

The Secrets in Following the Master Matthew 6

Christians are secret agents.

Misplaced Piety (6:1)

- Principle: Don't do your deeds of righteousness before others.
- Righteousness is not attained by human effort (Romans 5:17).
- Our righteousness comes as a response to God's grace.
- We experience righteousness through responding in faith to God's gift within us.

1. Giving (vv. 2-4)

- Motivation in giving: reward from God.
- What gets in the way? Flesh (Galatians 6:8).
- The purpose of Christian Giving: to bring glory to God.
- True love forgets self as it gives to others.
- True righteousness is not outward behavior but the condition of the heart (1 Samuel 16:7).
- Wrong idea = God's approval can be measured by people's applause. Galatians 1:10
- Hypocrisy repels people.
- Mahatma Ghandi: "I like your Christ. I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ."

2. Prayer (vv. 5-8)

- Basic Principle: Pray to God not before others.
- Three problems with our prayers:
 - a. Praying to look righteous before others
 - b. Mindless repetition
 - c. Wordiness
- Why pray? Not to tell God something He does not know but to worship Him.

3. Fasting (vv. 16-17)

- Problem: people were making it obvious that they were fasting in order to look religious.
- Purpose of fasting: to exercise self-control, repent, and be in prayer.
- We must have control of our body (1 Corinthians 9:24-27).
- "not our own righteousness but Christ within"

It all comes down to faith.

The Collect of Purity

Almighty God, to Whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You, and worthily magnify Your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.