

JESUS ON TRUE SPIRITUALITY (MATTHEW 6:1-18)

Video Two

Jesus has warned us against fake spirituality. A kind of religion that is motivated by performance. About being seen.

But Jesus offers us a better way.

He says – when you give. Give in secret.

When you pray. Go into your room, close the door. Pray in secret.

When you fast. Make your face look fresh. Don't make it obvious. Fast in secret.

Now it's important we get things clear here.

Jesus isn't saying that giving and praying and fasting in secret is *better* than doing it in public.

It's all about motivation.

You see – these religious practices have a purpose. They are meant to be a way of drawing closer to God. Of receiving his love. And of giving love back to him.

And so it's tragic when we give and pray and fast mainly before the eyes of others. Not before the eyes of God. 'Your Father who sees'.

That's why Jesus says: do these things 'in secret'. What you do in secret, reveals your motivations. Are you content for only God to know about your acts of devotion to him?

I wonder how this leaves you feeling? Feeling like a fake? How many of your good or religious deeds are done for show?

Well there is good news for us. It's something that is modelled in the prayer that Jesus teaches his disciples.

This prayer is an invitation to come to God 'poor in Spirit'. Needy.

To come to him for daily bread. For our basic needs.

For forgiveness. For our wrongdoing.

For guidance. Away from the path of temptation.

All of us are tempted to be fake. To live lives of performance rather than genuine devotion to God. Jesus knows that. And invites us to come to God for help, forgiveness, and guidance.

To come to God as our **Father. Who knows what we need.**

Knowing God as 'Father' is the central reality of being part of Jesus' kingdom. God is described as a Father 15 times in the Sermon on the Mount. And we can know this privilege, not by being 'perfectly spiritual'. But because of Jesus, who died for our hypocrisy.

And when you know the love of God as your Father – it's the key to killing the power of hypocrisy. You don't need the praise and approval of others. You're not motivated by that anymore. You can know the secret delight of loving, and knowing the love of, your Father in Heaven.

And what's the result of true spirituality like this?

"Your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

What's this 'Reward'?

It's not the 'Reward' of being forgiven and saved. Only Jesus can save us.

The reward is being able to enjoy God. To know the better way of doing life with him today. And knowing him forever.

But the reward is also about being enjoyed *by* God. Knowing his delight today as he sees your life lived for him. And knowing his delight forever. Somehow – our deeds done in devotion to God will be remembered for eternity. We'll know the 'Well Done' of our Father when we see him face to face.

So what will you choose? The shallow, temporary reward of the praise of others? Or the deep, eternal reward of your Father?