

**Prayer:**

**Slide # 1**

**Theme:** *Christ the King*

**Outline:**

Chps. 1-2 The Advent of the King. (Proving His LEGAL right to the throne by His genealogy.)

Chp. 3 The Forerunner of the King and the King’s baptism.

Chp. 4 The Test of the King. (Proving His MORAL right to the throne by not yielding to temptation; and exhibiting His kingdom resume.)

**Chps. 5-7 The Pronouncements of the King. (Proving His JUDICIAL right to the throne as seen in the wisdom of His kingdom teaching.)**

Chps. 8-10 The Power of the King. (Proving His PROPHETICAL right to the throne by fulfilling prophecy.)

Chps. 11-12 The Rejection of the King.

Chp. 13 The Parables of the King.

Chps. 14-16 The Revelations of the King.

Chps. 17-20 The Instructions of the King.

Chps. 21-23 Formal Rejection of the King.

Chps. 24-25 The Predictions of the King.

Chps. 26-27 The Passion of the King.

Chp. 28 The Resurrection of the King.

The ministry of Jesus started out with emphasizing the need for REPENTANCE because the kingdom was being offered on the condition of repentance (cf. Mt. 4:17). The lives of true repenters are then to be characterized by the description of the beatitudes and by living out the deeper fulfillment of the moral intent of the law as taught by Christ.

A proper understanding of the Sermon on the Mount in Matt. 5-7 zeros in on Matt. 5:20 where Christ says, ***“unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will be no means enter the kingdom.”***

The distinction being made throughout is the difference between what I call “outside in righteousness” versus “inside out righteousness.”

The scribes and Pharisees emphasized an outside in righteousness. In other words they put the emphasis on outward legalistic doing which supposedly made them right with God. Another way of describing this is that they held to a “works righteousness” or a “law-keeping” form of righteousness – which of course they didn’t really do as seen in chapter 5.

In contrast Christ taught an “inside out righteousness”. This means that Christ put the emphasis on the HEART. What is in inside the heart (true repentance and faith) then works its way out in the life. This is the essence of the climactic statement of Matt. 5:48.

### **Slide # 2**

#### **Matthew 5:48 (NKJV)**

**48** Therefore you shall be perfect, **just as your Father** in heaven is perfect.

The emphasis of Christ’s teaching is not the legalistic external keeping of the law; but rather being God-like in your character which then works its way out in the life. This God-oriented kind of living is now stressed and fleshed out in chapter 6.

### **Slide # 3**

#### ***Three forms of Piety***

Introductory Statement – Matt. 6:1

- 1) Almsgiving – Matt. 6:2-4
- 2) Prayer – Matt. 6:5-15
- 3) Fasting – Matt. 6:16-18

There are two great emphases in the Bible concerning faithful Christian living. Do you know what they are?

### **Slide # 4**

***Orthodoxy***: Right Doctrine

***Orthopraxy***: Right Living

This is a package! If one of these is missing something is dreadfully wrong. Right doctrine (chapter 5) but be lived out (chapter 6). People can have right doctrine, but it can be just all head knowledge.

In that case there is a HEART problem. People can also be legalistically moralist which also presents a HEART problem. In either case it gets back to the HEART. As Proverbs 4:23 says, “**Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.**” Life is all about “inside out”. What is going on in the HEART works its way out in the life.

### **Matthew 6:1 (NKJV)**

**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.**

The older manuscripts have “your righteousness” instead of “your charitable deeds” here in verse 1.

### **Slide # 5**

#### **Matthew 6:1 (ESV)**

**1 “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.**

The emphasis here is on PRACTICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS – how we should then live as Christ’s disciples. And again the contrast is between the legalistic righteousness of the scribes and pharisees and that being taught by Christ.

### **Slide # 6**

#### **Matthew 5:20 (ESV)**

**20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.**

#### **Matthew 6:1 (ESV)**

**1 “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.**

Matt. 6:1 sets the table for what is to follow. Christ is going to deal with three common aspects of Jewish piety; namely almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. In living out our righteousness Christ is making the strong emphasis throughout that our MOTIVES are to be God oriented and not self-oriented.

We are to practice righteous living, but it is not to be done in a showy or ostentatious way. Showy piety might impress people (maybe) but it definitely does NOT impress God. In fact, Jesus plainly says if you are putting on a show acting so “holy” then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

The issue of “reward” is mentioned 9 times in the Sermon on the Mount.

This is the governing principle throughout that Christ is emphasizing here. Yes, we should be about living for God (orthopraxy), but we should not put on “airs” about it.

