

The Greatest Sermon Ever Preached: The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) #3

“Practicing The Christian Faith” (Matthew 6:1-18)

Introduction

*The Sermon on the Mount through the Centuries: “When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him and he began to teach THEM....When Jesus finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching because he taught as one who had authority, unlike the teachers of the law.”

*The Affirmations/Challenges of The Sermon on the Mount-Heart of the Christian Life and Spirituality

*****The Importance of Christian “Practice” for a healthy and vital Christian Life and Church**

*****The Three (3) Essential Practices Jesus speaks about in the Sermon on the Mount: Giving, Praying and Fasting...the expectation and the motivation to practice Christian faith.**

*****The Call to “be careful” when you practice your “righteousness” ... private and public...you must not be like the “hypocrites” nor like the “pagans” ... your righteousness must surpass...**

I. Practice #1: “When you give...”(Matthew 6:1-4)... A constant practice in response to God’s grace and human need

A. Don’t put on a public show (like the hypocrites) when you give, so you will be “seen” and “honored” by others.

B. Give with humility and you will be honored (rewarded) by God.

II. Practice #2: “When you pray...” (Matthew 6:5-15)...A Practice 3 times a day (The Hours)

A. Don’t put on a public show (like the hypocrites) when you pray, so you will be “seen” by others.

B. Don’t “babble” (like the pagans) when you pray because they believe by using many words they will be heard.

*****Our “Father in Heaven, who is unseen, sees and hears our prayers and knows what we need before we even ask” sets us Jesus’ teaching of the Lord’s Prayer....”This then is how you should pray...”**

C. The Lord’s Prayer

1. OUR Father who is in heaven, HOLY is your name.

2. May YOUR Kingdom come. May YOUR Will be done, here on earth now as it is now in heaven.

3. GIVE US our daily bread.

4. FORGIVE us our debts/trespasses/sins, as WE forgive others (see Matthew 6:14,15)

5. LEAD US not into temptation. DELIVER US from all evil (the evil one).

*****FOR FATHER, YOURS IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY FOREVER. AMEN!**

III. Practice #3: "When you fast..." (Matthew 6:16-18)...A Seasonal and Rhythmic Practice

- A. Don't look somber/miserable/joyless (like the hypocrites) to who others they are fasting.
- B. DO put on oil on your head and wash your face so it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting.
- C. Our Father sees our practice of fasting and honors/rewards it according to our motivation.

*****A Special Word about Fasting....Saying no to something we desire, in order to say yes to God and be reminded of the grace, goodness and provision of God in our lives.**

Conclusions and Applications for This Week...

***When do you give? When do you pray? When do you fast?**

***What is the motivation of the heart for the practices of Christian faith like giving, praying and fasting?**

***Practicing the Christian Faith through these and other "recognized" disciples of the Christian Faith are gateways to knowing and experiencing the grace of God in our lives personally and together.**

In the Weeks Ahead

June 17th Don't Worry...Be Blessed (Matthew 6:19-7:12)

June 24th The Way, The Truth and The Life (Matthew 7:13-23)

July 1st Being Wise in the Eyes of God (Matthew 7:24-29)

Recommended Reading

***The Cost of Discipleship: Reflections on the Sermon on the Mount* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

***The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom* by R Kent Hughes**

***The Sermon on the Mount* by Scot McKnight**

***Jesus' Plan for a New World* by Richard Rohr**

***The Message of the Sermon on the Mount* by John Stott**

***The Easy Yoke* by Doug Webster**

***Divine Conspiracy* by Dallas Willard**