

Sermon on the Mount Part XX

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] Harvey Harpel, the chairman of our Board of Elders, usually takes care of the scripture reading this morning, and I forgot to mention him and the litany of those who are falling apart, but Gary is at home with his leg propped up and his knees swollen up greatly, as a result probably of overextending himself in some of their bicycle tours.

So, this morning we will, in his place, invite you to turn to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 6, and our scripture portion will be the first four verses.

Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 6. Follow along, if you would, please, as I read, beginning with verse 1. Beware of practicing your righteousness before men, to be noticed by them, otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

When therefore you give alms, do not sound the trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men.

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

[1 : 34] Now we have noted from the outset of the Sermon on the Mount that it's all about righteousness. There is human righteousness that falls far short of what God will accept.

This is that which the religious establishment embraced and set forth as being acceptable to God, but it wasn't at all. This is why Jesus said, Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of God.

And there is a human righteousness God will accept because it is one of a confessed, admitted deficiency in oneself.

Agonizing over one's failure, this human righteousness knows it is not really righteousness at all. And it cries out, God be merciful to me, a sinner.

These are they who will enter the kingdom of God. 5.20 of Matthew sets the stage for all that follows in the Sermon on the Mount.

[2 : 45] And that is the key verse where Christ said to this vast crowd that had gathered, we do not know how many were there, but suffice it to say there were likely several hundred, maybe even more than that.

He said to them, Unless your righteousness exceeds, goes beyond that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

And it was the general opinion of just about everybody there that the scribes and Pharisees were top drawer when it came to righteousness, that they had it all together. But in fact, they did not.

They were far from all together. Because the scribes and Pharisees had come up with all kinds of ways to circumvent the law, to interpret the law in such a way as to excuse themselves from certain responsibilities.

They engaged in all kinds of nitpicking detail in dotting I's and crossing T's that left the people in just absolute confusion. And this is why our Lord later will refer to the law of Moses as being that which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.

[3 : 58] There was nothing wrong with the law of Moses. It was the Pharisees' interpretation of it. And let me explain this again because it is very, very important. Perhaps the single most important charge that was consistently laid against the Lord Jesus by the scribes and Pharisees was, he teaches against the law of Moses.

He never did. And he made it quite clear that he did not come to destroy or abrogate the law. He came to fulfill the law. So the clashes that Christ endured on an ongoing basis were always between his interpretation of the Mosaic law, which was in accordance with its intent and its spirit, versus the interpretation of the scribes and Pharisees.

And therein lay a great conflict, and it was the basis for actually their turning on him and demanding his life. We noted in chapter 5, after stating what he did in 520 about their righteousness exceeding the others, that Christ went on then to give six examples of how the scribes and Pharisees utterly failed in producing a righteousness that God would accept.

He illustrated their failure by telling them they had the concepts of murder, adultery, divorce, swearing of oaths, non-resistance, and retaliation, and love all wrong.

All of those critical key areas that are so essential to day-to-day living, they had them all wrong. Their attitude toward them was all wrong. And what else is there in the community of men that matters, other than those six areas he covered?

[5 : 45] This has to do with our whole being, all of our activity, formal and informal, because murder deals with the sanctity of life itself. Adultery deals with fidelity to your lifetime partner.

Divorce deals with responding to a hardened heart in a marriage that makes its continuation impossible. The swearing of oaths that makes all transactions of commerce and exchange possible.

And non-resistance or non-retaliation, which lowers hostility in the midst of disagreements, and leaves room for the wrath of God. And the key there is what our Lord said, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.

And we are to leave room for the wrath of God. And when you engage in vindictive retribution or get even with someone, you are not leaving room for the wrath of God.

You are placing your own wrath in there. So these are very, very important and key points. And all of these are capped with the sixth and the final one in chapter 5, And that is illustrated by what he says in that context, that the Lord causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust.

[7 : 23] Why doesn't he make a distinction and provide rainfall so that it falls only on the just? It's because he loves the unjust too.

And if we love only those who love us, what's the big deal about that? Even the scribes and Pharisees do that.