There is a danger even in doing righteous things (dikaiousune) if one’s motive is to “be noticed” by others. ***Ed Glasscock***

Note throughout Christ is contrasting how His disciples (kingdom people) are to now live - in contrast to the religious hypocrites of the day.

Christ speaking of “***your Father***” must have been shocking to Jewish sensibilities. God is referred to as “Father” only 14 times in the OT, and then, generally in a national sense. The Jews did not know God intimately on a “Fatherly” basis.

### **Slide # 7**



In contrast to the sparsity in the OT Jesus used the term “Father” 17 times in the Sermon on the Mount and 10 times here in Matt. 6:1-18.

God as our Father emphasizes that we are His children and therefore share in His character which is to be demonstrated in the life. This is the secret to Christ’s deeper living out the moral sense of the law. God is now our Father! If we belong to God, we now share in His nature, and this should show in our lives, but we should not be showy about it.

**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.**

After introducing the theme of “practicing righteousness” and not doing so in a “showy” way; the first issue of piety that Christ deals with is almsgiving.

Almsgiving to the Jews was considered the height of personal piety. Jesus here rebukes the common practice of prominent Jews bringing great attention to themselves when they did some charitable deed. They did not want any good deed to go unnoticed.

Some think Jesus may be speaking metaphorically to emphasize that charitable giving is not to be publicized which was indicative of hypocrites.

The Jews had chests in the temple which resembled a trumpet by which they received the offerings of people. These chests were trumpet shaped with a wide opening where the coins were put in and then narrowed to where they dropped into the chest. This was so no one could stick their hand in and take the money.

Some point out that HYPOCRITES liked to convert their gifts into the largest number of coins possible and then noisily toss their coins in a prolonged way into the trumpet shaped coffer thus drawing attention to what a great giver they were.

### **Slide # 8**



The word “hypocrites” (Gk. *hypokrites*) refers to a play-actor – one who plays a role on the stage. A hypocrite is a player – an actor. He is a phony who pretends to be what he is not. Hypocrites who pretend to be all spiritual but are not are especially offensive to God. In Matt. 23 Jesus condemns the scribes and Pharisees in the harshest of terms because of their glaring hypocrisy (cf. Mt. 23:13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29). They were real religious players – the worst!

Jesus says those who put on a big hypocritical religious show have their reward. They want “glory from men” and that moment of “glory” is all they will receive. They have no reward from God. It’s all just a moment of fleeting human approval that doesn’t last. There is nothing more to come. That’s it! It’s over just that quick!

Get this point: God does not reward hypocrisy! There is no lasting reward for showboaters.

A man came into my office one Sunday and told me it was his first time to worship with us and that he intended to make our church his church home. He then handed me a generous check, with the promise that I would receive one just like it every week. I told him I did not want to receive checks personally and suggested that he should give anonymously as the rest of the church family did.

– **John MacArthur**

I am always amazed at how many ministries publicize their BIG givers. That ruins it. As we see in the text the issue is motives. Sometimes charitable deeds can’t be hidden; but the motive should never be to draw attention to ourselves. That is the point.

When Jesus says, “when you do a charitable deed” that expects that His disciples will be doing these things. In 5:16 Jesus said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” But note the emphasis – it is to be to the end that God’s glory is promoted – not our own.

The issue is this: Are we really promoting the cause of Christ or does this amount to “self-glorification”. That is always the issue!

### **Slide # 9**

v. 1 “before men, to be seen by them”

v. 2 “may have glory from men”

When the motivation is that people take notice and give me some accolades that is to the glory of self. There is no reward for self-glory! It is its own reward which has no eternal reward.

Though the works may be good, when the motivation is wrong, we have no reward from our Father in heaven. – **Howard Vos**

The Chinese are known for emphasizing to their pastors: ***Don't touch the girls; don't touch the gold, and don't touch the glory.*** That is good counsel. Don't be a "glory robber" because all the glory belongs to God.

**3 But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,**

Jesus is making a point here. Don't be self-absorbed in your giving. Don't give it over attention. Don't be "self-conscious" about it. Of course, you are going to be intellectually aware, but the point is - don't be self-focused on it. Keep "selfism" out of it. Let your giving be done inconspicuously. Don't make too much out of it – even in your own mind.

Really, Jesus is using a form of hyperbole that implies absolute secrecy as He goes on to emphasize in verse 4. The issue is that our giving is not to be with mixed motives, but with pure motives that truly have God and God alone in view.

**4 that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.**

What we are in secret is what we really are before God – spiritually speaking. We still have the flesh and it can't be trusted. The only way you can really trust your motives is to keep your piety between you and God.

