

**Message #20****Matthew 6:16-24**

There have always been and there will always be people in the religious arena who do things for show and not for God. They want to be in the limelight. Their motive is not God's will; it is their will.

Jesus Christ was giving teaching to His disciples (5:1-2). He would eventually send them out into the Jewish world to take these teachings to Israel (10:1-5). Part of their goal was to show Israel that they needed greater righteousness than what was being presented to them. The righteous kingdom demanded a kingdom righteousness, which Israel thought she already had but really she didn't have.

**KINGDOM RIGHTEOUSNESS DEMANDS PROPER ATTITUDES TOWARD FASTING AND TREASURE.**

God never wants us doing things for show. He wants our focus on Him. Real righteousness keeps its focus on God. No matter what the area—whether giving, praying, fasting or material things—real righteousness is always focused on God.

**AREA #1 – Real righteousness and fasting. 6:16-18**

There are times when fasting is the right thing to do—Jesus fasted (4:3) and so did the early church (Acts 13:2). God demanded that Israel fast on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:27). The Pharisees had taken fasting to a whole new level. Twice a week—Monday and Thursday—they fasted and they let everyone know they fasted (Luke 18:12).

Jesus decided to teach Israel the proper attitude toward fasting. Fasting was not publically depriving oneself of something; it was for the purpose of secret devotion to God. Jesus wanted them to know that the key issue for the fasting is the motive.

**(Regulation #1) - Do not put on a gloomy face so others know you are fasting. 6:16**

Jesus did not want His people looking gloomy and miserable when they fasted. He wanted the people to realize that spirituality is a private thing, not a public show.

**(Regulation #2) - Do look normal when you are fasting so only God knows about it. 6:17-18**

Just like with giving and praying, real spirituality in fasting is done in secret. If a believer wants to fast, it is between that believer and God.

When it comes to religious things, one can do something to receive the shallow praise of men or one can receive the eternal praise of God.

**AREA #2 – Real righteousness and treasure. 6:19-24**

We are challenged in many passages, including Church Age passages, to keep our focus on that which is heavenly, not that which is worldly (Col. 3:2; II Cor. 4:18). Laying up treasures in heaven is always to be the primary focus of our lives. The danger in any dispensation is that laying up treasures in heaven becomes secondary to laying up treasures on earth.

There is nothing wrong with having wealth. God does give us many good things to enjoy in life that have to do with living life on earth (I Tim. 6:17). **It is not wrong to own things or to possess things; but what is wrong is to let the things own us or possess us.** All throughout the Bible we are challenged not to be a covetous person who loves the present world and is motivated by greed for more and more (i.e. Col. 3:5; Eph. 5:5).

**(Point #1) - Keep your heart's focus on treasures in heaven, not treasures on earth. 6:19-21**

In Greek, the command to not lay up treasures upon the earth is given in a present imperative with a negative prohibition, which means this is action which needed to be stopped. Christ is addressing people who need to stop an action that was in progress; namely, they were focused on laying up treasures on earth rather than treasures in heaven.

**Reason #1 - Because treasures on earth do not last forever. 6:19**

**Reason #2 - Because treasures in heaven do last forever. 6:20**

**Reason #3 - Because treasure on earth or in heaven is an either/or matter of the heart. 6:21**

**(Point #2) - Keep your eye's focus on treasure in heaven, not treasure on earth. 6:22-23**

Another way to say this is keep your sights focused on that which is heavenly, not earthly. The reason is because one who is focused on the heavenly will see things clearly and reflect the light of God to others. However, one who is focused on the earthly will be colored and will reflect darkness rather than light.

**(Point #3) - Keep your service for God, not for money. 6:24**

You cannot have a love for money and for God at the same time. Sooner or later they will come into conflict with each other and you will have to make a decision.

Hebrews 13:5-6 tells us to stay free from the love of money.