It isn't difficult to love people who love you. What is difficult? What is demanded is to love people who hate you and spitefully use you.

That's agape love. That's the kind of love in which we are to engage. That's not the usual definition of tough love.

But that really would be tough love. To love those who do not love you. So, today, and that's just a brief summary of chapter 5, and I wanted to go over that briefly because we've had a weak hiatus here in between.

[8 : 33] And today we begin chapter 6, where our Lord continues the theme of what? Righteousness. Because, really, bottom line is, it's all about righteousness.

And this is what Paul was talking about when he gave his testimony in Philippians, I think it was chapter 3, where he said that he wanted to be found in Christ, not having a righteousness of my own, but the righteousness which is through faith in Christ.

And Paul knew full well that his own personal righteousness would not cut it, and neither will yours, and neither will mine. We are robed in the righteousness of Christ by grace through faith when we put our trust and confidence in him as our personal Savior.

Then God clothes us with a judicial, legal, spiritual robe of righteousness that allows God to look at us through Christ.

Rather than to look at us and see us in all of our unbecomingness and all our sin, he sees the righteousness of Christ applied to us. Nothing is more important than righteousness.

[9 : 48] And if you possess it through Christ, you possess a positional righteousness that cannot be abnegated, cannot be improved upon, cannot be taken from in any way.

It is the ultimate. Now, this is not borne out nearly so clearly in the Gospels, because in the Gospels, we do not have the grace of God set forth in such clarity and such understandable terms as we do in the church age, which is the age of grace.

And that's, frankly, that's what you would expect, because the Gospels, despite the fact that they are separated by 400 years from the Old Testament, really belong to the Old Testament.

They do not belong to the New. I know that is a shocking statement for some and probably considered heresy by others, but, you see, when our Lord was here for his earthly ministry, from the time he was born in Bethlehem until the time he was raised from the dead, Jesus functioned, operated under the Old Testament law.

So the four Gospels are where they belong canonically, in that they are in our New Testament, but theologically and doctrinally, they are part of the Old Testament. That's why Jesus was circumcised.

[11 : 08] That's why he kept the Sabbath. That's why he did all those things Jewish, because the law was still in effect, and he didn't come to destroy it. He came to fulfill it. So from the standpoint of doctrine, we must keep the Gospels where they belong, and that is in the Old Testament context.

Some think that just because Jesus was on the scene, that means that everything has changed, and it's the New Testament. No, it isn't. Not at all. And this is why he functioned as he did under the law and the Old Testament.

So, in beginning chapter 6, our Lord continues with this theme of righteousness, what it is and what it is not. How is righteousness among men to be conducted?

This is the question, and this is what he is addressing in verse 1. Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them, because if you do, you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

And I think this is just a tacit acknowledgement that there is a reward for living, acting, and doing righteously. God takes that into account.

[12 : 22] And we are not to be righteous for nothing. We are to be righteous because righteousness is the right way to be, and with it, there is a reward.

So, how is this to be done? How do we practice righteousness? How do we go about it? In this, there is a dispensational carryover.

I mean, righteousness is in vogue, whether you're talking Old Testament, New Testament, or whatever. Righteousness is that which exalts God. So, in the first verse, we are told how not to do it.

Do not do your righteous deeds in order to be seen of men. Now, here, there is a little question of clarification that needs to be injected. If we don't do these to be seen of men, why do we do them?

Think about that. These deeds of righteousness are acts. They are virtues. They are expressions of spirituality and righteousness that we perform.

[13 : 37] And people can see you performing them. How can you do deeds of righteousness that are not before men? And he isn't saying that we are not to do them before men because they are our greatest objective.

Remember, he said just earlier in the fifth chapter, that our good works are to be manifested in such a way that we are to let our light shine in such a way that men will see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven.

Well, how are men going to see your good works of righteousness if you don't do them before them? So, that's not the point, and that's not what he's saying. What he's saying buttresses and supports what we quoted earlier from chapter 5.

When we do these things before men, they are to see our good works and glorify you. No. Therein lies the difference.

They are to see our good works and not glorify us. They are to see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven.

