



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

*Special Study:* **PRACTICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS WITHOUT HYPOCRISY**  
**Matthew 6:1-4**

This chapter begins a new section of the Sermon on the Mount, yet it is closely connected with the previous chapter. In chapter 5 the Lord had said, "That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20). In the rest of the chapter (5:21-48), He corrects the false interpretation of required righteousness and reveals the righteousness of the heart, obtained by faith in Christ, necessary for the citizens of the Kingdom. In chapter 6, He exposes the false practice of self-righteous scribes and Pharisees and teaches us the true righteousness that pleases God, our heavenly Father.

True righteousness, the righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, aims at doing all things only for the glory of God. The desire of the righteous is not to seek the praise of men or to please and exalt self; his desire is to please God and glorify Him in all things. Such acts of righteousness that begin and end with God in view will be rewarded by Him. The whole chapter calls us to fix our hearts and eyes on our heavenly Father (6:1,4,6,8,9,18,24,26,32,33). The natural man desires the praise of men more than the praise of God (John 12:43; 5:44) but the righteous seeks only the praise of God (Romans 2:29; 2 Corinthians 10:18).

### **CAUTION AGAINST HYPOCRITICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Matthew 6:1,5,16; 23:5,13-15,25-28; Luke 12:1; 16:15; 2 Kings 10:16,31; John 12:43; Acts 5:1-11; Isaiah 29:13,14; Mark 7:6-9.

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, TO BE SEEN OF THEM." Here, the Lord cautions us and condemns doing any act of righteousness with the motive or desire to be seen of men and praised by them. Merely being seen of men is not what He condemns, but doing any good thing mainly and deliberately to be seen of men, to be praised by men, to draw attention to ourselves. Some good deeds cannot be hidden but they are still recognized and will be rewarded by God if the motive is only to glorify God (Acts 9:36-39; 10:1-4; 1 Timothy 5:9,10; Galatians 2:10; Acts 20:34,35; 24:16,17; Matthew 26:6-13).

There is no reward from God for those who seek the praise and recognition of men. God knows all things. He does not only see the actions of men, He sees the motives and the desires too. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13). We cannot judge others (1 Corinthians 4:5); we can only judge and examine our own hearts to make sure that our motives and desires are right and acceptable before God.

### **CONDEMNATION OF HYPOCRITICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Matthew 6:2; Numbers 10:1-4; Proverbs 20:6; Philippians 2:21; Job 8:13-15; 27:8-10; Matthew 23:5,28,33; 1 Corinthians 13:3; 1 Peter 2:1-3.

Hypocrisy stains, corrupts and destroys every good thing it touches. Hypocrisy turns almsgiving, praying, fasting, good works, love, righteousness, holiness, zeal and consecration into filthy rags. Judas Iscariot was the greatest hypocrite of all times. He pretended to care for the poor but his heart was not right with Christ (John 12:3-8; 13:27-29). Absalom was also a great hypocrite who professed much devotion to God while there was unprecedented wickedness in his heart (2 Samuel 15:1-11). Both Absalom and Judas Iscariot had outward expressions of being good, kind and nice that those around them did not suspect that they were hypocritical. But now their condemnation is known to the whole world and their damnation continues till eternity.

There were hypocrites in the Old Testament and there were hypocrites in the New Testament. There were hypocrites in Israel and there were hypocrites in the early church (Acts 5:1-11). There will be hypocrites in the church "in the latter times" (1 Timothy 4:1,2). Hypocrites are compared to leaven (Luke 12:1), to whitewashed tombs (Matthew 23:27) and to tares amidst wheat (Matthew 13:25) which will be cast into the fire at the time of the final judgment (Matthew 13:40-42).

## COMPENSATION FOR HEART RIGHTEOUSNESS

Matthew 6:3,4; Colossians 3:23,24; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 9:1-9; Psalms 112:1-9; 37:21,29-33,39,40; Isaiah 3:10; Luke 14:12-14; Matthew 25:31-46.

“But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.” The expression signifies that our good deeds or almsgiving should be done as secretly as possible. This does not imply that husbands and wives should hide their acts of benevolence from each other (See 2 Kings 4:8-11; Romans 14:15-19). “Let not then your good be evil spoken of.” “That thine alms may be in secret” means that you are not giving to be seen of men, to gain the praise of men, to buy favour from men or to attract attention to yourself.

“And thy Father, which seeth in secret, Himself shall reward thee openly.” There is a definite reward in this world, here on earth, and there will be a sure reward after this life, in heaven. “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will He pay him again” (Proverbs 19:17). Also “thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:13,14). God has promised to reward those who help others with truly compassionate hearts and unselfish motives. He will not fail, He is always faithful.

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