting and it leads to poverty." In other words, as you give God blesses. And when God blesses you out of your giving, out of His blessing you give again. You see?

I give. God blesses. Out of the blessing, I give again. And the cycle of blessing goes like that. Now if you step out of that circle or cycle of blessing and don't give, you don't give. There's nothing for which God to bless. There's no return and it just keeps tending to poverty. Pretty soon you're out of resources. The principle in all giving is not, and I'm not just talking about monetary things, but the whole of spiritual blessedness. The principle of giving is this, you need to give because it puts you in a circle of blessing.

And what you give God blesses, and when He returns the blessing, out of the blessing He returns you give again. In Deuteronomy Chapter 16, verse 10, we read "and thou shalt keep the feast of weeks with the Lord thy God with attribute of a free will offering of thine hand which thou shalt give unto the Lord thy God according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee." Now here you're picking up the cycle. The Lord thy God has blessed thee so out of His blessing you give. And as you give, He in turn will bless. Verse 17, "Every man shall give as he is able according to the blessing of the Lord they God which He hath given thee. And so there is the cycle. You give. God blesses. Out of His blessing you give again. There's only one way to live people. God says and that's to give, because you put yourself in the flow of God's blessing.

Now the New Testament expands this simple basic principle by giving us some very simple categorical statements relative to giving and I'm going to run them by you quick because we've studied them before and then I want to move to our text. But let me give you just eight simple principles to remember in your giving. Eight simple principles that'll help you to give in a nonhypocritical way. Eight principles, number one, giving is investing with God. All right? Giving is investing with God and that's what I've been saying. It puts you in the cycle of blessing.

Now how many of you and you've all done this. I've done...you got to the market, right? And you're going to buy some, I don't know, crackers, Triscuits or whatever of those things are or Cheez-Its or whatever. Those boxes of crackers or even cereal. And you want to know, you know, you've got a full box, so you feel a box and it's okay. And then you throw it in your cart, you know, and then the bag and across the deal. And you get it in the bag in the back of the station wagon and the back shocks aren't good and there's eight kids bouncing around and by the time you get home you've got this much crackers in the bottom because it's all settled, right? And you open the box and where are the crackers? Way down in the bottom. Because as soon as you shake the thing, you realize what you've got.

But that isn't how God is. Luke 6:38 tells us, "Give and it shall be given unto you." Good measure, press down and shaken together and running over. When God gives you can shake His box and it's still running over. You don't ever get cheated when you give to God. You see returns the blessing multiplied and whatever measure you measure it shall be measured to you again. So whatever you invest with God that's what you get a return on. Giving is investing with God.

2 Corinthians 9:6 says "If you sow sparingly, you reap sparingly. If you sow bountifully, you reap bountifully." God does not need your money, but you need to invest with Him to get into the flow of His blessedness. You want a rich life? That's the way to do it. We could...there are many who do this and you can just give testimony after testimony, sometimes you know, you feel kind of guilty, because God pours out such blessing. But it's out of that that you again invest with Him.

Secondly, giving is investing with God and secondly giving is to be sacrificial. If there isn't a sacrifice involved it's questioned whether you're even giving at all unless there's some sacrifice. David said, "I will not give God that which costs me nothing." "I will not give God that which costs me nothing." That would say nothing to Him. You don't say God here, I don't need this. That isn't any great act of love. It's when you give God that which you do feel you need that you've made a sacrifice.

I think of Mark Chapter 12 where Jesus sat in the temple and He learned a lot about people if He needed to learn anything by just sitting there and watching them come and give their money. And there were so many things going on and after all these rich people came and says they cast in much, along came a poor little widow and she had two mites and two mites today wouldn't be worth anything. In fact, a pocketful of mites would buy you nothing. And this little lady popped in her two little mites which totaled a farthing. And the Lord said she gave me than everybody gave. You know why? Because she only had two mites. That's all she add. It was the essence of sacrifice that made the significance out of her gift.

There's a third principle. Giving is not related to how much you have. People say if I had more, I'd give more. I'm waiting till my ship comes in, then the Lord will hear from me. Your ship won't make any difference. In fact, you'll probably get on your ship and sail away and indulge yourself like you've always done. You know, Luke 16:10 says "He that is faithful in little will be faithful in much. And He that is unjust and little will be unjust in much." It isn't going to change your character to have more.

