

Matthew 6.1-4

Bonus Podcast for “Kingdom Come” Series

February 2020

““Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honoured by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” (Matthew 6:1–4 NIV11)

Overview

“Be perfect (Matt 5.48), but be careful (Matt 6.1). Carson, 61.

"Almsgiving, prayer and fasting are selected as examples of religious observance. These three were (and are) the most prominent practical requirements for personal piety in mainstream Judaism (see Davies, pp. 307–315)."¹

The three mentioned are not exhaustive, but representative.

Matt. 6.1

‘to be seen’

A passage about internal motivation. Also purity of motives. Reward is not the problem (see Matt 5.3-12), nor is doing the right things, but the reason for doing them.

We are meant to be ‘seen’ as disciples (Matt 5.13-16), but not to be looking for a reputation for piety (alt. trans.). Glory to God is the point, not self.

Not so much not to be seen to be done, as not to be done to be seen.

‘righteousness’

To exceed Pharisees, but not to be ‘performed’ to be seen, Matt 5.20.

Here more about religious observance than ethical obedience.

‘reward’

Everyone gets a reward, just that some are ultimately meaningful (from God) and others not (from men).

In Ch 6 - see Matt 6.2, 4, 5, 6, 16, 18.

Matt. 6.2

‘give to the needy’

Expectation: Deut 15.7-11; Ps 112.9, Ps 41.1; Prov 19.17, not act of spontaneous generosity.

‘trumpets’

Might be noticed, but don’t advertise.

¹ France, R. T. Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary. TNTC 1. IVP/Accordance electronic edition, version 2.3. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1985.

Temple trumpets announced urgent need. Closing shop and hurrying to temple to contribute would be noticed.

'hypocrites'

Actors, not necessarily insincere, but acting a part to be seen. May be unaware of hypocrisy?

'have received'

"Have (apechoœ) is a commercial term for receipt in full, and therefore implies there is no more to look forward to (cf. its use in Luke 6:24, and the similar apolambanoœ in Luke 16:25)."²

'reward'

misthos, literally 'wages', that which has been earned.
A PR stunt.

Matt. 6.3

'left hand...'

Metaphorical? Like the trumpets of v2?
Impossible, but expresses the point well.

Matt. 6.4

'secret'

Not that no one will know, but that it is not done to be known.
Point is the intended audience (your Father), than whether it is noticed.
An expression of mercy - beatitude.
Like heart of Corinthians, 2 Cor 8.5.

'reward'

Origin of reward contrasted. Heavenly/earthly.
Origin effects quality of reward. Which would you rather have?
Giving secretly not to earn reward, but to actively avoid "the glamour of honour from men, to please his heavenly Father, and to meet real need." Carson, 64.

² France, R. T. Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary. TNTC 1. IVP/Accordance electronic edition, version 2.3. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1985.