



CITYLINECHURCH

Summary

This sermon focuses on Matthew 6, where Jesus warns against practicing righteousness to be seen by others rather than to honor God. The pastor uses the analogy of deceptive food packaging to illustrate how people can appear righteous outwardly while having wrong motivations inwardly. Jesus addresses three spiritual practices - giving, praying, and fasting - emphasizing that our motivation must be 'God first' rather than seeking human approval. The Pharisees are used as examples of those who performed religious acts for show, receiving only earthly recognition as their reward. True righteousness comes from authentic relationship with God, not from trying to impress others. The sermon challenges believers to examine their motives and pursue God for God's sake alone, allowing Him to transform them from the inside out.

Ice Breaker

What's the most disappointing purchase you've ever made where the product didn't match what was advertised or shown on the package?

Questions

- What does it mean that our righteousness must 'surpass that of the Pharisees' according to Matthew 5:20, and how is this different from simply doing more religious activities?
- The pastor mentioned that the greatest threat to spiritual growth comes from 'pretending to be someone we are not.' How can we identify areas in our own lives where we might be putting on a spiritual facade?
- Jesus assumes His followers will give, pray, and fast by saying 'when you' rather than 'if you.' How do these spiritual disciplines help us grow closer to God when done with the right motivation?
- What's the difference between letting our light shine before others (Matthew 5:16) and practicing righteousness to be seen by others (Matthew 6:1)? How do we balance these two

teachings?

- The pastor talked about social media being like a 'trumpet' today. How can we use social media in ways that honor God rather than seeking attention for ourselves?
- Jesus warns against 'meaningless repetition' in prayer. What does authentic, heartfelt prayer look like in your daily life?
- How can we examine our own motives when we give, serve, pray, or participate in other spiritual practices? What questions should we ask ourselves?
- What does it practically look like to pursue 'God first' in our spiritual practices rather than seeking human approval or recognition?

Key Takeaways

- True righteousness is a heart issue, not just outward behavior - God cares more about our inner motivation than our external actions
- The principle of 'God first' should guide all our spiritual practices - we must pursue God for God's sake, not to impress others
- When we practice righteousness to be seen by others, we receive only human recognition as our reward and miss out on God's eternal reward
- Authentic faith is marked by secret spiritual practices done solely for God's glory, not public displays meant to gain attention
- Jesus calls us to examine our motives constantly, asking whether we're seeking God's approval or human approval in our spiritual lives

Life Application

This week, choose one spiritual practice (giving, praying, serving, or another act of worship) and before you engage in it, pause and honestly examine your motivation. Ask yourself: 'Am I doing this to connect with God and bring Him glory, or am I hoping others will notice and think well of me?' Practice doing this spiritual discipline 'in secret' - in a way that only God sees - and focus entirely on your relationship with Him rather than any potential recognition from others.

Ending Prayer

Gracious God, thank You for this time of discussion and reflection on Your Word. We are convicted by Your call to authentic righteousness and challenged to examine our own hearts and motivations. Help us to pursue You for who You are, not for what others might think of us. Transform us from the inside out, Lord, so that our spiritual practices flow from genuine love for You rather than a desire for recognition. Give us the courage to live authentically, even when no one is watching, and help us to find our identity and worth in You alone. May our lives bring glory to Your name in all that we do. Continue to work in our hearts throughout this week, and help us to apply what we've learned. In Jesus' precious name we pray, Amen.