

Religious-ness

Matt 6.1-4

Top

[Scripture](#)

[Initial Thoughts](#)

[Commentaries](#)

[Key Words](#)

[Additional Resources](#)

[Rough Draft](#)

[Final Draft with Director](#)

[Notes](#)

Scripture

Matthew 6:1-4 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. (2) "So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. (3) "But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, (4) so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

Initial Thoughts

- Beware
 - Something here is dangerous
- Righteousness can be pretentious, and is dangerous
 - Pretentious righteousness is for the purpose of causing others to notice your fake piety
 - This type of righteousness has no reward from God.
 - Do not call attention to what you do so others can see your fake Christianity.
 - Don't announce how generous a contribution you are making
 - People might honor you, but God does not
 - The honor and prestige gained by such public philanthropy has accomplished its reward – whatever people give you
 - But such actions do not have any reward from God of heaven.
- Let righteousness be real and quite.

- Make sure no one knows the size of our donation, or the length of our prayers, or the hours of study needed to create talks or sermons or classes. Or how long it took you to make the give-away clothing, or the blanket or quilt.
- Just make the donation, prayers in private, time in the book, or needlework. Just do it quietly, without any fanfare.
- When you do this kind of giving, God sees
 - He is the only one who counts.
 - If He wants to reward you for your goodness, kindness, thoughtfulness, generosity, or labor, then he will reward you.
- Righteousness should be for simple sake of being right, regardless of any reward God might lavish on us.
 - It is joy and contentment with myself in such helpful actions that become a wonderful reward in itself.

[Top](#)

Commentaries

- Robertson's Word Pictures
 - Three specimens of the Pharisaic "righteousness" are given (alms, prayer, fasting).
 - **To be seen** (theathēnai). First aorist passive infinitive of purpose. Our word theatrical is this very word, spectacular performance.
 - **Sound not a trumpet** (mē salpisēis). Is this literal or metaphorical? No actual instance of such conduct has been found in the Jewish writings. McNeile suggests that it may refer to the blowing of trumpets in the streets on the occasion of public fasts. Vincent suggests the thirteen trumpet-shaped chests of the temple treasury to receive contributions (Luk_21:2). But at Winona Lake one summer a missionary from India named Levering stated to me that he had seen Hindu priests do precisely this very thing to get a crowd to see their beneficences. So it looks as if the rabbis could do it also. Certainly it was in keeping with their love of praise. And Jesus expressly says that "the hypocrites" (hoi hupokritai) do this very thing. This is an old word for actor, interpreter, one who personates another, from hupokrinomai to answer in reply like the Attic apokrinomai. Then to pretend, to feign, to dissemble, to act the hypocrite, to wear a mask. This is the hardest word that Jesus has for any class of people and he employs it for these pious pretenders who pose as perfect.
 - **They have received their reward** (apechousin ton misthon autōn). This verb is common in the papyri for receiving a receipt, "they have their receipt in full," all

the reward that they will get, this public notoriety. “They can sign the receipt of their reward” (Deissmann, Bible Studies, p. 229).

- Vincent Word Studies
 - **Sound a trumpet** (σαλπίσης) There seems to be no trace of any such custom on the part of almsgivers, so that the expression must be taken as a figurative one for making a display.
 - **Have their reward** (ἀπέχουσιν) The preposition ἀπὸ indicates receipt in full
- Jamieson-Fausset-Brown
 - **before men, to be seen of them** — with the view or intention of being beheld of them. See the same expression in Mat_5:28. True, He had required them to let their light so shine before men that they might see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven (Mat_5:16). But this is quite consistent with not making a display of our righteousness for self-glorification.
 - **otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven** — When all duty is done to God - as primarily enjoining and finally judging of it - He will take care that it be duly recognized; but when done purely for ostentation, God cannot own it, nor is His judgment of it even thought of - God accepts only what is done to Himself
 - **Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee** — The expression is to be taken figuratively for blazoning it. Hence our expression to “trumpet.”
 - **as the hypocrites do** — This word - of such frequent occurrence in Scripture, signifying primarily “one who acts a part” - denotes one who either pretends to be what he is not (as here), or dissembles what he really is (as in Luk_12:1, Luk_12:2).
 - **They have their reward** — All they wanted was human applause, and they have it - and with it, all they will ever get.
 - **But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth** — So far from making a display of it, dwell not on it even in thine own thoughts, lest it minister to spiritual pride.
- Preacher’s Homiletical
 - **To be seen**, i.e. as a spectacle. Theatre and hypocrite (see next verse), are words of cognate meaning (Bengel).
 - **Hypocrites** == actors. The word originally signifies, one who answers; thence, one who takes part in a dramatic dialogue; thence, one who assumes a feigned character
 - **Let not thy left hand know**, etc.—Secret and noiseless giving, metaphorically expressed

