

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

39- The Kingdom of Heaven and Its Citizens- Part 19 Secret Purity and Public Hypocrisy- Part 2

Church February 05, 2023

Matthew 6:1-24

1 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

2 "So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

3 "But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

4 so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

5 "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

6 But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

7 "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.

8 So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

9 "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

10 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

11 'Give us this day our daily bread.

12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'

14 "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

16 "Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face

18 so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.

23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

*To the Glory of God the Holy Father; God the Holy Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Now what you just heard read to you are the first 18 verses of the 2nd Chapter of what we call- the "*Sermon on the Mount*". And this Sermon is about how the *new* people of God will live their Lives- in the *new* Kingdom of God- that Jesus is bringing forth through the *new* Covenant. So, **Matthew 5,6,&7** is about the Characteristics of those, who have experienced the Miracle of the New Birth; who have been justified by Faith alone; who have been adopted by the Father into the real Family of God (*the Church*); who are the real "*spiritual*" Jews (**Romans 2:28&29**); the *genuine* children of Abraham (**John 8**); and who are now going through the Life-long Process of becoming more "*Holy*" (*Sanctification*).

We need to remember that ever since the Jews had returned from the "*Babylonian Captivity*"- the "*pure Religion*" that God gave them in the 39 Books of the Old Testament had been getting *progressively* more and more *perverted*. And by the 1st Century- what the Jews had received directly from God (by and through Angels) had become a fabricated religious "*System*" with many Man-made Rules; Regulations; Rituals; Commandments; and Prohibitions that God never spoke.

But instead of simply *correcting* where the 1st Century Jewish Leaders had gone astray (which God had done countless times before)- it was now God's Will- to birth into the World- the *final, full, and completed* Revelation of God to Man in the promised New Covenant. And "by", "through", and "in" the Lord Jesus Christ- this glorious New Covenant (that the Old Covenant *always* pointed to)- would finally "*do away*" with the *First* or the *Old* Covenant- and replace it with an infinitely *superior* Covenant; that is based on infinitely *superior* Promises; made by an infinitely *superior* Sacrifice; offered by an infinitely *superior* High Priest- the incarnate God Himself!

Another way of understanding what Jesus is teaching here is to remember what Jesus said in **Matthew 5:20b**:

... unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

... so, what Jesus is teaching in the "*Sermon on the Mount*" (**Matthew 5,6,&7**) is what that "*surpassing Righteousness*" looks like in the normal, daily Life of the new people of God.

So, to the Jews, who were there that day- Jesus is in the Place of "*Immanuel*" (God with us); the *long-awaited* Messiah; the *new* Moses; and the *only* Savior of God's people- as He heralds this glorious and perfect Sermon.

Now as we begin Chapter 6- we see that Jesus is dealing with a very important Subject:

Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

... and from that first Statement we see at least three things:

1. We are to "practice" Righteousness
2. We must be careful to NOT practice our Righteousness for the Purpose of being "noticed by the Public".
3. Jesus is NOT condemning all public aspects of Righteousness

So, there is an inherent, unspoken Command here that says genuine Believers ARE to do something Jesus called, "*Practice Righteousness.*" So, what does it mean for us to "*practice*" our Righteousness? It means to "*live out*" what we say we believe. It is to *respond* to what we believe by "*bearing the fruit of it.*" It is to *prove* that our Belief is *real* and *genuine*- by the "unmistakable Proof of "*Action*"; "*Deeds*"; and "*Good Works.*" It is to *apply* what we trust in- to our *normal daily*

Lives. Another Way of understanding this phrase is what Jesus Himself said back in **Matthew 5:16**:

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

... so, “*Letting our Light shine*” and “*Practicing Righteousness*” is the SAME thing.

