

# Giving for God

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[ 0 : 00 ] Matthew chapter 6, verses 1 through 4. If you don't have a Bible, there are Bibles in the pews that you may use.

! If you don't have a Bible, please take that Bible home as a gift from our church to you today in our hopes that you'll continue to be reading God's Word. But if you're there, would you please stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word together.

Jesus says, Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others.

Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But 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.

[ 1 : 14 ] And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you. May God add a blessing to the reading of His Word. Would you please be seated? May God add a blessing to the Lord.

If you're a Christian, wouldn't you want to belong to a church like that?

Don't you want our church to better look like that? This church was united. This church was in good health. Many of its members gave generously of their wealth.

And Luke highlights the generous giving of one of those members in verses 36 through 37. Luke introduces Barnabas to us as an example to emulate in giving.

Later in Acts, Barnabas shines as one of the most mature, reliable, and lovable leaders in the church.

[ 3 : 20 ] And here Luke shows us how his trusted ministry began with a demonstration of his love for the Lord, his love for others, and his freedom in Christ, which separated him from the love of the world, from the treasures of the world.

In this story, Barnabas stands as an example of how true faith in Christ creates a bond of love with him and for his church, and severs the love that people have with the world and its treasures. Acts chapter 4 ends with Barnabas' example. Acts chapter 5 begins with an example that we should not follow when it comes to our giving.

It's a kind of giving that was selfishly motivated. We read about that in Acts chapter 5, verses 1 through 5. But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property.

And with his wife's knowledge, he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of this land?

[ 4 : 46 ] While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that your heart has contrived this deed?

You have not lied to men, but to God. When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last.

And great fear came upon all who heard it. Verses 7 through 10 tell us that Ananias' wife Sapphira met the same end for the same lie.

And her demise likewise resulted in great fear that spread throughout the church. The sudden deaths of Ananias and Sapphira served as a warning to the early church and serves as a warning to the church today to fear hypocrisy.

Faking faith in the presence of God is a fearful thing. Those who seek praise for their righteousness are in grave danger, as Jesus points out today in our text as we continue to go through a portion of his sermon on the mount.

[ 6 : 07 ] Over the past five weeks, we have gone through Jesus' six antithesis statements where he calls for a righteousness that exceeds the scribes and the Pharisees.

Jesus uses those statements to reprimand the scribes and the Pharisees for misinterpreting, misapplying, and in some cases, manipulating God's Word to say things that God did not say to lower the standard that God established in his Word.

Those statements expose our hearts, our motivations, and bring us to an honest admission that we can't measure up to God's standard in our own power.

And that's a good thing. Because in seeing ourselves as we truly are, God opens our hearts to receive his grace. This is what Jesus has been getting at from the very beginning of the Sermon on the Mount.

In the first two Beatitudes, it mentions in Matthew 5, 2-4, this is what Jesus said. He opened his mouth at the very beginning of the sermon, and he taught, saying to them, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[ 7 : 28 ] Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. And seeing our sinfulness, we are brought to the realization of our desperate need for God's help, which Jesus provides.

Though we don't measure up, Jesus does. And when we trust in him for salvation, we receive the Holy Spirit who indwells us, who guides us, who instructs us, and who empowers us to pursue him and his righteousness.

We all fall at times. But if we are truly saved, there will be a demonstration, a pattern, reflecting the righteousness of Jesus in our lives as sin's presence decreases more and more and more.

However, there is a danger in that, a danger that Jesus warns us against. Because once you start following him, once you start obeying him, practicing righteousness and living a life that is full of good works, it becomes tempting to begin practicing your righteousness for people and not for God. And you do that so that you'll get the praise instead of him. When you practice your righteousness to be seen by people, you use God to exalt yourself.

[ 9 : 10 ] And like Ananias and Sapphira, you do not want to face the repercussions of elevating yourself above God.

It's not worth it. In our text, Jesus warns us about practicing righteousness with the wrong motives. These verses challenge us to analyze our actions, specifically the action of giving, and determine if we are giving like Barnabas, who gave to please God, or like Ananias and Sapphira, who gave to receive people's praise.

To analyze your motives, we must ask ourselves this question, which serves as the main idea for this morning's sermon. Do you practice righteousness for people or God?

Do you practice righteousness for people or God? Jesus issues a warning here that concerns all of us. It concerns all of us.

