

Are We Honoring Jesus as Lord – Part 1: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18 ESV

Giving to the Needy, Praying, and Fasting – Our Way or His Way?

Wednesday, February 10 at 11:00 & 7:00

Ash Wednesday – 2016

Our Free Meals at 12 & 6 begin next Wednesday!

Series Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Today we begin the series: **Are We Honoring Jesus as Lord?** In other words, we call Him our Lord, *but do we honor Him as our Lord?*

During Holy Week Jesus said these words to some of the religious teachers: “...**David himself says in the Book of Psalms, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’**” (Luke 20:42-43 ESV). So who is “The Lord” and “my Lord”? David, *moved by the Holy Spirit*, identified God the Father as “The Lord” and God the Son as “my Lord.”

So Jesus is in the middle; think about it like this: God the Father worked through God the Son to *create all things*; then, to *take away the sin of the world*. The Son was always obedient to the will of the Father – *because He is **the Lord!*** Now, *since we know Jesus*, He is both **our Savior** and **our Lord**. Life is best when we know the will of our Lord – *through whom we have the gift of heaven* – and put His will into practice in our lives!

Sermon Introduction: This is today’s key question: Are we honoring Jesus as Lord with our giving to the needy, praying, and fasting? At the end, answer “Yes” or “No.”

Our text is from Matthew chapter 6; Jesus is going to tell us how to ♦give to the needy, ♦pray, and ♦fast. For those who *have Jesus as Lord*, such things are expected; in each case Jesus did not say “if” you do such things, but rather “**when.**” So is Jesus trying to *boss us around* or *hurt us in some way*? *By no means!* Instead, **His ways are always best for us!** Our text begins with these words; Jesus said: ¹ **“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.”** *He wants us to be blessed!*

1. **Giving to the Needy:** It’s not an “if,” but a “when”!
 - a. ² **Thus, when you give to the needy** [*literally, when you do alms*], **sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets,** [for the reason] **that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.”**
 - i. What does it mean to do alms? It means to *do a kind deed* or *give a gift* to someone in need.
 - ii. If we give a gift, where does it come from? According to the Bible, *it should only come from what we give above our tithe*. Why is that true? The Bible makes it clear that a tithe of everything belongs to the Lord (**Lev. 27:30**), so that much is His – *it’s not for us to distribute to those in need*. Imagine if your boss decided to distribute part of your paycheck to others...
 - iii. For what reason should we never do alms? To receive the praise of others!

- b. ³ “But **when** you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” // So let us do alms *as secretly as possible*; then our Father in heaven *will bless us!*

2. **Praying:** It’s not an “if,” but a “when”!

- a. ⁵ “And **when** you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, [for the reason] that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.” // So it is *not wrong* if others see when we pray, but it *is wrong* when we pray **for that reason** – *so that others see us!*
- b. ⁶ “But **when** you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” // Showoff prayers are foolish; instead, we pray ♦to draw close to our Father in heaven, ♦to praise Him for our blessings, and ♦to share with Him our struggles. Then, *He will hear and He will bless us!*

3. **Fasting:** It’s not an “if,” but a “when”! The word “fasting” appears 20 times in the ESV Bible, 12 times in the OT, 8 times in the NT (*see the references noted below*).¹ Many other ESV references use “fast,” “afflict,” etc.

¹ Ezr. 9:5; Neh. 1:4; 9:1; Est. 4:3; Ps. 35:13; 69:10; 109:24; Isa. 58:4; Jer. 36:6; Dan. 6:18; 9:3; Joel 2:12; Matt. 4:2; 6:16, 18; Mk. 2:18; Lk. 2:37; Acts 13:2f; 14:23

- a. ¹⁶ “And **when** you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces [for the reason] that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.” // Again, *our motivation is so important!* So yes, we should do alms, pray, and fast, *but never to impress others!*
- b. ¹⁷ “But **when** you fast, anoint your head and wash your face [thus make yourself look like you are *not* fasting], ¹⁸ that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”
- i. What is fasting? It is voluntarily denying ourselves food or drink.
 - ii. Why fast? Our Lord Jesus Christ said we should, *He also promised that our Father in heaven would reward us!*
 - iii. What are other benefits? Fasting reminds us of our needs **and** God’s abundant provisions; it also reminds of our need for rescue and Jesus’ finished work by which God the Father rescued us from our sins!

Conclusion: When we give, pray, and fast *in agreement with the Bible*, Jesus is honored and we are blessed!

Let us pray... And all God’s people said: **Amen!**

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