

Matthew 6:1–4
Living for Infinite, Eternal Reward

Saturday, February 24, 2024 • Read Matthew 6:1–4

Questions from the Scripture text: With what two-word command does v1 begin? What were they not to do? What don't they have, if they do works of mercy to be seen by men? What does v2 assume that we will do? What does it say not to do first? Who did this? Where? To have glory from whom? What does Jesus say they have? What does v3 assume that we will do? What shouldn't we "let know" what? In order to keep our work of mercy of what character (v4)? Who sees there? What will He do?

What sorts of good works should Christians watch against doing? Matthew 6:1–4 prepares us for the morning sermon on the Lord's Day. In these four verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **Christians should watch against "good" works that are done in order to be seen by men and get glory from men.**

The works that we should do. "charitable deeds" throughout this passage is translating a compound word built upon the word for "mercy." The word itself seems to have been used most often with financial giving for/to the poor, but it extends to all works of mercy. We should remember that the chapter divisions are artificial. The Lord has just been instructing us in the sort of love that puts that of the scribes utterly to shame. How tempting it would be for us to want this to be seen by men! Nevertheless, we should love to do these works of mercy for brother, neighbor, and enemy. This passage does not discourage them, but rather assumes that we will do them.

The reward we should want. Reading these verses, it may occur to us that there are many who actually wouldn't find them motivating. They like to be seen by men (v1). They like to have glory from men (v2). They spend a fair amount of mental effort ignoring God and don't care to be noticed by Him or rewarded by Him. That feels insane to type, but we know that it is true. And if we are honest, we know that it is still too frequently too true of ourselves.

But we have a Father in heaven. He is our Father, Who has loved us and given us spiritual birth by His Spirit, adopting us in His Son, and then indwelling us with the Spirit of adoption. And He is in heaven. He is holy (cf. v9). He is glorious. What reward could be better than one received from Him? What reward could compare? Even if we were not reward "openly" (v4), it is great reward to our souls just to know that Father sees, and that Father is pleased. Even His being pleased is of grace, putting away our sin in Christ, and receiving our good works as done in Him.

The place and manner that we should avoid. We are probably not so obnoxious to sound a trumpet, or have someone do so, to announce our works of mercy. But do we do them at times and places and ways that would get noticed? Many churches actually arrange "works of mercy" as a way of "getting the church name out there" or "getting seen by the community." This is exactly contrary to Jesus's commandment!

The desire to be seen is so great that the Lord Jesus doesn't just warn us against doing good to be seen; He positively commands us to try *not* to be seen or known. The right hand is not to have a publicity campaign, even to the extent of making its good works known to the left hand.

Salt is something that we already are, and if we are what we are, where He put us, there will already be light shining before men (cf. 5:13–16). But, we must be careful not to be attempting to increase our exposure. Indeed, this passage teaches us positively to attempt to decrease it.

What works of mercy do you do? What measures do you take to keep them from being noticed/known by others? How do you keep your mind/focus upon the Lord in doing them?

Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You for Your great mercy to us, including the mercy in which You have given to us to be merciful like You are. Grant that we would do so only for Your eyes, and make it sweet to us to know that You are pleased with our good works in Christ, through whom we ask it, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP37C "Steps a Man Takes" or TPH464 "The Beatitudes"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Matthew 6, verses 1 through 4. These are God's words. Take heed that you do not do your charitable Deeds before men to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your father in Heaven. Therefore when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet. Before you as the Hypocrites, do in the synagogues and in the streets that they may have Glory.

From men assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not, let your left hand, know what your right hand is doing. That your charitable deed may be in secret. And your father who sees in secret, Will himself reward you. Openly.

Amanda sends this reading of gods inspired in an air inerrant. Word notice here, that the Lord Jesus assumes that his people are going to do works of Mercy. The word that's translated charitable deed. And usually means in that context, Almost giving. Where they had a subsistence life and People.

Literally received at the end of their work day that which was necessary for them to have food that night. And then if you couldn't work, you didn't have. The money. So almsgiving or or giving donations uh to the poor whether directly or by way of the priests Um, Was a big part of the works of Mercy that they did but they were Works of Mercy.

And of course Those who are Gods in Jesus Christ. Are the ones that he has described already in verse 7. Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain Mercy. They are merciful because they have obtained Mercy. God is the one who has counted Jesus. Their own righteousness. And so, they have been counted righteous before.

