

Matthew 6:1-18

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles and go with me to the Gospel of Matthew, Matthew chapter 6. Matthew chapter 6 is where we will be at this morning, Matthew 6, verses 1 through 18. If you have been with us, you realize that we're making our way through the Gospel of Matthew.

Something different this year for me, personally, not necessarily going through a Christmas series or a Christmas message. We are just making our way consistently through the Gospel of Matthew, though I believe that everything in Scripture really has a Christmas impact to it, if you will, especially the book of Matthew, as we look at what Matthew is pointing to, and that is the coming of the King, that the King has arrived.

If Isaiah is the prophet of the soon-coming King, then Matthew is the Gospel author of the arrival of the King. Matthew's intended audience was Jewish people, the Jewish people in particular who were looking for the coming of the King.

It is amazing to run that thread, and I know I just kind of jumped into it coming in hot a little bit, full feet running, but that's okay. You'll catch up in a minute, hopefully. If you're reading the daily reading plan, and if you're going along with that, by the way, I know a number of you are, complete sidetrack, and I am excited for you.

We will get together some point in January. I told you we would have a meal together. I would prepare you a meal. Good news is I won't prepare that meal on my own, so my wife and I will prepare a meal.

[1 : 23] We'll eat together, fellowship together, and celebrate. Some of you, I know I owe a couple of meals because you've done it for a few years, but anyway. So we will start that again January 1.

There will be copies of the reading plan, just encouragement to get in the Word of God every day, to get in it, reading it, not necessarily to put a checkmark beside it, but just to build that habit of consistency.

If you are following the same plan that a number of us are, Robert Murray McShane's Bible reading plan, you're reading today, maybe you haven't read it yet, but you will read it, in the book of 2 Chronicles.

And you'll see this kind of obscure account in 2 Chronicles. It's in a grouping of the wiki kings of Judah and how the king was killed and all of the offspring of that king was killed.

But there was one young man that was hid in the temple. That's important because that young man being hid in the temple until he was anointed king is the very reality that assured that there would be a descendant of David sitting on the throne.

[2 : 23] Right? So don't lose that consistency throughout Scripture. So the Jewish nation had this hope and this desire and this longing for the arrival of the king.

Matthew comes and says, Here is the king. The king has come. And if you remember in Matthew, we've already looked at it, the genealogy of Christ in Matthew found in Matthew chapter 1. Matthew brings the genealogy of Christ through his earthly father, Joseph, and that descendant gives him the legal right through that young child hid in the temple in 2 Chronicles.

Through that young child hid until the day of his coronation of king. It gives Jesus the legal right to the throne. But if you are a student of Scripture, you realize that according to that lineage, then Jesus has no spiritual right to the throne because of the rejection of God's people before they went into Babylonian captivity, especially in relation to a king named Conaniah.

Conaniah was in such rebellion, God said, No descendant of yours will ever sit upon the throne of David. This is why we have the second genealogy of Christ found for us in the Gospel of Luke. Luke traces the genealogy of Christ through Mary, who also was a descendant of David, but not through Conaniah or Jeconiah, as he is also recorded in Scripture, but rather from one of the other descendants of David that is just kind of named somewhere else, kind of haphazardly, supposedly, in the Old Testament, but there to remind us he is the king.

You say, you just said a lot. Why did you say that, Pastor? Because what Matthew is showing us, here is the king. Here's the king. You know what Christ came on Christmas? You know what Christmas was all about?

[3 : 59] The arrival of the king, right? The king has come. This is why we have the declaration of the angels in heaven. This is why we have the declaration to the shepherds in the field.

This is why we have the entourage of the wise men from the east, because the king has come. We have come to see he who has been born king of Israel, right? Really, he who has been born king of kings.

And we've been looking at that through the Gospel of Matthew, that here is the king, and this is what it looks like. And we are now smack dab in the middle of what we refer to as the Sermon on the Mount, which is in Matthew 5, 6, and 7.

And if you remember in Matthew chapter 5, Matthew gives us the Beatitudes. And the Beatitudes are, as Warren Wiersbe once said, they are the attitudes which must be in the life of every believer.