Look ahead with me to what he says at the end of this sermon and what he declares to those who claim to know him, who did all of these good things with the wrong motives.

[ 10 : 28 ] In Matthew 7, 21 through 23, Jesus says, Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, repeating that name as if they really know him, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

The ones who did not do good things to seek people's praise. On that day, though, Jesus says, many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do many mighty works in your name, many good things in your name?

And then I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.

This warning is dire. It must be heeded because it is possible to look and act like a Christian.

It is possible to practice righteousness and have a whole bunch of good works and have all of those things be rejected by Jesus as he tells you to depart from him for eternity because your true motivation was to seek praise, the praise of people for your own glory.

[ 11 : 52 ] Having used God to exalt yourself, even if you are truly saved, if you practice your righteousness to receive people's praise, all those efforts, all that time that you spent, Jesus said, will have been wasted because they don't produce a heavenly, eternal reward.

In either case, Jesus doesn't want that to happen to you. this morning, he wants you to analyze the motives behind the righteousness you practice, behind the good things that you do, specifically as it pertains to your giving.

By asking yourself this question, do I practice righteousness for people or for God? And you know, maybe you're here this morning or you're listening to this sermon and you don't believe any of this. You don't believe any of it. You're not a Christian. But you know Christians. And you've seen how hypocritical we can be. And maybe that has convinced you that what we believe is as phony as the ways that we often act.

But I guess that you're here this morning or you're listening to this sermon because there is something inside of you that you know is missing.

[ 13 : 36 ] You know that this world is not the way it should be. You know in your heart that you are not the way that you should be.

You know that there is something more to this life than this. You're right. There is. But you may think that you're basically a good person.

And that if your good deeds outweigh your bad deeds then you're going to go to heaven. And I tell you with love and with compassion you're wrong.

You're wrong. And this is why we all desperately need Jesus.

Because we don't measure up. We don't measure up to God's perfect standard. We all sin. We all sin.

[ 14 : 57 ] We can't save ourselves. We can't do enough good things to earn God's favor. We all fall short. All of us.

Even the best of us. But Jesus doesn't. And I'm glad you're here this morning. You're going to hear the gospel. I've prayed for you.

And I hope that today you will be saved. But again do you practice your righteousness for people or for God? That's the question that our text presents us with. Confronts us with.

And it's an important question. Because the motivation behind your actions in this case behind your charity and behind your giving will produce two kinds of rewards.

One that's worthless and one that's priceless. Jesus shows us the worthless reward first in verses 1 through 2.

[ 15 : 56 ] When you give to receive people's praise you receive a worthless reward. When you give to receive people's praise you receive a worthless reward. Verse 1 again.

Jesus says beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them for then you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

In the Greek the word beware is a present imperative. Now an imperative is a command. And the present tense signals that this is a command that calls for constant vigilance and constant watchfulness.

Jesus is commanding us to constantly be on guard against self-centered and sinful motivations that may lurk behind our good deeds.

Specifically Jesus warns us against doing good deeds with the motivation that we will be seen by others. Now if you're familiar with the Sermon on the Mount Jesus' statement here in chapter 6 might seem to contradict something he's already said earlier in the sermon in chapter 5.

[ 17 : 13 ] Remember? Matthew 5 14-16 Jesus says to those who believe in him you are the light of the world a city set on a hill that cannot be hidden nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket but on a stand and it gives light to all in the house.

In the same way let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

So on the one hand we are supposed to do good deeds so that people may see them but on the other hand we shouldn't do good deeds so other people won't see them.

Are you confused? The key to understanding the difference is the word translated in English as to be seen.

The word is in the Greek is *thethenai* a verb that is a different one than the one Jesus uses for see in chapter 5 verse 16.

[ 18 : 27 ] Matthew uses a form of the verb *thethenai* just four times in his gospel and all of those times they introduce the idea of seeing a spectacle seeing something new or something strange or seeing a performance.

The English term *theatrical* is based on that Greek word *thethenai* and this helps us understand the difference and the difference comes down to what you want people to see in your good works as you practice righteousness.

Do you want them to see God or do you want them to see you? Do you want to receive praise and glory or do you want praise and glory to go to God for the good things that you've done? Are you more interested in serving or performing? We know this is the point that Jesus is making by what he says next in verse 2.

He says thus when you give to the needy sound no trumpet before you. Now people didn't really do this back in Jesus' day.