God, God has wiped out their sin by the sacrifice of Jesus. And join them to Christ and given them this new life in Union with Christ, as children of their heavenly father. And they're merciful Uh, and But not only should our righteousness exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees.

And the way that we understand and interpret and apply scripture to our lives from the heart, reading it in context and interpreting it not only from the local context, but by the rest of the scripture, A righteousness ought to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees with the mercy, in the mercy of the works of Mercy that we do.

And so we are to do charitable Deeds someone who is not doing works of Mercy, someone who is not on the lookout for ways to imitate father for ways to express the character. Um Of Christ to whom they are united in the conduct of their lives. Someone who is not doing those things.

Has good reason to wonder whether or not he is actually converted. This is not. You should do works of Mercy that you don't feel like doing and it doesn't occur to

you to do in order that By doing these works of Mercies, you can show that you're a real Christian.

It does show that you're a real Christian, but this inclination to do it as an assumption of who you are in the Lord. Jesus, that is what shows it. So there's this There's this assumption. Uh, on the Lord Jesus's part that those who are his disciples are going to do, charitable Deeds, but they're going to do them differently.

Uh, then the scribes and the Pharisees whom, he calls Hypocrites. And one of the reasons that he's going to, they're going to do them differently is because Jesus wants them to be rewarded. Uh, now you may have heard this idea that Believers should not desire reward from God. A big problem with that is Jesus desires for those who are his to be rewarded by God.

That's the whole that. That's at least in his presentation of it. Uh, the whole problem was scribe and Pharisee works of Mercy, is that they don't get rewarded. So verse one, take heed that you do not do your charitable Deeds before men to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your father.

In heaven. And our good works. Appointed To Us by Our Father in Heaven. He's the one who picked the particular lamp stand that he would. That he would put us on. So this language has begun already in verse 16. Let your light so shine before, man, that they may see, your good works and glorify your father in Heaven.

He is the one who's planned, where you will be and what opportunities you will have for doing works of Mercy. And as you discover there's opportunities, there's good works that you prepared beforehand for you to walk in them. He is glorified uh, when See your good works. They might not like their good works or they might see the good works and not even know that it was.

You who did them. This as we will see here in the rest of our passage Whatever comes of it, it belongs to our Father in heaven. It is from our Father in Heaven. It is for Our Father in Heaven. He himself is the great reward. And Christ himself is the great reward.

There's this language of Our Father in Heaven, that participates in the relationship that Jesus even with respect to, in his human nature, is aware with his human consciousness that he is enjoying and expressing the relationship that he has with God as the Divine son and the one who has come to redeem us.

So that in the Divine eternally, begotten, son, we might be the adopted children. We might enjoy the glory of of God, enjoy the glory of the The way that the sun does and enjoy the glory of the In a way, analogous to how the father does. So, Jesus even on the night that he's betrayed before he goes to the garden.

And he prays with sweat, like great drops of blood that if there was any other way to accomplish what he had, just been praying for that. The cup would pass from him. But there was no other way. So he did go to the Cross to accomplish what he had, just been praying for what had he been praying for that.

Those who are his, that the father has given to him would be with him to behold his glory because the father loved him before the world began. And so there is this Delight in the father and the son and the spirit that is bound up in this language of Father in Heaven.

And so, of course, Jesus wants his people to be rewarded. He wants them to be rewarded. Uh, not so much. The admiration of men. Although praise God, we will all admire one another as having been conformed to Christ and our Union with Christ will be so obvious. And and so uh, But we'll be so conscientiously aware of it that in glory as our hearts are full and ever.

Enlarging towards God, the Father and God the son and God, the spirit will know each other and relate with one another and admire one another and appreciate one. Another Because the first thing that we will see and know about one, another is that we are children of the father and United to the son and indwelt by the spirit and Heaven will be this world of love, not in which we are forgetful of one another.

But in which we will be mindful of Christ as we think of one another and relate uh, And relate to one another. And so there's rewards that way and there's rewards in the New Heaven and the new Earth, but it'll be a new Heaven and a new Earth in which the knowledge of God fills everything knowledge of God covers it like the waters, cover the sea and in which righteousness fills it, the new heavens and the Earth new Earth in which righteousness dwells.

So there are these great rewards even that are extensions of these tiny little pygmy rewards that people go after in their fleshly corrupted ideas of being rewarded with praise or being rewarded uh, with treasure but the great reward in each of those things that Christ is seeking for us is the Triune God himself.