These are the attitudes which we are to exhibit. These are the things which we are to put on display. These are the ways in which we are to look. This is not saying that there are some who are meek, that there are some who are suffering, that there are some who do this, but this is really the attitude that ought to be reflected in each and every one of us.

[5 : 05] Because the Sermon on the Mount is about the kingdom people, not necessarily about the king himself. Because if there is a king, and if there are his people, then kingdom people look different because of the reality of the king.

And the first thing we understand about kingdom people is who they are, not what they do. Because it is more important of who they are internally than what they do externally. So in Matthew 5, we really have to deal with the internal nature of God's people or the character of kingdom people.

But we are transitioning into Matthew chapter 6, verses 1 through 18. Here is your title. This morning, I want us to see the righteous practice of kingdom people. The righteous practice of kingdom people.

So if you are physically able and desire to do so, I am going to ask you to join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God together, found in Matthew chapter 6, starting in verse 1 and going down to verse 18.

I want you to pay special attention to the repetition found in these verses, and therefore we will be able to find the truth of it. Matthew records for us the very words of Christ where it says, Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them.

[6 : 14] Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets so that they may be honored by men.

Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing so that your giving will be in secret and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you that they have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. So do not be like them for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

Pray then in this way. Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.

[7 : 19] And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting.

Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret.

And your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this day. God, we're so thankful to have the opportunity of gathering together and reading your word together.

Lord, we pray as we have read it and heard it and seen it, Lord, that now by the power and presence of your spirit that you would speak to us. Lord, we thank you for allowing us this opportunity.

[8 : 20] We pray that the truth of scripture would transform our lives, that we would be more conformed to your glory and image. And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated. Matthew chapter 6, verses 1 through 18.

You know, there's a portion of this service each Sunday when we gather together, which we do it as the tithes and the offerings are moving forward. A number of the churches in Utah, there's a particular church in Utah that we have served before.

They do it at the close of each one of their services, and that is the singing of the doxology. And I know I'm completely off track here, but you can stay with me, right? The singing of the doxology is intentional.

Now, I hope that we don't do it out of habitual practice, and we do it just because it is that which follows an order of program. The particular church that we administer to in Utah, they sing it at the close of their service as a declaration, as a declaration of faith because of where they are standing.

It is praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost because in Utah, there is the denial of the Trinity, right? It is the denial of all these things, at least in their particular setting.

[9 : 31] And I hope when we sing it, we are reminded of that reality, too, that this is a declaration of the Trinity. We're not singing it because there are some words on page, but we're really praising Father, Son, and Holy Ghost because as we come to read the Word of God, that God the Father moved the hands of man to write of the Son of God, and we have the Son of God living inside of us, and we also have the Spirit of God teaching us.

These are the reliance of the believers, that we come longing to know what it is that God has to say to us, and we cast ourselves on the complete totality of the Trinity to allow us to understand these things.

We are reading the Word of God as declared by the Son of God and hoping that the Spirit of God would be present to instruct us in these matters. So again, when we sing these things, let's pay attention to them.

Slow down every now and then and say, Yes, this is a declaration of faith of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Say, Pastor, can you explain the Trinity to me? I would look at you square in the eye and say, No, and I'm not going to try to, and that's okay because I don't want to be able to explain God the Father, I don't want to be able to explain God the Son, and I don't want to be able to explain God the Holy Spirit because the moment that I can explain and define God is the moment I have a grasp on Him.

And I don't want to serve a God that I can grasp. I want one who is so much farther above and beyond me. That's enough of that side note. So we just move forward. But we see the truth of the Scripture this morning.

[10 : 58] We see the righteous practice of kingdom people. That is what they do because of who they are. If you remember, Jesus takes a number of time, or a little bit of time, to build the character of the individual, and then He moves to the conduct of the individual because who we are always matters more than what we do because the reality is the things we do will always inevitably become a reflection of who we are.

We may be able to do good deeds for a while, and we may be able to do them during seasons, but we cannot maintain these things as righteous practices unless we are righteous on the inside because that which we do will always become a reflection of who we are.

