

Sermon: Motivation Matters

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[0:00] If Ass Ass All right, if you've got your Bible, Matthew chapter 6, Matthew chapter 6,
Ass Ass continuing in our series through the Sermon on the Mount. And we're going to, I got so
Ass Ass used to two weeks ago covering a large chunk. We're going to do that again tonight. The
Ass Ass plan is to cover verse 1 all the way down through verse 18. And so again, I think we're
Ass Ass looking at a section where it's better to look at the forest, not just the trees, because the
Ass Ass pattern of each example is actually making the main point that Jesus has for us to
Ass Ass understand. So let's dive in and get right to it. Matthew chapter 6. And what I'll do is just
Ass Ass read down through verse 4. But again, we'll look at a lot of other verses.

And by the way, in this passage is what we know as the Lord's Prayer. And I won't actually talk about that this week. I'm actually going to save that and deal with that next week. And so we're going to look at Jesus's main point and then come back and look at the Lord's Prayer that's in that context.

So Matthew chapter 6, beginning of verse 1, if you're able to stand, would you please do so as we honor the reading of God's Word? Matthew chapter 6, verse 1. 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. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you. This is God's Word. Will you pray for me and with me tonight? And let's ask God to teach us this important text. God, thank you for the time now to come to your Word. Lord, we're committed here to just teach your Word. And verse by verse, word by word, help me, God, teach this faithfully as Jesus intended it when he first gave this Sermon on the Mount.

And I pray that it would have the same impact of truth for us tonight. So, Spirit, do your work. Do what only you can do to the glory of Christ. And we pray it in his name. God's people said, amen. Amen.

You may be seated. Does the name Samuel Langley sound familiar to anyone? Langley lived in the early 20th century. He set out to be the very first person to build a flying machine. And at his time, he had absolutely all the resources that one could want to be able to do this. He had a prestigious seat at the University of Harvard. He was funded with a \$50,000 grant by the War Department.

[3 : 47] He also had a job at the Smithsonian, which gave him access to some of the greatest minds of his time. He had the media on his side. The New York Times followed him around, reporting on everything he did, cheering him on. Faith family, everybody knew at that point that Langley would be the first to flight. And yet, even with all that support and even with all of those resources, he wasn't the first to flight. That accomplishment was achieved by a name I'm most certain that you know, the Wright brothers. Orville and Wilbur, who are, of course, the exact opposite of Langley. They didn't have any money. They owned a little bicycle shop. They had never been to college.

They didn't even finish high school. Nobody even knew who they were. And so, how was it that the Wright brothers achieved greatness over someone like Langley? And the answer to that really can be summed up in one word, motivation. You see, Langley's motivation, faith family, by his own admission, was that he wanted to be rich and famous. He said that he wanted to be great like Alexander Graham Bell or Thomas Edison. He was only interested in becoming the first to flight so that he would look good in the eyes of others. And that's why when his first two attempts failed, he quit. He didn't want to jeopardize his popularity. But the Wright brothers, on the other hand, were driven by something greater than self.

They believed that a flying machine would change the world. They had a passion for something far greater than personal fame or success. And that is why it was the Wright brothers and not Langley. December 17, 1903, became the first to flight. Faith family, every one of us knows this truth that we're going to unpack tonight. Motivation matters. Motivation matters. Listen, what you do matters, but why you do what you do matters even more. You know this, right? If somebody gives you a gift because they have to, it doesn't quite have the same feeling as if they give you that gift because they want to, right? Motivation matters. And every one of us is motivated by something. You may be motivated by fame like Langley was. Maybe you're motivated by money. That's your real motivation. Maybe you're genuinely motivated to help other people. Maybe your motivation in life is achievement or success. Maybe you're really upset with somebody and your motivation is to get revenge. Maybe your motivation is whatever tradition that you grew up in. But listen to me, faith family. Every single one of you has a motivation in life and that motivation matters. It really, really matters. And that's what Jesus addresses in Matthew chapter 6.

I love those amens, by the way, all right? Now, just like in chapter 5, Jesus here is addressing faith family doing good. Or if you want the biblical terminology, it's practicing righteousness. But there's a shift here when you come to chapter 6. And the shift is moving from things you do in a horizontal relationship, anger, retaliation, love, hate, to now it's shifting to things that you do for God. It's shifting to the vertical relationship with God. And Jesus gives three examples here, very common examples in his day, of things that we do for God. Good things. And you need to hear this. Things we ought to do.

