

Hidden Hills Sovereign Grace Baptist Church
Sunday Sermon

Date: December 6, 2020

Text: Matthew 6:1-15

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:1-15

Subject: Sermon on the Mount, Part 5 – Alms and Prayer

In the preceding message from Matthew 5:31-48, we considered:

1. Our Lord's words concerning divorce and remarriage.
2. His words about swearing or make oaths - and letting our speech be simply yea, yea and nay, nay.
3. His teaching about vengeance and retaliation for wrongs done to us personally; that is, hurt to our person; taking of our goods; and being forced to do things we would not otherwise do.
4. Our Lord's teaching us to give to him who would borrow or ask of us.
5. His teaching us to love our enemies; to bless them that curse us, and do good to them that hate us and pray for them which despitefully use us, and persecute us. In a word, to be perfect in these things even as our heavenly Father is perfect – who makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good; and to send rain on the just and the unjust.

Let us now proceed to chapter 6, verses 1 through 18 for further study of part 5 of the sermon on the mount concerning giving of alms and our manner of prayer.

Matthew 6:1 (KJV) *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.*

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, -- Let us ask ourselves a question about the meaning of the word "alms." This is translated from the Greek word: "ελεημοσυνη eleemosune *el-eh-ay-mos-oo'-nay*" which is found fourteen (14) times in the NT. It is translated as alms 13 times and as almsdeeds 1 time. This Greek word seems to be a combination of two words. The first is "ελεος eleos *el'-eh-os*" which is found 28 times in the NT and is translated as "mercy" every time. The last part of the word speaks of righteousness, therefore, alms give us the meaning of "righteous acts of mercy."

to be seen of them: -- You and I, as disciples of our Lord must do better than the scribes and Pharisees in avoiding "heart-sins, heart-adultery, and heart-murder" Likewise in our good works of righteousness doing what we do from the new man in us, our vital principle, that we may be approved of God, not that we may have the applause and approval of men. So, we watch against hypocrisy, which was the leaven of the Pharisees. *Almsgiving, prayer, and fasting,* are three great Christian duties taught us in these verses.

otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. – You and I, in giving our alms, may expect a reward, and a very great one. But if we give alms only to gain esteem among men, we have our reward already. The giving of alms is charitable (merciful) relief of the poor and is a good work. Men may observe us doing our good works (for that is God's design), but we do it not for the applause of the world. Giving to the poor is giving to the LORD and this good work glorifies our Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 5:16 (KJV) *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

Proverbs 19:17 (KJV) *He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.*

Matthew 6:2 (KJV) *Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*

Here is our Lord's "do not" with respect of our giving alms – and the reason for it. We do it for God's glory and not to be applauded by men.

Matthew 6:3 (KJV) *But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:*

This is a manner of speaking to show that we give our alms in secret – letting neither the one our left or our right know what we are doing. John Gill says: "acquaint not thy nearest and dearest friend with it;"

Matthew 6:4 (KJV) *That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.*

When we take least notice of our good deeds ourselves. We must not observe it too much ourselves: the left hand is a part of ourselves; we must not within ourselves take notice too much of the good we do, must not applaud and admire ourselves. Self-conceit and self-complacency, and an adoring of ourselves, speaks of pride, which is as dangerous as vain-glory before men. God takes most notice of our almsgiving. In the same way that our LORD

hears the wrongs done to us when we do not hear them. David shows us his perception of this in the 38th Psalm.

Psalm 38:12-15 (KJV) *They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long. **13** But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth. **14** Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs. **15** For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.*

In the same manner, our LORD sees the good done by us, when we do not see it. Knowing that God sees in secret is a terror to hypocrites, so it is a comfort to us who are the disciples of the LORD. But this is not all; not only the observation and praise, but the recompense is of God, himself shall **reward thee openly**.

Matthew 6:5 (KJV) *And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*

Here is another “shalt not” for you and I about prayer. Not be as the hypocrites are! Hypocrites manifested the same spirit about prayer as alms-giving: it was done in public places. They did it to be seen and applauded of men, therefore, they have their reward! The applause of men!

Matthew 6:6 (KJV) *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, – Enter into thy closet. What is a closet? What does this mean? Closet is translated from the Greek word “ταμίειον tameion *tam-i'-on*” which is found four times in the NT. It is translated as: closet 2 times, secret chamber 1 time, and storehouse 1 time. It is clear that is our secret place into which we enter for prayer. Isaac went into the field ([Ge 24:63](#)), Christ to a mountain, Peter to a housetop.

and when thou hast shut thy door, -- Shut out everything else. Here we ought to pray unheard by other persons, undisturbed and avoiding distractions. Our Lord does not mean to exclude and condemn public prayer. For he himself directs to it, and approves of it as we see in this verse from Matthew 18.

Matthew 18:19 (KJV) *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*

The LORD’s purpose is to instruct you and I, as his disciples, that we should not only pray in public, but in private also. Especially the latter, which is more suitable and profitable, and less liable to pride, hypocrisy, and vanity.

And when thou hast shut thy door, ***pray to thy Father which is in secret;*** -- All other persons are shut out. We are in a private, secluded, secret place behind a closed door where our Father alone hears our prayer.

