

Rimrock Church

12200 West Highway 44
Rapid City, SD 57702
605-342-5373
rimrockchurch.com
office@rimrockchurch.com



But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 6 :33

Rimrock Downtown

514 St. Joseph Street
Rapid City, SD 57701
rimrockchurch.com/downtown/

All Scripture is New International Version

Matthew 6:1-4



“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. ²“So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

Earlier, Jesus said in the sermon, “Whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the Kingdom of heaven”. Now Jesus is explaining the practice of the person who is a disciple (learner/follower) of Jesus. Those who belong to the kingdom of God are being transformed by Jesus through His grace.

One of the practices we are to do, is that of giving. But how we give matters to God. On a trip to Boston I was impressed by the church that many of the founding fathers of our nation attended. I was struck, though, that the church was designed to amplify the generosity of certain members. Those who gave more money got a very comfortable booth with their names inscribed on it. Those who gave little were relegated to simple hard pews. Jesus says that if we give with the desire to impress others, that is our reward and we get no reward from God.

Jesus tells us that the practice of giving that we seek, for true transformation, is giving that is done in secret. God rewards those who give out of a heart of love for others and for God. This is why we were created and how we find our greatest purpose. So, let us practice secret giving that blesses others and not ourselves!

Discussion questions:

1. Why do you think Jesus is so concerned about practicing righteousness in front of other people? What does this say about the human heart?
2. Jesus says there is a reward for practicing God’s righteousness. Why do you think this is important? How does God’s reward compare to the reward of the recognition of others?
3. How does giving reflect God’s righteousness? What does secret giving look like?
4. How will you practice the discipline of giving in your life?

Matthew 6:5-8



⁵“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Jesus continues to invite us to practice the righteousness of the Kingdom of God for our transformation into Christ-likeness. Remember, this Christ-likeness does not come from our own performance, rather it comes from the abiding blessed life of grace in relationship with Jesus. Our love and desire is to be inwardly transformed which produces obedience to the way of the Kingdom.

Just like giving, prayer is an essential practice in our life with God. How we pray is important and Jesus makes clear that there is a wrong way to pray and a right way to pray. The wrong way is based on external performance for other people. It loves the attention and affirmation of others. Jesus said this kind of prayer is not the kind of prayer God listens to or rewards. The blessed way to pray is focused on the heart of the person and their relationship with God. It's not outward, but rather secret and hidden prayer. It is the kind of prayer not focused on fancy words, but rather an honest reflection of the heart. God is looking at the heart of the prayer not their performance. Anyone can learn to say the right words and exhibit the attention-grabbing postures. But, only a person transformed by Jesus Christ can go to the secret place of prayer and bare their heart before God. This is the kind of person that God knows and, like a Father, willingly gives what they ask for.

Discussion questions:

1. What is the danger of praying only in front of other people? The word “hypocrite” literally means “actor”. Why is this damaging?
2. How does prayer behind closed doors better reflect our heart? What is the promise Jesus gives when we pray this way? How does this transform our hearts?
3. What kind of prayer should we practice? How do our words reflect our hearts in prayer? What is God listening to?
4. How will you practice the discipline of prayer in your life?

Matthew 6:9-15

⁹ **“This, then, is how you should pray:**

“Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

¹⁰ **your kingdom come,**

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ **Give us today our daily bread.**

¹² **And forgive us our debts,**

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ **And lead us not into temptation,**

but deliver us from the evil one.’

¹⁴ **For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.**



This is one of the most famous passage in the Bible. In fact, in many churches, this prayer is recited weekly. The danger is that the riches of what Jesus is teaching can easily be missed through unthoughtful recitation. Saying words we don't understand or don't mean from our hearts is harmful and is what Jesus is warning us against in the previous verses. Inward transformation of our hearts happens through the practice of the righteous grace of God in the Kingdom of God. Prayer is the reflection of obedience in the heart surrendered to Jesus.

In order to understand what Jesus is teaching here, I think we have to start with the end in mind. In verses 14-15 Jesus makes a bold statement. Unless you forgive others, you will not receive the forgiveness of God. What is he saying? Remember the blessed life in God does not come from our performance, but rather our inward transformation. The primary purpose we were created for is to love others and bring glory to God (Matthew 5:13-16). This life of love is only possible with the grace and presence of Jesus. The fruit of this relationship is the kind of love that is unconditional. This is why we can love our enemies. The only way to love an enemy is to forgive.

Jesus is teaching here what John explains in John 15. The fruit of an abiding relationship is love. If there is no fruit of love then there is no relationship with Jesus. Forgiveness is the fruit of an abiding relationship with Jesus. In fact, it is the only possible way for human beings to forgive.

The prayer Jesus is teaching here is the kind of prayer that is reflected out of a deep abiding relationship with God as Father. It is prayer surrendered to the kingdom and will of God. It is prayer that is full of trust and dependence upon God in every area of life. This is the invitation to practice prayer in the power and presence of God that is evidenced by forgiveness of others in a life of unconditional love.