So, this has to do with the ongoing “*acting out*” of what we say we believe. It has to do with “*Orthopraxy*”- which means: “*Right Living*”. And that “*Right Living*” (Orthopraxy) is based on “*Right Believing*” (Orthodoxy). So, the Way we live our Lives *reflects* what we believe. We “*do this- but not that*”; or we “*engage in these things while refraining from those other things.*” And the Reason we do this is because we *already* believe that by either “*doing*” or “*not doing*” certain things- we are pleasing to God and we are bringing Glory and Honor to Him.

So, when the Apostle Paul was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit to write down how lost sinners are saved- he said this in **Ephesians 2:8&9**:

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

So, we are saved “BY” the Grace of God- alone (*Sola Gratia*). And Salvation is appropriated to each person individually “THROUGH” the Gift of “saving Faith”- alone (*Sola Fide*). And Paul is quick to add that Salvation is NOT a result of *anything* that we do for ourselves. And the reason God set up Salvation this way- was so that NO ONE would be able to boast that what he did for himself is why God saved him. Another Way of understanding this is to say that we are saved WITHOUT any “Works”- not even good, *religious* Works.

But then in the very next verse- the Apostle infallibly wrote:

Ephesians 2:10

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

So, our Salvation is the “*Work*” or the “*Working*” or the “*Workmanship*” of God Himself. In other words, we are saved “**by His Doing**” (**1Corinthians 1:30**). And that tells us HOW we are saved. But what are saved FOR? Paul wrote in **Ephesians 2:10** that we are saved,

... for good works

So, the “Way”; or the “Method” we have been saved- is “WITHOUT Works.” But the REASON we were saved is “FOR good Works.” So, if it is true that we have been saved entirely BY the Grace of God (alone) and if it is true that we have been saved entirely “THROUGH” the Gift of saving Faith (alone); and if it is true that we were saved entirely WITHOUT any Works- then we will PROVE that is true in our own individual Lives- by “responding” or “acting out” or “living out” our Salvation by “practicing” Righteousness.

Now keep in mind that Righteousness is the “Result” of Obedience. It is the “Fruit” or the unmistakable “Proof” of our Obedience to God and His Word. So, Righteousness is the Response that we have to being saved. Paul said this in **Romans 10:9&10:**

**9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;
10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.**

Now look again at the first part of verse 10:

for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness...

... so, if we have truly believed and have been truly born again; justified; and adopted- the result will be that we will “practice” Righteousness. And the Way to “practice” Righteousness- is to strive to obey the Commands of God.

Now it is interesting that the Commandment of Jesus in **Matthew 5:16** involves “*acting out*” or “*living out*” or “*practicing*” what we believe- in Public. Jesus said,

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works...

... while the Commandment in **Matthew 6:1** seems to warn us *against* “*living out*” our Righteousness in Public. There, Jesus said,

Beware of practicing your righteousness before men...

... so, is this a Contradiction?

No, because Jesus gave us a clarification of what He meant in **Matthew 6:1&2** when He said,

... to be noticed by them ... so that they may be honored by men.

So, it is the internal, invisible “*heart Motivation*” that is *behind* WHY we are “*living out*” or “*acting out*” or “*practicing*” our Righteousness in Public that Jesus is actually warning us about. Jesus is NOT condemning ALL public Acts of Obedience and Righteousness- we’re *commanded* to do that. He is *very narrowly* condemning what could be called, “*Hypocritical public Acts of Obedience*”- which is “*practicing*” Righteousness for the sole Purpose of being seen by the Public- so they will “*think much*” and “*make much*” of you.

Now in Context- Jesus is publicly condemning the Scribes and the Pharisees here- because that is *exactly* what they were doing. So, once again, Jesus is drawing a clear Distinction between the genuine Righteousness of genuine Believers and the phony, hypocritical “*righteousness*” of phony and hypocritical religious frauds. Now keep in mind that the Scribes and Pharisees were standing with the others as they listened to Jesus teach and preach this perfect Sermon on that day. So, Jesus is confronting these fake Believers to their face. No wonder they hated Him. But instead of falling on their knees and begging for Forgiveness- they hardened their hearts and hated Jesus all the more.