Psalms 34:15 (KJV) *The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.*

“Pray as long as you like in secret, but do not pray long with the idea that God will hear you simply because you are a long while at your devotions.” – Spurgeon.

and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. – Your Heavenly Father *sees in secret*; his eye is upon thee to accept thee, when the eye of no man is upon you to applaud you. *under the fig-tree, I saw thee*, said Christ to Nathaniel, [Joh 1:48](#). He saw Paul at prayer in such a street, at such a house, [Ac 9:11](#). There is not a secret, sudden breathing after God, but he observes it.

He will reward thee openly. The heavenly Father who sees and hears in secret shall reward thee openly – What a sure promise! Even when we enter into our prayer closet, we are still finite and know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Romans 8:27 (KJV) *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

1 John 5:14-15 (KJV) *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

O, brothers and sisters, we shall not lose our reward for our doing it in secret. It is called a *reward*, but it is *of grace*, not *of debt*; what merit can there be in begging? The reward will be open; we shall not only have it but have it honorably: the open reward is that which hypocrites are fond of, but they have not patience to stay for it.

Matthew 6:7 (KJV) *But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.*

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: -- We have a "but!" The term "vain repetitions" appears only here in the scripture. It comes from the Greek word "βαττολογεω battologeō *bat-tol-og-eh'-o'* and it means to "stammer, to repeat the same words over and over as in a chant. The wicked do this.

for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. – "Much speaking" comes from the Greek word "πολλολογια polulogia *pol-oo-log-ee'-ah*" – the phrase appears only here in the NT. It comes from two Greek words (1) "πολυς polus *pol-ooos*" which means many, much, or great, and (2) "λογος logos *log'-os*" which means word, saying, and speech. The heathen think they shall be heard because they use a lot of words or a long speech.

Matthew 6:8 (KJV) *Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*

Be not ye therefore like unto them: -- Plain enough! Don't be deceived into thinking that the Heavenly Father will hear you if you say a loooooong prayer!

for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. – The Heavenly Father knows all there is to know about every single one of us. He knows our frame; he has numbered the hairs of our head. He knows that we have need of food, clothing, and warmth. He knows the desires of our hearts because he looks on us, not as men do on the outward appearance,

but on the heart. There is not a word in our tongue that He does not know; he knows our thoughts afar off.

Matthew 6:9 (KJV) *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*

After this manner therefore pray ye: -- That is, in such a concise and short way, without much speaking and vain repetitions; making use of such like words and expressions as the following: not that Christ meant to pin down his disciples to these express words, and no other; for this prayer is not a strict form, but a pattern of prayer, and a directory to it, both as to brevity, order, and matter; for we do not find the disciples ever making use of it in form; and when it is recited by another Evangelist, it is not in the selfsame words as here; which it would have been, had it been designed as an exact form. Besides, Christ does not bid them pray in these very words, but "after this manner"; somewhat like this. Let's read the model prayer from the Gospel according to Luke. Notice that Jesus responded to one of his disciples who said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

Luke 11:1-4 (KJV) *And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. 2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. 3 Give us day by day our daily bread. 4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.*

Therefore, we conclude this to be the model prayer. It is the manner in which we, his disciples, pray. There is no proof that

either he or his disciples ever used exactly this form of prayer, but clear evidence that they prayed often in other language. Reading the prayers of the Apostle Paul, we see them as brief and concise, but not in these exact words. None ever thought Christians are obliged to use no other words than these in prayer, though none must deny the lawfulness and rightness of using those words which Christ hath sanctified.

Our Father which art in heaven, -- Our is a plural pronoun – and we shall notice that all the personal pronouns in this prayer are plural. This is a manner of approach to the Heavenly Father of us all who believe. This indicates to me that it is a prayer which involves not only us individually, but all the saints of God particularly those in our own assembly. This is an address to the Great Almighty Father and God of all the saints of His.

Which art in heaven, -- We cannot see our Heavenly Father with our natural eyes, but we understand He is on His throne in heaven and can see him with the eye of faith.

Hallowed be thy name. – The term “Hallowed be” comes from the Greek word “αγιαζω hagiazo *hag-ee-ad’-zo*” which is found twenty-nine times in the New Testament. That Greek word is translated as: “sanctify 26 times, hallow 2 times, be holy 1 time.” Let’s notice the other time the word hallow is translated:

Luke 11:2 (KJV) *And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, **Hallowed be** thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.*

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the English word “hallowed” as: “Sanctified, blessed, consecrated, dedicated.” We can see that the Father’s name is to be set apart by us in a very special way. His name is holy!

Exodus 20:7 (KJV) *Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

Psalms 111:9 (KJV) *He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.*

Matthew 6:10 (KJV) *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

Thy kingdom come. – We are asking that the kingdom of God would make its appearance with the destruction of the kingdom of Satan, and the abolishing of the kingdom of the beast, in the latter day; which will usher in the kingdom, of the King of kings and Lord of lords which he will receive from his Father, and this will terminate in the kingdom which goes into eternity.