You know, you must learn when you have a little. That's one of the things we try to teach our children. That's one of the things I learned as a child. When I was a very little child I remember everything I got my dad would say to me now Johnny you want to give to some of that to the Lord. Now you figure out how much you want to give to the Lord and you take that and give that to the Lord. And that was drummed into my head from the time I was a little child. And we've taught our children the same thing that whatever you receive from whatever source it is, you think in your own heart, what you'd like to give the Lord because if they don't learn now when they have little to be faithful over little, they'll never learn it when they have much.

In fact, I remember one night going with my dad, it was my birthday and he had to go preach and he had given me a five dollar bill for my birthday. We didn't have much in those days and that was a lot and I was going to get to buy a baseball glove and a baseball with it which is all I ever used money for, you know, stuff like that. And boy I had that little five dollar bill tucked in my little pocket and I was going off with my dad to his meeting and I'd sit down there and I wanted to be a support to my dad, even when I was a little kid. In fact, if nobody came forward sometimes I'd go forward just to get the thing rolling you know. But I was sitting down there and he went preaching away and after his sermon, they took the offering and, you know, they made such an appeal for the offering that I just took out my little $5.00 and put it in the offering.

And so we were riding home and I got over...I always sat next to my dad after his meetings because lots of time he preached on the devil and I was scared, you know. So we were going on home and I said "dad," and he said, "what?" I said, "I don't have that $5.00 anymore." He said, "what, Johnny if you lost that $5.00," and he went into his, you know, typical lecture, which precipitated a spanking, you know. And I said, "No, I didn't lose it dad." He said, "what did you do with that?" I said, "Well, I put it in the offering." And he was trapped. He couldn't say anything.

But you know, I was so grateful because my parents taught me when I was a little child that I had a responsibility to God and they taught me to be faithful over little. And that's where you begin to learn those things isn't it. Giving is not a matter of how much have, it's a matter of where your heart is and what your commitment is. And so we learn that the New Testament teaches that giving is investing with God. Giving is to be sacrificial, it's not related to what we have.

Fourthly, it correlates with spiritual riches. In other words, if you're not faithful in what you do with money, God's not about to give you the true riches, it says in Luke 16:11-12. If you're not faithful over money, the unrighteousness mammon, then who is going to give you the true riches. What are true riches? Souls, people, ministry, and God is not about to give a strategic ministry to somebody who can't handle money. There are many men who never made it through seminary because they couldn't handle money and the Lord didn't want them in His ministry.

There are many people who have dropped out of the ministry because of their inability to deal properly with money and God wasn't about to give them souls. There are some men who've stayed in the ministry, but their ministry has been small and insignificant because God would never commit to them the eternal soul of a person when they couldn't take care of the temporal characteristics of money. So your spiritual effectiveness, the dimensions of your spiritual influence will have a lot to do with how you handle your money.

Fifth, giving is to be personally determined, personally determined. "As every man purposes in his heart," 2 Corinthians 9 says, "so let him give," verse 7. Whatever you purpose in your heart to give, that's between you and God. The Macedonians gave abundantly out of their deep poverty. The Philippians gave because they chose to give out of their heart of love. It is to be a spontaneous act of the heart. There's not any prescription. It's personally determined.

Sixth, we are to give in response to need. We are to be sensitive and listen to needs. In Acts 4 and Acts 5, the early church shared its resources because there were people who had a need. Paul went all through Asia Minor collecting money from the Gentile churches to give to the saints of Jerusalem because there was a need.

Seventh, giving demonstrates love not law. You're not under any law to give. There's no New Testament law to give in a sense of an amount of a fixed sum. We're not giving to please some legal system. It is an act of love that we give. That's why it's to be cheerful, not grudging and not of necessity. It's not a law. It's an act of love. Now listen, those are simple principles, invest with God, make it sacrificial, remember it's not a matter of how much you have. Another principle God will give you the real riches when He sees how you handle money. It is to be personally determined. It is to be in response to need. It is demonstrate love, not law.

And I might sum it up with number eight by saying all of these things tell us that our giving is to be generous, generous, generous. And the generosity with which you give will be determined by all of these other factors. How much do you want to invest with God? How much are you willing to sacrifice for Him who sacrificed all for you? How much of the spiritual riches do you really want to be worthy of? How much of the need do you want to meet? How much love are you trying to demonstrate.