Now in verses 2-24 Jesus is teaching HOW the *new* people of God; who are a part of the *new* Covenant; and who will live forever in the *new* Kingdom of Heaven- believe and act- in regard to four Issues:

1. Giving to the Poor (verses 2-4)
2. Prayer (verses 5- 15)
3. Fasting (verses 16-18)
4. Wealth (verses 19-24)

So, almost MORE than anything else- it is our *Disposition* toward the Poor; and to Prayer; and to Fasting; and to financial and material Wealth- that *defines* the person who will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.

So, please keep in mind that Jesus is talking here about our “*Disposition*”; our “*Attitude*”; and our “*Bent*” toward these four things in this Section of His “*Sermon on the Mount*”. Jesus is NOT talking about the AMOUNT. So, it is NOT the AMOUNT that we give to the Poor; it is NOT the AMOUNT we pray; it is NOT the AMOUNT that we fast; or the AMOUNT of Wealth we may or may not have- that is the Issue. Jesus is simply teaching us here- HOW and WHY to give; HOW and WHY to pray; HOW and WHY to fast; and HOW and WHY to accumulate Wealth.

And also notice that with three of the four Issues- Jesus did NOT say, “IF” He said, “WHEN”:

- **when you give to the poor** (verse 2)
- **when you are praying** (verse 5)
- **Whenever you fast** (verse 16)

... which indicates that Jesus absolutely *expects* us to give to the Poor; and to pray; and to fast. So, let's look again at verses 2-4:

2 "So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

3 "But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

4 so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

Now here in verse 2- Jesus is NOT condemning ALL giving in Public. The correct Context here is the Way the Scribes and the Pharisees gave.

... when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

The "Hypocrites" in Jesus' Mind are the religious Frauds that held out that they were great "men of God" and that they represented God to the people. It was common back in the 1st Century that the Scribes and Pharisees (as well as the Sadducees) would literally have someone blow a trumpet when they gave to the Poor. This was to announce themselves as "Great". So, the trumpet sound was done on purpose to draw the Attention of the average person- as to how Humble and Godly these unsaved Hypocrites supposedly were.

Jesus says here that these terrible Sinners had that trumpet blow- not only out in the streets of Jerusalem- among the average citizens- but also inside the Synagogues- among the religious elite as well. In fact, according to ancient rabbinical Documents- the members of the "*Sanhedrin Court*"- which existed to handle legal and religious disputes among the Jews- taught that this trumpet blast- was to remind people of the many times the ram's horn was sounded when Israel first became a Nation.

The great Difference was now in the 1st Century- these religious Leaders were blowing the trumpet- NOT to put fear into the hearts and minds of God's enemies- but rather to announce their own supposed Humility and Godliness- as they gave to the Poor. Jesus put it this Way:

... so that they may be honored by men.

Jesus says here that the ONLY Reason the Scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees were giving to the Poor¹- was so they would be **“honored by men.”** In other words- these men cared NOTHING for the Plight of the Poor- which Plight was *substantial* back in the 1st Century.

We need to remember that, back then, people were literally falling over dead on the side of the streets of Jerusalem because of being so Poor they had no Food or no Way to find Cures for Diseases. Starvation and Death due to easily treated Diseases is still wide-spread even now in the 21st Century- over MUCH of the world. It just doesn't happen as much here in America.

So, this is a good place for me to say this: We routinely condemn the Jewish religious Leaders of the 1st Century- and we are correct to do so- because Jesus condemned them. The five major religious Groups of 1st Century Palestine of: the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, and the Zealots hold the dubious Distinction of being the ONLY Groups of people about which Jesus NEVER said anything Good.

