

Introduction:

Well Good Morning...

Scripture Reading:

Please go ahead and turn in your Bibles to Matthew 6:1-18 for our scripture reading today...Matthew 6:1-18...As you turn there, I would just like to thank all those who faithfully serve on Sunday morning...Thank you...We are in Matthew 6:1-18...And I will ask you to please stand if you are able to do so for the reading of God's Word...

“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 ^[d]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 ^[e]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 ^[f]evil. ^[g][For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]’

¹⁴ For if you forgive ^[h]others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

¹⁵ But if you do not forgive ^[i]others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

“May God bless the reading of His Word”...Children are dismissed to children's church...Please be seated...”

Before I begin, I'd like to open our time in the Word with a moment of prayer...

Introduction:

Well good morning...It is an honor to be here with you this morning friends and family...

But before we begin this morning...

#1: I'd like to ask for forgiveness because unfortunately I am genetically predisposed to sweat like Shaquille O'Neal...I'd probably sweat in Antarctica... so it may be either to take my jacket off or get one of the those sweat head bands...If I need to take my jacket off just know I am not trying to go rogue or push the envelope...It just hard to preach with sweat pouring in my eyes...

#2: The second thing I'd like to share with you is something I shared with the elders and deacons...I need to apologize for I am not perfect...I know, I know shocking...shocking to some not to my wife...I am not perfect...I am not a perfect leader...So, I will make mistakes...So When I make a mistake...

Know first that it is **never** my intention to purposefully hurt anyone's feelings or to a make mistake...second, I ask of you for forgiveness and please, third, feel free to approach me about any issue...

So, Two weeks ago we discussed we discussed Matthew 5:33-37 on keeping your word, last week we discussed Matthew 5:38-48 on putting aside revenge and bitterness through forgiveness and this week I'd like to talk to you about Godliness, about Godliness... about what it looks like to truly be a Godly person...

ME: (What are we talking about?)

But first let me ask you a question...What is Godliness? What is it? How do we define it?

In preparing for this week's lesson, I found it difficult to define...I found it to be like nailing mud to a wall...

So, in order to gain an understanding I decided to go pursue some great quotes on Godliness...

Yet in my pursuit, I found something interesting...I found that it is difficult for everyone else to define too...

But there are still many great quotes on the issue of Godliness

Charles Spurgeon Speaks of Godlines...

“Alas! Much has been done of late to promote the production of dwarfish Christians. Poor, sickly believers turn the church into a hospital, rather than an army. Oh, to have a church built up with the deep godliness of people who know the Lord in their very hearts, and will seek to follow the Lamb wherever he goes!”

Or one from the famous missionary William Carey

"Prayer - secret, fervent, believing prayer - lies at the root of all personal godliness."

These quotes gives us a decent idea...but I'm not sure they really nail it...

Some say Godliness is external...that Godliness is found through a strict adherence to a moral code...Being Godly is doing what you're supposed to do...Paying your taxes, Giving your tithe, going to church, serving on a board, making sure to give time to a local ministry, or combing your hair a certain way...

Essentially, in some people's eyes Godliness is found through action alone...However these type of Christians tend to try justify their **worth** before God by their **work** before God...But friends your worth is not declared in what you do...Your worth was declared on the cross...That We Christians are a valued member of God's family and so valued that He died for us (Romans 5:8) and we are actually a co-heirs with Christ...I think action is part of the equation to Godliness but I'm not sure it encapsulates the whole...

Some say Godliness is something internal...that Godliness is about reading your Bible everyday and memorizing and meditating on scripture...That Godliness is more about your knowledge...It is about hearing the Word on a consistent basis...

Essentially, those who pursue Godliness internally alone often find Godliness to be a state of being...Viewing Godliness as a habit to be controlled...Many who pursue Godliness only through knowledge and disciplines seem to be seeking a way to mentally justify their position before God rather than realizes knowledge does not justify but rather grace through faith in Christ alone justifies...

Some say Godliness is a feeling...that Godliness is a feeling of passionate love... as a firey love of a newlywed... (I've heard this one many times) That Godliness is found through attending an engaging church or a Bible study that gives excitement, that Godliness is found through how I engage with those around me and how I communicate my passionate love for God to others...

Essentially, those who pursue Godliness through feeling alone...May be seeking to justify their position before God through finding a peace and a passion for the Lord...

However...The Gospel declares you a child of God regardless of feeling...Finding justification through feeling will be fleeting...

Listen friends if you are a believer in Jesus then you have something that will never be taken from you...Salvation is not something that can be taken off as a set of clothes but it is permanently sealed...It is welded to you by the Holy Spirit that lives inside you...

WE:

So, if Godliness isn't just a state of being, actions or feeling alone then What is Godliness? For the sake of simplicity...**Godliness is a pursuit...**Godliness is the pursuit of someone...True

Godliness is the sanctifying pursuit of Christ... True Godliness is the sanctifying purposeful, missional pursuit of Christ...

True Godliness is found only through an intentional relationship with God that create a progressive holiness...

Paul says in Philippians 3, “⁸ More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.”