This is not putting on a show. This is not putting on a front. This is actually the practice. That is the daily habits of the righteous kingdom individual. And He begins to speak of these righteous practices, what the kingdom people do throughout their lives and how they are to live their lives and how they are to behave in their lives.

He will transition into how they deal with money and how they store up and things of that nature. But here we see three practices of the righteous people, three practices of kingdom people, and really the reflection that it has upon them and the reflection that it has to society around them.

This is the transition from being to doing because Christ always moves people from that, from being to doing. We don't just believe in Christ. We believe in Christ and then we behave like Christ, right?

[12 : 30] We do things because of our faith. We don't do things to gain our faith. We do things because we are forgiven and redeemed. We don't do things to be forgiven and redeemed.

There is the faith which has works connected to it, not the faith that is earned because of works. Big difference. Now James speaks of that, right? The faith without works is dead.

But the manner of works and the practice of works and that which we do as kingdom people matters. Number one, we see that the righteous practice of kingdom people comes first and foremost with a word of caution.

There is a word of caution here because anytime we begin to speak of good deeds or good doings or practicing things and looking good on the outside, we have to be careful and kind of pump the brakes a little bit.

There is this word of caution and he says it like this, Beware, beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them.

[13 : 33] There's the word of caution. Beware of practicing righteousness before men to be noticed by them. Now, if you are reading the Sermon on the Mount and you're reading it in one sitting or if you're reading through the Gospel of Matthew as it was intended to be written and as it was intended to be read as a letter written to a group of believers and if you are reading it, just making your way through it, you would have just read in Matthew chapter five immediately following the Beatitudes where Matthew makes this bold declaration.

Matthew says, You are the light of the world. A city set on the hill cannot be hidden and a lamp that is lit will not be covered on a basket but will be put on a lampstand. And then Matthew says this. He says, Jesus declares, So let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

And then we go just a little bit further and he says, Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them. We are met with what seems to be a little bit of a quandary, right? We kind of scratch our heads and say, Well, then what are we to do?

Are we just to sit around like a knot on a log and not do anything? Because at one moment, Christ commands his people to let their light shine before men and then at the very next moment, he cautions his people and says, Beware of showing your righteousness before men.

So what are we to do? And it is this word of caution that is connected with the actions of the individuals. And really it is found in the verse itself because what he commands us to do is to let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and what?

[15 : 06] Glorify our Father in heaven. The caution there is, Beware of practicing your righteousness in order to be noticed by men.

See, really, it is not a matter of will people see what it is we are doing. It is not a matter of putting our works on display. It is the motive of the heart, remember?

It is the internal qualities that matter more than the external behavior. It is the motivation of the heart that is what we are told to take caution to. Are we doing the things we are doing so that people may see the things we do and glorify our Father in heaven?

Or are we doing the things that we are doing so that people may take notice of us? It is really the caution that says, Pay very close attention to your motivation.

Are you praying and hoping and desiring that people see the life you live and see all that you do because to be seen is inevitable? You are a billboard.

[16 : 09] If you are a believer in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, if you are redeemed and forgiven, if you have been called a saint, not if you call yourself a saint, but if the Lord God Almighty calls you a saint because He has purchased you with the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, if you have been adopted into the family of God, then people are supposed to be looking at you.

Like it or not, we are to be the display or the billboard for a watching world to see. This is the whole intended purpose of the nation of Israel throughout the Old Testament.

They were to show the world what it looks like to live in relationship with Holy God. They were to put on display to a watching world what it looks like to live in relationship with a Holy God so that others would be drawn to that relationship.

And this is the calling of the church and the individual today. You are to put on display before men what it looks like to live a life in relationship with Holy God so that people may be drawn to Him.

So it's not a matter of whether people are looking at us or not. The caution here is what is our motivation to being seen? Are we desiring that people will see the life we live corporately and individually that is as a church and as individuals and therefore witness that and have a longing to know the Father or the God we serve or are we just hoping people will say well there goes a good guy.

[17 : 43] Look at all that he does. Man he's doing a lot of good. See it is the motivation of the heart that really gives a rise to a word of caution. We need to be careful of why it is we are doing what we are doing because Christ says kingdom people are to behave differently but their motivation is to be completely radical.

