

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18 – “Practicing your Righteousness”

Where we’ve been and where we’re going

- A. A summary pocket guide to kingdom living (Matthew 5:3-11)
 - B. The kingdom citizen’s relation to the world (Matthew 5:13-16)
 - C. Kingdom righteousness (Matthew 5:17-6:18)
 - 1. A righteousness **greater** than the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:17-48).
 - 2. A righteousness **different** than the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 6:1-18).
- I. The two different meanings of the word “righteousness” in Matthew 5-6
- A. In Matthew 5:17-48 “righteousness” is a _____ righteousness.
 - ✓ Think the Ten Commandments.
 - B. In Matthew 6:1-18 “righteousness” refers to the *practice* of _____ or practical piety.
 - 1. Think “Quiet Time”, tithing, going to church.
 - 2. Almsgiving, praying, and fasting all occur in some form in every major world _____.
 - 3. Matthew 6:1 (NRSV) – Beware of *practicing your piety* before others.
 - 4. Matthew 6:1 (GNB) – Make certain you do not *perform your religious duties* in public.
- II. The place of “religion” in Christianity.
- A. Religion _____ (?) relationship
 - 1. **When** (not *if*) you give to the needy, don’t be like the Hypocrites... but **when** you give to the needy, **do it like this**... and your Father will **reward** you.
When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites... but **when** you pray, **do it like this**... and your Father will **reward** you.
When you fast, don’t be like the hypocrites... but **when** you fast, **do it like this**... and your Father will **reward** you.

2. Jesus assumes that religious duties (not just moral ones) are actually a very important part of true discipleship and Kingdom living.
- B. Religious duties (compare with moral duties)
1. Fasting (6:16-18; cf. Matthew 9:14-15)

 2. Almsgiving (6:2-4)

 3. Prayer (6:5-6)
 - a. Daniel 6:10 – Daniel got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.
 - b. Acts 3:1 – Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.
 - c. Acts 10:30 – And Cornelius said, “Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour...”
 4. Part of the point of religious duty is _____, _____, _____, etc.
 - a. “*practicing*” your righteousness”
 - b. *When you give... When you pray... When you fast...*
 5. Quiet Time
 6. Church attendance
 7. Sabbath observance
 8. Lord’s Supper and Baptism?
- C. “_____-religionizing” and “_____-spiritualizing” Christianity.

- D. The “accoutrements” of religion (contrast with the duties of religion)
1. In so far as there is a religious aspect to our Christianity, *I think* we can also assume that there *can be* an APPROPRIATENESS to *some* of the accoutrements of religion.
 2. Throughout history, one of the biggest “non-Scriptural” accoutrements of religion has been special _____ of worship.
 - a. Throughout history, church _____ has always reflected some of the essential aspects of Christian _____.
 - b. “Architecture... provide[s] the suitable outward theatre for the public worship of God. Architecture is a handmaid of devotion. A beautiful church is a sermon in stone, and its spire a finger pointing to heaven... During the whole period of persecution there were few church buildings properly so called. The cause of this want, however, lay not in conscientious objection, but in the oppressed condition of the Christians. No sooner did they enjoy external and internal peace, than they built special places of devotion, which in a normal, orderly condition of the church are as [appropriate] to public worship as special sacred times.”
 3. What a special “house of worship” can mean for LWBC

Conclusion

- A. I believe that when we have a balanced and informed understanding of the place of “religion” in Christianity, it will have huge implications for how we think about a whole variety of topics.
- B. Religion is _____ the goal. _____ is the goal.