Transition: So, if true Godliness is the sanctifying pursuit of Christ... How do we grow in it? How do we grow in our faith?

Today, Jesus gives us a few guidelines to grow in our pursuit of Godliness through spiritual disciplines... In the passage today, Jesus discusses giving and praying as a spiritual discipline in our pursuit of God... and in the passage today Jesus provides with each disciplines 3 main things... Jesus provides **a Warning, a How to (or a template on proper conduct of spiritual disciplines), and the result of proper conduct...**

Transition: Come with me again to Matthew 6... Matthew 6:1-15 and we will begin by Looking at verses 1-4...

Read 6:1-4,

“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.”

So in this particular section, Jesus is discussing the spiritual disciplines of giving...

What is the Warning?

If you have a pen and a paper Bible, circle Verse 1... Verse 1 is the principle warning for all three disciplines)

Look back at verse 1-2, “Beware... Or Warning, warning, warning... 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...

What is the warning? Verse 1 leads us to Point #1:

Point #1: True Godliness is Not External Appearance... That when you give...or when you practice righteousness...Do not sound a trumpet...in other words do not draw attention to yourself while you give... That practicing righteousness is not about being seen...

Transition: which then leads us to Point #2:

Point #2: True Godliness does not seek man’s approval...

Friends, Godliness is not something to be “shown off”...the practice of righteousness is not meant to be shown off...I remember hearing a recent convert say that he would buy the biggest Bible he could find to show everyone he is serious...

Story: Godliness is not to be shown off...No one likes a show off...I want you to think back to your childhood...I bet everyone of us can remember the class show off...Right? I am sure there was a child that just had to one up you...”Well, I bet you can’t do this?”...How many of you liked this person?

For me, it was Ross...Elementary school it was Ross...Man, Ross was smarter than me, quicker than me and it seemed Everything I could do...He could do better...He used to whip me in math problems... He used to whip me in races on the playground... I’ve never seen legs go that fast...

Just like we don’t like a “show off” neither does God...**That true Godliness is not meant to be “shown off” but rather pursued...**

Observation:

Notice with me in verses 1 and 2, watch this...**That Jesus in verse 1 and 2** does not denounce giving but only denounces **HOW** one gives...**Listen friends...**that giving of our resources is an essential component to Godliness...It is...Some are saying, “Oh brother the preacher is asking for money” I’m not God is...I’m just conveying the issue in the text itself...That giving to church or giving to the Lord’s work is an essential component to living a Godly life...

Transition: So, the warning for giving is not to be seen as we give **or more specifically** that we should not draw attention to ourselves as we give...

But then how are we to give? What is the template for giving? Look back at verse 3-4,

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...”

What is the “How-To” or what is the template on how to give? “Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing...so that your giving will be in secret...”

Now we look at this verse and some of you may be saying as I did, “Now, how in the world can I not know what my right hand is doing?”

Unless you have a strangely unique ability or multiple personalities...Jesus seems to be using hyperbole here...

I think this is what Jesus is saying...That you should be so unmotivated by appearance that you give as if it were in secret...

So, can you drop a check in the offering plate? Sure...However, do not give in the offering plate if all you want is to be seen putting a check in the plate...Give us in the offering plate but do not give if it is just to be seen...Rather give without any concern for anyone watching...

Illustrations: Jesus is asking us not to be like many businesses today...Some businesses I’ve found really mainly give to be noticed...How do I know what business oftentimes give to be noticed? It is because they find the world’s biggest check and take lots of pictures with it...Right? We’ve all seen the big checks...Give but not to be noticed...

Point #1: True Godliness is Not External Appearance...

Point #2: True Godliness does not seek man’s approval but God’s...

Transition: Now let us look at the next discipline to pursue true Godliness found in verses 7-15...

Read 6:7-15, “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 ^[e]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 ^[f]evil. ^[g][For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]”

What is the warning? Look back at verse 7, “Do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do...for they will be suppose they will be heard for their many words...”

Point 3: True Godliness is Not Ritual but Relational

That in the sanctifying pursuit of the person of Jesus Christ that we are not to get bogged down in a ritualistic method to Godliness...Because oftentimes rituals lead to meaningless repetition...The motivation for Godliness is not ritual but should be relational...

When we pray...When we come to church...When we read your Bible, we should not be motivated by obligation and rather be motivated by a person...

That when you pursue God you should recognize His salvation and Gospel for you and then seek to enhance and pursue a relationship with Him...

Transition: But Jesus does not just stop with a “warning” on prayer but continues with a “how to”...

But before we dissect the template known as the Lord’s Prayer in verses 9-13...I’d like to make a quick cultural observation on the Lord Prayer...

I find the Lord’s prayer to have a bit of irony in our culture...Because Jesus warns us to not use meaningless repetition in our prayers...But what has the Lord’s Prayer become often in our culture? Meaningless repetition, right?

I’d like to give you a test...to demonstrate the irony of the Lord’s Prayer...I’d like you to raise your hand if you’ve ever had a ball coach, a priest, a co-worker pray the Lord’s prayer as meaningless repetition?