- Pulpit
 - **To be seen of them** (πρὸς τὸ θεαθῆναι αὐτοῖς. Having for your final purpose (cf. Ellicott on 1Co_9:18) to be gazed at by them)
- Albert Barnes
 - **Before men ...** - Our Lord does not require us never to give alms before people, but only forbids our doing it “to be seen of them,” for the purposes of ostentation and to seek their praise. To a person who is disposed to do good from a right motive, it matters little whether it be in public or in private. The only thing that renders it even desirable that our good deeds should be seen is that God may be glorified.
 - **Do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do** - The word “hypocrite” is taken from “stage-players,” who act the part of others, or speak not their own sentiments, but the sentiments of others. It means here, and in the New Testament generally, those who “dissemble” or hide their real sentiments, and assume or express other feelings than their own - those who, for purposes of ostentation, gain, or applause, put on the appearance of religion. It is probable that such persons, when they were about to bestow alms, caused a trumpet to be sounded, professedly to call the poor together to receive it, but really to call the people to see the proofs of their liberality and piety; or perhaps it may mean that they should not make a great noise about it, like sounding a trumpet.
 - **In the synagogues** - The word “synagogue” commonly means the place of assembling for religious worship known by that name. See the notes at Mat_4:23. It might mean, however, any “collection of people” assembled for any purpose, and it is not improbable that it has that meaning here. It does not appear that they made a noise in bestowing charity in the synagogues, or that charity was commonly bestowed there; but it was probably done on occasion of any great assemblage, in any place of concourse, and at the corners of the streets, where it could be seen by many.
 - **They have their reward** - That is, they obtain the applause they seek the reputation of being charitable; and as this applause was all they wished, there is, of course, no further reward to be looked for or obtained.
 - **Let not thy left hand know ...** - This is a proverbial expression, signifying that the action should be done as secretly as possible.
- Four-Fold Gospel – McGarvey
 - a1 **Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.** [This verse refers back to Mat_5:20, where the disciple is told that his righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. Matthew's fifth chapter deals with the actions themselves, but this sixth chapter treats of the motives and manners of our

actions.] **2 When therefore when thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward.** [Trumpets were sounded as signals to large bodies. This fact gave to the word trumpet a symbolic significance. Anything which is noised or blazoned abroad is spoken of as being trumpeted. The figure also conveys the idea of pompous self-laudation. Hence we still speak of an egotistical man as one who "blows his own trumpet." The hypocrites of that day did not blow a literal trumpet to call attention to their gifts any more than the hypocrites of this day do. But they used methods to call attention to their generosity as those of our time do when they publish an account of their munificence in the newspapers. Almsgiving was a prominent feature of Jewish life. Transplanted from Judaism, almsgiving became one of the characteristic features of the early church (Act_9:36, Act_10:2, Gal_2:10). Christ corrected the error as to it in what he said about the widow's mites. As these hypocrites sought the praise of men, they had their reward when they received it.] **3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: 4 that thine alms [250] may be in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.** [Jesus here recommends secret and noiseless giving, by the never-to-be-forgotten metaphor of the left and right hand. Our generosity is to come so spontaneously, and with so little thought, that the liberality of one part of the body shall not be communicated to the other. The command does not forbid publicity, but that spirit which desires publicity. "The true Christian cares not how much men hear of his public charities, nor how little they hear of his private ones" (Toplady). Good deeds may be published by others to stimulate good in others; but care should be taken lest they be stimulated to give for the sake of like notoriety (Mar_12:41-44, Act_4:36, Act_4:37). Salvation is a matter of favor, and not of merit. But there is, nevertheless, a recompense attendant upon it. The joys of the world come, and the blessings in this world are included in that recompense-- Mat_25:34-40.]

[Top](#)

Key Words

- Righteousness
- Noticed
- Seen
- Reward
- Trumpet
- "Blow his own horn"
- Hypocrite
- Honor
- Left hand
- Right hand

- Father
- Secret
-

[Top](#)