So the point is this people and I'm hitting it from other ways, God is not saying give because I need your money. He's saying give because it's a spiritual exercise that brings into your life the true blessing of God. Now those principles cover our giving to the church and our giving to the needy, but let's go to the giving to the needy because that's the text we're studying.

The Old Testament made it abundantly clear that the people of God were to give to the poor. In fact, in Leviticus 25:35 it tells people to give to the poor whether they're a sojourner or whether they're somebody who belongs in the land. In Deuteronomy Chapter 15, it says if you come across a poor person, make sure you meet his needs. If he needs a place to stay, give him your house. Make sure his supply of food is met. Make sure all of the necessities of his life are cared for, because that is how people are to act when they name the name of God.

You can read it in Psalm 41:1. You can read it in Proverbs 19, Proverbs 21, Proverbs 29, again and again and again. It says when you give to the poor, you give to the Lord. Why? Because all giving is stepping into the cycle of blessing. All giving is investing with God, you see. And part of our giving is to be directed to those who cross our path who are in deep need, deep need. And so the Lord approaches this matter of giving, because obviously the scribes and the Pharisees and the people following them were not living according to these kinds of principles. They weren't giving to get into the cycle of God's blessing. They weren't giving selflessly. They weren't giving magnanimously out of a pure heart. They were giving to put on a show of piosity.

And so the Lord directs His thoughts at that. Now we had three points last time. Let me just mention what we talked about. First in Matthew 5, rather Matthew 6, the first point was the practice of righteousness. And we said that the practice of righteousness is not to be before men. But God was saying I have a standard for the practice of righteousness and you do not do it before men. Now let's

go to point two, the peril of religion. The peril of religion. And what is the peril of religion? We've already said it. It is hypocrisy, verse 2. When you do your alms or when you do your supposed deed of righteousness, beware that you don't do it hypocritically. That's the peril of religion.

Now listen to men, once a person has become a Christian, one thing that Satan loves to do is to shove them in the category of hypocrisy so that they really negate the validity of their witness and they lose their reward. The peril of religion, and we all face it, is that we would play the hypocrite. Now there are two ways to approach this. They hypocrite can be one who's not really a Christian, but pretends to be, and the hypocrite can be one who is a Christian, but is operating within the framework of his Christianity hypocritically.

You can be a phony by being a non-Christian pretending to be a Christian and you can be a phony by being a Christian who's carnal but pretends to be spiritual. And both are really covered in the principles He gives here. Even though the first group is perhaps the scribes and the Pharisees who were the hypocrites. It is also possible that the disciples just as well could have manifested hypocrisy in their lifestyle even though they believed. So the message is for all of us.

Now the peril of religion is illustrated in alms. The word alms there is eleemosune from which we get an English word eleemosynary which means nonprofit or charitable organization. It has to do with being charitable. Whatever funds you receive are for the giving to those in need and so that's where that word comes from. The Greek verb is eleato. And that is the most interesting verb. It means to have mercy upon to succor the afflicted to give help to the wretched, or to rescue the miserable. And I think it would be important to notice that eleato is not a verb that speaks of an attitude. It is a verb that speaks of an act. There is no attitude without an act in this term. So there is not the feeling here of a longing to help the poor or a compassion or an empathy or sympathy but the very deed itself. So that eleemosune giving or alms is the actual act itself, not some weak sympathy which carnal selfishness feels, but never does anything to help. And not some false kindness which really indulges ones own flesh in conscience salving based on pride. And certainly not some silent passive pioity which may be genuine at some point, but never acts in a tangible way.

What he's talking about is an actual act of giving. So he's saying when you do it, this is not the way to do it. You know, it's kind of interesting it uses the word when, isn't it? Not if, but when. Why? It is assumed that you would do this. Giving to people in need is an assumption. How could we possible say we're Christians and not do that. 1 John 3:16, "If you see your brother have need and you close up your compassion then how dwells the love of God in you." In other words, your testimony is suspect. Your claim is questionable.

James says you tell me your faith is legitimate. I'll tell you this, "faith without works is," what, "dead." If somebody comes into your midst and is destitute and naked and you say to them, brother be warmed and be filled, you give them a lot of encouragement and you don't do anything to give him

what he needs, your faith is questionable says James. It's questionable. You see, it's when because it is assumed that one with the heart of God dwelling within him is going to reach out to one in need for the heart is God is toward the poor and the needy.

