“Life in the Kingdom: Letting God Keep Score”

Matthew 6:1-4; Col. 3:17-24

(Notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 1/15/23)

Right things can be done with the wrong motives…

Why am I here at this Bible Study? Is it an offering to my King, or am I here to appear religious? Is it an expression of my love for my King and my fellow subjects? As a leader, I must ask myself, “Why do I lead?” Is it for self-gratification, or my love for my King and my desire to edify others in the body of Christ? Here is the bottom line: **Why I do religious things matters more than the religious things I do.**

Matthew tells us all about God’s Kingdom breaking through into our lives. Jesus describes the nature of His Kingdom and the nature of His subjects. The King’s people know that they can’t make themselves right with God. They can only turn in repentance and faith to King Jesus. His own righteousness is imputed (credited) to His children. God’s people don’t live for show. They live in devotion and delight in Christ’s work for them and in them. The genuine Christian life is a godward life- not a life that merely looks religious to impress others or to gratify self.

Matt. 6:1 talks about acts of righteousness or charitable deeds. (Q1) But even these right things can be done for the wrong motives. You don’t even have to be a child of the King to engage in religious performance (Cain, Judas, Pharisees). But our God is omnipresent and omniscient. He knows our true motives (Prov. 5:21; Heb. 4:13). He rewards all that is done from a pure heart, and He rewards NOTHING done to show off for others or to gratify self. Our King sees the true motive behind all of our religious activities. And be careful of one more thing: yesterday’s sincerity is no guarantee that you will have the right heart today.

Matt. 6:2 talks about giving. (Q2) The King assumes that His children will give. I am a STEWARD of God’s stuff. It’s not my stuff. God is saying that when you give, don’t toot your own horn! The hypocrites’ motive is to gain glory for themselves. Glory seeking is a primary attribute of man apart from God. It is robbing God of His glory. It’s an abomination to God! (Isa. 42:8; Luke 16:15; John 5:44). Those that give with the wrong motive do get a reward: they get noticed. But it has no eternal value and it doesn’t please God. The salient test: Would I still do this even if no one else knows that I did it? Because God sees all my acts of devotion, there’s no need to keep score for others, or even for myself.

Let’s return to Matt. 5:16 for a moment. God wants us to shine for Him. Don’t hide your allegiance to the King, **BUT LET THE GLORY BE HIS!** He is the only King worthy of being followed.

The word “reward” in Matt. 6:1-2 is a different Greek word from “reward” in verse 4. The first one is a “paycheck”. The latter one is what God gives by His grace. Always remember: What we do for Him is always with the enablement that He has provided in the first place! Giving and praying and doing all boil down to **motive**, and our motive springs from the depth of gratitude we feel for God’s tremendous mercy and grace toward us.

Let’s be honest: sometimes we feel mixed motivations. Only Jesus lived without mixed motives. He is now refining us every day to be more and more like Him. Our pitiful, imperfect works are washed by Him and offered to the Father by His nail-scarred hands. He **DELIGHTS** in our works, imperfect as they are. And He offers an ETERNAL inheritance as our reward. How great is that reward when its source is God, its measure is grace, and its value is eternal! We thank you, Jesus, for Your work done for us. Help us to be “self-forgetful.” Help us to be more like You, our King. May You be glorified in all we do, pray, and give. May your Kingdom grow within us. Amen.

**QUESTIONS**:

1. What acts of righteousness (or charitable deeds) might we engage in? How do we know if we’re doing them for the right reasons?
2. The King wants His people to give, but not just money. What else can we give?
3. What do today’s scriptures tell you about the nature of God. What do they tell you about your own nature?
4. **How** does the gospel change a heart predisposed to please self?
5. Paul David Tripp said, “Looking to others for your inner sense of well-being is pointless… [Jesus’] grace has forever freed us from needing to prove our righteousness and our worth.” (New Morning Mercies, Jan. 11) Discuss this with your group.

“Take My Life, and Let It Be” (Havergal)

1. Take my life and let it be  
   Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.  
   Take my moments and my days,  
   Let them flow in endless praise.
2. Take my hands and let them move  
   At the impulse of Thy love.  
   Take my feet and let them be  
   Swift and beautiful for Thee.
3. Take my will and make it Thine,  
   It shall be no longer mine.  
   Take my heart, it is Thine own,  
   It shall be Thy royal throne.
4. Take my love, my Lord, I pour  
   At Thy feet its treasure store.  
   Take myself and I will be  
   Ever, only, all for Thee.