People want to be noticed. They want to be stroked. And indeed, we all need encouragement. But when it comes to giving Jesus is emphasizing that it is to be totally God-oriented. And the only way to ensure that is to do your giving in secret.

The issue here is all about motives. Do I do it to be seen by people. That is pride. That is about self-glory. That makes it about self and not about God or others.

Jesus says the key to proper "giving" is to do it in secret. Do it before God – your audience of ONE! God approves of giving that does it for Him alone – for His glory alone.

God sees what is done in secret.

**Slide # 10****Jeremiah 23:24 (NKJV)**

**24** Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?" says the LORD; "**Do I not fill heaven and earth?**" says the LORD.

**Hebrews 4:13 (NKJV)**

**13** And there is no creature hidden from His sight, **but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him** to whom we must give account.

God sees in secret and He will reward whatever is done in secret.

**Father, Where Shall I Work Today? (Poem)**

Father, where shall I work today'  
 And my love flowed warm and free.  
 Then He pointed me out a tiny spot,  
 And said, "Tend that for me."  
 I answered quickly, "Oh, no, not that.  
 Why, no one would ever see,  
 No matter how well my work was done.  
 Not that little place for me!"  
 And the word He spoke, it was not stern,  
 He answered me tenderly,  
 "Ah, little one, search that heart of thine;  
 Art thou working for them or me'  
 Nazareth was a little place,  
 And so was Galilee."  
*author unknown (appropriately)*

When we are working for God, we don't need the recognition of man! God sees. He sees what is done in secret for His glory! You see "secret giving" puts the focus on God because people are not involved. It ensures a God-centered focus!

The enduring reward that really matters comes from God! What really matters for all eternity is what God will say on Judgment Day. His is the only opinion that really matters or counts in the end.

As we go along in life, we come to learn on a very deep level that it only matters what God says. People's opinion in the ultimate sense doesn't really matter. That is a tough but good lesson.



**Slide # 11****Hebrews 6:10 (NKJV)**

**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.

God's keeping track of it all. People can be so fickle, but not God. Live for God. Give for God. Be totally God-focused in all your doing and giving. This is what counts.

***Footnote:***

This passage should not be pressed to prohibit any gift that might be seen by others, since it is virtually impossible to make all one's contributions strictly anonymous. It simply condemns the blatant display of giving. – ***William MacDonald***

The spirit of it is that our giving is to be done for God's glory and not self-glory!

Also note the word "openly" is not found in the older manuscripts but as you consider the whole counsel of God His reward for faithful service is certainly going to be an openly known reality.

It is said that there was a special, out-of-the-way place in the Temple where shy, humble Jews could leave their gifts without being noticed. Another place nearby was provide for the shy poor, who did not want to be seen asking for help. Here they would come and take what they needed. The name of the place was the Chamber of the Silent. People gave and people were helped, but no one knew the identities of either group. – ***John MacArthur***

But I would add: God KNEW! And the Father Who sees in secret will Himself reward each one.

In the matter of "piety" having addressed the issue of "giving" Jesus now addresses the issue of "praying".

**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.**

Don't pray like a hypocrites. They pretend to be so spiritual in their grandiose self-oriented praying. They pretend like its all about God but really its all about them.

**They LOVE the attention.** It's like the guy who came running into the room crying, “ATTENTION, ATTENTION, ATTENTION” and when everyone gave them their attention, he said, “***Oh I just wanted ATTENTION.***”

This is all about SELF. They love the attention of being seen by men. They love coming off all impressive in prayer because it makes them look so spiritual. Once again, this is not about God, rather they made it all about SELF.

In truth their prayers were not really directed to God but really to other people. They were praying with people in mind – not God. With self in view – not God. Narcissistic praying is always WRONG!

And once again, Jesus said, “***Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.***” They have no reward from God, just that momentary recognition from people who may be impressed by their hypocritical display.

**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.**

Want to pray in a God-honoring way? Then don't focus on putting on a show. No matter the oratory, no matter the tone, no matter the tears, God is not impressed. In fact, He sees right through it. He sees the heart. He sees the motivation.

Jesus is saying, “Make prayer all about God”, not about SELF in any way. And the best way to do this is to get away all by yourself where it is just you and God.

I was talking with someone this week and they were telling me that about all they can do anymore is PRAY and that is what they do.

Note genuine God-focused prayer is precious to God. Prayer that truly makes Him the focus (in the secret place) will be rewarded. There is a special reward for praying. Every prayer offered up has its own reward.