The Bible tells us God is great in mercy, Ephesians 2:4. And if God is great in mercy, we who name the name of God would be merciful to the others as well. Micah 7:18 says, "He delights in mercy." And if He's living His life through me I would delight in mercy to one in need. Jesus and the disciples carried around with them a little bag. According to John 13:29 that little bag contained money. And you know what that little bag was for? It was to give money to the poor. That was the heart of Jesus, because that was the heart of God. So it's when you do this.

Now the Pharisees were used to doing this. The Scribes the Jews, this was a long part of their heritage. They had always done this from the time they were in the land. They had always cared for the poor. They had always extended themselves to the need. In fact, they had even twisted and perverted the significance of that to a place where it was overstated as to its importance. Did you know that in the hypocripher, for example, in Tobit Chapter 12, verse 8 it says "It is good to do alms rather than treasure up gold for alms deliver from the death and this will purge away every sin." The Jews actually taught that they would purge away their sins by giving money to the needy. That's how far they've gone. In Syrac 3:30 it says, "Alms will atone for sin." I found several quotes out of the Talmud. Alms giving is more excellent than all offerings and is equal to the whole law. Alms giving will deliver from the condemnation of hell and make one perfectly righteous.

Now that's going a little far, isn't it? They believed you could get perfectly righteous by giving your money. You see that's why the Jews believed that the richer you were, the easier it was to get in the kingdom, because you bought your way in. And so when Jesus said it's harder...it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than a rich man to get into heaven, it devastated their whole conception. See? Because they thought the rich could buy their way in easy because purging of sin came from giving away money.

By the way, the Roman Catholic Church picked this up. Leo the Great said this, "By prayer we seek to appease God. By fasting we extinguish the lust of the flesh and by alms we redeem our sins." By the way, the Pope who just visited America believes that. That's part of the system. They made it a saving element. And then they made it an element for piosity. Boy they really put it on as a big display. And Jesus goes right by all of that stuff on the outside and says the only thing God cares about is your heart, not what you did, but why you did it. See? Two people doing the same thing, giving money to a poor man. Why did they do it makes the difference.

The attitude is everything. What's your attitude? Just examine your own heart. Boy I examine mine. You say oh those Pharisees can you imagine them going around blowing a trumpet. Oh disgusting. And there's lots of dialogue about what this deal was. Some say we can't find anything in history

about such an incident and Jesus is just making a caricature of a guy coming down a road and he's got some guy with a fanfare and he blows this big fanfare while this guy gives his money so everybody sees. Some people say they actually did have a little silver trumpet. I think Calvin thinks they did. They had a little silver trumpet and he used to go in the streets and the synagogues, not the temple, because this was not the temple giving, but this was the giving to the needy at the synagogue and the streets as it indicates there, just in the course of life and they would blow a little silver trumpet and it was kind of like all your poor, come one come all. Your great benefactor has arrived.

And all the poor would come at the blowing of the little trumpet and the guy would start doling out the money. Our Lord pictures a pompous, self-righteous Pharisee on his way to put money into the hands of the poor. In front of him march the trumpeters blowing the fanfare to draw a crowd as he says come and get it, and passes out everything. And he does it all for appearance sake. Now whether it really happened this way or not, Jesus makes His point fairly well, doesn't he? And we say it's disgusting. But you want to know something? We all have our own little silver trumpets. Have you noticed? You know, we do something for somebody in need and we say now, I don't want to be hypocritical about this, so I just...I don't want to say anything, but inside we can't wait till somebody brings it up so we can say, well, of course, the other day I had the opportunity to be gracious unto another and would shoot the whole thing.

And we all fight that kind of thing. We have our own little trumpets. We want to let people know we gave. We go home to our wife and say boy what I've done for him, you'd think that he could treat me a little different. And we want to find somebody that we can tell. It's just that we want our little trumpet. We don't want a big trumpet, just a little trumpet. And then we get appeals from Christian organizations, if you will give us money we'll send you a certificate for your wall. Now that is a trombone folks.

And then if you want a tuba, you can get a plaque. You can just...you can have a whole band in your office blowing all over the place. You can be a member of the inside group. See? Well, we have our trumpets. We'll send you a special gift. We'll write your name on a thing, you know. That's not what the idea is at all. There are so many unbiblical approaches to motivate people to give today it's just disgusting to our Lord. I'm quite confident. I remember a guy walked in my office here one time and he...the first Sunday he says, "this is my first week here, Pastor. Here's my check." And he had this...stuck it right under my nose. I was sitting in my office. He said, "I want you to know there will be one like it in here every week." And I was just kind of nonplus.