We're not hoping to be recognized. We're not hoping to be seen. We should not be hoping to be noticed and to be exalted and to be put upon a pedestal. It is a matter of the desire because he says beware of practicing your righteousness before men.

Why? To be noticed by them. So how do we assess that? Well do we get bent out of shape when nobody notices? Do we get upset when nobody knows what it is we're doing?

Does it bother us when we get no recognition? Does it concern us when nobody cares? And here is a check for the motivation of the heart because he says otherwise you have no reward with your father who is in heaven.

The word of caution says this pay very very close attention to your motivation for doing that which you do. Why do you give?

[19 : 07] Why do you pray? Why do you fast? These are the three things we'll see in just a moment. Why do you practice righteousness? Why are you living differently than others? Why are you trying to stand out?

Why are you abstaining from things that you used to partake of? Why have you changed your behavior? Why are you doing things differently from people around you? Why do you behave differently? Why do you talk differently than you did before you knew Christ?

Why are the things that you're watching different than they were before you knew Christ? Why are the things that you're reading different from the things that they were before you knew Christ? Why are you listening to things different than you did before you knew Christ?

Why has your whole life been completely changed and turned upside down? I didn't ask you if, I said why is it, right? That's another declaration because these are all things that happen. Because behold, all things are made new.

It's amazing when you look at that biblically. It's not that he just refines the things that are already in your life. He discards the things that you don't need in your life and he redeems them. That is, he bought them and he purchased them and he redeems your life.

[20 : 03] And therefore, he allows you some things back and some things he doesn't give back to you because they now belong to him. And everything is completely new. We don't need to be cleaned up.

We need to be raised up, right? We need to be resurrected. We need to be, I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. And a dead man lives differently than he did before. So we understand these things.

But why do we do that? It's so that people can see us and notice us and recognize us. Or that people could say, wow, look at the God they serve. You know, I have this tendency at times to be a little too transparent.

I have this tendency at times to be a little too open about who I am and speaking to individuals. And even sometimes up here, and it's definitely not to be recognized and be noticed.

I'm always trying to keep myself in a proper perspective. Always trying to keep myself on the proper platform. Because I don't want anybody to be like me.

[21 : 06] I had an individual tell me one time and it concerned me. And I was right early in the stages of ministry. And he looked at me and I'm not going to say his name or anything like that.

No one you would know. There's maybe one or two people in here that would know him. But nobody in here would know him. And he said, the best I could hope for is when I die that there would be a lot of little, and he said his name, a lot of little me's running around.

And I remember thinking about that and I go, man, I don't want any more Billy Jo's running around because I know the problems with Billy Jo. Right? Now, Paul said be imitators of me as I imitate Christ.

Right? But I really don't want a lot more of me running around. I don't want those things because I know who I am. I don't want to be known. And that's why I have to be careful.

Listen, the temptation is always there. The temptation is always there, especially as a pastor. Did anybody notice? Did anybody care? Did anybody hear? But it's there for each and every one of us.

[22 : 12] So we have this word of caution. Secondly, we see with the righteous practice of kingdom people, there is a life of concern. There is a life of concern. This concern is connected to this caution.

The reason we have a word of caution is because kingdom people live lives of concern. Because we notice, again, throughout the Sermon on the Mount, we notice as Christ is teaching, as it applies to the kingdom, as it applies to the realm in which he rules in, that is the kingdom that he was over, and that the subjects of his kingdom behave differently and live differently, and all of a sudden they have different concerns.

And he doesn't use the word if. He says when. And he doesn't say if perchance you do these things. He doesn't leave it down. He says when you do these things. And he gives three examples of lives of concern.

And they are the examples of giving, praying, and fasting, right? Did you notice that he says when you give, when you pray, and when you fast? I have a friend who is a non-denominational pastor.

I've had the opportunity to preach in his church one time. You put this pastor out of concern. It's still around my family. It is a point of laughter, and they tend to make fun of me because they had a full band up on the stage.