But if we are not careful, Jesus warns us of here, we will do these things with the wrong motivation. Look at how he starts chapter 6 in verse 1.

[8 : 18] 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. So Jesus starts what we know as chapter 6 with this warning. And it's a warning about the wrong motivation for doing good. I mean, how practical could this be tonight? Amen? I mean, what is your motivation, Christian, for why you do what you do?

And Jesus is saying there is a real danger of doing good or practicing righteousness, listen, in a way that is motivated by looking good rather than loving God. Amen?

Amen. That's a real danger. And his warning here simply put is this. Notice it on the screen. Jesus warns of doing good to look good. And to make this point, to flesh out this warning, he gives three examples of things that were very common. Acts of goodness, acts of righteousness that were very common in Jesus' day. And of course, this isn't an exhaustive list. I mean, today we could add our worship practice into this list. But these are just the three that Jesus mentions. And so let's unpack them.

Number one, he addresses giving. Verse 2, he says, thus when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogue and in the streets that they may be praised by others.

This is what we know as alms or giving to the poor. Giving to the poor or generosity or giving in general is something that the Bible talks about from cover to cover. Amen? I mean, it's all over the Bible and the Bible is always teaching us and commanding us to give. Okay? And so here, in fact, even last week, Mike talked about in Matthew 25 of giving to the least of these and serving the least of these. This is a priority in the Scripture. So listen to this. The question is not, should you give? The issue is not, should you be a generous person? Listen, listen. The issue is, what motivates you when you do? The Bible assumes you're going to be a giving person if you're a follower of Jesus.

[10 : 45] But what's going on in the heart? What's the motivation behind it? And Jesus says, don't blow a trumpet when you do this. It's like saying, don't toot your own horn when you give. And in Jesus' day, one of the things that they would do is they would blow this trumpet and at the synagogue, they would take up an offering for the poor. And guess what? You would rattle around and slam your door and make sure that all your neighbors knew what? I'm going to the synagogue to give.

You wanted everybody to know, look how good I am. I'm going to the synagogue when you're supposed to go to the synagogue to do good and practice righteousness. And Jesus says, don't do that.

And of course, we do the same thing. Amen? We want people to know that we give. We may brag about how much we give. Or trust me, 25 years of church ministry has shown this out. We want something in return when we do give. Don't you know how much I've given to this church? I've only heard that a million times. Don't you know how much I do? Don't you know how committed I am? And maybe for you, it's not an issue of money. Maybe it's your time. Do you know how much time I've sacrificed? Do you know how much time I've given to faith family? Do you know how much time? And on and on and on.

And Jesus says, oh, you need to be very, very careful that you try to let people know how good and dedicated and righteous you are through whatever it is that you're giving. Are you with me?

Example number two is prayer. Verse five, and when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. There's the same language, to be seen by other people. Jesus here is addressing religious prayer because he uses the word hypocrite. And hypocrite in Matthew is synonymous for religious leaders, okay? Listen, a hypocrite is not someone who has no inconsistencies in their life, right? A hypocrite is someone who acts like they don't have any inconsistencies in their life.

[13 : 01] Are you with me? That was a good place for an amen. Everybody online, amen. I heard you. Thank you, right? We all have inconsistencies in life. The Pharisee, the hypocrite, the religious one is like, I'm good. I got it all together. That's who Jesus is addressing here. And they would use prayer as a religious person as a way of displaying their righteousness. Oh, how often they pray, or the fancy phrases they use in prayer? I think the way we pray is, prayer is a powerful thing, but I think it's when you grow up in church, it's just you hear prayers all the time in different styles and stuff, and little quirks that people have when they pray. I don't know, little phrases that I don't understand to this day. But we use the phrases, but that's just what we heard growing up. We think that's just the right thing to say when we pray, you know, like hedge of protection.

You ever hear that? Hear that a lot, hedge of protection. Damn, we are praying a hedge of protection around you, buddy. That's right, a hedge. Around you and your whole family.

A hedge, huh? I don't mean to complain. Is that the best you can do? How about a thick cement wall? Around me. With some razor wire on top of that bad boy.

Can't you protect a good set of clippers, get right through that thing. I'm sure the devil's got a set of those. I mean, you think a hedge is going to scare the devil away? What is this greenery?

I can't get through that. Move that bush. My greatest weakness is landscaping. How do they know?

