What Motivates You to be Righteous?

Matt. 6:1-18

I. Introduction.

A. Matt. 5:20, "*For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*"

B. Luke 18:10-14, "*Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*"

C. Matt. 6:1-18, "*Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. 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. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.*"

II. Acts of generosity (vss.1-4).

A. Jesus said in verse 3, "*But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth*".

III. Acts of Prayer (vss. 5-15).

A. In vs. 6 He's not talking so much about where to pray, but how to pray and why.

IV. Acts of Fasting (vss. 16-18).

A. Fasting should have been a companion of their prayers during times of grief or during times of deep concern.

V. Some Lessons:

A. The right deed can be offset by the wrong motive.

1. Matt. 12:35, "*A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.*"

B. But what about the wrong attitude and right deed?

1. Luke 18:11-12, "*The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*"

a) In Matt. 5 the Pharisees were condemned for doing the wrong things, and in Matt. 6 they were condemned for doing the right things for the wrong reasons: to be seen by men.

C. Be careful about your public prayers.

1. Matt. 6:7, "*But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.*"

D. Falling into the habit of doing good for praise from men instead of praise from God is easy.

1. Jesus said in Matt. 6:1, "***Take heed*** *that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them…*"

2. Jesus says in Matt. 6:4, "*That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.*"

3. But this requires a great deal of faith as we find in Heb. 6:10, "*For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*"

4. Jesus also said in Matt 6:6, "*But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*"

VI. Conclusion.

A. As we extend the invitation, different things can motivate us to do what is right, however, we should want to appeal to God's goodness.

1. Rom. 2:4, "*Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*"

2. Acts 17:24-25, "*God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;*"

3. Jesus was recognized by God when He did what pleased Him.

a) Matt. 3:13-17, "*Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*"

B. If you have not yet become a Christian, why wouldn't you be moved to obey Him now?

1. Hear. Matt. 17:5, "*While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;* ***hear ye him***."

2. Faith. Heb. 11:6, "*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*"

3. Repentance. Acts 2:38, "*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*"

4. Confession. Rom. 10:9-10, "*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*"

5. Baptism. Acts 22:16, "*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*"

6. What motivates you?