

November 18, 2018

Jesus is my Lord!

"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven." Matthew 6:1

"...when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Matthew 6:1-4

"...when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen." Matthew 6:5-14

"...when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men..." Matthew 6:16-18

"...store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:19-24

As those who believe in and follow Jesus, why do we do what we do? For centuries believers have focused their attention on the what and how and when of their ***"...acts of righteousness..."***; but more often than not, we have lost track of the why. So, for example, when we share in the 'Lord's Supper' we worry about whether the bread is unleavened. We teach that this is something that must be done on every Sunday and only on Sunday.

In doing this we lose focus, I think, on the why. According to the Apostle Paul, ***"The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."*** The Apostle adds, ***"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."*** (I Corinthians 11:22-26)

Is it important to use unleavened bread for the 'Lord's Supper'? The bread Jesus used was unleavened. Is it important to have the bread before the wine? Jesus did. Is it important to pray a blessing on each one? Again, Jesus did. The answer to all of these questions is probably 'yes', but **WHY** did our Lord tell us to do this thing we call the 'Lord's Supper'? He said, ***"Do this in remembrance of me."*** So, while we use the 'right' bread and do it in the 'right' order and even do it on the 'right' day, the real reason we do it is very private. We do it as a time to remember the cost of our sin and the price of our salvation. It is our time to remember Jesus.

So, in his 'Sermon on the Mount' Jesus will teach about the same sort of things. He warns, ***"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them."*** We do not do what we do as believers so that those around us can see our 'righteousness'. We do what we do, to please our Father in heaven. Why? Because we are his. Because we have surrendered our lives to his Son. Because we want to please him.

That really becomes the driving motive behind everything that we do as believers. My God has rescued me from death and hell. I have surrendered my life to his will. His Son is my Lord and Master. I do what I do, I live each day to please him.

So, Jesus addresses our giving, our prayers, and our fasting. These are by no means the only 'acts of righteousness' that we practice because of who we are. But each 'act' that Jesus addresses, as examples, our focus is either on impressing men or it is on pleasing God. It cannot be on both. The **WHY** matters.

Do I share with the needy to get attention and praise from others? Do I pray to impress those who hear me with my deep spirituality? Do I fast so that everyone around me will think I am righteous? Or, do I do what I do to please my Father in heaven?

Jesus would have me understand that any other motive, except to please my Father in heaven, means I will reap no reward for my righteous life. Instead our Lord teaches us to, "...**store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**" My treasure stored in heaven is the pleasure of God. If Jesus is my Lord, then my life must be devoted to pleasing my Father in heaven alone, just as my Lord did. If Jesus is my Lord, then...

