

An Offering Given in Purity # 12

Matthew 6: 1-4

Tonight we begin a new chapter in our study of the Sermon on the Mount, but it is just a continuation of what we have studied in the past. We are still dealing with the message that Jesus preached to the multitudes. His focus has shifted somewhat, but He is still dealing with the conduct of believers. Many of the past verses dealt with the perception and behavior of people in contrast with what the Bible taught. As we continue Jesus offers guidance and direction for holy and upright living.

These verses deal with alms giving. One of the commentaries that I use titled this passage: *Counsel About Philanthropy*. That is an interesting thought. Webster defines philanthropy as: *goodwill to fellowmen; an active effort to promote human welfare*. This is certainly a Christian principle that our Lord taught and practiced. Every believer ought to be a philanthropist in that they seek the welfare of those around them. That is not to say that we support ungodly behavior, but that we seek to assist those in need. [Jam.2:15-17 – If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, \[16\] And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? \[17\] Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.](#)

Let's take a few moments to consider the [teachings](#) of our Lord as we think on: [An Offering Given in Purity](#). Once again Jesus offers a contrast in these verses.

I. The Directive for Sacrifice – It is evident that Jesus encouraged and even commanded that we be willing to sacrifice for the good of others. Let's see if we can put things in their context.

A. The Explanation – In these verses Jesus speaks of alms giving. The word alms has the idea of "*mercy, pity, charity; a donation to the poor.*" This is not dealing with the tithes or offerings that we give to the church, although the same principles would apply. The focus here is giving of ourselves for the needs of others. It is the willingness to sacrifice for those in need.

- As with all things our alms giving must be done decently and in order. If there is a genuine need, we are obligated to do what we can to alleviate that need. I know that all who seek help or benefit from the church are not really in need, but there are real needs that the church should seek to meet. We have not been called to develop large bank accounts while those around us suffer. Personally we have an obligation as well. If God has blessed us, and I am certain that He has, we should be willing to give of our abundance for the good of others.

B. The Expectation (2) – **When thou doest thine alms...** This is not a mere suggestion. Jesus did not present an idea that He wanted those who followed Him to consider. He did not say, if you offer charity, but when!

- This is really no surprise to any of us. Our very human nature demands compassion. I am aware that some are more compassionate than others, but with the exception of a few coldhearted people, the majority of humanity has compassion. It isn't a matter of whether we sense the needs of others, we all do, but the question is whether we respond to that which we know we ought to do. We are never more like Christ than when we give of ourselves!

I. The Directive for Sacrifice

II. The Display of Self-Righteousness (1-2) – As we look at these verses, I want to point out that these were not guilty of withholding charity. They gave of themselves, but their motives were wrong. If we are to please the Lord with our alms, they must be given properly. Jesus offers a stern warning regarding alms giving: **Take heed**. As we will see, these gave for their own benefit. There is something within our nature that craves attention and praise. We must be careful that we don't fall into the same trap these did. Consider:

A. The Publicity (1a) – **Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them:** Jesus was aware of those in His day who gave their alms publicly to be seen of men. They had given charity, but it was paraded openly for all to see.

- Have we not all met those who used their charity as a means of publicity? We see it all the time today. Many are willing to freely give as long as their name is mentioned or placed upon a plaque. Most of us have probably been guilty at some point in time. We all like to hear our name mentioned or posted in the bulletin. We must be cautious that we are not parading our charity just so the world can see.

B. The Pride (2) – **Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets.** This is likely figurative, but many sought to draw attention to themselves as they gave. History teaches us that many would carry large coins to the Temple and throw them into the coffer made of brass or gold so that it would sound as it hit.

- We must be careful that pride doesn't influence or promote our giving. Men do not sound trumpets, but many seek to ensure that their giving is noticed of others. I used to work with a man who would bring his tithe check to work on Friday and show it to everyone. He was sounding his trumpet.

C. The Purpose (2) – *that they may have glory of men*. Jesus was well aware of their motivation. They were not giving for the good of others; they gave so they would receive praise and glory of men. Again we must be careful that our giving is motivated by a desire to serve the Lord and please Him rather than to gain the praise of men. It is easy to fall into that trap, genuinely meaning well, but allowing the desires of the flesh to defeat us spiritually. (It is possible to allow our humility to create pride. We must be careful in every aspect of Christian life.)

D. The Parallel (2) – *Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets*. Jesus makes a strong comparison to those who draw attention to themselves, desiring the praise of men. In His eyes they were no different than the hypocrites. A hypocrite is one who portrays the part of another. Many sought to appear compassionate and giving and yet they only desired to be noticed and praised.

- I fear that many in our modern society seek to appear compassionate and concerned, but their motives are not pure. Think of the commercials we see on television where wealthy actors portray as sense of compassion for the less fortunate. May we always give sacrificially for the right reasons.

E. The Profit (1-2) – *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. [2] ...Verily I say unto you, They have their reward*. God will not bless faulty motives. We may receive the praise of men, but we need not expect the blessing of God along with it if that is what we seek. The word *have* has the idea of "receipt in full." Isn't that tragic? Many go through life giving abundantly of their wealth expecting to receive future reward, but God says they have been compensated enough. They have received all they will get for their charity. The praise of men may have felt good at the time, but it is fleeting. It cannot sustain the desires of the flesh.

I. The Directive for Sacrifice

II. The Display of Self-Righteousness (1-2)

III. The Discipline for Sacrifice (3-4) – In the closing verses Jesus offers the contrast to self-righteous pride. Let's consider the differences. Notice:

A. The Purity (3) – *But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:* This is speaking of a heart of purity and humility. This too is a metaphor, but it reveals a great truth. Our motives are so pure that if we gave with our right hand the left hand would never know. It wasn't motivated by pride or recognition, but from a desire to please the Lord and offer blessing to someone less fortunate.

B. The Privacy (4a) – *That thine alms may be in secret:* Those who gave from a pure heart with pure motives did not seek to draw attention to themselves. They did not seek to make their gift made known publicly. Their gift was given without the recipient even knowing where it came from.

- This is portrayed by silently placing your gift within the offering plate. It is giving without recognition. I have been the recipient of such secrecy. I have come home to find gifts left on the doorstep. Those who gave gave from a heart of love and desire to help, rather than for recognition.

C. The Perception (4b) – *That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.* Jesus speaks of a tragedy for many and blessing for others. Those who gave for the recognition of men got what they desired. They received the glory of men, but that was all they would receive. Jesus declares that those who give from a pure heart, with the right motives receive the recognition of God. He is always watching and aware of what we do.

- If we will seek to serve Him in a way that pleases Him, He will notice. Those who give without a desire for recognition receive the greatest recognition.

D. The Payment (4b) – There is a reward for pure giving as well. It was not the motive for giving, but it will be received nonetheless. Jesus promised that those who gave with a pure heart would be *rewarded openly by the Father.*

- I have witnessed what I believe to be the rewards of the faithful in this life. I firmly believe God blesses His people openly in this life. We also know that we will be rewarded in heaven for our obedience and service to the Lord.

- I sure desire to have something to offer my Lord as I stand before Him in heaven. We have the assurance that our God is keeping a record of the lives we live. That is very humbling in one sense, but it is also very comforting in another.

This has been a challenging study. We are all tempted to satisfy the flesh. One of the greatest satisfactions is the praise of men. I pray as we live and serve the Lord that we will do so with a pure heart and godly motives. May we follow the example our Lord left us and give of ourselves for the good of others.