

RCMI L-Path Teaching
August 21, 2022

TITLE: THE WORLD IS NOT OUR STAGE ((Please God, Not Men))

BIG IDEA: There should be no gray area in terms of doing good works. It is not about us but should always be about God. To please Him should be the only reason why we practice our righteousness.

VERSE: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18 (MSG)

1 "Be especially careful when you are trying to be good so that you don't make a performance out of it. It might be good theater, but the God who made you won't be applauding.

2-4 "When you do something for someone else, don't call attention to yourself. You've seen them in action, I'm sure—'playactors' I call them—treating prayer meeting and street corner alike as a stage, acting compassionate as long as someone is watching, playing to the crowds. They get applause, true, but that's all they get. When you help someone out, don't think about how it looks. Just do it—quietly and unobtrusively. That is the way your God, who conceived you in love, working behind the scenes, helps you out.

5 "And when you come before God, don't turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers, hoping for fifteen minutes of fame! Do you think God sits in a box seat?

6 "Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.

16-18 "When you practice some appetite-denying discipline to better concentrate on God, don't make a production out of it. It might turn you into a small-time celebrity but it won't make you a saint. If you 'go into training' inwardly, act normal outwardly. Shampoo and comb your hair, brush your teeth, wash your face. God doesn't require attention-getting devices. He won't overlook what you are doing; he'll reward you well.

INTRODUCTION:

- There are three (3) essential Christian Disciplines that Jesus illustrated in the verses we read.
- **Charitable Giving, Prayer, and Fasting**
- These are essential Christian disciplines that are **expected in every believer**.
- **Charitable giving** sustains the needs of others
 - a. Jews has that deep sense of duty towards the poor and needy.
 - b. Proverbs 14:31 (NLT) Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but helping the poor honors him.
 - c. Charitable giving or **helping the poor honors God**.
- **Prayer** sustains our well-being.
 - a. Prayer sustains our physical, emotional, mental, spiritual well-being.
 - b. **It makes us healthy Christians**.
- **Fasting** strengthens our spiritual well-being.
 - a. Fasting enables us to do the greater purpose of God in our lives.
 - b. It is a spiritual tool that helps us overcome evil and enables us to do greater things for God.
 - c. Remember when Jesus fasted, He easily overcame the devil's temptations.
 - d. **Fasting makes us stronger Christians!**

- *When giving, praying, and fasting are practiced together in the life of a believer, it creates a type of threefold cord that is not easily broken - Jentezen Franklin*
- These are practical Christlikeness that every believer should practice.
- And while doing it, we need to do it right!

Please God Not Men

Jesus is concerned on how we do our good works. He wants us to understand the right way of doing it.

1. Pleasing God is not a performance

- a. "Do not be like the hypocrites"
- b. Greek word "hypokrisis" and means "the acting on a stage", "playactors"
- c. Doing good is not for the show
- d. *v2..You've seen them in action, I'm sure—'playactors' I call them—treating prayer meeting and street corner alike as a stage, acting compassionate as long as someone is watching, playing to the crowds.*
- e. *v5 "And when you come before God, don't turn that into a theatrical production either. All these people making a regular show out of their prayers..."*
- f. Hypocrisy is a great sin. Let us be careful not to be religious actors. We only do good because people are watching us.
- g. Pleasing God should be the only reason why we are doing good works.
- h. "Let it be our heart's pursuit to always please God."

2. Pleasing God is not by schedule

- a. We don't dictate time when to please God.
- b. That's the difference between performance and pleasing God.
- c. Performance limits us with time. But true worship to God is timeless.
- d. *v4 When you help someone out, don't think about how it looks. Just do it—quietly and unobtrusively.*
- e. Most of the time, we don't need preparation to please God. We just need to do it!
- f. There are no rehearsals, no prescriptive time to do it. Please God should be a regular practice.
- g. Charitable giving should be a regular practice
 - i. *Proverbs 22:9 Blessed are those who are generous, because they feed the poor.*
 - ii. Being generous is not one-time. It comes from an abundance of goodness in our heart.
 - iii. *Luke 6:45 A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart...*
- h. Prayer should be a regular practice
 - i. *1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances...*
 - ii. One main challenge in praying is we try to schedule it. Then we miss it.
 - iii. Key to effective prayer is making it a habit. We pray anywhere, anytime.
- i. Fasting should be a regular practice
 - i. We should not avoid fasting!
 - ii. Though there is no prescribed frequency for fasting, it is something that Christians are obligated to do.
 - iii. *Luke 5:33-35 - 33 They said to him, "John's disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking." 34 Jesus answered, "Can you make the friends of the*

bridegroom fast while he is with them? 35 But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast."

- iv. Fasting is expected from us.
- j. As the saying goes, "Time is precious, spend it wisely". Our take is, "God is precious, spend time with Him wisely"

3. Pleasing God is not for self-gain

- a. It's not for the applause. Don't call attention to yourself.
- b. It's not to impress others.
- c. Though it says, "your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.", that should not be our reason why we want to please God.
- d. *Philippians 1:21 For to me, living means living for Christ...*
- e. We please God because that is the way we need to live our Christian life.
- f. It is not to gain people's approval, but God's approval.
- g. If we are looking for self-worth in this world, then we are in the wrong side of things.
- h. Our self-worth is with God.
- i. Our lives will matter if we do things that matters to God!

CONCLUSION:

- The world is a stage not for men, but for God. (Sad fact is, we have built more stage for men in this world than for God)
- The applause in this world is not for men, but for God. (Sad fact is, there is more applause for men in this world than for God)
- The pulpit is not a place for men, but for God. (We are just instruments, servants)
- It's time to make God our priority!
- We need to put Him front and center in our lives.
- *2 Corinthians 5:9 So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him.*

DISCUSSION:

1. In the 3 Christian disciplines (Giving, Prayer, Fasting), what is your main challenge?
2. Did you experience doing good works to gain the approval of men? What did you get out of it?
3. This week, what will be your improvement area to please God more?