But here we see that the Scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees DID give to the Poor. They gave and they ministered to the Poor- on a regular basis. Now, it is true that they did all of this for the WRONG Reason; and it is also true that they NEVER received any Blessings at all from God for their giving to the Poor- because they did it for the WRONG Reason. But they DID give! And they DID minister to the Poor! And so, if we today, as American Believers in the 21st Century, do not do at least as much as those Hypocrites did- then, by all Accounts- we are WORSE Sinners than they are!

And I think I know what the biggest Obstacle is to American Christians giving to the Poor. Our own Government. We see that there are hundreds (if not thousands) of Government Programs to help the Poor of our Country. And we also see how people learn how to “game the System” to take advantage of those Programs; and we harden our hearts; and we turn our heads; and we pretend that, because we pay taxes- that, somehow, we are *exempt* from this Command.

But we're NOT exempt. No genuine Believer is exempt from this Command. Ever. The Bible teaches from Cover to Cover that Believers are to give to the Poor. And it is our individual “Disposition”; our own individual “Attitude”; or our own “Bent” to the Poor- that is one of the MAIN WAYS that our Salvation Experience with Jesus- is either validated or invalidated by. That is what the Holy Bible teaches, my dear friends.

¹ The other two major religious Groups active during 1st Century Palestine- the “Essenes” and the “Zealots” were NOT known for their giving; nor for any Ministry to the Poor. This had the effect to make those two Groups WORSE than the “Scribes”, “Pharisees”, and “Sadducees”- who DID give- and who DID minister to the Poor- even if they did it for the wrong Reason.

Now please hear me as I just said that: Lost Sinners are born again by a sovereign Act of God. And the Miracle of the New Birth- gives us both the Power and the Desire to love Jesus and to hate Sin. It is in the New Birth that God gives us eyes to see; ears to hear; and a heart that is willing and able to believe.

And so, with those new eyes- we see the Glory of God in the Person of Jesus Christ. And with those new ears- we hear the Sound of amazing Grace. And with that new heart- we love the Glory that we see; and we are changed into what we see (**2Corinthians 3:18-4:6**).

So, once we are born again- we then *respond* to what God sovereignly did “*for*” us and “*in*” us- and we “*turn away from*” (repent) Sin; and we “embrace”; we “trust in”; we “hope in”; we “believe in”; and we “confess”- the Lord Jesus- *personally*- and in His finished Work- and we are *immediately* and *eternally* forgiven for ALL Sin (Past, Present, and Future); and we are credited with the very SAME spotless Righteousness of Jesus Christ; and at that moment- we are made “*fit for Heaven*”. We are then “adopted” into the Family of God where we become:

- True spiritual Jews
- Children of Abraham
- Heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant
- Brothers and sisters of Jesus
- Children of God
- Heirs of Eternal Life

.. and ALL of that is “BY” the Grace of God ALONE (Sola Gratia); and “THROUGH” the Gift of saving Faith ALONE (Sola Fide)- and NOT by ANY good Works- NOT even good *religious* Works- like giving to the Poor.

So, us giving to the Poor does NOT wash a single Sin away. Giving to the Poor does NOT save a single soul. Yet those who have already experienced the Miracle of the New Birth; and those who have already been Justified; and those who have already been Adopted- *respond* to all of that- they prove that all of that is really true in their own individual Lives- by striving to obey ALL of God’s Commandments- INCLUDING giving to the Poor!

So, Believers are COMMANDED to give to the Poor. And we are COMMANDED to give to the Poor *regularly*; and in such a Way that it actually helps. And that is one of the MAIN WAYS we obey what Jesus said was the 2nd greatest Commandment:

... YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF. (Matthew

19:19b)

So, acting like our tax dollars allow us to be *exempt* from this; or throwing a few dollars a month to some Organization; or trying to debate about what annual income qualifies as “Poor”- and thinking *that* is fulfilling our Duty and Obligation and Joy about this Command- is like the Pharisees thinking they were exempt from loving their Neighbors- because they didn’t literally live next door to them. And in “*Alabama English*”- that is trying to “crawfish” our way out of having to obey this Command with Joy.