[14 : 50] They are to see by our good works. What is the dynamic and the power and the motivation behind your good works? And where does that point to?

Points to him. If we do our righteousness to be seen by men so that they will give us accolades, give us recognition and praise, then Christ says, you know what?

What they give you by way of praise and accolades, that's all you're going to get. Just theirs. If you want God's praise, engage in deeds of righteousness in such a way that men are drawn beyond you to the God who motivates you in doing those things.

Therein lies the key. Do not do your righteous deeds in order to be seen of men so that they will glorify you, but so they will glorify God.

And the first example of how and how not to do our giving is addressed in verses 2 through 4. And he says, when therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you.

[16 : 12] Now, why in the world would he use an expression like that? Well, it's very simple. It's because some did. And nobody does that today. Not in our giving.

But you know, there are equivalents. I mean, back in this day, most of the giving was done at the temple, in the temple courtyard. In fact, there was even a receptacle place there.

Remember the text in Luke's Gospel that talks about the poor widow woman and the widow's mite, how that the wealthy man came up and gave a great sum of money, and then this poor little widow lady came up and she cast in her mite, and Christ said, you know which one gave the greater amount?

It was the widow and her mite. Because the rich man gave much, but he gave from his great abundance.

The widow gave very little, but it was all she had. And Christ elevated that to the proper place of supremacy because, relatively speaking, she gave a lot more than he did.

[17 : 25] And another thing, we won't take the time to go there, but in that Luke passage, I think it's Luke 12, Jesus said, the text says that our Lord was sitting there by the temple treasury.

He was beholding how the people were giving, with what attitude or what demeanor they gave. And I'm sure that there were some trumpets involved.

These were ram's horns. The ram's horn is like a trumpet, and if you've got the wind to blow it, you can make a horn, a bugle sound noise out of it.

And there were those who came in who were very well placed in the community, very authoritative individuals, well connected, prestige, lots of money behind them, always had a retinue following them, dressed in fine robes and everything, made quite a spectacle.

Here they come up to do their thing for God, and God certainly should appreciate it very much. And they make a big fuss and a big to-do out of it. The equivalent of this today is when somebody who has the money wants to write out a large check, and it's made into an oversized check, and the photographer is there to take the picture, so it'll be in the daily newspaper, and they're all standing there shaking hands congratulating, this is Mr. So-and-so, and this is his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Gottbuck's, and they're writing out this check.

[18 : 50] This is all to be seen of men, and to gain the accolades of men. Now we don't blow trumpets like that today. You know what the equivalent of this would be? Let's have a drum roll, huh?

So to get everybody's attention, and I've seen people do that. I've seen it on television. I've never seen it in person, but I know that it goes on, where this preacher preacher is waxing eloquent, so-called, and God is speaking to me.

There are five people here, five people whom God is leading to give \$5,000 each to this cause.

Are you one of those five? If you are, please come forward now. You can write your check right here. You know there are people who will do that.

It's incredible. I mean, it's incredible that preachers would use this tactic, but I've seen it on TV. And it's incredible that people would fall for it and go, and you know what?

[20 : 01] They get a hand clap, and they get all of these looks of admiration as they walk down the aisle, this big smile on their face, and they write out this check. First of all, they want everybody to know they've got it, and they can do that.

And it's pathetic. That's what it is. It's just plainly pathetic. This is the kind of thing that was going on in that day, and our Lord rebuked it.

When you give alms, which is just another term for money, and alms is primarily intended for the poor and the downtrodden. When you give alms, do not sound the trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men.

Oh, you're so appreciative of your generosity. You're such a wonderful person, and you're so generous and so kind, and God needs more people like you, and blah, blah, blah, and people just eat that stuff up.

In fact, that's why they do it, to get that kind of recognition. They get all kinds of warm fuzzies out of that. Never mind the fact that they could give the same, and give it so that no one knows but God what they've given, and derive joy and pleasure from that, in knowing that no one else knows, but God knows.

[21 : 31] And that's all that counts. You know, since our inception, here at Grace Bible Church, we have always had in place a system of giving that if anyone wants to, they can make it completely anonymous.

