

Voyager Church | Drop The Mic

Message #10: Religious Masquerade - Act 1: Charity

Text: Matthew 6:1-4

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Religious Masquerade

Act 1: Charity

¹ Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in heaven. ² So whenever you give to the poor, don't sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. ³ But when you give to the poor, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

For the next four weeks (the month of August) we are going to be in a breakout series in our study of the Sermon on the Mount that I have titled **Religious Masquerade**. The hope of this four message mini-series is that we would seriously consider our motives when it comes to three different things we should be actively doing as followers of Jesus: charitable giving, prayer (2 weeks), and fasting. By doing this I pray we will allow Jesus to transform our hearts in such a way that we will not be guilty of masquerading as a bunch of religious people looking to get credit for the good works we do, but a people consumed with giving him the glory for everything. What we are going to see in Matthew 6:1-18 is Jesus destroying "religion" and emphasizing an intimate relationship with God (he uses the term Father ten times in these eighteen verses). Remember, Jesus is not giving us the secret formula we must follow to earn God's grace and favor. Instead, he is instructing us in how we should be living our lives because God has poured out his grace and favor upon us through Jesus (descriptive, not prescriptive).

The first thing Jesus addresses in Matthew 6:1-4 is what we will consider today: our motive for giving to those in need (i.e. acts of charity).

1. Am I seeking the applause of people when I give to those in need?

1. The warning

1. ***¹ Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in heaven.***

1. **“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them.”** This is a stern, present tense warning (beware!) emphasizing the need to be on the alert to the temptation to seek the affirmation and applause of others, not only in our giving, but also in prayer and fasting. Another way of stating it is “always, constantly, without stopping, beware.” This is serious business! Jesus knows that our hearts are ever pulling in the direction of self.
2. **Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in heaven.** The first of ten times the word Father is used in verses 6:1-18. We will discuss reward later.

2. The example not to follow

1. ² So whenever you give to the poor, don't sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward.

1. **“So whenever you give to the poor...”** Notice how Jesus phrased this; he doesn't say “if you give,” like it's optional. Instead, he says, “whenever you give,” because he is assuming we are giving charitably to those in need. Sacrificially giving of one's time, talents, and treasures to meet the needs of others is expected for disciples of Jesus.
2. **“...don't sound a trumpet before you...”** This could refer to a couple of different things. Actual trumpets in the synagogue. More likely it was a figure of speech (i.e. “don't to your own horn!”).
3. **“...as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people.”** The word translated “hypocrites” comes from the classical Greek word *hupokrités*, meaning a stage player, an actor, a pretender. It was a term applied to actors in Greek plays who often wore masks.

2. How do I keep God at the center of my acts of charity?

1. Forget your own “goodness”

1. ³ But when you give to the poor, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing...

1. **“But when you give to the poor...”** Again, Jesus is assuming that we are giving.
2. **“...don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing...”** This is impossible!

2. Be content with God as the only witness

1. ⁴ ...so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

1. **“...so that your giving may be in secret.”** Does Jesus mean all giving must be secretive? No! Remember Matthew 5:14-16

1. **⁴ You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.**
2. **“And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”** What is our reward? Knowing we have brought glory to our Father in heaven. His good pleasure is our reward!
3. **What are some ways I can effectively help those in need?**
 1. **Our backyard**
 1. ***Churches Active In Northside (Northside)***
 1. CAIN is a neighborhood ministry that transforms lives and inspires hope by providing nutritious food, crisis assistance, resources, and compassion in a way that respects human dignity and builds a more vibrant community. Ministries connected with CAIN: Grace Place, Rainbow Food Pantry, and Phil’s Place Community Meal (cainministry.org).
 2. ***Cincinnati Urban Promise (Westwood)***
 1. Cincinnati Urban Promise seeks to create holistic change in the lives of individuals, families, and neighborhoods by meeting their spiritual, physical, emotional, and academic needs through a Christ-centered approach to education, empowerment, and loving relationship (cincinnatiurbanpromise.org).
 2. **Greater Cincinnati**
 1. ***A Child’s Hope International (Sharonville)***
 1. The mission of A Child’s Hope International is to motivate and mobilize the Church to care for the orphans in their distress. Their vision is to see local churches wrap around at least one child using one of their four bridges of care: adoption, foster care, orphan care, and humanitarian relief (thechildrenarewaiting.org).
 2. ***Focus On Youth (West Chester)***
 1. The mission of Focus On Youth is to improve the lives of children by providing strengths-based foster care, adoption, and mental health services that promote the permanency, safety, and well-being of youth. (focusonyouth.com).
 3. ***City Gospel Mission***
 1. City Gospel Mission helps the homeless and hurting break the cycle of poverty and despair one life at a time. We engage, equip and empower those in need with the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical skills and resources to achieve long-term life transformation and self-

sufficiency. Our proven programs and services are centered on caring, personal relationships focused in four key service areas: food and shelter, recovery, at-risk youth and job readiness and placement. (citygospelmission.org).

3. **U.S./International**

1. ***North American Mission Board***

1. Evangelistic church planting is the core focus of the North American Mission Board. But that is not all NAMB invests in and assists churches to accomplish. Their compassion ministry, Send Relief, encourages and equips churches and individuals to tackle complex issues in North American communities (foster care and adoption, refugees and internationals, human trafficking, disaster relief, poverty and hunger, etc) . By providing information, training, resources and opportunities, churches and individuals can reach their communities and introduce their friends to Jesus (namb.net).

2. ***International Mission Board***

1. The International Mission Board partners with churches to empower limitless missionary teams who are evangelizing, discipling, planting, and multiplying healthy churches, and training leaders among unreached peoples and places for the glory of God. They also work to serve a multitude of people who are in desperate need of relief from poverty, oppression, and disaster (imb.org).

4. **But please don't forget...**

1. The easiest way you can help people locally and internationally is through your financial giving to, and physical investment in, Voyager Church. Our vision is to impact the lives of people with the love of Christ in our neighborhood, in our city, across our country, and around the world. We can do this because we are a part of the Southern Baptist Convention (sbc.net).
 1. This means that we have consciously partnered with 125 local churches in nine surrounding counties through the Cincinnati Area Baptist Association (cincinnatiabaptist.com).
 2. We have also partnered with 760 churches across Ohio through the State Convention of Baptist in Ohio (scbo.org).
 3. Nationally and internationally we are a part of a network of over 47,000 local churches who cooperate together as a family to see people come to know Jesus through proclaiming the gospel, planting new churches, and meeting the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of others.
2. So 10% of everything you give to Voyager Church goes to help people locally, nationally, and internationally through various different ministries!

Conclusion

So, are you generous with your treasure when it comes to helping others? When you give, do you desire the applause of others? Are you striving to keep Christ at the center of your giving, giving God the glory for everything? Are you truly plugged in to your local church or another Christ-centered organization with a desire to give of yourself to others for the glory of God?