[23 : 25] Their lights went low. I mean, streaming, you know, and I would go, and I was way out of my comfort zone. And, you know, this is good. This is great. And I was getting ready to preach there. And, you know, the music was playing.

And the worship was going, and people were running up and down the aisles and dancing and singing. And I didn't know what to do. So, you know, I get carried away, and I get nervous. And my family told me later on that, Dad, you were doing the penguin dance up front.

Said the pastor beside you was breaking it down. And I said, well, listen, everything inside of me wanted to come out, but the Southern Baptist part of me said, you can't do it, right? Push it down, push it down, push it down. Because I was afraid if it ever came out, it might really come out.

So I just kind of patted my legs a little bit. I said, we're going to be okay. But anyway, so this pastor and I have hung out quite a bit. And he made a comment to me one time. I mean, you talk about taking a knife and sticking it into the heart of a pastor.

He and I were eating lunch together one time. And he looked at me, and he said, hey, pastor, he said, I got something I want to say to you. I said, yeah, he said, we are quick to fast. And you Southern Baptists are fast to the table.

- [24 : 26] And I went, oh, boy. A little bit of humor in that, but a whole lot of conviction as well. Because we begin to see these emphatics that Jesus talks about a life of concern, right? When you give, when you pray, and when you fast. You say, are these commands? No, these are just expectations. These are not commands.
- These are expectations, right? Some people say, well, I'm waiting on a call to missions. Well, he says, when you go or as you're going to proclaim the gospel. We don't have to wait on a call. We've already been given the expectation that we will be on mission in the Great Commission.
- We've already been given these things. Here are expectations that the king has of kingdom people. Here are expectations that the king has for subjects of his kingdom.
- Those that live within his realm. These are things that he anticipates and expects that they will do. Because they are a reflection of a life of concern.
- [25 : 28] And the reason he gives a word of caution is because these were things that even non-kingdom people were already doing. And he seems to contrast them in what we would call absurd realities.
- He says, when you give to the poor, don't be like the hypocrites who like to sound a trumpet. I mean, think of Brother Jamie standing in front of you when you walked outside and you were going to give to someone.
- And he sounded his trumpet and everybody turned around to see. And all of a sudden you say, oh, yeah, I'm giving to this individual. Seems absurd, right? But it also is a reality. He says, make sure you're not making a show out of it.
- Make sure you're not doing it in the church or even outside the church. This is why when the deacons get together and we decide if we're going to help a family out. And if we decide if we get a phone call from a family and we get someone who calls and needs help.
- And when we decide to help that out, we always let Miss Lynn know we don't need to put on the budget who we helped and why we helped them. Just put it on there miscellaneous, right? If anybody has a question, tell them to come talk to the deacon body.
- [26 : 27] And we don't feel like we need to put a big display out there. We don't need Brother Jamie running ahead of us with his trumpet sounding an alarm. So everybody knows when we're doing anything. Because Jesus says that's hypocritical.
- But he also says you will do it. Right? It's an expectation. Because a life of concern looks for those around you who are less fortunate.
- Looks for those around you who are what he defines as poor. You look for those who may be downcast in a season. And it looks around to see, is there anyone that we can help corporately?
- And is there anyone that we can help individually? I have the blessing so many times being the pastor of a generous church. I have the blessing of being on the other end of making deliveries.
- And I remember this past week I took Ethan with me. And we went to deliver the gifts that were brought in by this church for the school, right? And I remember we went to the school.
- [27 : 24] And I was like, we got some gifts. Oh, that's great. Just put them over there. And I told Ethan before we went in. I said, listen, they're probably going to point to one little area and say, put all the gifts right over there. And it seemed like that right there. Like, put all the gifts.

And I said, ma'am, I don't think you understand. He says, quite a few gifts. He says, oh, that'd be great. Just put them right there. It's okay. And I had pulled the church trailer there, if that tells you anything. We brought in 25 big garbage bags and put them right there.

And nobody else could ever go throughout that office the rest of the day. That's great. We didn't have to sound a trumpet. We didn't have to tell anybody, right? We just wanted to give. These are expectations.