Is the greatest reward and the greatness of all other rewards. And Jesus knowing that. Does not want us to do. Works that seem good that seem merciful? While missing out on the reward. He? Consecrated himself. To die. And to suffer the Pains of To get us, that reward. And so this idea that Christians should not do good works with rewards in mind.

Is utterly ignorant? Of what the reward is or better point who the reward is. And Christians should recognize and know who our award is and do the good works for him in such a way that aims at him. Being our reward. Uh, and so we should feel the logic of verse one in a way that drives To avoid verse 2 and follow verses 3 and 4.

The logic of verse 1. Do not do your charitable Deeds before men to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in Heaven. Don't do that. Don't lose it. Don't waste it. And since you don't want to do it that way, don't do what they do in verse 2.

But follow what Jesus says to do in verses 3 through 4, these two faced people, Uh, and Uh, the word hypocrite referring to the play actor coming from. Um, Greek drama, which was more Shakespearean than Shakespeare, uh, 1500 or more almost 2, 000 years. Ahead of Shakespeare, you know, we're so proud of ourselves in the English-speaking world.

We have no idea that we were born yesterday and are very small in the history of civilizations. But from that comes this language of the hypocrite of the two-faced guys, and maybe you've seen The two masks that are uh, that are the picture that is the idea of Of the hypocrite and they have.

One face towards man. And one face towards God, you can't face both at the same time. You're either facing God with your good works, or you're facing man with your good works. And whether it's literally sounding a trumpet uh, which maybe apparently, according to some commentaries, some people actually did.

Uh, but seems rather to have been the most ridiculous possible instances. Like, we have ridiculous instances of things that people do in our culture. They're called celebrities actors and actresses and and sports people and billionaires who who do things that draw all kinds of, uh, attention and months, and monstrosity and contorted form.

And then somehow think that, that gives them a platform to instruct the rest of us about morality and politics and science. And uh, we're just the most ludicrous Society ever. A few people who did this in a monstrous way. But what he's saying is That if you are hoping that other people will notice what you do.

You are basically in the same Spirit as the guy who has an attendant who runs in front of him and he's paying his Trumpeter, more than he's giving to the poor. And

so, his well-paid Trumpeter goes in front of him. As he's going and he sounds the Fanfare and everybody looks what's gonna happen and he puts his coins into the box.

Now that everybody is looking at him. That's what you are like. When you do something for someone else, And you hope it gets around. And you hope it gets noticed. That's the same Spirit. And if You do it in that Spirit, it's not actually. A work of Mercy.

It's not like you're doing a work of Mercy and Jesus sees, or the father sees rather in Jesus's illustration, the way he's talking to us here. It's not like you're doing a work of Mercy and the father sees And he says, It was a work of Mercy but he didn't quite get it right.

So I'm not gonna reward him. No. If it was a real work of Mercy, you would get the reward which is God himself. What he's saying? Is that if we do it, hoping that it gets around. It's not an actual work of Mercy. It's a work of self-service. Not other service.

And so we've got a lot to, to work on a lot to look to, to God by his Spirit from Christ to help us in in our hearts. Because we know how much we desire that others would see and find out about the good things that we do. But our Lord here is telling us that's not a real.

That's not a real work of Mercy. And so be careful about. Uh, the where and the how Of what you do. Doing it out in the streets or right there in the middle of the Assembly of the church, the synagogue, in this case, where everyone's already gathered. So you have maximum possibility of Of being noticed as you do it or overheard as you talk to someone about it.

They said no no. Watch the wear and watch the how. And watch the heart. So that you will from from God in Christ by his Spirit be doing real works of Mercy. As these blessed ones who have been saved by grace and changed to be different from the world, as Jesus was making those points at the beginning of this sermon at the beginning.

Of Matthew. Chapter five. But how should we do it when you do a charitable deed? Do not know, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing that. Your charitable deed may be in secret, praise God, we know what to do with our hands here more evidence that you're not actually supposed to cut your physical hand off.

But you are to cut off your fleshly hand. Because we are to offer our minds, our hearts, our mouths, every member of who we are as slaves, unto God, for righteousness, as Romans chapter 6, teaches us, and, and describes for us. And so, my right hand now is God's right hand in Jesus Christ.

And when I offer unto God, as a slave for, for righteousness, Don't even hope or desire. That my left hand would know what the right hand is doing. So I've got the right hand, good works and this and I am hoping my right hand as it's anthropomorphized is hoping that God Alone will see what it does.

