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MATTHEW

Performative or Personal Faith

Matthew 06:01-06

- I. Intro
 - a. Do you want to be used by God for His Kingdom?
 - i. Do you want God's work through you to affect change in the lives of others?
 - ii. To you want your life to make a mark?
 - b. Sermon on the Mount - Beatitudes
 - i. Make a mistake if we relegate Jesus' teachings to simply principles for right living
 - ii. ***Mat 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.***
 1. Not good advice but the good news of the coming Kingdom
 2. That was the central theme of Jesus' teachings – a New Kingdom is coming, a better Kingdom, and it is nothing like the kingdoms of this earth
 3. And its King is nothing like the kings of this world
 4. And its citizens are nothing like the citizens of this world
 - c. Describes the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven
 - i. ***"You are the salt of the earth,*** preserves, flavors, slows decay
 - ii. ***You are the light of the world,*** reveals reality, guides, exposes, gives hope
 1. "You are..." not "Try to be."
 - iii. ***Mat 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.***
 1. No one lights and lamp and then puts it under a basket – don't conceal your citizenship
 - d. And then Jesus said in ***Matt 6:1 "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them..."***
 - i. How can we reconcile these two seemingly contradictory commands?
 - ii. What do you mean Jesus?

Matt 6:1 "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. 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. 3 But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. 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. 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.

II. Cultural Christianity

- a. We live in a day and age where if it wasn't captured on video did it even happen?
 - i. Concerts with cell phones out, hiking with cell phones out, theme parks with cell phones out, everything is being recorded
 - ii. Why? The sharing, and the posting, and the follows and the likes have become more rewarding than the experience itself – being seen – having an audience – getting their approval
 - iii. The world becomes a stage in which we are living for the applause
- b. Religious communities are not immune to this, and this isn't something new that came about with the invention of the smart phone
 - i. ***do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them, when you give do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, when you pray do not stand on in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets***
 - ii. How do we make sense of this and what Jesus taught in chapter 5
- c. ***do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. - that they may have glory from men. - For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men.***
 - i. Jesus assumes that we will give, pray, and devote ourselves to God. The question is who these practices are for.
 1. The problem with evangelical Christianity today is we have built entire systems - churches, conferences, platforms, social media ministries – centered around being seen by men
 2. Asking the question “what is it that the people want to see?”
 - ii. It has become a performative faith – we do what we do for the approval others – and we gauge success with
 1. Audience size
 2. Applause
 3. Followers
 4. Attention
 5. Affirmation
 - a. Jesus says, “You have received your reward.”

III. Seeing Jesus

- a. ***Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.***
 - i. Immediately begins teaching on personal purity
 1. Bitterness and hatred – murder
 2. Lust – adultery
 - a. Cutting off sin at the root
 3. Reconciliation before worship – making peace with one another
 - ii. Strong committed marriages
 - iii. Don't swear – Let your yes be yes and your no be no – personal integrity
 - iv. Give more than is asked and turn the other cheek - retaliation and generosity
 1. go the extra mile, give your cloak also
 - v. Love your enemies
 1. By blessing those who curse you, doing good to those who hate you, and praying for those who use you and make your life uniquely difficult
 - vi. And then in chapter 6

1. *when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing that your charitable deed may be in secret*
 2. *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.*
- b. What is missing? An audience
- i. There is no audience for my personal struggle against sin, there is no audience when I'm painfully honest, there is no audience when I do good to those who could care less about me
 - ii. Well, there's no audience on earth – are we more concerned about appearing faithful are being faithful
 1. Citizens of the Kingdom of God don't need an audience – that don't ask "did anyone notice?"
 2. They ask "Is God pleased?"
- c. Our witness begins long before we step into public
- i. It begins when no one is watching, our witness is shaped behind closed doors in quiet devotion to Jesus

IV. The Antidote for Approval

- a. Secrecy – secrecy satisfies the hunger for recognition
- i. It reveals what we are really after.
 1. A person who cannot live faithfully without being noticed isn't primarily concerned about what God desires
 - ii. When prayer becomes performance, it isn't prayer any longer, it's a speech
 1. We are no longer talking to God
 2. Prayer is not a religious act to demonstrate faith; it is participation in the life of God.
 - iii. Generosity is no longer generosity when we want people to know about it
 1. It is now giving to get – strings attached
- b. Jesus' warning "They have received their reward" is not angry or malicious.
- i. It is simply descriptive
 1. If one lives for man's approval, then man's approval is what you have.
 2. The person has already chosen what they truly want
- c. Here's Jesus' invitation in Matthew 6
- i. He invites us into a life where the Father sees and that is more than enough
 - ii. Because the truth is unglamorous devotion behind closed doors – good works done in secret – being faithful while remaining anonymous, those are what actually make people like Christ.
 1. The kingdom of God does not advance through performance and production. It advances through quiet, simple devotion to the one who saved our souls from death, gave us new life, and brought us into His Kingdom.
 2. That is who the Father rewards