[ 19 : 50 ] He's using hyperbole. He's using exaggeration. He's doing what we do. When we describe someone who likes to talk about themselves a lot, talk about their achievements a lot, what do we say about such a person?

They like to toot their own horn. He's doing the same thing. Jesus, though, is the smartest man who ever lived. And if we dig deeper, we'll find even richer meaning to his words and the points that he was making.

And such is the case here. If you conducted a study, if you looked through all of the pages of Scripture to find all the places where horns are used, what you would find is that in most cases, horns, blowing of trumpets, was used to draw attention to God.

Do you see the deeper meaning? how backwards it is to trumpet your giving to draw attention to yourself that should be given to God instead.

Now, imagine this. Imagine what that would look like if we literally did this in our church. Pastor Tyler is a great musician. I know he plays the trombone.

[ 21 : 14 ] He could probably learn how to play the trumpet. Maybe he knows how to play it. But say he took out his trumpet and we said, you know what? We really want to make a big deal out of those who give.

Those who give a lot. Those who give consistently. And so there's going to be a time in our service. Tyler, you're going to get your trombone and we're going to ask everybody to pull out their tithe and you're going to play your trombone.

You're going to play it loud. You're going to play it loud and proud and we're just going to march up and down these aisles and we're going to end at an offering box where everybody is going to drop their offering in.

Or imagine this. Say we put trumpets at each of our offering boxes. And throughout the service, throughout our time together at church, we said, hey, once you put your offering in the box, make sure you grab one of those trumpets and just blow in it real loud.

Say you had a guest or a friend or a family member at church that day when we did something like that. Wouldn't you be embarrassed? embarrassed? I hope you would be.

[ 22 : 18 ] But wouldn't you be angry? Wouldn't you be angry about drawing that kind of attention to ourselves? God sees your heart.

He knows your thoughts. Don't you think that drawing that kind of attention to yourself makes him angry too?

You may not sound the trumpet outwardly, but inwardly when you give. And it may sound like this in your mind. Look at me. Look at what I can do.

And again, don't you think that makes God angry when you practice righteousness for people and not for him? Jesus continues to emphasize his point in verse 2 by labeling those who seek people's praise as hypocrites.

In the Greek, it appears as hypocrites. And again, it's another word with roots to the theater. A hypocrite was an actor who wore masks on stage as they portrayed different characters in a play.

[ 23 : 39 ] Actors back then, just as they do today, were celebrities who were adored by the masses.

And they performed for the thrill of receiving a standing ovation at the end of their performance. confidence. And Jesus uses the same term here as he does in other places to describe the kind of spiritual mask that people wear to play a part.

People who give to the needy in order to receive people's applause. masks. But God sees behind the masks that people wear.

He knows the true intentions of our hearts. Jesus often has exposed the hypocrisy of the scribes and the Pharisees who acted righteous, who played the part well, but they did not fool God.

In Matthew chapter 15, verses 7 through 9, Jesus addresses them, and he quotes Isaiah. He says, You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you when he said, This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

[ 25 : 04 ] In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. Notice the places where Jesus says this kind of hypocrisy, this performance, was being carried out.

He said it was being carried out in the synagogue and on the streets. Those are places where people gathered, places where people knew that they would be seen, places where they knew they would be seen and would receive the reward that they desired, which was people's praise.

But Jesus says next that such a reward is truly worthless. worthless. Again, in verse 2, he says, Truly I say to you, they have received their reward.

It's a reward that he said back in verse 1, does not come from the Father. The reward is people's praise.

worth for to Why is that worthless? Well, Jesus tells us as this sermon progresses in chapter 6, verses 19 through 21, Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.

[ 26 : 29 ] But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

People are fickle, and people are unfaithful. Their applause eventually fades. It's fleeting.

It's temporary. Ultimately, no matter how good their applause might make you feel about yourself, their approval means nothing, because they won't be your judge at the end, but God will.

Jesus doesn't want you to waste your life pursuing such a worthless reward. Don't miss the gravity, the sincerity, and the finality of what he's saying here at the end of verse two.

Those who give to purchase people's praise will have their reward, and as it pertains to eternity, what good will people's applause do for you when you stand before God in judgment?

[ 27 : 57 ] So, why do people pursue such worthless treasure? Well, I think it's pretty simple. They love this world, and they love the things of this world more than they love God.

Is that true of you? Is that true of you? Jesus says that this kind of hypocrisy, this kind of giving to receive or to seek people's praise happened in the synagogue, and it was happening in the streets. for us today, we can relate the synagogue to the church and the street to the places where we work, to the places where our kids or you students go to school, and all the places we gather to socialize with other people.

Some people give in the church to acquire attention of the people that they want to impress. Why would they want to impress them?

Well, to feel good about themselves, to make people feel jealous of them in some kind of twisted way that makes them feel good.

[ 29 : 24 ] People are often tempted to compare themselves to others and use those comparisons to make themselves feel like they have more value, that they're winning life, they're doing better than other people.

In such cases, sounding the trumpet in your mind might sound something like this in the church.

That person, they don't give as much as me, so my opinion should matter more than theirs.

praise. Sometimes people give in the church to receive people's praise because what they really want to purchase is a position of leadership in the church, thinking, if people see me giving, they'll be impressed, and maybe they'll ask me to serve in some kind of leadership role, and that title will give greater value to my voice and my opinions.

Sometimes people give in the church to excuse or to cover up their sins. They think, if I give a substantial gift, I'll put myself in the good graces of other people in my church, and they wouldn't dare cross me because if they want to call me out on my sin, then I'll just leave, and I'll take my money with me if they do.

For some of our students this morning, you might be tempted to give for the praise of people as well, and those people that you're tempted to receive the praise from is your parents.

[ 31 : 19 ] and you think in your mind, if mom and dad see me put money in the offering box, I'm going to do it discreetly, but just enough so maybe they can see out of the corner of their eye, then they will be proud of me.

They will praise me, and that will make me feel good about myself. And they might be so impressed with me that the next thing I ask them to do, they'll say yes.

And you could also be thinking, if you have brothers and sisters, how much better will I look in the eyes of my mom and dad than my brother or sister?

When it comes to the street, we can be tempted to give to receive people's applause by giving money to something like your boss's or your co-worker's kid's fundraiser.

And you could give, but really in your heart and your mind, what you're thinking is, I'm going to give more than anybody else. And my boss will see that, and my boss will be impressed, and my boss will like me, might praise me, especially when it comes time to hand out raises or promotions.

[ 32 : 44 ] Speaking of charities and fundraisers, fundraisers, sometimes adults use charities and fundraisers, especially if it's for their kids' sports team, because in their mind, what they're thinking is, if I give more, if I work hard for this, then my son, my daughter will have a starting spot on that team.

Sometimes people organize charities and fundraisers to mix and to mingle with the people that they most want to impress, whose approval they seek.

Sometimes charities and fundraisers become a way for a person to showcase their wealth. Look at how much I can give compared to everybody else.

Aren't you in awe of me? Sometimes students do community service, and they do it for a grade, only for a grade, or they do it for a parent or a teacher's applause or approval, or they do it because it gives them something to put on their college application to let that person know who's looking at it, hey, I'm a good person.

how about social media? Sometimes people are tempted to trumpet their righteousness on social media.

[ 34 : 18 ] Why? Because they feel good when they get all of those likes, when they get all of those hearts, when they receive all of those kind comments from people that make them feel good about themselves, and they use giving to purchase it.

they give to purchase a reward that Jesus says is ultimately, totally, and completely worthless. Should you give then?

Or should you not give? No. Please don't hear me saying that. No. You should give. Jesus assumes that we will give to those in need, but it's why we do it.

It's what motivates our giving that matters. So how can you know if your motivation is right? Again, I think it's really pretty simple. You ask yourselves a couple of questions to analyze your motives before you give.

You ask yourself, why am I doing this? You ask yourself, who will receive the glory for this, or who do I want to receive the glory for this?

[ 35 : 29 ] do I want people to praise God, or do I want them to praise me? Don't waste your life.

Don't waste your life pursuing earthly treasures. Make sure that you have the right motives benefits when you give and give to promote Jesus, to promote the gospel, and to advance his kingdom.

That's the worthless reward. Now Jesus turns our attention to the priceless reward in verses 3 through 4. In verses 3 through 4, Jesus describes the right way to give.

Again, it's giving with the motivation that God will be pleased because he is ultimately the object of praise. In verses 3 through the beginning of verse 4, Jesus again says, but when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing so that you may give or that your giving, I should say, may be in secret.

Now again, Jesus here is using another figure of speech. Most people in the world are right-handed and they use their right hand a lot more than they use their left hand on a day-to-day basis.

[ 37 : 12 ] The thought here is that giving should be one of those normal Christian activities on a day-to-day basis. Notice Jesus doesn't say if you give, but when you give.

So giving is a regular act of obedience carried out by Christians in a simple, direct, and discreet way if possible.

giving. It's a kind of giving where the right hand gives without the left hand patting yourself on the back.

Jesus uses this figure of speech to instruct us to give and then to forget that we gave. love. We should be pleased with pleasing God by meeting the needs of others without sticking around afterward to receive any kind of recognition for that or any kind of praise for that because we're just thankful that we've been able to take what he's given to us and bless someone else.

this is what that attitude looks like. Paul describes it in 2 Corinthians 9, 6 through 7. The point is this. Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

[ 38 : 41 ] Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful, giver.

Now this verse, that passage has been used and abused by health and wealth preachers to fund their Ponzi schemes. I do believe that these verses teach us that those who give with the right motives are those who prove themselves to be faithful to God and thus God will give them more because he knows that they will give more.

It's not the health and wealth gospel that says give more so that you can receive more and then keep that for yourself. Such people don't give truly to please God.

God wants us to be cheerful. He wants you to be cheerful when you give and be used by him to bless others because when you do, there's a tremendous reward in that.

years ago in my church in Leavenworth, one of our church members worked for a Christian ministry inside of a prison.

[ 39 : 58 ] And for a time, the state of Kansas funded that ministry. And that's how he got paid. But then as things happened, budget cuts were made and they completely lost all of their funding.

But they wanted to continue on because they knew that they were reaching men who the rest of the world had completely cast aside. And so for two years, he continued to do that job without getting paid a cent.

During that time, one of the inmates who had been in that program completed his time, he was saved in prison under that ministry.

He met his wife through that ministry. He completed his time and then he became a member of our church and his name was Dave. Dave had a shaved head.

He had a big, bushy goatee. He was a welder. That was his job and he was a biker. And I tell you those details to let you know that he was tough.

[ 41 : 09 ] He was a tough man. But he was a wonderful, born-again Christian and a great member of our church. And after about a year of being out, after about a year of being married, his wife came into an inheritance suddenly.

And he came into my office and he said, Pastor Mike, me and my wife, we want to give some of this inheritance to his name was Stu.

We want to give some to Stu because we know how much he's meant for us. We know how much the Lord has used him to pour into our lives. And we know that he hasn't been received a paycheck in a really long time.

And God has laid it on our heart to give this to him. And he handed me an envelope, a thick white envelope. And he said to me, Pastor Mike, what I need you to do is I need you to give this to him from us.

And I said, Dave, do you know how much it would bless Stu to know that this came from you?

[ 42 : 23 ] For all those years that he didn't get paid, for all those years he poured into your life and the lives of all of these other men, do you know how much it would mean for him to receive that envelope from your hand instead of mine?

And he wasn't swayed. He was sitting there with his arms crossed looking at me and then he pointed his finger at me and he wagged it. He said, Pastor Mike, you better not.

And I said, okay. And I told you, he's tough. I don't think he would have hurt me, but I wasn't going to try to cross that line. And so I handed that envelope to Stu and told him, you know, somebody anonymously wants to give this to you and your wife.

And he opened it and he just started crying. Said, thank you. And then he thought I had done it. Like, no, please.

It was not me, but I can't tell you who. They just wanted to bless you. Sometime later, I, you know, Dave never asked me what happened, but I felt like I really wanted to tell him.

[ 43 : 38 ] And I told him. Told him about the reaction. And man, he just smiled from ear to ear. And he chuckled. And he looked up.

And he said, praise the Lord. And that was it. That's a picture. That's a picture of the kind of giving that Jesus is talking about here.

And the rest of verse four, Jesus says, and your father who sees in secret will reward you. The principle about giving to please God is this.

If you remember what you gave, if you keep accounts of what you gave thinking that you will receive something in return, God will forget that. But if you give and you forget it, God will

remember.

He'll remember. It's the kind of motivation summed up by the attitude Jesus shares in the parable of the unworthy servant. This is the attitude that should characterize all of us. Luke 17, 10.

[ 44 : 49 ] So also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, we are unworthy servants. We have only done what was our duty.

Maybe you remember when you were a kid or for some of our students today, you remember a time where you did something good. You gave in this way, not to receive anything.