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. -- In this same sense Christ prayed, *not my will, but thine be done*. I think we are praying this way: "Enable me to do what is pleasing to thee; give me that grace that is necessary to the right knowledge of thy will, and an acceptable obedience to it. Let thy will be done conscientiously by me and others, not our own will, the will of the flesh, or the mind, not the will of men, much less Satan's will, that we may neither displease you, Father in anything we do nor be displeased at anything you do.

Matthew 6:11 (KJV) *Give us this day our daily bread.*

Luke writes the petition this way:

Luke 11:3 (KJV) *Give us day by day our daily bread.*

We need the mercy of God every day of our lives for a proper supply of food: We are praying that our Heavenly Father would give us, for the present time, such food as we stand in need of.

Matthew 6:12 (KJV) *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

Luke says it this way: **Luke 11:4 (KJV) *And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us...***

And forgive us our debts, -- Forgive us our sins or transgressions. Speaking of our debts, John Gill says: "...but are so called, because on account of them we owe satisfaction to the law and justice of God."

As we forgive our debtors. – This speaks of actual sins against us – forgive those who have offended, or done real injuries to us, either by word or deed: the injuries of enemies, the unkindness of friends, all sorts of offences, are to be forgiven by us; and not only so, but we are to pray to God to forgive them also. Now this is mentioned, not as if our forgiving others is the cause of God's forgiving us, or the model of it, or as setting him an example, or as if his and our forgiving were to be compared together, since these will admit of no comparison; but this is founded upon God's own promise and grace, to forgive such who have compassion on their fellow creatures. More on this when we come to verses 14 and 15.

Matthew 6:13 (KJV) *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

And lead us not into temptation, -- A petition similar to this is offered by David, [Ps 141:4](#) "Incline not my heart to any evil thing,

to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity." God tempts no man with evil See [Jas 1:13](#). Do not *suffer us, or permit us*, to be tempted to sin. It is certain that God *has* such control over us and the tempter, as to save us from it if we call upon him. The word *temptation*, however, means sometimes *trial, affliction*, anything that tests our moral goodness and strength. It is like saying to the Heavenly Father, We pray you "Do not afflict or try us."

But deliver us form evil: -- Deliver us from any kind of evil – from evil things and evil persons – evil circumstances.

For thine is the kingdom, -- Thine is the reign and dominion.

and the power, and the glory, for ever. – All power is yours and all glory both now and forever.

Amen. – So be it. Be it established.

Matthew 6:14-15 (KJV) *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

Here is a great principle for all of us who are the Lord's disciples. If we forgive men their trespasses, then our heavenly Father will forgive us. But if we forgive not ... neither will our Father forgive us our trespasses.

Mark 11:25-26 (KJV) *And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.*

It is blessedly true that our Heavenly Father, under the provisions of the New Covenant has said “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” There is no danger that we shall ever suffer punishment for our sins. But, we have been called to follow His steps and walk even as he walked. Our service as a child of God includes forgiving others as Christ forgave us.

Colossians 3:13 (KJV) *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

Mark 11:24-26 (KJV) *Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. 25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.*

James 2:13 (KJV) *For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.*

This is constantly required in the Bible. Our Saviour says we should forgive even if the offence be committed seventy times seven times, [Mt 18:22](#). By this is meant, that when a man asks forgiveness, we are cordially and for ever to pardon the offence; we are to declare our willingness to forgive him. If he does not ask forgiveness, yet we are still to treat him kindly; not to harbor malice; not to speak ill of him; to be ready to do him good; and be always prepared to declare him forgiven when he asks it. Let us read from Matthew 18 which pertains to our forgiveness of others. This will be our closing scripture.

Matthew 18:21-35 (KJV) *Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. 23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. 24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. 28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. 29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. 31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? 34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. 35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye*

from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

This verse contains the sum or *moral* of story of the king and the servants. When Christ has explained one of his own parables, we are to receive it just as he has explained it, and not attempt to draw spiritual instruction from any parts or circumstances which he has not explained. The following seems to be the particulars of the general truth which he taught:

- (1.) That our sins are great.
- (2.) That God freely forgives them.
- (3.) That the offences committed against us by our brethren are comparatively small.
- (4.) That we should, therefore, most freely forgive them.
- (5.) That if we do not, God will be justly angry with us, and punish us by delivering us to the tormentors. That word is found only here in the NT and comes from the Greek word "βασανιστης *basanistes bas-an-is-tace*" The root of this word is another Greek word which is translated as: torment 8, pain 1, toss 1, vex 1, toil 1. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word tormentor as: "An officer who inflicts torture or cruelty."

From your hearts. That is, not merely in words, but really and truly to feel and act towards him as if he had not offended us.

Trespasses. Offences, injuries. Remarks and actions designed to do us wrong.

We have seen in these first 15 verses of this 6th chapter both how to conduct ourselves when we do our alms and when we pray. Let us do our alms in secret and let us pray both in services and in our closet (our secret) place. We pray earnestly that our Father "...forgive us our debts,

as we forgive our debtors.” We learned the high importance of forgiving others in order to avoid the chastening hand of our Heavenly Father because of our lack of mercy in forgiving others.