

**The Gospel of Matthew #62**

**Sermon on the Mount: chapter 6: LIVING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

Overview of chapter 6

He is teaching us to live *consistently* with what we say we believe:

- An unseen eternal Kingdom of God our Home
- A heavenly **Father** Who the center of our affections & Help

But we live as practical atheists in 2 basic ways:

1. Whose FAVOR we seek: v1-18

Egs: A. Giving (v2-4) B. Praying (v5-15) C. **Fasting (v16-18)**

2. What TREASURES we seek: v19-34

Two kinds of concerns: A. Acquisition (v19-24)

B. Anxiety (v25-34)

Each one cries, "More!"

Ch 5: righteousness → ch 6: **FAITH**

How many of us occasionally fast when we pray?

Jesus says "**WHEN** you fast..."

I. \_\_\_\_\_ you fast

Jesus assumes you will (and endorses it, together with giving and praying)

A. Fasting in the OT

1. Only time commanded is for Day of Atonement: Lev 16:29, 31; 23:27-32; Num 29:7. It is a vivid way of communicating

\_\_\_\_\_ **before God**

2. Done other times of deep sorrow or calamity or urgency: egs: I Sam 31:13 (grief); II Sam 12:16-23 (urgent prayer); Zech 8:19 (remember afflictions & God's judgments);

Dan 9:1-3 (repentance and urgency);

Esther 4:16 (desperation); Ezra 8:21-23 (urgency)

Always because of deep feelings of sorrow or repentance, joined with prayer in seeking God earnestly

B. Jesus on fasting

1. Jesus fasted in the desert 40 days (Mt 4:2)

2. Jesus corrected hypocritical fasting (Mt 6:16-18)

3. Jesus taught His Presence precluded fasting! (Mt 9:14-15)

C. Pharisees' fasts

From empty humbling to pious achievement

They fasted to show how earnestly they sought after God (v16, cf Lk 18:12)

II. \_\_\_\_\_ you fast

A. Not fast:

1. To gain God's favor

Superstition: Lk 18:12

Jesus Christ has gained us access to God as Father by His death and resurrection (Heb 4:14-16), so your Father sees and responds to your heart cry (Mt 6:18)

2. To impress people with your spirituality: v16

B. Do fast:

1. To seek the Lord in a personal crisis (Acts 9:9)

Not eating focuses your attention on spiritual things

2. To focus time together in prayer on an urgent and important matter (Acts 13:1-3; 14:23)

Aids concentration and removes distractions

III. \_\_\_\_\_ to fast

A. \_\_\_\_\_: Not to impress anyone; do not complain about what you are suffering: v16

(General rule of sacrifice for the Lord)

Rather look normal and do not mention your fast: v17-18a

B. \_\_\_\_\_: Secretly to the Father Whose Face alone you seek with broken heart or deep urgency: v18b

(Cf. prayer, done normally alone (v6), but sometimes in community (cf. v9: our; Acts 13, 14 together)

C. \_\_\_\_\_: Always joined with prayer (fasting has no merit in itself)

And He WILL hear and answer with infinite loving wisdom for your good and His glory: v18c