Now another Issue that hinders us to freely give- is that Giving to God and giving to the Poor has been so abused by wayward Ministries. And their abuse of the *Means of Grace* called, “*Giving*” has poisoned the well with many people- to the point where they just don’t give at all. But the ONLY thing that did- was to cut those people off from the Flow of God’s Blessings. You see, our God gives- all the time. And the people who are the most like God- do NOT close their hearts- they give too.

But if you listen to political Conservatives- the ONLY reason anybody is Poor in the United States is because they’re lazy; or on drugs; or drunks. And so, their Attitude toward the Poor is ungodly and hard. It is also Unchristian. And that harsh Attitude toward the Poor destroys any Mercy or Kindness they might have- and so, they don’t give to the Poor.

But please hear me about this, my friends, when your heart is hard- it’s just hard- and it doesn’t matter WHY it’s hard. Everybody who has a hard heart has a Reason WHY they allowed their heart to become hard. But it doesn’t matter. A *hard* heart- is a *sinful* heart. So, all that matters is- satan won- and the net result is your heart is hard. And God will NOT bless a hard heart. So, WHY you allowed your heart to get hard doesn’t matter. **Proverbs 18:23** says,

The poor man utters supplications, But the rich man answers roughly.

We must remember that we NEED Mercy and Kindness and Forgiveness from God all the time. And so, we are told by the Owner and Creator of the Universe to “**Treat people the same way you want them to treat you**” (**Matthew 7:12**). And nowhere is that Divine Truth more relevant than in our Attitude and Disposition toward the Poor. So, we are to give to others- out from what we received from God. So, we really cannot afford to allow our hearts to get hard. And we really cannot afford to NOT give to the Poor.

But if you listen to political Liberals- no matter how much you

give to the Poor- it isn't enough. And you get burned out because there is no end to it all. So, you respond to that- by shutting down your heart and no longer hearing the cry of the Weak and the Hungry and the Sick and the Poor. And again, it really doesn't matter WHY we don't give to the Poor- because God has told us to give. So, rather than be motivated by Politics- may I suggest that we become motivated by the Word and the Spirit of God. And when we do that- we WILL give.

Now to prove that I'm correct about this- Jesus gave us a spiritual Principle about HOW- not IF- we are to give to the Poor when He said this in verse 3:

when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

... again, please notice that Jesus said, "WHEN" you give to the Poor- not "IF" you give- proving that Jesus expects us to give.

But in Reality, it is impossible to literally obey Jesus here- because no matter which hand we use- since both hands are connected to our body- and since both hands are controlled by our brain- we will ALWAYS know what each hand is doing. So, Jesus is NOT speaking literally here. Jesus is actually talking here about us being *hypocritical* about our giving to the Poor. So, for example, we are to NOT to give- **SO WE MAY BE SEEN BY MEN!** We are to simply give- because we see a Need and because God the Holy Spirit has prompted us to give.

Now I was raised by very wealthy people. It wasn't my fault- I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth. And until we moved to Mississippi- I never knew anything about Poverty. Everybody I grew up with in Dallas was wealthy. All my extended Family was wealthy. And all my friends at school were wealthy.

And we always had the very BEST of things. But there was something true about my Family that, after I was saved- I began to notice. My Family didn't give. At all. To anyone. Ever. And my Father would say, "*I can't afford to give*". And he said that- because he looked at giving as *losing* what he had. He had a financial Plan that he was following that allowed him to have the BEST that this Life brings. But it had no room in it for giving. And he was extremely disciplined in keeping that Plan. So, if he were to give- it would *interrupt* and *hinder* his Plan to be wealthy. So, he didn't give.