These are opportunities that we get to behave. And our hope and our desire in doing that, listen, I don't tell you these things so that you can go, whoa, look at them, look at them, look at them. All I was was the guy who left going, man, my shoulders are hurting.

I should have called some more guys to help me, right? So don't pump me up, right? I was a little late. Somebody needs to help carry these. There happened to be a couple county maintenance men there, and it really crossed my mind to say, hey, guys, won't you come help? Because I was getting tired.

[28 : 25] But this is just a great testimony. Like, our desire is that they go, wow, look at that church, the God that church serves must be real. Right? Must be real. It's not a question of if you will give, but when you give to the poor.

Now, again, this absurdity, don't let your right hand know what your left hand is doing. Does any of you have the ability not to let your right hand know what your left hand is doing? No, but it is really there to highlight the point.

You need to forget about it yourself. Right? You don't need to be concerned. You don't need to hold on to it. You don't need to be paying attention to it. You just need to give and move on.

And when you pray, you say, well, is prayer really a life of concern? Yes. When you pray, again, don't go out into the street corners or in the sanctuary sounding the trumpet, making the sound, going, hey, I'm about to pray here.

Let everybody know I'm going to pray. This is not saying that we can't do corporate prayer together. This is not saying we don't come together as a prayer meeting. Because I think even as we read through the New Testament, we see I long to have those type of prayer meetings that we find in the book of Acts.

[29 : 34] Right? When the early church got together and they prayed together and it says the walls of the place that were gathered together started to shake. I want some of that. Right? I would love to be in that type of prayer meeting. So it's not saying we can't have that type of, hey, we're going to meet together in prayer.

It just says don't make a show out of it. Yeah? No. When you pray, go into your room, shut the door behind you, go into your prayer closet and pray. And then what we have, unfortunately, which is called the Lord's Prayer.

By the way, I'm going to go ahead and make a declaration here and this may upset some of you. But I'm going to go ahead and say what you have in Matthew chapter 6 is the model prayer. The Lord's Prayer is found for you in John 17. That's where our Lord prays.

Right? John 17 is the only recorded prayer we have of Jesus himself praying. That's the Lord's Prayer. This is a model prayer. Now, again, I've been a part of teams and they've repeated this.

I've got pictures in my office of a football team that when they were in kindergarten praying together, when they were eighth graders praying together, and when they were seniors praying together. The same football team.

[30 : 32] It's really cool. You see the same kind of grouping of them. Right? And they would always gather together, especially when they got in middle school and in high school, and they would always repeat the model prayer. Is this saying that we should say this?

No, because Jesus says don't use vain repetition. Right? There's no power in these words, per se. Okay? There's power in the model. But did you notice in this model prayer that there is not very much room for personal matters here, that it's always corporate concerns?

Our Father, which art in heaven, which means from the very beginning you were reminded, He's not just your God. He's the God of all His people. You belong to a larger body than just yourself. Our Father.

Now, is He my Father? Yes. Because through the spirit of adoption, I cry out, Abba, Father. But being able to cry out, Abba, Father, or Daddy, Daddy, or to cry out to Him with loving adoration is also reminding, I'm not the only one running.

Right? I have this whole family of believers around me who have been adopted into the family as well. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. We're lifting Him up. Your kingdom come and will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

[31 : 35] All these desires, I know I'm going through this kind of fast, but look at the corporate concern. Give us this day. You're not just praying, God, provide for me. God, give us this day our daily bread.

But you're in a prayer closet by yourself, and you're praying with concern for the body. See how this is a life of concern?

This is not just a life of personal interest. This is a life of corporate concern. Right? And forgive us our debts as we have forgiven, as we have forgiven.

Those who have trespassed against us are our debtors. And lead us not into temptation. I wonder, you know, I was asked a question. I probably didn't give a very good answer to that.

You know, would God really lead us into temptation? The quick answer to that is no. God does not lead us into temptation. But here in this model prayer, what you see is you're asking in your private prayer, in your private unannounced prayer, that God would guard the corporate body from temptation.

[32 : 44] I wonder how often we pray that for one another. I wonder how often we have that type of concern for one another. Because, see, this is a life of concern.

