

28 February 2021

Matthew 6:5

Matthew 6:1-18: (3) things that the Lord Jesus taught us, as children of God to do in secret; (3) things, which, we are to make every effort to conceal when doing, and to not call attention to ourselves when engaged in them.

Last week, “TAKE HEED that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them”. Alms being acts of righteousness, kindness, or good deeds done for others. Your motivation for doing righteous deeds should always be to bring glory and honor to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so, when you DO, do your acts of righteousness/kindness:

Let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Conceal it even from yourself!

This morning, “secret prayer”. Not that we don’t often pray in the presence of others, before meals, or at a prayer meeting or church gathering; these are times when we do pray publicly.

In these times, others hear us pray; but in our text, the Lord is teaching us that there ought to be, for each of us, very special, intimate times of prayer when the only One that hears or sees us praying is our Heavenly Father.

Matthew 6:5-8

Secret prayer is a time of private intimacy that every one of us as children of God should have with our Heavenly Father.

In our text, the Lord Jesus teaches us how NOT to pray; and then, HOW TO pray! 1st:
When YOU pray, THOU SHALT NOT pray like a hypocrite!

“TAKE HEED” that you do not pray like hypocrites; their desire is to pray so that they may be heard (praying) by others.

In this our Lord teaches us how terribly affected we are by the fall; here the religious hypocrite would use prayer to be heard/praised by those around them.

This is an abhorrent use of prayer, and it teaches us how bad sin is in that, if it were possible, it would follow us into the very presence of God.

BUT beloved; EVERY prayer is for one purpose, communicating with God, and though others may hear us pray, our singular desire must be to be heard by God alone! We must BLOCK out of our minds every other hearer but God!

MLJ: Sin is not merely something that tends to assail and afflict us when we are far away from God, in a far country as it were. Sin is something so terrible, according to our Lord's exposure of it, that it will not only follow us to the gates of heaven, but---if it were possible---into heaven itself" (in our prayers)

Oh beloved, to pray like a hypocrite, or like the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day is to think to yourselves that you may approach the presence of God and the throne of grace sinfully! Proverbs 15:8-9, 21:27

Do you remember the Parable of Luke 18; when two (2) men went up to the temple to pray? Luke 18:9-14

The scribes and Pharisees had an insatiable desire TO BE SEEN AND HEARD PRAYING.

YES! They loved to pray! But NEVER to be heard by God in Heaven!

Well, they had and received their reward....what was their reward? That they would be HEARD by men; crowds of people who could hear them and praise them for their wonderful prayers; their audience. Actors need an audience to perform! We live in a society that NEEDS "Likes" like on FB. If that is what you're seeking, and you receive it

"Verily, I say unto you, you have your reward".

But when the hypocrite DOES PRAY in this manner, the One to whom they pretended to pray; HEARD not one syllable of their religious performance.

So, don't pray like a scribe or Pharisee, and in (V7), don't pray like the heathen:

Or like the religious lost. How do they pray? By uttering the same words over and over again; Jesus called these types of prayers "vain repetitions".

"Vain repetitions" are thoughtless words (empty prayers) repeated over and over again. Prayers that are full of vain repetitions are prayers that are full of the same cold/mechanical and heartless words, which we utter, every time we pray.

Vain repetitions are words that do not come from a heart that desires an intimate time of communion with God! This type of prayer is an empty religious duty; cold, empty words communicated to the air; words that have no efficacy or power to come close to God's throne of grace.

Jesus also teaches us to NOT think to ourselves that we will be HEARD for our "much speaking". Remember that Pharisees were rebuked by Jesus for making long prayers: Matthew 23:14, Ecclesiastes 5:2

So now we've learned how NOT to pray. "Thou shalt NOT pray like a hypocrite or like someone who is religious and lost.

(V8): "Be not ye therefore like unto them"; don't pray like them.

Don't pray to be heard by others; (like hypocrites), don't pray in vain repetitions or in much speaking!

"For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him"

Your Father already knows what you need, (He knows you intimately), and He will give you, not what you want, but what you need.

Psalms 103:11-14, 38:6-9, Romans 8:26-27

WE WANT THINGS TO BE OUR WAY: We think we know best: But when you pray, and we will see this next time; our prayers are to be according to God's will, not ours. "Thy will be done". Remember that your Heavenly Father knows what things you need before you ask Him. God will give you what you need, NOT what you want. He knows best!

(V6): THIS IS HOW YOU ARE TO PRAY: "But thou, WHEN thou prayest":

"Enter into thy closet": Get yourself into a place where you won't be distracted or interrupted. As 1 Corinthians 7:35: "that ye may attend upon the Lord (and commune with Him) without distraction"

Every one of us OUGHT to have a secret place; a place where we go to get alone with our Father, to pray to Him, where NO ONE else can HEAR OR SEE US but our Heavenly Father!

EVERY TIME we pray, whether in secret or in a public gathering or before others, our ONE and ONLY desire should be that we would be HEARD by our Heavenly Father! 1 John 5:14-15.

Jesus communed with His Father and prayed in secret.

Mark 1:35, 6:46, Luke 6:12, 11:1, 22:39-46

We have many examples in the scriptures of the saints secretly praying to God! Genesis 18:22-23, 32:24, Daniel 6:10-11, Acts 10:1-2

Beloved, SECRET PRAYER is where we go to our Heavenly Father and pour out our hearts before Him.

These supplications are for no one else's ears but your Father's. Do you remember Hannah and her prayer unto the Lord? *1 Samuel 1:9-18*

Secret prayer is so important because, when you secretly pray to your Heavenly Father, you may tell Him things, ask Him things, and confess things to Him, that are only for His ears. Between you and Him alone!

In closing, don't forget this: "When you pray to your Heavenly Father in secret, thy Father WHICH SEETH IN SECRET shall reward thee openly"

God WILL hear you; God will bless you; God will reward you openly.