

# The Sermon on the Mount: *An Audience of One*

*Matthew 6:1-4*

## For Whose Glory? (v. 1)

- Jesus turns His attention to personal piety
  - Practices of righteous behavior that develop godliness in us
  - This includes:
    - Almsgiving (6:1-4)
    - Prayer (6:5-14)
    - Fasting (6:16-18)
- He warns His disciples that these practices are meant to be private
  - We can work together with others in these practices
  - But, we are not to make a show of our efforts
- Our goal is to draw near to God, not draw the attention of others

## Loving the Needy (v. 2-4)

- Jesus *assumes* that His disciples will give alms
  - Alms: Money, food, or material goods given directly to the poor and needy as an act of mercy, compassion, & righteousness
- God commanded His people to give to the poor in various ways throughout the Torah
  - Almsgiving: Direct support (Dt 15:10-11)
  - Harvest practices: Indirect support (Lev 19:9-10)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup>-year tithe: Communal support (Dt 14:28-29)
    - This was not the same as regular tithing
      - Tithe: 10% of one's crops, livestock, and produce given to the Levites to help support them & maintain the Temple/Tabernacle (Num 18:21-24; Dt 14:22-27)
- New Covenant giving is similar, but different from the Torah stipulations
  - Tithing is not a New Covenant command
  - Our giving should be:
    - Cheerful & voluntary (2 Cor 9:7)
    - Private (Mt 6:2-4)
    - Proportional to one's income (Lk 12:48; 1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 8:12; 1 Tim 6:17-19)
    - Sacrificial & generous (Mk 12:43-44; 2 Cor 9:6-7, 11; Heb 13:16)
    - Supporting ministry (1 Cor 9:14; Gal 6:6; Phil 4:16-18; 1 Tim 5:17-18)
    - Helping those in need (Mt 6:3-4; Lk 6:30; Act 20:35; Jas 2:15-16)
- We are called to give, understanding that:
  - Our generosity reflects God's love & generosity (1 Jn 3:17)
  - God will reward us (2 Cor 9:6; see also Lk 6:38; Act 20:35)
    - This can be now or in eternity<sup>4</sup>
- We should never give so that others think highly of us
  - Rather, we want God to receive the glory
    - Especially since all that we have is from Him
- We should not even think highly of ourselves for our generosity (v. 3b)

### **So What?**

- Are we seeking the praise of God or other people?
- Are we showing God's love by meeting the physical needs of others, especially those who are struggling?

**Meditation Verse:** *Matthew 6:3-4*