Now he had a reason- he was raised in Poverty and he never wanted us to have to live in Poverty. So, I was raised to be extremely disciplined when it came to Money and Possessions. And that Discipline simply didn't allow for me to give.

So, for many years- I thought my Father was correct about this. But after I was saved; and I began to read the Bible; and I saw how much is in the Bible about helping the Poor- I used that same Excuse, at first, in my own Life. And I would

tell people that I was simply not able to give just yet- but if God would bless me- I would give later on- you know- when I could *afford* to give.

But there was a moment when God smote my heart with Conviction. And I remember sitting on the side of my bed as a 17 year-old boy- weeping at the hardness of my own heart- as I realized how sinful my Attitude was toward my Giving. And that is when I realized a very clear Principle that I applied to my own heart and that I taught to my Children and that I'm teaching now to my Grandchildren:

If you think you can't afford to give now with *whatever* God has already blessed you with- then you will NEVER think you can afford to give- no matter how much God blesses you with.

And after I was saved- God allowed me to taste of extreme Poverty as I lived with rats and went hungry and cold- and couldn't afford food or heat or gas to drive my car. And I thank God for that- because it changed my Attitude toward the Poor and helped me to develop a more biblical view of giving to those who are Poor.

We need to remember that the ONLY Reason we have ANYTHING at all- is because God has chosen to give it to us. And since we are all Sinners- we don't *deserve* ANY Blessings from God. We haven't *earned* any Blessings; and God is NOT *obligated* to bless us with ANYTHING. All of our Blessings are Gifts of God's Grace from a merciful Savior- based on NOTHING but His Own Benevolence. And God is absolutely "free" to give us a little; or a lot; or nothing at all- and still remain perfectly Holy. And God is also absolutely "free"- at any time- to take from us- a little; or a lot; or all of it- and remain absolutely glorious!

We must understand that ALL that we have earned in this Life- is an eternity in Hell. All that we "*bring to the table*"- is our Sin. And the fact that God forgave us of all Sin; and draped over us the very Righteousness of Jesus Christ- should be more than enough! And so, if our Life here on earth is very easy or very hard- what is that compared to an Eternity in unspeakable Joy and Peace? So, whether we eat steak three meals a day; or we eat live rats in Prison; or we don't eat at all- we are going to spend all of Eternity in Glory- and that should be enough!

But even at that- we need to have a biblical understanding about Giving. Because here in verse 4- Jesus gave us the godly Incentive to Give when He said,

so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

Now this is another example where whoever divided the Scriptures into numbered verses didn't do a good job.² Because the first part of verse 4- should actually be attached to the end of verse 3- so that verse 3 says,

But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving will be in secret

So, what Jesus meant when He said, “**do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing**” is “**so that your giving will be in secret**”. So, by using that phrase about our right and left hand- our Lord is telling us to give “*in secret*”. Okay- but what does it mean to give, “*in secret*”? It means that we are to give without wanting anyone else knowing that we gave. Now somebody else might know that we gave. But that isn't why we gave. Remember, the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees were giving and ministering to the Poor all the time. But the REASON they were doing this- was two-fold:

1. To be *seen* by men
2. To be *honored* by men

... which Jesus said was “Hypocrisy”. And the ONLY Reward for hypocritical Giving- is the praise of other people. But God will NOT acknowledge it at all- it is as though you never gave anything.

So, we are to give “in secret”. And if anyone else finds out that we gave- we have no control over that. But we are NOT to give, hypocritically- so that people will find out and “make much of us”. But now look at the remainder of verse 4 again:

... and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

So, God has promised to reward our secret giving. And we should say that and believe that and expect that. But that does NOT mean that God will automatically bless us *financially*. But He might. It also does NOT mean that God *owes* anything to us. He doesn't. All of God's Blessings are giving to us- FREELY- without any *Coercion* or *Pressure*. But HOW and WHEN God chooses to reward us- is at God's own Discretion. Yet God's Promise to reward us stands firm.

