

A Very Temporary Reward

Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Matthew 6:2

Recognition has its place and can be very important in the developmental years. Earning a smile of approval from a father or mother or any authority figure can be a great encouragement to children. Doing right or accomplishing a level of achievement should be commended, but there comes a time when we need to be weaned from needing the praise of men and spiritually mature with a desire to know the praise of God. Unfortunately, the praise of men is audible and tends to cater to our pride, while the praise of God is often silent, and bypasses fleshly desires to rejoice our spirit.

In today's text, Jesus was addressing the situation of men performing good deeds so that they might be seen by men and receive their praise. These earthly praises cater to man's pride, yet will never satisfy the insatiable lust for more self-recognition. The glory that such men receive will be their reward, but that reward will be short-lived. This work of the flesh only serves to glorify the flesh. God would have us grow in faith so that our greatest desire will be to earn that invisible smile of approval from heaven. We should walk as if the King of the universe is walking right beside us seeing our every deed and hearing our every word. He sees the acts of charity we perform when no one else is around. The Lord knows the intents of our hearts and is best glorified when we serve HIM with all our soul, spirit, and heart. Just as our most intimate time of prayer is when we are isolated from others to spend time with the Lord; so, our charitable works should be rendered as if no one else is present other than the Lord.

As we serve the Lord, He will guide our steps so that every circumstance can be used for His glory, which is our ultimate purpose. John the Baptist had the reputation with our Lord Jesus of being the greatest man born of woman (Matthew 11:11), and this greatness was demonstrated by his desire to decrease so that the Lord might increase (John 3:30). When we can push ourselves out of the way, we allow more room for the Lord to increase in our lives. Remembering that the Lord is with us, for the Father hath not left us alone, therefore, we should do those things that please Him (John 8:29). Though God's praise is often silent to our ears, it rejoices our hearts; let us then esteem the eternal praise of heaven more than the temporary praise of men.

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