The only problem is, and this is a fly in the ointment that we've never been able to work out, the only problem is, it has to be given in cash.

And if it is given in cash, you see, at the beginning of the year, we distribute numbered envelopes. It has the same number on it for the whole year. And the one who is distributing the envelopes and keeping track of the numbers on the envelopes also has the names that go with the number.

But they are not to have the amount of money that is given. And the one who knows the amount of money that is given is not to have access to the names of those who give it.

But the system breaks down when you don't use cash because people write checks and it's impossible to process things without noticing names on the checks.

[22 : 47] And we can thank our internal or our infernal revenue service for this kind of nonsense that keeps it from being as private as it should be.

But we say all this to say that we don't want people to be in a position where they can either be embarrassed by what they don't give or that they can be overly noticed for what they do give and their generosity because that can set people up for spiritual downfall.

And one thing that we also insisted on from the outset and I guard this very very faithfully and I've never had occasion to be confronted with anything negative about it and I take great pleasure in this I have no idea who gives what in this church.

I don't know who the larger givers are. I don't want to know. I don't know who gives little or nothing. I don't want to know. Because human nature being what it is it is very very tempting to treat certain people whom you recognize as larger givers to treat them in a different way than you would someone else.

I think that's almost inevitable. So steps have been taken to prevent me from even having that information. I don't have it. I don't want it. I don't seek it.

[24 : 16] And it provides within me a great relaxation and comfort in not knowing. I don't want to know. That's between you and the Lord. This matter of giving is a touchy issue with most people in most churches but I am happy to say it has never really been an issue here.

And probably one reason is because in the 42 years that I have been your pastor I've averaged speaking on money once every eight years.

And that was because the text dealt with the subject of money so you can't very well avoid it. And I have been just absolutely overwhelmed time after time after time by the generosity of grace people.

people. And I am so thankful that it is uncoerced and that there is no pressure applied for people to give. We do not operate a pledge system.

Never have. We do not require people to indicate what money they're going to give and then done them for it if they don't give it. Never had a pledge system. I remember years and years ago when Paul Pontus and Dave Weinbrenner and myself went to a local bank to open an account and we were telling them about this church that we were going to start.

[25 : 46] This would have been 1970 or 71. And of course banks are always interested in how you're going to repay the loan. And we said, well, we're confident that the money will be there.

Oh, well, you, you, you operate with a pledge system. Well, no, no, we don't, we don't ask people to pledge anything.

Well, then you just, you just practice the tithe. Well, no, we don't, we don't actually tithe anyway. Well, well, what do you do?

We said, well, we just, we just put a plate on the table there in the back and say, if anybody wants to give, they just drop their money on the plate there. And if you don't want to give or you can't afford to give this week, that's okay, don't worry about it.

And he just looked at us aghast as if, and I could read, I could read in his eyes he was saying, you can't operate a church like that. you've got to put people under the gun, you've got to lay on the guilt, you've got to use all the manipulation, you've got to wring the bucks out of them.

[26 : 49] Well, if that's what it takes, I don't want any part of it. I just don't want to do that. Paul tells us that we are to give cheerfully, not grudgingly, nor of necessity.

We have never, ever taught tithing. And even those who say they teach tithing, they don't teach tithing at all. They may not know it, but if they really taught tithing, and were really strict about it, they would require from their people 23.5%.

I don't know where they get this 10% business. 10% is a tithe. That's a tithe, singular. But the scriptures talk about tithes, plural.

And offerings. And you add them all up. And it comes out to about 23.5%. So even those who say they teach tithing, they don't. And can you imagine where most of our friends would be if the pastor stood up and said, well, we've been telling you that the tithe is 10%, and we expect you to give 10% to the church, but in actuality, folks, it's 23.5%, so we expect the bump up next Sunday.

They would say, is your name Obama? Or what? You know? No. It's just you are to give, Paul makes it very clear, in the dispensation, the age of grace, the church age, you are to give according as how God has prospered you.

[28 : 29] And it is not my business to tell you how God has prospered you. That's between you and the Lord. That sets up a freedom and a relaxation in the life of the believer.

