



THE GOSPEL OF
MATTHEW



Simple and Sincere

Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18



Matthew 6:1–4

¹ “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

² Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”



Matthew 6:5–6

⁵ “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”



Matthew 6:16–18

¹⁶ “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”



1. Dead goodness (6:1)

¹ “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.”



Matthew 5:16

“Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”



Most congregations of professing Christians today are saturated with a kind of dead goodness, an ethical respectability which has its motivational roots in the flesh rather than in the illuminating and enlivening control of the Holy Spirit. This surface righteousness does not spring from faith and the Spirit's renewing action, but from religious pride and conditioned conformity to tradition. In 2 Timothy 3 Paul describes it as a form of godliness which denies its power.

— Richard Lovelace



2. Self-deception (6:2, 5, 16)

² Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others... ⁵ And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others... ¹⁶ And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others.



3. Hollow praise (6:2, 5, 16)

² Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

⁵ Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

¹⁶ Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.



Proverbs 22:1

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches,
and favor is better than silver or gold.



Popular acclaim is not worth talking about.
It comes randomly, for little or no reason,
and it never lasts very long.

— Boethius



One of the most tragic things about us is that our lives are so much governed by other people and by what they do to us and think about us.

— Martyn Lloyd-Jones



4. Simple sincerity (6:3–4, 6, 17–18)

³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret.

⁶ But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret.

¹⁷ But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret.



5. Simple sincerity (6:4, 6, 18)

⁴ And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁶ And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁸ And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.



To the blessed who alone behold it, you are the sole serene goal in which we may rest, satisfied and tranquil, and to see your face is our only hunger, our only thirst, for you are our beginning, our journey, and our end.

— Boethius



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