

# Life in the Kingdom Part 3: When You Give

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## Review / Catching up:

Sermon on the Mount - Matt 5 - 7 - meant to be taken as a whole.

Part 1: Kingdom Character (Beatitudes)

Part 2: Kingdom Commands (You have heard it said, but I say...)

Part 3: Kingdom Devotion

Part 4: Kingdom Priorities

**Coming into Part 3**, which is most of chapter 6: practicing piety - devotion - putting into practice all that Jesus has just taught:

- when you give (vs 1) (our relationship towards others)
- when you pray (vs 5) pray like this (vs 9-13) (our relationship with God)
- when you fast (vs 16) (our inner state of being)

Each section has a warning, a command and a promise.

## When You Give

*"To be a disciple means less about believing in a set of propositions and more about acting upon God's Word as interpreted by Jesus." Levine (p 45)*

*"Jesus was not a philosopher laying out a new system of disembodied belief. Jesus was a teacher whose life taught what he preached... Jesus didn't ask us to agree with him but to follow him." Willamon & Hauerwas p 13*

Follow - Put into practice - Do the stuff - **when you follow, one foot in the Kingdom.**

## Matthew 6:1-4 (NLT)

*"Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. 2 When you give to someone in need, don't do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. 3 But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. 4 Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you."*

**vs 1 All the "Yous"** in this passage are singular. Previously in the SOTM it has all been plural. You are the salt, you are blessed, etc. This is personal. It's for each of us. Every follower of Jesus needs to pay attention to this.

**Vs 1 "Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others..."**

δικαιοσύνην dikaiosune. Righteousness / Justice / Piety. **Covenantal loyalty.**

Used several times in Matthew previously:

- 5:6 - Beatitude: *“hunger and thirst for righteousness”*.
- 5:10 - Beatitude: *“persecuted for the sake of righteousness for theirs is the K of H.*
- 5:20 - Jesus says unless your R is greater than the R of the scribes and Pharisees you will never enter the K of H. The disciples have to be more righteous than the most righteous people there were (in popular view)!
- 6:33 - Seek first the K of G and his R...
- In 6:1 “dikaosune” should not be displayed for personal aggrandizement / self-promotion. It’s focussing on humility, connection, dignity.

**Concern for others** should be paramount. To be righteous / to practice the right type of piety / to do justice is to have **one foot in the Kingdom of God**.

*>> But how are we to practice righteousness? How are we to do it without doing it in front of others?*

It does mean having a public impact (Salt and Light, Light of the World).

*>> How do disciples avoid practicing their righteousness before others?*

**vs 1** *“Don’t do your good deeds publicly, **to be admired by others**, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven.”*

*“If it’s based in justice it’s fine. If it’s based on self-interest, “in order to be seen by” others, then it is not.” (Levine P 55).*

**Jesus seems to be interested in: Dignity for the Poor over Self-promotion**

**Example of the wrong kind of righteousness:**

**2** *“When you give to someone in need, don’t do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get.”*

**vs 2** *“When you give to someone in need...”* Almsgiving.

When, not if! Expectation is clear - disciples putting righteousness into practice will be marked by giving - generosity - to be Kingdom people is to be people who are generous.

**Core Practice Highlights:**

**Generosity** (giving and sharing resource), **Mercy** (care for the vulnerable).

He’s expecting us to give - giving instruction on how practice righteousness...

**vs 2** *“don’t do as the hypocrites do, blowing trumpets in synagogues and streets to call attention to themselves...”*

This wasn’t literal. There weren’t shofars, or trumpets, or bells or gongs.

*Eg. Expense Point or Car Dealerships: a gong every time a sale is made.*

When we give in this way (calling attention to our gift), it ceases to become a gift and is more of a purchase. When this happens we're not helping those who are poor as much as using those who are poor.

**Maybe the modern equivalent is selfies, likes or views.**

In Mumbai India there are 16 "no selfie" zones because of the number of accidents. Washington Post reported over 250 people died while attempting to take selfies. Drowning, vehicles, falling, firearms, animal attacks and electrocution are the top reasons of selfie death.

*"Our desire to be seen by others is killing us." Jethani p 84*

We all want our lives to matter - celebrity culture - doing things for attention - says that our lives only matter to the degree they are noticed.

How many likes, shares, retweets do you have on your FB, Twitter, Insta, tik tok?

We want someone, anyone to notice us.

**Vs 3** *"But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. 4 Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*

Jesus is saying what happens in secret is what matters the most. Real intimacy requires privacy. With another person and with God too.

- Do we give to receive "shout outs"?
- Why do we give? What's behind our giving?
- Do we need our names on buildings? Do we need people to know we paid for this?

*Eg: Anonymous gift giving. There's pleasure in it - but sometimes (if you're like me) I want the beneficiaries to know it was me. Wanting really badly for someone to know we gave to the Odemin mural.*

It's all about our heart - the reasons we're giving.

**Why we do things is as significant as the things we do.**

*"The love you put into the giving is the most important thing." St Theresa of Calcutta*

### **Maimonides (1138-1204) Levels of Charity**

Level 8 — The donor is pained by the act of giving

Level 7 — The donor gives less than he should but does so cheerfully

Level 6 — The donor gives after being asked

Level 5 — The donor gives without being asked

**Level 4** — The recipient knows the donor but the donor does not know the recipient (sages would tie coins into the backs of their robes so people could be saved the indignity of asking to receive charity)

Level 3 — The donor knows the recipient but the recipient does not know the donor (the problem here is that the benefactor is moved with pity and the recipients don't have the opportunity to express gratitude)

**Level 2** — Neither the donor nor the recipient knows the other (this is what Jesus is suggesting. Jerusalem temple had this system. So does WCV!)

Level 1 — The donor gives the recipient the wherewithal to become self-supporting

Practicing "righteousness" requires that we pay attention to dignity. Same as when Jesus talked about responding to violence with more violence. It is a dignity restoring posture to stop the violence.

### **Jesus seems to be interested in:**

- **Dignity for the Poor over Self-promotion**
- **Intimacy over Publicity**

*"what we do or do not do with our material possessions is an indicator of the Spirit's presence or absence" - Krodel 1986*

*"Indeed, this also is theft: not to share one's possessions." John Chrysostom p 165*

*"This is why God has allowed you to have more: not for you to waste on prostitutes, drink, fancy food, expensive clothes, and all the other kinds of indolence, but for you to distribute to those in need." St. John Chrysostom p165*

*"Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbour is the holiest object presented to your senses." C.S. Lewis in The Weight of Glory*

### **Ministry:**

**Pride** - we're no better than anyone else. Tables can turn quickly. Might need help tomorrow.

**Stinginess** - ungenerosity. Walked by someone in need.

NOTE: there's a lot of generous people here - good boundaries. No Guilt.