I know there are people who don't give what they should, and I know there are people who give more than they can afford to give. And it all balances out. And the Lord knows, and he rewards those that he deems appropriate, and he takes care of those whom some of us would regard as stingy or skin flints.

God has ways of evening discourse. He doesn't call us to do that. We are to just teach the truth and encourage people to give. And by the way, let me just say this again. Your generosity over the years has just been amazing.

We've had occasions where somebody in the church would come up with a critical need. I remember years and years ago, Gordon Johnson, a dear man, and he and his wife were with us for several years, and they eventually moved away to be closer to their kids.

But Gordy came down with a series of debilitating strokes, and it was devastating because I think he was only in his 40s at the time. and the need was for a van with a lift in it.

[29 : 57] And they were expensive, several thousand dollars, and we just put out the need. Hey, we need 12 grand or whatever it was within the next few weeks, and money was there.

And we still don't know where all it came from, but we don't have special offerings very often. but when we have a special offering, it's special.

We don't wear that thing out. And people have just continued to give. We've got a box. You know, I'm supposed to tell you this every Sunday morning.

I'm supposed to remind you that there is an offering box out there on the wall, and you can drop in anything that you want the church to have, but you must do it.

Willingly, joyfully, gratefully, don't give grudgingly, don't stand there and say, well, I'm going to give this money, I'm going to put this in the box, but I really rather not because I'd rather pay my electric bill, blah, blah, blah.

[31 : 00] Pay your electric bill. Only money that is given joyfully with the right attitude should be deposited in that box. And over our 42 years of existence, we have never one single time, ever had a bill come due that we couldn't pay on time.

All I can say is the Lord honors that. And it is true that the nation of Israel was under a lot different methodology than what we are today.

They were giving in accordance with the law and the tithes set forth and stipulated in the law of Moses. And it was a very involved thing. There were lots of ramifications to it that in order to understand that you really have to spend time in the book of Leviticus and Deuteronomy to be able to put it all together.

And you understand that it was through the giving of the children of Israel that the priestly tribe was supported. This was God's built-in welfare system for the priests.

Because the priests all had their families. They married and had wives and had children and had financial responsibilities and upkeep. But none of them were ever allotted any land.

[32 : 14] So none of the priests had any acreage. They couldn't till any soil. They were virtually dependent upon the people. And that's one of the principal things that the tithes and offerings were to be used for.

It was kind of like a welfare system for the priesthood. And it was built in as well as the whole principle of gleaning. That too was a welfare system established for the poor and the needy.

And Ruth who came from Moab with her mother-in-law Naomi was a gleaner in the field. And the Jewish welfare system if you will was set up so that when a man went out and reaped a harvest in the field whether it was barley or oats or whatever it was all he could do was make one pass through the field.

That was it. And whatever he got on that first harvest that was his. But he couldn't go back over it again because everything that he left behind and missed was for the gleaners.

And those were poor people who would come in and pick up the leftovers and they would subsist on that. But they didn't have it delivered to their house and they didn't receive it by a check in the mail.

[33 : 25] They had to go out and work for it and pick it up. And that enabled them to maintain their dignity as well as fit into a system that God had established.

And it was a beautiful thing. So today our giving is decidedly different. We are not involved in principally what is taking place here.

But the application is the same. And the principles are the same. We are to give as unto the Lord because we give from a sense of gratitude.

Not from a sense of I have to do this. Because if I don't, I won't be able to live with the guilt. And you've got some different problems. But we need to be able to give and do so joyfully, not grudgingly.

And the Lord loves a cheerful giver. It's a beautiful thing. In this text we also find the principle of reward.

[34 : 27] And he makes it quite clear in verse two that when people give in such a way as to be noticed, admired, thanked by men, recognized by men, Christ said that's all the reward they're going to get.

They needn't look for anything from God. So when you give, verse three, when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

I've struggled a little bit with that, and I'm convinced that more than anything else it's an Aramaism, that is an Aramaic figure of speech, and it simply means that when we are not to keep close accounts, we are to be generous with the full hand.