Additional Resources

- Timeless Talks
- GBN
 - Hypocrite
 - <https://youtu.be/FoIGB182VRc>
 - Hypocrite
 - <https://youtu.be/bP4MIknu1u0>
 - Is the Church made of Perfect People
 - <https://youtu.be/2vQGvBelj1I>
 -
 - Better a Little with Righteousness
 - https://gbntv.org/daily_lift/daily-lift-december-18-2017/
 -
- WVBS
 - Sermon on the Mount: Hypocrite
 - <https://video.wvbs.org/video/hypocrite-sermon-on-the-mount/>
 - Ananias: Keeping Up Appearances (for women by women)
 - <https://video.wvbs.org/video/11-ananias-keeping-up-appearances-intriguing-men-of-the-bible/>
- Search
 - Problems in Worship
 - <https://youtu.be/erOm38FGyOE>
 - Script (Downloaded 6-20-22)
 - A Servant's Heart
 - <https://youtu.be/jBMh-YzztqU>
 - Script (needs to be downloaded and changed to page)
 - <http://searchtv.org/printmaterial/tr/2020/WT-S-24-20-AServantsHeart.pdf>
 - Hungering for Righteousness
 - https://youtu.be/F2Q_ZF-1jy8
 - Script: (must be downloaded and changed into a page)
 - <http://searchtv.org/printmaterial/tr/2019/WT-S-36-19-HungeringforRighteousness.pdf>

- La Vista Church of Christ
 - Hypocrites (audio + outline)
 - <https://www.lavistachurchofchrist.org/cms/hypocrites/>
 - I Fear to Teach Others Because I Might Be Exposed As a Hypocrite
 - <https://www.lavistachurchofchrist.org/cms/i-fear-to-teach-others-because-i-might-be-exposed-as-a-hypocrite/>
 - What Is A Hypocrite
 - <https://www.lavistachurchofchrist.org/cms/what-is-a-hypocrite/>

- WordPoints
 - Sincerely Setting Our Hearts on God
 - <https://wordpoints.com/sincerely-setting-hearts-god-may-16/>
 - Piety
 - <https://wordpoints.com/piety-november-18/>
 -

- The Gospel Message
 - Good Works
 - <https://www.gospelmessage.net/2020/05/2020-5-18-y2fyb4rhfyabsktdnxbkc4yqmyd3km/>
 -

- Christian Courier
 - Can You Feel The Love
 - <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/1230-can-you-feel-the-love>
 -

[Top](#)

Rough Draft

Faking Righteousness.

Hook

Can you tell me who said, “Toto, I’ve a feeling we are not in Kansas anymore.”? Sure. You said Judy Garland from the Wizard of Oz

Or this one: “They call me Mr. Tibbs.”. Sidney Poitier.

How about this last one. “You can’t handle the truth!”. If you said Jack Nicoleson, you would be correct.

Each one of these actors drew us into their performance, and made it more than just believable. They cause us to feel what they felt.

Great actors.

But sadly, many people put their religious, or their acts of righteousness on display for everyone to see. It is not who they really are, but what they want you to think. And they too, draw us into their performance. And we speak of their righteousness as great. Their generous donations as heroic. Their speeches as mesmerizing.

Each one gets his own praise for his religious performance.

And others, thinking this is what you are to do, create their own religious theatrics.

There are some dangers here that you need to know about. I will tell you what they are, and how to fix the problem.

Benefit

Content.

I had a friend walk up to me one day and asked me why our religious group did not participate in the local Halloween Trunk or Treat. he also asked why we did not participate in sunrise services with other religious groups on Easter Sunday.

Without being judgemental, this is what came to mind.

Matthew 6:1-4 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. (2) "So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. (3) "But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, (4) so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

Practicing my righteousness, or as in the case of my friend, my Religion in a highly public way according to the Unconventional Jesus, is somewhat dangerous. He said Beware.

What is dangerous is the public display of my personal righteousness or my religion in public. The reason is that my righteousness can become pretentious. I can pretend to be extremely pious for the sake of other people watching. My Pious-ness this could become fake.

Let me share 2 things Jesus said in this text.

Did you notice the words "to be noticed". The original Greek word is the same as our word "theatrical". It is talking about a performance.

And, Did you notice the word word “hypocrites”. They were actors in the theater. They pretended to be someone not like themselves. They were “fakes.”

Jesus says this kind of righteousness or religion gets no reward from God.

It is the kind of fake Christianity where I make it obvious how generous a contribution I am making. and people shower me with honors. But God does not honor me.

Praise and Distinction from people is gained by this kind of public philanthropy. It is its own reward. Whatever people think is all the reward you will get. God does not give any reward for you being an actor, or hypocrite

Our righteousness, or our religious activities, need to be real, personal and quiet. Make sure no one knows the size of your donation. Don't say prayers with lofty words so as to draw attention to yourself. Do not announce how much Bible you studied to create a talk, video, or class. Or how long it took for you to make that piece of clothing you're going to give away. Or that blanket or quilts you will contribute.

Do not conform to what others do. Just make a donation. Say your prayers in private. Spend your own personal time in the book. Do your needlework privately. Just do it quietly without any fanfare.

This is the kind of righteousness, or religious activity that God does see. And isn't HE the only one who really counts anyway. If he wants to give you a reward for your goodness, kindness, thoughtfulness, or generosity, then let Him do the rewarding.