I said to him, "I don't think you understand." "Oh yes I do. See you next week." Never saw him again. I don't want his money and he didn't need to give it because it wasn't from a right heart. He was just blowing a trumpet. Whatever you do whether it's in reference to the church or the needy, don't blow a trumpet, because that's hypocritical. You just give to the one in need. Now, can I give you a little caution? Make sure the one in need is really in need. Don't support healthy beggars.

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:10 and make sure you understand that it says, "If a man can work and doesn't work he's worse than anything." Don't support somebody who can. If he doesn't eat...if he doesn't work, he doesn't eat, right?

You can support the poor by giving them work. You can support the poor by giving them some self respect, by giving them something to do. Now there are some who are so destitute and so infirm or whatever, they can't work. That's fine. Those need to be cared for. But be careful you make a distinction. Don't just indiscriminately and wastefully support healthy beggars. So there's a peril in religion even in the area of giving that we be hypocrites just like the Pharisees.

That leads me to the last point. We go from the practice of righteousness to the peril of religion to the promise of reward. You see the point is this, how you do this area of giving is going to result in how you're rewarded. Some people get all hung up on rewards, they think that's kind of a crass motive. It doesn't have to be. God has established this and God is an absolutely holy God and He must have a holy reason for it. There are some things that deserve a reward and that's in God's mind true and that's the way He set it and so that's fine. And if I read the Bible properly, I'm going to take any reward that I would ever get and so will you and cast it at His feet in adoration and praise.

And I should seek to have a reward if for no other reason that I might show Him my love and giving Him all that I have. But there are rewards. Would you notice the promise of reward in verse 1? It says, "If you do your righteousness before men to be seen, you have no reward of your Father who's in heaven." All right? Verse 2, "If you blow your trumpet and do your thing so that everybody can see, verily I say unto you they have their reward." Now in verse 1, it says you have no reward and in verse 2 it says they have their reward. Now do you do or do you don't? The point is simple. You have a reward in verse 2, but it is not from your Father who is in heaven. Who's it from? Well, who did you want it from? Who were you doing your thing for? For men, right? You get your reward. They saw it, that's it. That's it.

The key is your Father who's in heaven. You get an earthly reward, not a heavenly one. You get something from men and nothing from God. You forfeit that. If you're an actor on a stage, if you're if he doesn't work, he doesn't eat, right?

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In other words, if you do it for men, you are fully receipted, the debt is over. God owes you nothing. It is humanly receipted in full. You got your reward. You wanted to do it for men, you did it for men, they gave you the reward that you wanted and that's it. That's it. You know what God owes a hypocrite? Zero. He owes a hypocrite nothing. He isn't bound at all. But there is a reward for those who give out of a right heart. Verse 3 tells about it. "But when thou doest alms, mercy giving, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." That's a funny statement, isn't it? People have wondered about that. It's a funny statement.

Some believe it was a Proverb of the time. For doing things so spontaneously that you didn't really think about them and I agree with that. It's as if you're walking along and the right hand was usually the active hand, most people being right-handed. You're walking along the street and here's somebody with a need. And without a long process of calculation, without a lot of thought and analysis and checking out your bank book or whatever, here's a need and you just reach in and you stuck over there and your left hand which is down here by your left hip doesn't even know what's happening. That's the idea.

Hebrews used to speak in very graphic and physical terms. And the left over here on this side wouldn't even know what the right hand is doing. I mean, it's not as if you're stopping and saying now let me think about this. Let me calculate how much and you just, boom, it's spontaneous, it's free. It's uninhibited. It's based on the compassion and the mercy of the moment. The left hand isn't even aware of it. And that's the essence of what he's saying. The normally active right hand passes a needing person, stretches out, so lifely, so quickly, so easily does the right hand meet the need, the left hand never even knows what's going on.