We are not to keep score or keep tabs. I think that's the meaning of left hand and right hand, after all, they both belong to you. What does it mean that your left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing?

It just means, what it seems to imply, that there is an unawareness there that your generosity is first and foremost and keeping strict accounts as to how much you are being generous with is strictly out of the question.

- [35 : 41] Don't worry about that. Just give as unto the Lord, and you give in accordance with your ability. I want to say something about that too, and I realize that this sounds kind of unspiritual, but I'm going to say it anyway, because I'm convinced that it's right, even though it does sound a little unspiritual.

there are good, well-meaning, sincere Christian people who allow themselves to be taken advantage of in such a way that it is just not a good thing.

And someone may put the arm on you for money, and you may not be in a position where you can help them, but you can go the extra mile and do something to help them, and you feel that just because they have come to you and asked you, that means God is asking you.

Not necessarily. Not necessarily. And I have known people who have unwisely impoverished themselves so that they could give to others, and they thought it was a very spiritual thing to do.

It wasn't a spiritual thing to do at all. It was a foolish thing to do. And Christians can engage in foolishness, I'll tell you. It's entirely possible to be generous with someone in a way that we ought not to be.

- [37 : 14] And I see that this goes on sometimes within family settings. And I realize I'm getting on touchy ground here, and who am I thinking of, and who do I have in mind here?

I'll tell you who I have in mind here. Everybody. I'm not singling out anybody. I'm not picking on anybody. I have no individual in mind at all. But I do know that people can come to you with financial needs, and sometimes well-meaning, sincere believers consider just the request to be something that God is behind.

And maybe he is, and maybe he isn't. But there are people who have impoverished themselves over subsidizing irresponsible lifestyles of their adult children.

And you're not doing them any favors, and you're certainly not doing yourself any favor. And yet, some can be so ungrateful. Some can be so ungrateful that they will try to lay a guilt trip on those who don't shell out or write the checks.

and just because you have it, doesn't mean they are entitled to it, and you're supposed to give it to them. Now, I'll be the first to tell you, we all rise and fall with our kids and their needs.

- [38 : 39] And I've had occasion over the last 40 years to explain this to people, and sometimes I think with some real benefit, and probably sometimes it wasn't heeded, but I make a distinction when it comes to giving.

And by the way, I make it a practice, never lend family members or friends money. Never. I never lend family members or friends money.

If there is a need, and I am able to meet the need, I give it. I don't lend it. And I don't expect it back. I don't even want it back.

There are occasions that arise when one may have grown children that are responsible with their money and with their life, but something happens and they really fall upon hard times.

Maybe it's health. Maybe they lose their job. Maybe some other circumstance just overwhelms them financially. What do you do? Well, you help them. If at all possible, you help them.

- [39 : 52] Because they are yours and you brought them into the world and their need becomes your need and you want to do what you can. And I call this financial crisis intervention.

It's a wonderful thing. when kids or adults are laid off from their job or there's an extended illness and they've got medical bills and things like that.

Of course, you do whatever you can to help them. But then there are cases where they may live very irresponsible lifestyles. I knew of a case one time where an adult couple spent \$50, \$60 every week buying lottery tickets.

And then they can't provide food for the kids at the end of the month and they come to mom and dad to bail them out. And you wouldn't do it except for the fact that the kids are involved, the children are involved.

Then you're between a rock and a hard place. What are you going to do? So you end up subsidizing an irresponsible lifestyle because you don't want to see your grandchildren do without and it's a hard place to be.

[41 : 02] And it requires great wisdom. But I try to make a distinction between helping people who are suffering from a financial crisis that is not of their own doing as opposed to helping people who just live in a perpetual financial crisis and you will never get through writing checks for them.

After all, they feel that as long as you are their safety net and you will keep bailing them out, they can continue to live the lifestyle they want to live and put the arm on you with guilt or whatever when the need arises.

And you're doing them no favors. This is where tough love comes in. Sometimes you just have to say, no, yes, it's true, I can help you, but I'm not going to because you need to do this on your ground.

I'm not going to subsidize your irresponsible lifestyle. You become an enabler. It's just like giving another drink to an alcoholic and saying, I sure wish you would quit.