[14 : 54] Give me a second. And that's just one of like how many phrases. I could give you so many. And it's not that using that phrase is a bad thing, but how easy it is for just to use these repeated phrases to sound spiritual or the posture that we take in prayer. And what's being reflected with that kind of motivation?

You. It's a show. And you're trying to make other people think that you're good. Now, an important warning here is this. Notice it on the screen. Jesus is not against praying in public. Jesus is against praying for publicity. That's an entirely different thing. Jesus prayed in public. We ought to pray in public. Prayer is a part of our gathering together. Jesus isn't saying praying in public is bad. It's when you pray to publicize self. That's the danger. And there's so many ways in which we do that. You focus on the words because you want to impress everybody in the room or the opposite. You want to avoid being embarrassed. You don't pray publicly because you might not use the right words. You hear somebody pray and you say, boy, I wish I could pray like that. You try really hard to be known as a person of prayer. You mention your prayer language to feel superior to other people as if Jesus didn't understand English. And the only time you pray is in public. Notice this on the screen. You know your prayers are motivated by publicity when you never pray in private. So whether you pray out loud hoping that you look good or you don't pray out loud because you don't want to look bad, the core motivation of your prayer life has nothing to do with God and everything to do with you. And Jesus says you're using this as a way to practice righteousness, but your father knows better. And then Jesus moves from religious people to non-religious people. Look at verse 7. He shifts from hypocrite to Gentile.

And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think they'll be heard for their many words. So now we have a different category. Hypocrite was referring to religious leader.

Gentiles refers to those that don't worship Yahweh. But of course, everybody worships something, right? Which is why everybody prays. Have you noticed that? People that have absolutely no faith at all will pray. Or they'll say, I'm praying for you. And usually what prayer is, is a bartering system.

It's nothing more than offering up something in hopes they get what they want in return. Now, Jesus is teaching this in a Roman culture that believed in many gods. And they believed, if I say the right things, empty phrases, I'll get the right things. They will be heard.

[18 : 04] And so what the people in Jesus' time thought is, if I just ramble on and I say enough, then maybe God or the gods or whoever they are will hear me and I'll say the right thing and I'll get a good crop.

And there'll be some good weather. And my kids will be safe. And so all it really is, is can I offer up the right phrase to get back what I want in return? It has nothing to do with worship of God. It has nothing to do with the love of God. It has everything to do with your weekly calendar.

And Jesus here is not against repetition. I mean, read the Psalms. His issue is using prayer as if God were the genie from Aladdin. He owes you three wishes. And maybe if you say the right thing, you'll get the right thing. And it happens all the time. How many religious or irreligious people are upset at God because they prayed and didn't get what they wanted? And some of them are in this room.

How many of us, if we did a quick analysis of our prayers, we primarily pray when we need something. Prayer is rarely ever about God and His glory and enjoying Him and being in communion with Him.

It's usually like, oh, by the way, I need this, preferably by the end of the week. If we're honest about our prayer life, this may very well be what we use to show how good we are.

[19 : 39] Now, listen, of course, the Bible is not against making requests. Of course, the Bible wants you to make requests. We'll see that next week in the Lord's Prayer. Give us this day our daily bread, right? But if prayer is only making requests, then it is not prayer. It's room service.

If all prayer is, is offering up your request and what you want, it's not prayer. It's room service.

It's about you. And we'll see that more next week. It reminds me of a story of a businessman that was flying on an international flight and he got his in-flight meal, peeled back the cover, and he noticed something extra. And it wasn't extra dessert or an extra piece of meat. It was a roach in his salad.

Protein. Protein. Right. Protein. And the man was furious, as you can imagine. He was unbelievably upset. He complained to the stewardess when he got home. He wrote this long letter to the airline president. And a few days later, much to his surprise, he receives a letter in return that's just dripping with apologies. The letter said things like this, oh, we have taken immediate action.

The airplane will not be used again until thoroughly checked. The stewardess has been put on probation. This will never happen again. Please continue to fly our airline. And the man was like, wow, that's really impressive. This must have just been an honest mistake. And he thought everything was fine until he noticed on the back of the letter was a post-it note, a handwritten post-it note from the president of the airline to his secretary. And the post-it note read, send this man the standard roach letter. Makes you nervous the next time you open a meal on an airplane, all right?