Now there are those who might say, “I don't want or need for God to reward me when I give in secret”. And while I totally understand why you might say that- nevertheless- God has given us His infallible Promise that He would. So, to be

² The Verse and Chapter Divisions in the Bible were added many hundreds of years AFTER the biblical Writers were dead. So, the Divisions are NOT inspired. And we are free to re-arrange them to make better sense of what is being said.

biblical- we have to humble ourselves to even this- and believe and trust that when we give in secret- God will reward us.

But that means that the Man-made Teaching in the modern American Church about “*Seed Investing*” and “*Seed Giving*” is a Lie from Hell. And beside the Fact that the overwhelming majority of those who have bought into that Lie NEVER receive what they think they are entitled to get- that false Doctrine promotes Covetousness and Greed and Self-righteousness in the Minds and Hearts of those who are deceived by it.

The Truth is that ALL you can give to God or to any Ministry- is what God has first placed into your hand. And so, you are actually giving God a *portion* of what He gave to you- *first*. So, you really haven’t given God anything other than a *part* of what He gave to you in the first place.

But to give to God and then to think and say and pray that, because you gave to God a *portion* of what He gave to you *first*- that God now OWES you? And then to get “*bent out of shape*” with God because you think you are, somehow being cheated out of what you *think* you are *entitled* to get? Beloved, that is the height of Arrogance and the height of Blasphemy.

ALL God *owes* you; ALL you have *earned*; ALL you *deserve*; ALL that would be *fair* for God to give you; and ALL you are *entitled* to- is to burn forever in the Lake of Fire! But ALL your Blessings; ALL your physical Healings; ALL your Happiness; ALL your Peace; ALL your Joy; ALL your Salvation; ALL your Inheritance in Heaven- ALL of that- is a gracious Gift of God’s free Mercy and God’s free Love and is, in no way, *owed* to you.

The Bible teaches that God is NEVER obligated to Man in any way. Ever. No matter what you have done. God is NEVER “painted into a corner” where He HAS to move; or He HAS to do what you want Him to do. That is a sinful and unbiblical understanding of the one, true, and living God. Everything in Christianity from Salvation to Healing to Blessings are all carried out BY God’s Grace and THROUGH the Gift of Faith. None of that is ever *earned* or *deserved* by us. And God is never *obligated* to do ANYTHING. And yet Jesus said this in **Luke 12:32:**

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.

... but then hypocritical and worldly people then assume that this Statement means that God will give them whatever they *want*.

So, as we read and trust in what Jesus said *here*- we need to read the very next Passage- where we find out just what Jesus *meant* by promising us the Kingdom:

Luke 12:33-34

33 "Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys.

34 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Owner and Creator of the Universe is the ONLY truly “Free” Being that exists. Man has NEVER been truly “Free”. When we were Lost- we were “Slaves of satan” and “Slaves of Sin”. And now that we are saved- we are “*bond-slaves*” of Jesus Christ. But Man has NEVER been in charge. Ever. And we never will be. We have ALWAYS been Slaves; and we will ALWAYS be Slaves- even in Heaven. And so, we should learn the Language of Slaves; and the Attitude of Slaves; and stop thinking and talking and acting like we are in charge. Because we’re NOT.

So, YES! God has promised to reward our secret Giving. But NO! we cannot *dictate* to God what that Reward might be. And Salvation causes us to *rejoice* about that Reality. Salvation makes us *happy* to know that God is *always*- and in all Ways- over us. And Salvation *causes* us to have great Joy over the Truth that we are ALWAYS accountable to God for what we do. And Salvation allows us to *celebrate* the Reality that ALL that we have; and ALL that we give; and ALL that we lose- belongs to God- and ALL that we are- are “temporary Custodians” over *some* of what belongs solely to God- and we are *commanded* to use and manage what we have been given- according to God’s written Instructions and to His Glory- alone!

Amen. Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone

