

January 25, 2015

“Welcome to the Forever Family – Devoted to Ministry to Those in Need “
Matthew 22:37-39

Welcome to the Forever Family

Devoted to:

Being filled with the Holy Spirit

God's Word

Fellowship

Ministry to those in need

Prayer

Worship

Taking the Good News of Jesus Christ to Everyone

Last week we talked about Fellowship and how believers in Jesus are called to love one another. We talked about how the early believers gave to anyone as he had need. But we are not only to meet each other's need within the church, we are also called to minister to all those in need. This is a given.

Ministry to All People

Matthew 22:37-39

Jesus replied, "You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

We are commanded to love God and love others as we would want to be loved. If you keep the command to love God you will love your neighbor too because it please God when you love your neighbor.

One time when Jesus taught about loving our neighbor He was asked, “OK, and who is my neighbor?” In reply He told the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37). You know the story:

A man was traveling when he was attacked, robbed, and left for dead on the side of the road. A priest came by, but when he saw him he crossed to the other side of the street, avoided the man and passed him by. A Levite walked over, looked at him and passed by him too. Then a despised Samaritan came along, but when he saw the man he felt compassion and did something about it. He gave him first aid, disinfected his wounds, and bandaged him up. Then he put him on his donkey took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he gave the innkeeper some money to take care of the man and promised that if it cost more he would pay it on his way back.

After Jesus told the story He asked, “What do you think, of the 3 who would you say was a neighbor to the man that was attached.” Of course, the answer was, “the one who showed him mercy and was kind to him.” Then Jesus said, “Right, now go and do the same.”

In other words whoever is in need is your neighbor and to be a good neighbor to them you should love them as you love yourself or treat them as you would want to be treated if you had the same need.

You will also notice that the Samaritan not only felt compassion he did something. Love is not a feeling, but an action. If you wait to feel something before you act you may never love well. But if you act in a loving way even if you don't feel like it your feelings will change. Do you want proof that love is an action before it's a feeling? Jesus said, “love your enemies.” Do you think you will feel like loving an enemy? This idea of love being an action; of doing what you should even when you don't feel like it will help you in your marriage, at your job, in the church, in all relationships, it will even help you emotionally and spiritually. Of course it is easier when we feel love for others, but don't wait for a feeling to come upon you to love others.

There are so many needs all around us and all around the world. Pray that God will help you to see the needs, give you compassion, and wisdom to minister to the needs you see. You are Christ's eyes, ears, heart, hands, feet and perhaps the only Jesus others will see. Don't judge others, love them. I asked Frank D. to play the song we heard during the offering this morning. It was Give Me Your Eyes – Brandon Heath

Give me Your eyes for just one second
Give me Your eyes so I can see
Everything that I keep missing
Give me Your love for humanity

Give me Your arms for the broken-hearted
Ones that are far beyond my reach.
Give me Your heart for the ones forgotten
Give me Your eyes so I can see

So there is no doubt that we are to meet the needs not only of other Christians, but of anyone in need; to not just feel for others but to act. Minister to all people, but Jesus also gives us this warning:

Motives that are Pure

Matthew 6:1-4

"Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. When you give to someone in need, don't do as the hypocrites do—blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right

hand is doing. Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

Is this a contradiction to Matthew 5:16?

Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

First Jesus says, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, then He says, Don't do you good deeds publicly, to be admired by others.

There is no contradiction here, because in 5:16 Jesus is giving us the correct motive for good deeds which is *"that everyone might praise your heavenly Father."* But, Jesus warned about the wrong motive in Matthew 6; doing good deeds so that others might see and you can be *"admired by others"* which is the way to *"lose the reward from your Father in heaven."*

But to Jesus, the motive behind doing the good deed was as important if not even more important than the good deed itself. God rewards good deeds done for His glory alone. He does not reward good deeds done for our own glory, recognition, applause, or honor. In fact, as Jesus explains 6:1 if you want the "reward" from others, then that is the only reward that you will receive.

Probably the vast majority of people are more influenced by what men will say, than by what God Almighty thinks. — *G. Campbell Morgan*

In the Old Testament God commanded us to give to those in need:

Deuteronomy 15:10-11 NCV

Give freely to the poor person, and do not wish that you didn't have to give. The LORD YOUR God will bless your work and everything you touch. There will always be poor people in the land, so I command you to give freely to your neighbors and to the poor and needy in your land.

In the New Testament that law hasn't changed. Jesus expects His followers to do likewise. In 6:2 Jesus did not say "If" but *"When you give to someone in need."* But we are to have a different motive than *"the hypocrites do."* Hypocrite means someone who wears a mask. It is a theatrical term. An actor is pretending to be someone else. Hypocrites want to draw attention to what they are doing. They want people to notice them. They appear to care about others, but what they really care about is drawing attention to themselves. Ever notice when people tell you the good things they are doing. Ever notice yourself doing that... of course not. You notice others do that right? They tell you, "I had a busy week, I did this for this one and I did that for that one." Sometimes they will even add, "not that I want to pat myself on the back, or not that I am looking for anything in return." Yes, they are! They looking for others to know what a good person they are, they want the recognition. When they do that they are, *"blowing trumpets...to call attention to their acts of charity!"* Watch out, your actions may be good but your motives may be hollow.

We must be devoted to minister to those in need, but God will reward those who are sincere in their faith and whose motive in all their good deeds is to glorify Him. This must be our sole focus, to please God.

Jesus expects us to minister to the needs of others, but He says, (6:3) But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. With this phrase He is teaching that motives for giving to others must be pure.

It is easy to give with mixed motives, to do something for someone if it will benefit us in some way. Even if the benefit is recognition that people know what we did. Jesus, however, condemned practices to impress others. Jesus' followers should give generously, out of compassion, when there is a need. God rewards such giving.

(6:4) Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

The word for the "reward" that God gives is a different Greek word than the one used in 6:2 for the reward of bringing attention to our good deeds, for the reward is very different.

The hypocrites receive praise from humans alone as their only "reward." Those who give in secret, however, will receive a reward from the Father — a reward of greater value because it will be perfect and eternal. Not only is there an eternal reward, but when we minister to the needs of others and do not seek human or social recognition there is another reward or result, we grow; we grow as a person, we grow in love, and we mature as a Christ follower.

So we are to minister to all people with motives that are pure

But let me caution you about something else; we need...

Moments in His Presence.

We can be so busy serving and doing for Jesus, yet be missing Jesus. As someone has said we can become human doings, instead of human beings.

It is either the Mary or Martha approach.

Luke 10:38-42

As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed them into her home. Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

Martha was busying doing, but her life was fragmented, pressured, and stressed. In her duty of doing for Jesus she actually became disconnected from her love for Jesus.

Mary on the other hand took time to be with Jesus, enjoying intimacy with Him, loving Him, attentive, finding peace in His presence.

Martha did a lot of good things, serving others but she was irritable, and anxious. She was angry that Mary was not helping her. If Mary were to help her she would not have the same temperament because her inner person had slowed down enough to focus on Jesus and to center her life on Him.

The man who knows the love of Christ in his heart can do more in one hour than the busy type of man can do in a century.

- D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

We are devoted to ministry to those in need and to do it with pure motives. Love God and love your neighbor as yourself looking for nothing in return but trusting God for His rewards. But this kind of Love for others grows out of our love for God. And this kind of loving service and being with others grows out of our being with God.

Our relationship with God and our relationship with others are two sides of the same coin. If our loving union with God does not result in loving other people, then our love for God is not true. But loving others well, seeing and treating each individual as someone created in the image of God will not develop if we are not spending time with God.

It is only when we make time to be alone with God to contemplate God that we not only get to know Him we get to know ourselves and what is going on inside of us. This is indispensable to not only our own emotional health but also to loving well. When we quiet ourselves before God we hear His voice, we discern His will.

Everyone is busy, but we must slow down to pay attention to God and to reflect; the kind of reflection that is needed to sustain a life of love with God and others. Not only must you slow down to hear God, but the question is are you paying attention to God?

We must be with God, enjoying intimacy with Him, loving Him, quiet, attentive, surrendered. You must take time to be with God that He may lead you throughout the day. When you don't take time alone with God your doing is led by you and you will burn out. When you don't take time alone with God your doing will be done with less than pure motives, you will be tempted to draw attention to yourself and you will lose the rewards of your Father in Heaven. Your doing must come from your being with Jesus.

Ministry to all people with

Motives that are pure (do all for the glory of God) will come out of those Moments in His Presence.