[21 : 24] In other words, the letter sounded good. It had all the right words. It seemed sincere. But in reality, it was nothing more than a routine action filled with meaningless words.

Is that how we could describe your prayer life? Use the right words. Seems sincere, but it's nothing more than a routine action filled with meaningless words. Here's the third example.

The first is giving. The second is prayer. The third is fasting. Verse 16, and when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. So now he's back to the religious leaders, for they disfigure their faces, that their fasting may be seen by others. Now on the Jewish calendar, there were lots of times of fasting. Now these usually accompanied an upcoming feast. So people would fast for a while in preparation for a feast or a celebration. Also in Jesus's time, people would fast as a time of mourning. Maybe they lost a loved one. They might fast as a season or a time of repentance. There were a lot of different ways that people would fast in Jesus's time. But often what people would do is they would go to great lengths to let other people know how much they were suffering.

They'd put on this pitiful face like, oh, don't you see how much I'm suffering and sacrificing for Jesus? Don't you know how hungry I am? I am so committed to God. Don't you see?

And of course we do the same thing. It may not be fasting, but we will do things to let others know how much we're hurting in our sacrifice to God. Don't you know how hard my situation is?

[23 : 13] Don't you know what I'm going through for God? Don't you know the pain that I've experienced in my life? And we crumple up our faces and we share our story all motivated to make us look good.

Has Jesus made the point? If so, say amen. Do you see the pattern in the text? It's the exact same pattern every one. That's why I'm showing you all three examples. These are good things that we ought to do, but if we're not careful, we'll be motivated to do them with the wrong motivation. That is, to look good instead of serve God. And Jesus tells us what will happen if this is our motivation.

Look at verse one. Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward. Verse two. In fact, just look at the phrase that's highlighted because we've already read the other. Truly I say to you, they have received their reward.

Verse five. Truly I say to you, they have received their reward. Verse 16. Truly I say to you, they have received their reward. Repeatedly, Jesus says this, and I hope you're listening, faith family in person and online. You had better enjoy that praise you get.

You had better enjoy that popularity and fame you get. Why? Because that's all you're going to get. That is all the reward you will have. Look at it on the screen. When you do good to look good, looking good is all the reward you receive. That is straight out of Jesus's mouth. And yet, the looking good in front of other people, it's so appealing. It's such a drug. Amen?

[25 : 21] It's so addictive. And we all must be honest that we have that in us in one way or another, whether it's hiding so we don't look bad or putting ourself on the stage so that we look good, both have the same root. And it's drug-like. It's addicting. Notice this on the screen.

We will do good to look good because looking good feels good. Amen? Or maybe I'm the only one. Okay. It's what comedian Jim Gaffigan calls the McDonald's of the soul. It's that fast food satisfaction, that temporary, momentary pleasure that makes you feel good. Is everybody listening?

Jesus says, So now Jesus is addressing the right motivation for doing good. He's already pointed out the wrong motivation. This is the right motivation. He's contrasting public acts of goodness that are meant for show with private acts of goodness that are only between you and God. Is everybody with me?

These are, you do these things to look good or you do these things because you love God. Which is it? Because if you're doing it in secret, the Father knows it's between you and God. You're not getting any publicity.

Nobody's saying, my, that was an impressive word. He used substantiation. Unbelievable. Oh, I wish I could pray like that. You don't get that when it's just between you and the Lord, which means the motivation for why you're praying is that you love God, not you want to look good.

[27 : 55] Now, I don't think Jesus is being literal here. And some of you get nervous when I say that. Yes, he's making a literal point. But what Jesus is not doing, listen, he's not saying public, bad, private, good. And a lot of people take this this way. That's not what Jesus is doing at all.

Jesus is contrasting, just like he did in chapter 5, external from internal. He's addressing the heart. What's motivating you? In other words, he's asking this. When you pray, because you will pray. You're a Christian, right? So when you pray, is it to please others or please God? You will give, right? You will fast. Or you could fill in the blank.

Like, you will worship. You will go to church. You will read your Bible. There's all kinds of practicing righteous things. You'll do these things, but when you do them, is it to look good or serve God?

So he's not saying public is bad. He's dealing with the heart. It's just like in chapter 5 when he's saying, you think it's external, don't murder. I'm saying it's internal. You can't even have anger towards your brother.

Do you see? Jesus is getting at the heart. In other words, Jesus is not saying, hey, y'all, if you're, which Jesus would use y'all, because he was from, never mind.