But here, have another drink. The principle is the same. These are tough issues, I would be the first to admit. And all of this is talking about an act of doing righteousness.

[42 : 23] And this is how we are to do it. We are to be generous, but not for the accolades of men. We are to be generous so that people can see the generosity, but they don't credit you, they credit the Lord.

He's the motivation behind it. We've got about five minutes, so I'll take some Q&A; if there is any. And if you don't want to talk about yourself and your own financial situation, you can always preface it with, I have this friend.

That's always a good out. Anyone? Shelly.

Shelly. Can we have the mic? We don't have a runner here.

Where is Scott Cutliffe when you need him? We've got to get him some rollerblades and get him out here. A lot of times the people who go up and give the \$5,000 were planted in the audience.

[43 : 35] I'm sure that takes place too. They call it seeding the audience. And it's a manipulative tool that is to stir up the positive nature in other people and get them to say, well, I could do that too.

That does go on. That's just flat-out deception. It's just terrible. Anyone else a comment or question? Ed has one in the back there.

I was fortunate enough last week to meet a man that graduated from Cedarville the same time you did.

Oh. Don Don Dillon, I want to say. He sells lumber, or he sells trees for lumber.

But a very good man. Had a lot to say about the Lord. We spent two days, and that's all we talked about. And the second day, you know, he had told me all these things about how much he had given and how much the Lord had done for him.

[44 : 52] And he was Pentecostal, and on the second day, close to the end of when we were going to be together, he was talking to myself and another guy, and he made a comment about he was happy to give, and he told this other fellow that he had given this lady a Bible, and it had, he had put, I guess, some sort of magic cloth in it or something, I don't know, but I've seen them before, and it just really, I mean, I just wanted to melt, because the guy I thought was, he had told me how much he had given, I mean, just sound like millions, you know, to people, unfortunate, and he just given things away that were just very, very valuable, land and so forth, but I couldn't understand a man like this as he talks to the Lord, and I finally just had to tell him, I said, Don, you're just full of it. I said, I don't believe half the things you're telling me.

I said, that cloth just did it for me, and the giving that he talked about was so moving for me, because he had given a lot, I mean a lot, but I think he was maybe one of those rich men that gave a lot, but he had a whole lot.

Wow. But this Pentecostal thing has really been something, my boy and my wife and I sat at a campfire last night until pretty late, and my son, I've got to tell all of you, I'm just so proud of him and the way he's bringing his six children up, that I just thank the Lord for it.

Amen. Thank you. Thank you, Ed. Well, you know, there are testimonies and there are bragamonies, and God is not honored with bragamonies.

[47 : 06] Someone has said, there is no limit as to what can be done for the Lord when you don't care who gets the credit. Isn't that neat? That's true, too.

That's true. This wanting recognition and wanting the credit and wanting the accolades of men, it's an ingrained kind of thing, and it's part of the flesh.

It's the old nature. And this is what Jeremiah meant, or at least this applies to what Jeremiah said, when he said, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Who can know it? And there are people who will be generous, but they want to make sure you know how generous they are, and they want to get the credit for it. And the credit that's given for that kind of giving is all the credit that they're going to give.

It's too bad that people don't understand that. And there's going to be more of this issue coming up in this chapter and in the next chapter, so we'll be revisiting it.

[48 : 12] It's powerful content. And regardless of where you are dispensationally, there is spiritual application here across the board. Well, thank you for your kindness and your patience.

Would you stand, please? We'll be dismissed. Lord, thank you for your grace. Thank you. Loving Father, we regard it as a privilege to be able to give of our sustenance in accordance with what you have given us.

And we do not give out of necessity nor grudgingly, but we give joyfully because we are happy recipients of your grace and your goodness. And that's our motivation for wanting to share with others and give to them.

Thank you for making it all possible and we recognize that you yourself are the giver of every good and perfect gift. You with whom there is no variation caused by no shadow by turning.

We bless you for being the God of righteousness and the God of plenty. And to this end, we commit this service and all that shall come from it in Christ's name. Amen.