You gave and you forgot it, but somebody saw it. And word got back to your mom and dad. And they said to you, hey, we heard about this thing that you did.

Man, that makes us really proud of you. You remember that? You remember how good that made you feel? Now think of it compared to your heavenly father. And how good it makes him feel when his children are obedient to him, not seeking any kind of praise, just doing what he's called us to do. There's no greater gift than pleasing the great giver of gifts. So yes, give. Give in secret if possible.

[ 46 : 02 ] Give publicly if you must. But look forward to the eternal reward in heaven, because that treasure is priceless.

Jesus doesn't tell us specifically what it is, only that it'll be worth it. And here's the thing. The greatest and the most priceless treasure of all treasures that anyone could ever want, that anyone could ever have, is knowing Jesus Christ as your Lord and as your Savior.

He who gave his life to give us life. You know, all of us, all of us, Christian, unchristian, believer, unbeliever, all of us, at times, are hypocrites.

All of us are tempted to wear masks, to hide who we truly are, to hide our sin. All of us but Jesus, who never wore that mask, who never sinned, and who in his love and his grace removes those masks from us and says, hey, you don't, you don't need to wear that.

I know who you are. You can't hide anything from me. But the Bible says, for God so loved the world, he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

[ 47 : 48 ] And if you're an unbeliever this morning, if you're hearing this word, if you heard this gospel, God has you in this place or listening to this sermon so that you will be saved.

He will remove that mask, and even more than that, he'll remove your sin completely. If you trust in him who died on the cross, in your place, that by faith in him, not by your good works, you have eternal life.

I hope you'll turn to him today. What should we do with this message? What does Jesus want us to do? I think this is how we adjust. Pinpoint the motives behind your method of giving.

Pinpoint the motives behind your method of giving, and how do you do that? Simply by asking yourself, am I giving, am I doing this righteous act for people to see and praise me, or am I doing it that God will be praised and God will be pleased?

Somewhere out there in this world, unless he's gone to heaven, is a man I don't know, but I know what he did for me.

[ 49 : 12 ] He donated \$800 to me, to my youth pastor, so that I could go on a trip, youth conference with our youth group.

Some of you have heard this story before, but I was 16 years old. I didn't want to go. And the only reason why I went is because this man, I found out, had paid for me to go, and if I didn't go, he would not receive any of his money back.

And so I went. And there, God called me to ministry. 16 years old.

I never found out who in my church gave that money. But I'm thankful that he gave. I've never had a chance to tell him thank you.

Never had a chance to go to that man and say thank you. And you know what? That's the point. Isn't it? That's the point.

[ 50 : 23 ] He never gave me the chance to thank him. So that all of the praise would be for the Lord instead.

You know, for our students today, this is what I challenge you to do. You've heard this message about giving. I challenge you to start cultivating that discipline in your life right now. It may not be much, but it doesn't matter.

God will see it, and God will be pleased with you for it. And you start cultivating that discipline in your life now so that it becomes a habit that you have later in life.

Adults, I challenge you again to analyze your motives. Why are you giving? Why are you doing what you're doing in the church? Why are you posting that post on Facebook? Is it because you want God to be praised or yourself to be praised?

An unbeliever, it's simply turn to Jesus, the greatest treasure today. Turn to him and be saved. I'll be up here.

[ 51 : 32 ] Whatever you need praying for, whatever God is doing in your life, I would love to know. Please come and find me either during that time or afterwards. For right now, let's pray.

Lord, we thank you that you are so kind and generous to sinners like us. That, Lord, you did not leave us in our sin, but you sent your son Jesus to live the sinless life that we are incapable of living, to die sacrificially on the cross in place of us for the sins that we've committed to you, enduring your wrath, rising again, that by faith in him we have eternal life.

Lord, forgive us that so often when we give or when we practice righteousness, we do so thinking that we're doing it for you when reality is, Lord, we're doing it for ourselves.

God, forgive us that too often we hunger for the praise and the applause of people because of how it makes us feel. Instead of just being obedient and doing what you've commanded us to do and being pleased with knowing that we've been able to just model you in some small way to somebody else.

God, open our eyes to the opportunities that you give us to give on a daily basis. And, Lord, when we do so, I pray that we would do so in a way that desires only for you to be glorified, you and you alone, because only you are worthy.

[ 53 : 08 ] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Thank you.