

FLASHY GIVERS
(Matt. 6: 1-4)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. If I were to ask each one of you what it is that you detest most in a professing Christian's life, you would undoubtedly say, "Hypocrisy;" that is, mere externalism without a real heart for God.
- B. This morning Christ is going to speak to us about the hypocrisy of externalism as it relates to the giving of our monies to the Lord's work.

II. A WARNING ABOUT EXTERNALISM 6:1

- A. "Take heed, (Beware)" -- Our Lord is speaking to His disciples and wants to warn them about mere external religion without having an internal heart relation to God.

NOTE: Christ gives this warning because externalism is such a prevalent thing among professing Christians.

- B. "That you do not your alms (righteous acts) before men, to be seen of them:" -- The word "alms" here should be translated righteous acts, so our Lord is talking about the doing of practical righteousness. He is stressing practice and how His disciples were to live righteously.

POINT: These righteous acts refer in context to three areas: giving of alms, prayer and fasting. If any good deed is motivated by self-advertisement or ? publicity, it is wrong. Our Lord is warning against things to please men rather than to please God.

NOTE: Every Christian is to do good works (Matt. 5:16) but it is possible to do a good thing in the wrong way. It is not enough to do good; a man must do good in the right way. The only genuine motivation for good works is to please God, not men.

- C. "Otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." -- Those who do good works only because they want publicity have no reward for God for their righteousness. Our Lord is not discussing salvation here but reward for Christians who faithfully and quickly serve Christ. Only true Christians, born of the Spirit, could call God their Father.

POINT: If a disciple of Christ performs a good deed to be seen of men, he has no reward from his heavenly Father. Mere externalism God hates with a passion. God wants a heart that beats for him!

III. GIVING TO PLEASE MEN -- 6:2

- A. Introduction: The Lord is going to use the illustration of alms giving as an object lesson for His disciples. He will contrast the wrong way to give alms as seen in the hypocritical Pharisees and the right way as seen in the true righteousness of His disciples.

- B. “Therefore when thou doest thine alms,” -- The giving of alms was like our giving to charity organizations. The Old Testament taught that believers were to be concerned for the poor (Lev. 25:35; Prov. 14:21). Believers are to give monies to the poor; that is, those that genuinely have a need. But Christ is going to teach us on how to give in a way that will glorify God.
- C. “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.” -- Some think that the ‘sounding of the trumpet’: is just illustrative language to show how the Pharisees made a big “ta-do” when they gave money to the poor. But it was a custom in that day for the Pharisees to blow a trumpet when they gave alms. This was done to call the poor and the needy together to receive the gift. It also afforded a fine opportunity to let others know how generous they were.

POINT: These Pharisees gave only to please men and to get the praise of men. Their only reason for doing good was to get men to praise them so that their egos could be inflated.

NOTE: Just think how many things you do in this life to please men rather than God and you will be astonished at the vileness of your own heart.

- D. “Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.” -- Externalists get their reward from men and only men because God will not reward them, for God is interested in the motive not just the act.

NOTE: Flashy giving may get their names in the paper, a plaque on the wall and people will talk about them, but that ends it. They will get nothing from God. These externalists are to be pitied and prayed for.

IV. GIVING TO PLEASE SELF -- 6:3

- A. But when thou doest alms,” -- The Christian most certainly is to have a charitable heart, but he is to give the right way.
- B. “Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.” -- When a Christian gives, he is not to become self-satisfied or complacent about this good deed; that is, he is not to whelm up with pride and say, “Man, am I a good guy.” This builds pride. When money has been given, we should not congratulate ourselves but dismiss it from our minds, for God is keeping records and he will reward accordingly. Not only not to tell others but not to tell ourselves how great we are. Christian giving is to be motivated by self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness, not by self-congratulations.

V. GIVING TO PLEASE GOD -- 6:4

- A. “That thy alms may be in secret:” -- The whole point is that inasmuch as is possible giving is to be in secret, not before men. Giving should be done between the individual believer and God.

NOTE: This is a far cry from what we have in so many so-called Christian organizations. Much giving today is prompted and promoted solely on the basis of

publicity. In some fund raising campaigns leading givers compete quite openly against one another. Much of the so-called pledging of money is based on feeding man's ego rather than glorifying God. This is exactly the opposite of what Christ states here as a basic principle of giving. It is not to be promoted by publicity. If it is, the giver has lost his reward.

- B. "And thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly." --The Christian's Heavenly Father knows everything he does, even in the area of giving. If giving is done in secret, God knows this and will reward that believer. This reward may be spiritual blessing in time but at the Judgment Seat the Christian will be rewarded before the whole universe (I Cor. 4:5).

NOTE: God will not forget one act of giving that was done out of love for Him. (Heb. 6:10). At the final judgment for Christians, Christ will say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

VI. CONCLUSION

- A. **Saved:** The only true motivation for giving is love. While Christians are commanded to give, it is giving out of love that brings reward from God. Giving is not to be motivated by publicity or promoted by a cold sense of duty. Giving is to be the warm response of a heart that has been blessed by God and willingly, and longingly desire to give back to God. True giving is rewarded by God Himself, but true giving must be incited by love. Beloved, beware of being a "flashy giver."
- B. **Unsaved:** For you here without Christ, is your life for real? Do you live a double life? Always trying to please men, always trying to impress people, always "buttering" up the people who can help you and always living a two-faced life? Is your life a sham? Is it a lie? Only Christ can give life meaning, purpose and stability and free us from sin and ourselves, so as to take away the hypocrisy of life. What must you do to have a personal relationship with Christ? You must acknowledge that you have sinned before a holy God and turn to Christ and receive Him into your life as the One who can forgive you for your sins and give you eternal life. Christ will save every person who see his need of a Saviour and turns to Christ in faith.