Matthew 6:9-15

Discussion questions:

1. How is Jesus' invitation to address God as Father radical and instructive on the nature of prayer in the Kingdom?
2. How does Jesus' teaching on prayer offer a model of prayer for us? What are the key aspects of Jesus model prayer? How does this transform our hearts?
3. Why do you think Jesus makes forgiveness the central issue in prayer? How has forgiveness or lack of forgiveness affected your life with God and others?
4. How will you practice the discipline of forgiveness in your life?

Matthew 6:16-18



¹⁶ “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Medical and biological science continue to come out with studies showing the benefit to human health with periodic fasting. People fast for many reasons but often their motives are external. Whether to show off religious devotion or for personal health reasons, Jesus tells us this kind of fasting has only one result. It is a temporal passing reward of the applause and approval of others.

Just like with giving and prayer, Jesus invites us to the inward transformation of our hearts in fasting. This is a practice that Jesus expects his disciples and followers to do. But the way we do it matters. So, instead of performance for others or personal health benefits, our motivation becomes love for God. Love for God in our hearts is evident not by what we do in front of other people, but in secret. Secret fasting does not announce to everyone else. Rather, your face is clean, you have a smile and you’re ready to engage with the world around you in unselfish and unconditional love. This is the kind of fasting that our Father in heaven rewards.

Discussion questions:

1. Why do you think Jesus includes fasting as a practice of righteousness in the Kingdom? Why is fasting important for our transformational growth in the Kingdom?
2. What is the contrast between Kingdom fasting and performance-based fasting? What is Jesus emphasizing in how we fast? What matters most to God?
3. How will you practice the discipline of fasting in your life?

Matthew 6:19-24



¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ²² “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy,¹ your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! ²⁴ “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Trust is a powerful thing. Some economists have even identified it as the key difference of why some societies flourish while others suffer.

"If you take a broad enough definition of trust, then it would explain basically all the difference between the per capita income of the United States and Somalia," ventures Steve Knack, a senior economist at the World Bank who has been studying the economics of trust for over a decade. That suggests that trust is worth \$12.4 trillion dollars a year to the U.S., which, in case you are wondering, is 99.5% of this country's income (2006 figures). If you make \$40,000 a year, then \$200 is down to hard work and \$39,800 is down to trust." *

This is what Jesus is talking about in the sermon on the mount. All true treasure and wealth come from the heart condition of the person. Trust is the evidence of the heart condition. Material wealth has its place in our lives but Jesus is inviting us to see material wealth not as primary but secondary value in our lives. The real issue Jesus is interested in is what our hearts treasure. What we love is evidenced in the way we live our lives. If we love God with all our heart then what flows from that love is seen by what we do.

Jesus compares the heart of the person with our eyes. Healthy eyes make all the difference in how we experience the world around us. The illustration helps us understand the primary place our hearts have in forming who we are.

So, if we treasure material wealth at the expense of loving people than trust is destroyed and our own lives are mastered by a lesser treasure that will not endure. Jesus invites us to treasure love for God and others above all and this will lead us to the life of blessing, fulfillment, and satisfaction.

*https://www.forbes.com/2006/09/22/trust-economy-marketstech_cx_th_06trust_0925harford.html#6a7808a22e13

Matthew 6:19-24

Discussion questions:

1. How does what we invest in reveal our true treasure?
2. What is the danger of treasuring material wealth? How have you seen in your own life or others material wealth lost or disappoint?
3. How does what we treasure reveal our heart condition? How does the illustration of eye sight help us understand the role of the human heart in human well-being?
4. Who is the master in your life? What does your checkbook and time commitments reveal about your heart condition and who you serve?

Matthew 6:25-34



²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? ²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or

spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Jesus invites us to live lives of total trust in God. Trust is powerful in our human relationships and even more powerful with God. If we accept Jesus invitation to love and treasure God above all else and love others than the question we have is, “Will I have enough?”

We live in a time of great anxiety. People are exposed to pressures and information maybe more than anytime in human history. We see the wealth and lifestyles of others and the expectations are high for a certain kind of success that is evidenced in looks, popularity, and wealth. We experience and witness soaring depression and suicide rates in American society. Many people feel overcome by anxious thoughts and feelings.

Jesus invites us to reject what the world runs after for success. Instead of treasuring material wealth He invites us to treasure God and love others. When we live this way, we can let go of worry and anxiety about our physical needs.

The question is no longer will I have enough? But what are the resources of my heavenly Father? When we ask this question, we look around and see how God provides! Jesus gives us examples from creation where the lavish and abundant wealth of God are put on display for all to see. Jesus says this same abundance is available to us! When we put first the Lordship of Jesus, and His righteous way of love above all else, God will provide for all our physical and material needs. We no longer need to anxiously chase after worldly wealth. Rather we can rest in trust in our Heavenly Father. He has enough and He is good to meet our real and present needs in our lives.

Matthew 6:25-34

Discussion questions

1. If we are captured by Jesus vision of the life in the Kingdom with God as unconditional love for God and others, how will we have the resources to live this way? What is our source of unconditional love?
2. Read John 15. How does this passage help illustrate what Jesus is talking about on the sermon on the mount? What does John 15 highlight as our resource for unconditional love?
3. How does worry reveal our treasure and resource for living? What is the contrast between worry and trust? How does creation point to God's goodness?
4. How does trust point to the goodness and sufficiency of God in your life? How has God kept His promise of provision in your life as you seek first His kingdom and righteousness?