And you know what's kind of nice about it too? If the left hand doesn't know, the left hand can't get involved. And it's very hard to clap with one hand. Have you ever tried to do that? It's very difficult. The left hand isn't going to say a thing. The idea is the freedom and the spontaneity without calculating it. Just give it. You say, but what am I going to do to make sure? The Lord will bless. I'll tell you...I personally...I...this is not a biblical, personally giving to the church is a great blessing and systematically and weekly we do that. But the greatest blessing to me is that right hand thing that the left hand never knows about. That to me is the biggest joy, to just give and not even think about how much or can you, you know, can you afford it. You respond to the need. It's that that the Lord is talking about.

When not only don't people know, the other side of you doesn't even know. It's kind of like give and forget. Don't even make it enough of an issue for half of you to be aware of it, just do it. Now some people give to the needy and then they wait to see if the needy are grateful. And if the needy aren't grateful, they'll never do that again. Listen, if you give and somebody's ingratitude bothers you, you gave for the wrong reason. You gave for gratitude from men. If you didn't get that, you didn't even get that reward, but you'll get nothing from God. And so giving is to be in secret.

Verse 4, "Your alms should be in secret." Not even your left hand knows. In other words, get this, not only do not people know, but there's a part of you that doesn't even know. It shouldn't be a settled account in your subconscious. It ought to be forgotten. You ought not to even be able to remember the last time you did that for some one. You shouldn't even remember it. Give it and forget it. Boy that's indicting, isn't it? Because we remember our good deeds. Don't forget Lord, I did it. I hope it's on your books.

We remember. We should forget. Let me tell you something folks, you do it and forget it, and God will remember it and reward it. You do it and remember it and God will forget it and there will be no reward. Take your choice. You want it here and now or you want it forever. You want the blessing of God or the applause of men? Don't keep mental books on your giving. Vesser said that the temple had a special place where the bashful benefactors, he called them, could come. They wanted to give to the poor, but they were bashful. And so they would just come and they would just put money there. And then there were the bashful poor, who didn't want to ask and the bashful poor would come in in another place and they would take what they needed. And the name of the place was Silence;

Silence. I love that.

Nothing to be said, just needs to be met. And when you've done your best beloved and when you've given more than anybody else ever gave or you ever gave and when you've stretched yourself sacrificially, remember this, "So ye also when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you," says our Lord, "say we are unprofitable servants. We have done that which was our duty to do." That's all. That's the spirit of the humble heart.

And what happens at the end of verse 4? "When you do your alms in secret, your Father who sees in secret shall reward you." The word openly isn't in the manuscripts there because the contrast isn't between secretly and openly, it's between the reward from men and the reward from God. God sees your heart. He'll reward you. Hagar said "Thou God seest me." And she was right. God sees. Hebrews Chapter 4 and verse 13 tells us "that there is neither any creature that is not manifest in His sight but all things are naked and open before Him with whom we have to do." He sees everything. He knows. He knows your heart. He knows if your religion is real or false. The Psalmist said "Wither shall I flee from thy presence. If I make my bed in hell, if I take my flight on the wings of the morning, if I dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, thou art there." He sees. He sees your heart.

And so as you live your Christian life beloved, make sure you're real. As you give, give God's way. Give to those in need and give without a thought or a remembrance. Don't be a hypocrite and for some of you who don't even know the Lord Jesus Christ, but are faking it, that's the severest hypocrisy of all, because that is unforgivable. Because unless you truly know Jesus Christ, the sin of hypocrisy is on you forever. Trust that your faith in Christ will be unfeign faith. And that those of us who are Christians would live as David did. David had a right heart in Psalm 57:7 for he said this, "My heart is fixed oh God. My heart is fixed."

An established heart. Is your heart that way? Do you give out of a pure heart? Do you pray out of a pure heart? Do you fast out of a pure heart? If you don't, then you should echo the prayer of David in Psalm 51. "Create in me," what, "a clean heart oh God." Let's pray together.

Father, we hear the echo of David's words, "Behold thou desirest truth in the inward part." We hear the echo from 1 Samuel 16:7, "God looks upon the heart." We hear the words of the apostle Paul calling us to do the will of God from the heart. Lord, may our giving be that which is of the heart. May we never do our alms as the Pharisees and the scribes. Either trying to buy our way into the kingdom or trying to play a spiritual game when really we're carnal. Help us to give in secret and know that you'll reward us rather than giving openly and receiving the useless, empty reward of men's applause.

May our righteousness be before your eyes, not the eyes of others. But we know that in that we shall truly manifest that we are the sons of the Father. We pray in Christ's name, Amen.

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