God works through prayer. If people don't use the "prayer closet" it really proves they don't put much stock in prayer. People that really believe prayer matters – pray!

Do you believe that even ONE single heart felt prayer can change the course of the nation – or can change the eternal course of a human being.

James, after saying, "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (Ja. 5:16b) then said this:

### **Slide # 12**

#### **James 5:17–18 (NKJV)**

**17** Elijah was **a man with a nature like ours**, and **he prayed** earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.

**18** And **he prayed** again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

God works through prayer! That was not just true of Elijah, but of us as well.

### **Slide # 13**

#### **Ephesians 3:20 (NKJV)**

**20** Now to **Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think**, according to the power that works in us,

God is able to do far more than we can ask or think. If you study the whole of Scripture you will find God consistently working mightily in answer to prayer. And God-focused prayer done in SECRET is the SECRET weapon. This is the secret to answered prayer.

Sure we can also pray publicly, but I think the emphasis here is that first and foremost the reality of prayer life is seen in private.

Now of course Jesus wasn't prohibiting all public praying. Really, He was correcting the whole misguided practice of "showy praying". Whether we pray in private or in public the focus should always be on God.

There is certainly a place for public praying...

### **Slide # 14**

#### **1 Timothy 2:8 (NKJV)**

**8** I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;

In the early Church we see a constant practice of publicly praying together and not only in private. The Church was born out of a prayer meeting as seen in Acts 1-2. The first missionary journey was born out of a prayer meeting as seen in Acts 13 (cf. Acts 1:24; 2:42; 3:1; 4:24-30; 12:12; 13:3; 14:23; 18:19-20; 20:36).

The issue is not merely on where we pray - but WHY. What are our motives? Are they truly God-centered and God-focused?

The point is not *where* we pray. At issue here is, *why* we pray – to be seen by people or to be heard by God. – **William MacDonald**

**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.**

Jesus adds this qualifier. Not only should we pray in secret with a total God-centered emphasis; but also when we pray don't use "**vain repetitions as the heathen do.**"

The Greek word translated "repetitions" (battalogo) denotes "babbling or speaking without thinking" (Liberty Bible Commentary).

Pagan prayers are ridiculous and mindless. They are chants. They are mindless mantras thinking "**that they will be heard for their many words.**"

Just repeating a bunch of verbiage is not God-honoring prayer. True prayer puts your mind and heart into it. We don't meaningfully communicate with other people with "**vain repetitions**" how much more insulting to do this with God.

**Imagine if I went to my wife** and said, "I am hungry, I am hungry, I am hungry, I am hungry". "Please make dinner, please make dinner, please make dinner." And after we eat, I would say, "Thank you dear,

thank you dear, thank you dear.” How do you think that is going to go? Imagine if I did this day after day. I think after a short while she would smack me, or perhaps call for professional help – something!

We should not do this with God. Often prayers can get pretty mindless, just mouthing mantra words. And I am sure I am guilty of it as I pray through my prayer lists day in and day out.

Someone has said, “***All of us have one routine prayer in our system; and once we get rid of it, then we can really start to pray!***” There is probably more truth in that than we want to admit.

Frankly, a lot of people memorize what is **the Lord’s prayer** and in mantra style just continually quote these words. Jesus specifically said not to pray this way. I am always reminded of this travesty whenever I go to some event such as funeral and the religious leader asks the people to pray the “Lord’s Prayer”. It sounds like a bunch of rote monotonous words that get no further than the ceiling.

**Roman Catholics** do this as they mindlessly quote the rosary which has even deeper theological blasphemy involved than the mere repetition of certain words.

I have **heard charismatics** claim that tongues is their private prayer language and that they pray for hours in this mindless way spouting nothing but sheer gibberish.

Sometimes some choruses follow suit with a bunch of mindless repetition that is all emotional in orientation but virtually nothing for the mind. And we call it worship. I wonder sometimes if is not just “vain repetition” with little or no substance. Some meetings almost put people in some sort of trance as they over and over and over repeat to build to some kind of an emotional experience.

In effect, Jesus is saying, when it comes to praying put your mind and heart into it. Don’t use vain repetitions like the heathen do. Don’t just do “mantra praying”. Constantly mouthing some form of abracadabra is not impressive to God!

People who have a “heathen approach” to prayer in the sense of “vain repetition” have a wrong view of God. They seem to think its not about the substance of what they are saying, rather its about the AMOUNT.

And that if they just say enough words, they may wear God down to where He grants what they are mumbling about.