Righteousness should be for the simple sake of being right. It should not matter what kind of reward God might choose to give us. This kind of righteousness gives us joy and contentment. These kinds of helpful actions become a wonderful reward in themselves.

It's time to stop being an religious actor in your community's theater of attention. What kind of righteousness, or religion, do you have? Is it for everyone to see? Or is it just for God?

[Top](#)

Final Draft with Director Notes

Hypocrites??

Can you tell me who said, “There is no place like home!”? Sure. You said Judy Garland from the Wizard of Oz [slide of Wizard of Oz](#)

Or this one: “They call me Mr. Tibbs.”. Sidney Poitier from In The Heat of the Night. [Slide of Sidney Poitier](#)

How about this last one. "YOU CAN'T HANDLE THE TRUTH!". Ok, I will stop my bad imitation of Jack Nicoleson. But if you said Jack Nicoleson, (slide of Jack Nicoleson) in A Few Good Men you would be correct.

Each one of these actors drew us into their performance, and made it more than just believable. They cause us to feel the emotions..

They are Great actors.

130 But sadly, many people put their religious activities, or their acts of righteousness, on display for everyone to see. It is not who they really are, but what they want you to think. And they too, draw us into their performance. And we speak of their righteousness as great. Their generous donations as heroic. Their speeches as mesmerizing.

100 Each one gets his own praise for his religious performance.

And others, thinking this is what you are supposed to do, create their own religious theatrics.

130 There are some dangers here that you need to know about. I will tell you what they are, and how to stop the danger.

INTRO 4

100 I had a friend walk up to me one day and asked me why our religious group did not participate with the other religious groups in a local Halloween Trunk or Treat. He also asked why we did not participate with other religious groups in sunrise services on Easter Sunday. He was wanting our group to have publicity and good relations in the community.

Without being judgemental, this is what popped in my mind.

SLIDES Matthew 6:1-4 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men TO BE NOTICED BY THEM; otherwise you have NO REWARD with your Father who is in heaven. (2) "So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the HYPOCRITES do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, THEY HAVE THEIR REWARD IN FULL. (3) "But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, (4) so that your giving will be IN SECRET; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

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130 What is dangerous is the public display of my personal righteousness. The reason is that my righteousness can become PRETENTIOUS. I can pretend to be extremely pious FOR THE SAKE OF OTHER PEOPLE WATCHING. My Pious-ness could become "fake."

100 Let me share with you 2 things Jesus said in this text.

SLIDE Did you notice the words “to be noticed”. The original Greek word here is the same as our word **“THEATRICAL”**. It is talking about a performance.

SLIDE And, Did you notice the word “hypocrites”. The Greek word is for **ACTORS** in the theater. They pretended to be someone else, not themselves. They were “fakes.”

130-L Jesus says this kind of righteousness, or religion, gets **NO REWARD FROM GOD (Right)**.

It is the kind of “fake Christianity” where I make it obvious how generous a contribution I am making. and people shower me with honors. But **GOD DOES NOT HONOR ME**.

Praise and Distinction from people is gained by this kind of public philanthropy. It is its own reward. Whatever people think is **ALL THE REWARD** you will get. God does not give any reward for you being an actor, or hypocrite

100 Our righteousness, or our religious activities, need to be real, personal and quiet. Make sure no one knows the size of your donation. Don't say prayers with lofty religious words so as to draw attention to yourself. Do not announce how much Bible you studied to create a talk, video, or class. Or how long it took for you to make that piece of clothing you're going to give away. Or that blanket or quilts you will contribute.

160 DO NOT CONFORM TO WHAT OTHERS DO. Just make a donation. Say your prayers in private. Spend your own time in the book. Do your needlework privately. Just do it **QUIETLY** without any fanfare.

130 This is the kind of righteousness, or religious activity that God does see. And isn't **HE** the only one who really counts anyway? If he wants to give you a reward for your goodness, kindness, thoughtfulness, or generosity, then let Him do the rewarding.

100 Righteousness should be for the simple sake of **BEING RIGHT**. It should not matter what kind of reward we get. This kind of righteousness gives us joy, peace, and contentment. These kinds of helpful actions become a wonderful reward in themselves.

130 It's time for you to stop being an religious actor in your community's theater of attention. What kind of righteousness, or religion, do you have? Is it for everyone to see? Or is it just for God?

Here at Timeless Talks we are grateful for the time you have given us. We hope it causes you to stop and think. If you have any kind of need, you can use the contact page on the website. The link is in the description. And we have people waiting to pray for you. Use the prayer request page for private prayers.

Thank you for watching, and until we can visit again, goodbye for now.

