



The Only Approval that Matters

Matthew 6:1-4

- The Queen Mary was a ship that launched in 1936 as the largest to ever cross the ocean. Through four decades and a world war, she served until she retired as a floating hotel and museum in Long Beach, California.
- During the transition, they took off the three massive smokestacks to scrape them down and repaint them.
- When they started to scrape them down, they realized there was nothing left of the actual steel on the smokestacks. All that was really left was the 30 plus coats of paint over the years. They crumbled once removed because all the steel had rusted away.

- All that was left was the exterior what had accumulated over the years.
- Jesus looked at the Pharisees in Matthew 23 and called them “white-washed tombs.”
- The picture here was of a tomb that had decaying flesh and bones on the inside, but on the outside they were covered with white paint to make them look clean and pristine.
- This would have been pretty offensive to the pharisees because Mosaic law required a cleansing period of seven days if you touched someone who was dead.
- In Matthew 6 – Jesus addresses the sin of hypocrisy.
 - o He reminds His disciples that they can be hypocritical even when they are doing good things. Notice the focus and emphasis of this passage – it’s addressed to those who are doing charitable deeds – good deeds – sometimes translated as righteousness.

Main Point: What should be the stature of our heart as we care for the needs of others?

I. Different motives

- a. Motives are directly addressed here in VERSE 1.
- b. The motive is “...to be seen by others.” You can do the right thing for the wrong reason and be completely wrong.
- c. Motive isn’t really addressing the actual act that is committed (however good or bad that may be). It is addressing why the act was executed in the first place.
- d. Jesus has a lot of dire warnings for those that are doing good deeds for the wrong reasons.
- e. VERSE 2 is very clear in its implication.

- i. Don't call attention to yourself while doing nice things for others.
Trumpets are used to capture everyone's attention and to get everyone to look in a particular direction.
- ii. From announcing the arrival of royalty to leading a procession of people – trumpets are meant to garner attention. I've never heard of a quiet trumpet.
- f. Those that do good works for other people to see them are hypocrites.
- g. Comes from the Greek word that means actor. They are displaying a manufactured version of someone else on the stage while everyone is watching. Then, when they come off of the stage, they are someone completely different.
- h. The word literally means – an interpreter from underneath. In Greek stage plays an actor would wear a mask to signify the person they were pretending to be. It was an interpretation from underneath the mask.

II. Different results

- a. The end of VERSE 1 should raise the eyebrows of every believer. It should capture our attention and convict our heart.
- b. There is nothing good about doing good deeds just so others can notice us.
 - i. “The disciple's life is inevitably, and rightly, public, but that does not entitle him to show off his religious devotion; there is a world of difference between living a conspicuously good and godly life (5:13–16) and striving to gain a reputation for piety. The difference lies not only in the motive, but in the result: the former brings glory to God, the latter only to the performer.”

ii. R. T. France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 135.

c. There should be an intentional focus on doing the right thing, for the right reasons, and in the right way. Ultimately, in a way that pleases the Lord.

d. VERSE 3

e. For us to have this degree of intentionality – we should have a clear understanding of what we are doing and why we are doing it. We should look in our own heart and examine ourselves.

f. You can ask yourself a few questions to be more self-aware.

- *Do I want people to think better of me than I really am?*

- *Does it bother me when people don't notice my spiritual performance?*

- *Do I modify my actions to make sure others notice the way I am praying, serving, or otherwise being holy?*

- *Am I quick to condemn others but touchy when my own faults are pointed out?*

- *Do I spend much time looking spiritual but very little time on inner spirituality?*

g. Perhaps part of the problem is that we can easily be misguided in doing work for the Lord individually, and we can also be misguided as a part of the church.

h. Entire churches can lose their focus if they're not careful.

i. "Modern religion focuses upon filling churches with people. The true Gospel emphasizes filling people with God." AW Tozer.

j.

III. Different rewards

- a. VERSE 4
- b. The KJV and the NKJV phrase the last phrase as the Father will reward you openly. In the older manuscripts that other translations use, there is no Greek word here that would indicate your reward would be out in the open.
- c. It just simply says that your Father will reward you.
- d. That's enough, really. It's more than enough. There is only One that we are aiming to please.
- e. We live in a day when the government takes a dollar from you and gives you back 50 cents to make it seem like they're doing you a favor.
- f. We live in a day where people are consumed with the glorification of self. Some are obsessed with how other people view them.
- g. People will go out of their way to buy \$500 shoes because they're a particular brand so they can look good in front of others, but when it comes to giving to Kingdom causes and missions – they just can't afford to tithe.
- h. A prosperity Gospel preacher in New York was mugged during the Sunday morning service while they live-streamed with service. They stole over \$1 million worth of jewelry. A few thoughts:
 - i. That's horrible.
 - ii. It's not a safe time to live in NY.
 - iii. WHY DOES THE PREACHER HAVE ON SO MUCH JEWELRY?
- i. We are in an Instagram obsessed culture. Image is all that matters to some people
- j. "Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter." Charles Spurgeon .
- k. Christian, make sure all that matters to you is pleasing the Lord.