

THE  
KINGDOM  
IS HERE

# matthew

*sermon series*

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## KINGDOM SEEKERS: MATTHEW 6

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Matthew told us that Jesus' ministry was marked by preaching and teaching about the kingdom and healing the sick. We learned about this in Matthew 4:23-25 and Matthew 9:35. Matthew 5-7 serves as an illustration of Jesus' teaching and then Matthew 8-9 illustrates the types of healings Jesus performed.

Our text for today is Matthew 6, and this text is a continuation of Jesus' sermon on the Mount. This text also continues to emphasize the theme of Kingdom righteousness. Righteousness is a major theme, if not the main theme of Matthew 5-6. Jesus preached in the beatitudes that Kingdom citizens must hunger and thirst for righteousness and are filled with it (Matthew 5:1-12). Jesus explained in the latter half of Matthew 5 that the righteousness we need, we do not possess (Matthew 5:13-45). Rather, Jesus fulfills this righteousness and gives it to us as a gift (Matthew 5:17).

Now, in Matthew 6, Jesus continues to preach on the theme of kingdom righteousness and explains that Kingdom Citizens must seek God's kingdom and his righteousness first rather than the things of this world. As I studied this passage this week, I became convinced that Jesus divides humanity into two groups: those with man-centered righteousness. This righteousness leads to hell since it is no different than the Pharisees (5:20). Then, some possess God's righteousness. This righteousness is greater than the Pharisees and leads to life (5:20). Those who possess this righteousness, as we learned last week, do so because they have received it as a gift.

Let's investigate this truth now in Matthew 6.

### ***Man's Praise or God's Praise: Matthew 6:1-18***

The first section of Matthew 6 is verses 1-18. This section begins with an introduction in verse 1 where we learn the controlling idea of this verse: do not practice righteousness *to be seen by man*. Jesus then illustrates what he means.

In verses 2-4, he discusses generosity. Man's righteousness is generous but for an earthly purpose: *to be seen*. Notice how some sound the trumpet as they are generous (6:2). These men do not desire the glory of God, but their glory. Jesus tells us that they are generous *to be praised* by others (2). They desire men to seek well of and compliant them. God's righteousness is similarly generous but for different reasons. This generosity manifests itself in secret giving because these people desire God to be glorified, not themselves (6:3).

Next, in verses 5-15, Jesus discusses prayer. Man's righteousness leads these people to pray to be seen by others (6:5). Again, the reason for this public prayer is obvious. They do not desire the glory of God but the glory of man. Notice verses 5. "For they love to stand and pray." The issue here is that these people love to pray so that everyone notices them. Man's righteousness loves the glory of man (their good thoughts and complaints), not the glory of God (the display of God's worth). Now we should point out one less obvious point here. Man's righteousness focuses on man; thus, any prayer that focuses on man rather than God is an unrighteous prayer. This prayer leads to some standing in the street praying loudly. It may also lead some to be timid to pray. If you are timid because you are afraid of what people will think, then that is man's centered prayer. Let's be a people who pray God-centered prayers.

Glory to God because he explains what a God-centered prayer is in the Lord's prayer (6:7-13). God-centered prayers focus on the glory of God. This prayer begins with the request for God's name to be hallowed or sanctified. The idea of sanctification is "complete devotion" and God-centered prayers request that God would display his holiness or complete devotion throughout the earth (9-10). Now, as is true throughout Scripture, so it is true here in Matthew 6. The display of God's holiness entails glorious, good things for us such as physical provision (6:11), forgiveness (6:12), and

protection from temptation and evil (6:13). Similarly, in the OT, God announces that he will hallow or sanctify his name by saving his people (Ezekiel 36:22-32, see esp. 23). God-centered prayers focus on the glory of God displayed in the joy of his people!

Before moving on to discussing fasting, Jesus discusses forgiveness since this theme was present in the Lord's prayer. His point here is blunt, so we will be blunt. He simply says that forgiveness is a powerful indicator of the nature of our righteousness. If your righteousness does not move you to forgive others – even those who have hurt you – then your righteousness is man's righteousness, not God's righteousness. There is no grey area here because when God's people receive forgiveness, this forgiveness will express itself in forgiving others. It will do this; it must do this. Again, church family, there should be no doubt in our minds about the genuineness of our faith. An authenticity test of your faith is forgiveness.

Now, after discussing the acts of generosity and prayer, Jesus discusses the issue of fasting (6:16-18). Again, man's righteousness and God's righteousness move a person too fast in opposite ways. Those who possess man-centered righteousness fast so that man sees them. These are the people who sound a trumpet in public (6:2) and who stand up to be seen while praying (5). Now, these people disfigure their faces

intentionally to be seen (6:16). God's righteousness, however, is not like this. This righteousness moves us not to seek the praise of man but the praise of God. Therefore, like generosity and prayer, we fast in secret.

We learn in Matthew 6:1-18 that man's righteousness seeks the praise of man while God's righteousness seeks the glory of God.