Because when you pray. And then that last one, when you fast. What type of concern is that? Well, fasting is giving up of something that most of the time is normal.

Right? Most of the time is necessary. Traditionally, fasting was giving up of food. Now we say, well, you can do a technology fast. Or you can do a TV fast. Or you can do all these other fasts.

And again, I'm not here to berate or to put down any of that. But traditionally, it was giving up something that was normal. Something that was necessary. The Pharisees fasted twice a week in the days of Christ.

They fasted on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The early church fasted twice a week as well. They did Wednesdays and Fridays. Because they didn't want to follow the Pharisaic tradition. They said, we're doing something new.

[33 : 42] So they fasted twice a week on Wednesdays and Fridays. And the reason they would abstain from all food on those days. Because it was taking something that was absolutely necessary. And doing without it.

Because you thought it more important to be in right relation with Holy God. And it was having a concern for your spiritual well-being over your physical well-being.

It was having a greater concern for yourself spiritually. Than it is to have for yourself physically. Now, is this an area where the modern church should practice?

Yeah, I believe absolutely. Is this something that I'm really good at? No. Have there been seasons in my life where I have fasted? Yes. Very great beneficial times. But we understand this reality.

Again, we don't want to make a big scene out of it. I'll give you a great picture of making a big scene out of it. Shortly before Mardi Gras comes through Louisiana, right? You say, oh, Pastor, you know about Mardi Gras?

[34 : 45] Wait a minute. Now, I've never been there, never done that, right? Just to stay with me. But you probably do know of Fat Tuesday. Because Fat Tuesday is the Tuesday before the start of Mardi Gras. Fat Tuesday is so named as Fat Tuesday because that's the day where you gouge yourself full of food because you're going to fast the next day.

Right? You're making a scene out of it. Like, I'm going to eat all I can. I'm going to eat all I can. I'm going to eat all I can. I'm going to eat all I can. So that when I am fasting from whatever it is that I'm fasting from, I don't miss it as much.

I'm going to make myself sick on it. Now, is that wrong per se? No. But it becomes wrong when you make a scene out of it. Right? It is wrong when you make it a highlight and a celebration and a festival.

Then it becomes wrong. So we understand this reality is when you fast, nobody needs to know. Because your concern is your relationship with your Holy Father, not your recognition from everyone else.

Not those acknowledgments from other people. This is a life of concern. Now, let me go to the third and final thing, and I'll wrap it up. I know I've ran over, but I'll be done here.

[35 : 57] And this third one is very quick. You have a word of caution, a life of concern. And number three, an abiding confidence. An abiding confidence. Because the question remains is if we are to practice our righteousness, which righteousness just means to be in a right standing with Holy God.

If because of a right standing with Holy God, our life is to look different, we are to behave different, and there are some expectations for our behavior. If we are to look starkly different so that people may see our words and go for our Father in heaven.

But those behaviors and those works and those practices should never be for the intended purpose of recognition before other people. Or even being rewarded by other people.

Then what motivation is there for us to continue? Why would we do it when nobody seems to pay attention to us doing it? Why would we be led to do it when it seems as if nobody cares?

And it is this three times repeated phrase that I ask you to pay attention to. Jesus says this, Your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

[37 : 09] Your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

Your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. If there is one thing that I have found to be true is when the King says something will happen, then it will happen. When he makes a bold declaration of this is something that will happen, then it absolutely will come about.

And when he declares to kingdom people that when we practice our righteousness for the right reasons, Though none may notice, though none may care, though there may not be any seeming reward on this earth or any recognition in this life, There is the absolute confidence of this fact.

Our Father who is in heaven will see what is done in secret and will reward us. Absolutely will.

Reward us. It doesn't matter who knows. The only confidence we need is that our Father who is in heaven knows.

[38 : 35] And he has absolutely promised that he will reward us for those righteous practices. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day.

God, we thank you for, Lord, just the opportunity together, together to look at your word, Lord, to let your word look into our hearts and minds.

May it be the probing and searching instrument of the Spirit to show us why it is, why we do the things we do. Lord, may you be glorified and may you be honored throughout our lives.

We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.

[39 : 52] Thank you.