

Matthew 6:1-4

ALMS GIVEN BEFORE GOD

- I. What they are.
 - A. Alms is mercy or pity especially as it is exhibited in giving alms, charity, a donation to the poor.
 - B. The key is that it is mercy or pity which reflects our gratitude for God's mercy given unceasingly and always undeservedly.
 1. The emphasis is on the attitude of the heart behind the gift, not on what is given.
 2. What determines alms and benevolence is, not the poverty of the recipient, but the well willing/wishing, merciful heart.
- II. This religious activity is sinful when it is done "before men," i.e., before human eyes (others or our own).
 - A. Jesus speaks of alms-giving so it is seen by humans: "sound a trumpet" and "in the streets."
 - B. The evil behind such giving is that it is an activity without God involved, and it is so often pride.
 1. What hypocrisy when we pretend to show the mercy of Jesus while desiring the praise of men.
 2. Jesus is warning against my having the praise of men (including me) the reason for my good works.
- III. Proper giving is doing our giving "in secret."
 - A. Jesus uses the fact that our hands – the right and the left often work together: carry, catch, lift.
 1. The idea is that our giving must be separated from what man think of us.
 2. Therefore we are constantly to kill self by remembering our "natural face" (James 1:23).
 - B. When we give alms for God, then we do so in order to please Him – to "seek God's praise."
- IV. Father's reward.
 - A. To "have the glory of men " is to have the reward of men, i.e., human admiration, which exactly what they wanted.
 - B. Our Father "shall reward thee."
 1. First, the more we aim at our Father's approval, the less we are concerned about the praise or contempt of men.
 2. When God gives a reward to sinners it can be only the reward of grace (undeserved).
 - C. Learn: God works with us as a Father, giving us promises as way to stimulate us to do what is good and right.
 1. God shows that the value of a deed is determined by the motivation from which it proceeds (Rom. 14:23).
 2. Guard against pride and destroying religious activities with wrong motives (I Cor. 11:31).