Story: To tell you a quick story...When I was in little league, I had a ball coach that prayed the Lord’s Prayer before every ball game then he’d go out and yell at the refs and make fun of 10 year old boys for their play...

Can we pray the Lord’s prayer? Sure...Just don’t let it be meaningless repetition...The Lord’s prayer is not necessarily for reciting but rather for guidance...It is designed as a template to guide us to pray...

Jesus actually gives us 4 concerns to pray through...

Notice the “How To” with me...

Look at verse 9, 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.’”

#1: We are to pray with Adoration...Adoration is the recognition of God's glory...of where God is and where you are...It is the recognition that God is in heaven...That He is holy...That He is transcend...He is all powerful...That He holds the Milky Way Galaxy on the tip of His finger...That He transcends time...That the universe can not contain Him...And then there is you...

Adoration is then realizing that God is magnificent and that you are a mere ant that could be smooshed...an ant living on a small ball in a vast ocean...That God is glorious and mighty...That His will, His kingdom and His plan will not be thwarted...

#2: We are then to pray for Needs... Look at verse 11, “Give us this day our daily bread.” Literally in the Greek it says, “Give us the bread we need daily...”

It's okay to go to the Lord with needs...Actually it is commanded...Jesus commands us to go to the Lord for needs... Some would take this verse to mean that we can only pray to God for our dietary needs...

But I believe based on the language that we should go to God in prayer for any of our immediate daily needs...Food, Shelter, direction, guidance, patience, perseverance...a job...We are to pray with adoration, for needs and...

#3: We are to pray for forgiveness...Read Matthew 6:12, “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”

Jesus commands us to go to the Lord with our debts...But friends...It is not talking about the debt of money we owe to another...but it is referring to our debt of sin...That as part of our regular devotion and prayer life that we confess the sin we have committed against the Lord...

1 John 1:9 adds, “That if we confess our sins He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness...”

Look back at verse 12, “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors...”

We are to also confess our sins to God in order that we may forgive others...God's forgiveness should remind us to forgive others...That if God forgives billions and billions of sins then we can forgive one wrong, two wrongs or even seventy times seven wrongs against us...If God forgives us we can forgive a spouse or a friend...or we can forgive one another.....

Transition: But notice with me the seriousness of forgiving others, skip down to verses 14-15

“⁴ For if you forgive ^[h]others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
¹⁵ But if you do not forgive ^[i]others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”

God forgives therefore we should forgive...Friends, this verse informs us that in order to run the race to the fullest we must not carry the weight of bitterness or revenge...But friends lay it aside through first realizing God has forgiven you for far more than we will ever need to forgive

another...

God forgives therefore we should forgive...Confess your sins and forgive others...

Transition: So, we ought to pray with adoration, needs, confession and then look at verse 13...

Read Matthew 6:13, “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.’]”

#4 We are to pray for Guidance...The Lord’s Prayer template instructs us to then pray for guidance...Specifically over temptation...That in our daily life that we shouldn’t live a defeated life to sin but rather recognize the seriousness of sin and pray for the Lord’s strength to overcome it...The text and the context not only seem to indicated praying for strength and guidance to overcome sin but also guidance as for direction in our daily lives...

YOU:

But we still have a question we must answer... **So what? What difference does this passage make in my life? In applying this passage I’d like to talk to two different groups of people...**

The first group of people are those that the “so what” means nothing too... Instead some asking “so who?” If you are sitting here this morning and you do not know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior then the first question you need to answer is not “so what?” but rather, “so who?”

Everyone of us in this rooms are sinners...**Everyone of us...I’m a sinner, you are a sinner...**I am not perfect, you are not perfect...**And everyone of us are in need of a Savior...**That Savior is Jesus the Christ who died on the cross for you was raised from the dead and lives...And he offers you eternal life through faith in Him...

AND LISTEN, There isn’t enough good deeds you can possibly to knock down the door to heaven...Heaven’s door can only be opened through one person Jesus Christ and you enter into fellowship with Him through faith...Romans 10:9...That before you even consider growing in your faith you must first have faith in the only ticket to heaven...the only ticket to a true relationship with God is through Jesus..

Now, to group #2...Group #2 are those that are on the pursuit...If you are a Christian, then your task is to ask “So What?” How do I apply this message to my life?

Today, I want to leave you with **3 key ideas...3 key ideas** for applying this message to your life...

Idea #1: Disciplines need Discipline- Friends, building the discipline of giving, praying and next week fasting takes discipline...It takes a conscious decision to see it through in your daily life...

Idea #2: Disciplines facilitate Destination (or the pursuit)- Disciplines facilitate your pursuit of God...It aids and facilitates your walk with God helping you to grow in your faith...

Idea #3: Disciplines are not Displays- Remember that as you grow...to not display your disciplines... Remember Matthew 6:1, “Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.”

WE:

As I close Friends, Let us be Christians that are on a pursuit...That we are consciously, continuously pursuing Christ not to “show off” but rather let the Gospel motivate you to pursue Him 1 John 4:10 states, “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”...Love Him because He first loved you...

Friends, keep your eyes on the prize...On the sanctifying pursuit of Jesus Christ...

Let us pray