Because the right hand is a slave of God for the glory of God. Enjoying God serving God and then when it comes the left hand's turn, the left hand is hoping the same thing, it's only for God and you, you're living this life in the secret place. You're living life from the heart.

People have apparently discovered that we're supposed to think. Uh, and maybe 20 years ago or 30 years ago, the language that was popular was intentional living. And now the language that is popular is mindfulness. You know, we have begun, we have become this this mentally comatose. You know, enslaved population, whether enslaved to or all of the, the neurochemical stimuli manipulation that are, uh, that our culture runs on or controlled by our feelings.

Well. Don't just be a mindful person, but be a heartfelt. Person, you know, to borrow the Um, Calvin's wonderful life motto that really did come out of a thoughtful life. Not just being one still today, one of the great exegetes of God's word. But a meditator upon God's word before God's face and his life.

Motto was my heart. I offer to you promptly and sincerely that in everything he did, he was offering himself. Uh, offering himself through the right hand to God offering himself, through the left hand to God, that we would live this life in the secret place with God. That our charitable deed would be in secret and our father, Receives a new name.

Now, God has been calling him. Sorry Jesus has been calling in Our Father in Heaven and now he gives him a new title in verse for our father who sees in secret and so we want our charitable Deeds. The great location Center of our charitable. Deeds, will be the secret place of the heart that tries to find secret places and the least observable way.

To do our Good Deeds because we want it to be as secret as possible. Um, not thinking so much about other people, I have to keep it from them. And you can get a, you can get obsessive that way but the secretness of it is aimed at the father, he's the one who sees in secret.

So I want to do it as much as possible only for Uh, for my father, that it would be between me and between him and he would be my reward and the glory of Christ in me, uh, would be my reward unto him that I had the privilege of Of honoring and pleasing my father for the glory of the son, because of his pleasure in his son.

As he sees what his son is producing in me by his spirit and his son's spirit, uh, who is now also, Uh, our Holy Spirit, the spirit who dwells in us and And belongs to us as a seal unto the the day of redemption. I want it to be as much as possible for my father.

And he is going to be my reward now. And he's going to be my reward forever. And his plan. Is to glorify his son for all the new creation to see that angels. Will pray. The Sun forever, and will praise. The bride forever. Jesus was despised by men so that we could be praised by Angels.

Unto the glory of Jesus. Critical text doesn't have the word openly in it. That's a sad loss by an unbelieving way of approaching the preservation of the Greek New Testament. To put the word openly is important here. Because we don't want the praise to remain secret. Because if God is our reward, and if God Christ's glory in us, is our reward.

Uh, we are looking forward to the day. When that which has been in secret and we begin to enjoy the reward now But the greatest enjoyment of it is in the last day. When all of God's Plan of Redemption is finished. And the open and public. Infinite Glory of God in Christ is displayed.

And we are participating in that and enjoying that. And so there is that heavenward focus of our heart as we do, our good works. But there's also that forward to the last day to glory to Forever. Focus of our hearts. As we do, our good works, and both of them.

Liberate. From the the tiny by comparison, shriveled cheap momentary reward. Of being noticed by others. How pathetic? The flesh is and When we see the greatness and the solidness, and The Brilliance. Of what Jesus wants for us. It is a mechanism of his to deliver. From the cheap and tawdry stuff.

That our hearts would desire instead. Somebody the Holy Spirit help us. To have this view of our father, to have this view of the works that we do to have this desire.

For the Uh, and currently secret what everlastingly open. Reward. Let's ask him to help us. Our gracious.

God and our heavenly father. We pray for faith that we would have evidence and substance. Of things that are not yet and not visible to our senses. You know, our weakness. Um, How pathetically, uh, difficult it is for us to light, hold of that, which is spiritual, and that, which is future.

And that which is eternal, even though we know That it is of Greater and truer substance. So help us by your spirit. Give us the mind of Christ, be our Lord. Uh, show us your glory. Uh that we might love you who have loved us so we might love your glory and desire.

The outcome of all of the work. All of your work of redemption even as our Lord Jesus, so desired it and prayed for it and went to the cross for it. Uh, Grant to us. Than to have this. That has lived in fellowship with you and towards you and offered to you.

A grant that our right hands would have their right part in this life and our left hands and so forth. And help us. As you make us more and more like Christ until in the last day you have conformed us to His Image. And he is the firstborn among many Brethren Or granted.

We ask in Jesus name. Amen.