## ***Earthly Treasure or Kingdom Treasure:***

### ***Matthew 6:19-24***

The second section of Matthew 6 is verses 19-24. In these verses, Jesus discusses the issue of treasure, and this topic is closely connected to the verses we just studied (6:1-18). The connection is this: if we seek the praise of man, it is because we treasure man above God. If we seek the glory of God, it is because we treasure God above man. Those who possess God's righteousness as a gift do so, not because they simply do their duty, complete their checklist of holy things to do, or do enough to earn God's favor. Those who possess God's righteousness as a gift do so because they treasure God. Jesus talks about this often in his parables. Let's remember that the kingdom of God is like someone who finds a treasure in a field and so they go with joy and sell everything they have to buy that field. We have bought the field because we treasure God more than this world.



Likewise, the kingdom of God is like a valuable pearl that one finds in a field. The person goes and sells everything to buy that field (Mathew 13:45). They buy the field because they treasure the pearl more than their possessions.

The issue then with our righteousness is all about what we value. The more value something has the more we treasure it. Church family, Jesus again is blunt in these verses. He says that we cannot serve two masters. Treasuring this world such as money or man's praise is incompatible with treasuring God and his glory. If we are wrong in assigning value – if we assign more value to the things of this world, we will be damned. This word is the word of the Lord: we cannot serve two masters.

So how do we move from treasuring this world to treasuring God? The issue is beholding the glory of God. This reality – beholding the glory of God – always moves God's people to treasure God, of course, not perfectly, but truly. This fact is evident with Noah, Abraham, and Israel. God reveals himself to Noah and Abraham and they worship him. God reveals his glory to Israel on Mt. Sinai and they build the tabernacle: they worship God. This idea is why blindness is a dominant way to describe the unsaved: they have not seen the glory of God. One day we will be glorified and will worship God perfectly. Why? because we will see him (1 John 3). The same idea is true now. We are transformed when we behold the glory of the Lord (2 Cor 3:18).

Church family, are you beholding the glory of the Lord? Let's remind ourselves of God's glory. In the Lord's prayer, Jesus taught us to pray that God's kingdom would come to earth. This is a prayer for God to be glorified on earth. Then, Jesus says that we should ask God for daily provision, forgiveness, and spiritual protection. The glory of God is displayed in God graciously caring for us.

Church family, are you beholding the glory of the Lord in the gospel! Beholding this glory is what moves us to treasure him more than the things of this earth.

### ***Earthly Living or Kingdom Living: Matthew 6:25-34***

The third section of Matthew 6 is verses 25-34. Here we see that the thing or person that we treasure affects our living. If we possess man's righteousness because we treasure man, we will be anxious about the things of this world. We will care intensively about what we will eat, drink, or wear. In our context, we might say, we will care intensively about buying the next toy on our list or saving up enough money to reach our next saving milestone. We will spend too much time thinking and planning and processing all the details about these worldly things. Those who treasure this world have anxiety because we are helpless to provide for us the things we need.

If, however, we possess God's righteousness because we have beheld the glory of the Lord, we will seek God's kingdom and

his righteousness. We will care intensively about the glory of God expressed in his kingdom and we will not be anxious. Why? We will not be anxious because God can provide us what we need. Jesus says that God knows that we need these things (6:32). Moreover, God delights in providing for us. Jesus says that God provides for the birds and flowers, and we are more valuable than them (6:26, 30). Therefore, we are not anxious, but we seek God's righteousness.

## ***Conclusion***

Jesus' sermon on the Mount has focused on the theme of righteousness. Whose righteousness do we possess? Do we possess man's righteousness or God's? Man's righteousness seeks the things of this earth because they treasure the things of this earth. God's righteousness seeks the glory of God because they have beheld the glory of God.

What are you beholding? This week, what glory will you fix your eyes, your mind, and your heart on? Focusing on the glory of man looks like endless scrolling on social media where you beheld jealously the "happy" homes, new toys, and nice vacations of your friends. Focusing on the glory of God means replaying repeatedly in your head how you were unable to make someone else happy. Focusing on the glory of man means constantly devoting attention to getting ahead in this world and achieving your "happiness" goals. If you behold the glory of man repeatedly, this is what you'll treasure.

Do not do that. The glory of God is so much better! When we behold the glory of God, we see the grace of God (John 1:14-18; Ephesians 1:3-14). We see the gospel where God proves himself to be just and merciful. We see our eternal destiny of hell done away with so that we experience an eternal destiny of joy with God. We see a God who delights in doing good to sinners: providing for our earthly needs (6:11), forgiving our sins (6:12), and protecting us from temptation (6:13). We see a God who rewards his people. That is, he overwhelms us with good things (6:4, 6, 18). This week gaze at the glory of God, church family, and let this glory move you to practice God's righteousness. Have a biblical view of God and treasure him above this world.

Non-Christian today is the day. Would you come to Jesus today trusting that your righteousness is insufficient, but that Jesus is sufficient? Come to Jesus today.

## *Prayer*

God, draw the lost to you today and equip your people to live as kingdom citizens. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.