It reminds me of Samson and Delilah. Remember in Judges 16 how Delilah wanted Samson to tell her the secret of his great strength.

### **Slide # 15**

#### **Judges 16:16–17 (NKJV)**

**16** And it came to pass, when **she pestered him daily with her words** and **pressed him**, so that his **soul was vexed to death**,  
**17** that **he told her all his heart**, and said to her, “No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.”

Some people seem to approach God with this strategy – if I just pester him long enough with enough words He will eventually weaken and give me what I want. It is a manipulative approach to prayer! It really is a very small view of God.

But it doesn’t work that way. For one thing God-honoring prayer is not the idea of trying to get my way with God, rather its about getting God’s will done. God-honoring prayer has a God-agenda from start to finish – not a self-agenda.

God doesn’t need to have many words. Long prayers are not necessarily more effective than short prayers. Really, it is thoughtful, heartfelt prayers that are God-honoring. These are the prayers God delights in.

### **Footnote:**

Yet it is not mere length nor repetition that Christ condemns (Jesus prayed all night, Lk. 6:12, and repeated His petitions, Mt. 26:44, but the unworthy motive that prompts such religious acts.

– ***Wycliffe Bible Commentary***

Again, what God is really looking for is piety that is borne out of the HEART – not just merely going through the motions.

**8 “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.**

Don't come to God like He needs an education. He already knows what we need before we ask Him. This is not a matter of filling God in or trying to wear Him down.

So, the legitimate question then arises. If God already knows then WHY do we need to pray at all?

Prayer is a fascinating study. The short answer is we pray so that God will be glorified, and we will be strengthened.

Prayer is talking to God. It is communication with God. Every relationship is based on communication. God desires to have a meaningful relationship with us – a prayer relationship. He talks to us through the Word of God and we speak to Him in prayer.

In verse 8 Jesus says the “***your Father knows the things you have need of***” so in view is prayer about our needs. We are to pray about these things because it acknowledges our DEPENDENCE upon Him. God could do it without prayer, but in relying upon God through prayer it draws us closer to Him. It shows our God to be living and in real relationship with us as He answers. We ask God and then when He answers we thank Him. And in this continual process God is glorified through prayer. You see prayer is not merely about communicating information – its about WORSHIP!

**This is a true story about Hudson Taylor** (1832-1905) who a missionary pioneer and founder of the China Inland Mission.

As they were sailing to China suddenly the ship he was on was in peril off the coast of New Guinea.

The wind had ceased, and a four-knot current was carrying them rapidly toward sunken reefs. As they drifted nearer to the shore, they were alarmed to see natives building multiple fires. The captain informed him that the natives were cannibals. [And they were excited to be having the people aboard this ship coming to dinner].

Taylor's testimony is this:

After standing together on the deck for some time in silence, the captain said to me: “Well, we have done everything that can be done. We can only await the result.”

A thought occurred to me, and I replied, “No, there is one thing we have not done yet.” What is that? he queried. “Four of us on board are Christians. Let us each retire to our own cabin, and in agreed prayer ask the Lord to give us [an] immediate breeze. He can as easily send it now as at sunset.

Taylor prayed briefly but did not continue to beseech God, because he felt assured that the Lord would grant the appeal for Him to send wind. Taylor ventured again on deck and asked the first officer to lower the sails.

“What would be the good of that? he answered roughly. I told him we have been asking a wind from God; that it was coming immediately; and we were so near the reef by this time that there was not a minute to lose.”

Within minutes, the wind did begin to blow, and it carried them safely past the reefs. Taylor wrote:

Thus God encouraged me before landing on China’s shores, to bring every variety of need to Him in prayer, and to expect that He would honor the name of the Lord Jesus and give the help each emergency required.

(Quoted from **Dr. Ron J. Bigalke** in *The Message from Jonah – Part 2 – Midnight Call*, Jan. 2021, p. 18-19)

Indeed, the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous avails much but prayer done for self-glory has no lasting value.

The story is told about a supposed holy man in the east who covered himself with ashes as a sign of his humility. When tourists asked permission to take his picture, the mystic quickly rearranged his ashes to give the best possible image of his pious humility. (Adapted from a story told by **John MacArthur**)

A great deal of religion is about people rearranging their “ashes” to try and impress people about how spiritual they are. But before God all such hypocrisy is a sham! In reality such piety is all about a commitment to SELF and not to God.



God is looking for HEART-religion, not mere outward show. He wants what's real. Seek to please an audience of ONE, namely God. Paul summed it up well in 2 Cor. 5:9: ***“Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.”***

It's all about pleasing Him! Live for Him!