

“JESUS’ KINGDOM MANIFESTO”

BIG IDEA . . . Part 10:

True Worship in Giving, Praying & Fasting (6:1-18)

INTRO: We are studying Jesus’ Kingdom Manifesto, the SOM (Matt. 5-7), where the King provides His principles for the citizens of His kingdom. Impossible to achieve on our own, we need His righteousness and His Spirit to empower us to live as He describes.

Ch. 5 On True *Righteousness* – begins in the heart (from within)

vv. 1-16 True Righteousness is *defined*

vv. 17-20 True Righteousness is *received*

vv. 21-48 True Righteousness is *practiced* esp. in how we relate to others. Six illustrations describe . . .

Ch 6 On True *Worship* – flows from the heart

vv. 1-4 in our *Giving*

vv. 5-18 in *Praying and Fasting*

vv. 19-34 in our *Investing and Trusting*

*A SOBER WARNING ABOUT HYPOCRISY (6:1)

1. The WHAT – Hypocrisy is fake righteousness. It is motivated by pride and the attention of others. It focuses on the externals (what we do). They use religion to hide their sin. Cain was the first hypocrite. Judas the supreme one. They are found in secularism, paganism, Judaism and Christianity. We are in the room! Hypocrisy is not treated kindly in Scripture. Outside of idolatry, it may be our greatest sin. Jesus strongly condemned the hypocrisy of His day (Matt. 15; 23; Mk. 7:6-7).
2. The WARNING (6:1) – “Beware” (watch out for) religious activities that are based upon pride and self-effort. It is “theatrical righteousness”; only practiced to be seen by others. Motive matters (5:16; vv. 1, 2, 5, 16).

Jesus offers three illustrations (giving, praying, fasting) of important habits that can easily become more religious activities instead of spiritual disciplines that foster our relationship with God. Spiritual disciplines are . . .

I. COMMONALITIES OF THE THREE PRACTICES

- A. *Jesus assumes we are already practicing those habits* (vv. 2, 5, 16 *When you . . .*). It’s not a question of IF, but when, how, and why. They are “givens” for all believers – never to be rote empty exercise, but spiritual habits that build our relationship with God (Jude 20).
- B. *These “holy habits” are to be done discreetly* (vv. 4, 6b, 18 *“in secret”*). These are to be practiced discreetly to connect with God; never to draw attention to ourselves (vv. 3, 5, 16). Nothing for show! Strong call to examine our motives for giving, praying, and fasting (heart issue). We get our word “theater” from “seen”!

- C. *These practices will be rewarded by the Lord* (vv. 4b, 6b, 18b “your Father who sees in secret will reward you”). Practicing these not only reaps intrinsic benefits (now) but reward later. We are not told what form it takes nor when it takes place, but He promises! Rev. 22:22

II. THE PRACTICE OF TRUE *GIVING* (vv. 2-4)

- A. Defined – It is giving to the needy. Refers to charitable deeds for the needy. Ex-money, food, clothes, etc.

ILLUS: Spring Lake Elementary Title I . . . Lydia house . . .

- B. Motivated by mercy, love, and generosity to help others in need, not be seen and praised by people. So, be generous since all we have is His.

III. THE PRACTICE OF TRUE *PRAYING* (vv. 5-15)

I’m not going to deeply dissect this; point out key elements in this prayer and then the verses that bookend the prayer (vv. 7-8, 14-15).

- A. *Key Elements* – Probably intended to serve as a model or pattern for how to pray more than a prayer to be rote recited (not wrong). *Adoration/Praise* for who He is (v. 9). *Submission* to His kingdom and His will (v. 10). *Provision* for our needs (not greeds) v. 11. *Confession* to stay clean (v. 12). *Protection* from temptation and the enemy (v. 13a). Closes with more praise (v. 13b)
- B. *Bookend Verses* (vv. 7-8, 14-15)
 1. (vv. 7-8) Pray sincerely (v. 7) and expectantly (v. 8). He knows what we need. Both comforting and challenging. Comforting that He knows and cares about my needs. “If He already knows, then why pray?” As our heavenly Father He wants us to ask Him to provide (demonstrates humility, dependency, brokenness). Also gives him opportunity to show His strength in our lives and builds our faith.
 2. (vv. 14-15) WOW! Tough! Of all Jesus could be emphasized from His pattern for prayer, He highlights forgiving all who have hurt us. To refuse is to place ourselves above God! Col. 3:13

IV. THE PRACTICE OF TRUE *FASTING* (vv. 16-18)

- A. Defined – Fasting is denying ourselves food (mostly) to focus attention on God. It is a “soul fattening” exercise as we draw near to God.
- B. Many kinds: Full, partial, liquid . . . Physical benefits, too.
- C. Reasons: repent, grieve, intercede, answers, chains . . .

CONC: The most important part of the Christian life is what God sees. When reputation is more important than character, we are hypocrites! True righteousness leads to true worship in why and how we give, pray, and fast.