[29 : 28] Jesus is not saying, if you're going to go help somebody, what you need to do is, I want you to wear a ski mask so that they don't know it's you helping them. They'll just be like, who is this random stranger that showed up to help me move? I don't know. I can't tell you.

I'm just going to use a different voice so you don't know it's me. That's not what Jesus is saying here at all. Or, hey, in a little bit, when we take up an offering, I want everybody to stare at the ground because you don't want anybody to see anybody giving.

No. Jesus doesn't mean that at all. And you say, well, prove it. Okay. Go back a few verses into chapter 5, verse 14.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill 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 the house in the same way. Let your light shine before others.

Why? So that they may, talk to me, see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Jesus just literally taught us that we're the light of the world, that we're to do our good works in front of others.

[30 : 38] So this is not public is bad. But Jesus is saying here, you're doing your works in front of others, not to bring glory to you, but to bring glory to God.

Salt gives glory to the food. Light gives glory to the object it's shining on. So when you give, and when you pray, and when you fast, and when you do whatever you do, sing at church.

When you do whatever you do, our motivation for doing good is God's glory. Amen?

Amen? That's what it means to belong to the kingdom. That's what it means to be a follower of Jesus. And this is the motivation that God will reward with something far greater than the praise of men.

Again, when you deal with long texts, there's so much more I want to say. But every single one of these sections ends with, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And your Father will reward you. And your Father will reward you.

[31 : 40] And I have to emphasize this because I think this gets left out often in our Christian thinking. Listen, Christian, you are to be motivated by a greater reward.

The question is not, are you motivated by a reward? You are, and so am I. The question is, what reward are you motivated by? Listen to this.

Please listen to this. Jesus does not have a problem with you being motivated by a reward. He has a problem with you being motivated by the wrong one.

He wants you to be motivated for the Father's reward. A life lived to the glory of God. Seek that reward with all your heart.

Just don't sell out for mud pies when you could have so much more. That's what Jesus is saying here. So, we've seen in the text that Jesus warns against the wrong motivation.

[32 : 43] Did you see that in the text? You didn't come here for a talk. We came to look at the Bible. Did you see that in the text? Jesus warns against the wrong motivation. And what is that?

Doing good to look good. And Jesus demands the right motivation. Love God. Sincerity of heart. Here's the final question that we'll end on, is this.

Because I'm afraid most sermons would end here. Where do I get the right motivation? If you're saying, Jesus, if you're saying that to be in your kingdom, you can't have this motivation for doing good.

You've got to have this motivation for doing good or practicing righteousness. How do I get the good motivation? Because I don't know about you. I don't have it.

Maybe you're more spiritual than I am. But I guarantee you, if you leave this up to Wes, he will do good to look good every time. Whether that's running and hiding or running to the stage.

[33 : 51] Either one, he'll be motivated by the wrong thing. Is anybody else with me? So where in the world, Jesus, do I get this? And I want to ask you, because one of the reasons I teach the way I do is I want you to start being able to understand the text.

If I were to say, where is the motivation found in this text? Not in your brain or somebody else's idea. Where is it in this passage? Where does the motivation come from?

Where would you go? So let me end by discussing the source of the motivation for doing good. And I'm going to start by asking this. Why did Jesus offer the warning of verse 1 in the first place?

Why did he warn us about doing good to look good? Well, go back to the last verse of chapter 5. The verse right before chapter 6 starts.

Verse 48. You therefore must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. Now, if you've zoned out, I need you to zone back in for the next just couple minutes.

[34 : 55] Because as far as I'm concerned, this is the most important point. Jesus just finished, if you were with us two weeks ago, or you know what he teaches in chapter 5.

He just finished raising the bar really, really high. Did he not? Like impossibly high. He said this. Do you want to be in my kingdom?

Do you want to be in the kingdom of God? Well, you have to have a righteousness that surpasses the scribes and Pharisees. You've got to sing better than Adele. You've got to shoot basketball better than Steph Curry.

You've got to be better than the best. In fact, you've got to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. And I know what you're going to think. You're going to think, well, yeah, but I don't do this and I don't do that.

Yeah, but it's actually higher than that. Because you have heard it said, don't murder. But I'm telling you, you can't even have anger in your heart. Oh. You've heard it said that an eye for an eye.

[35 : 51] But I'm telling you that if they slap you on the cheek, you don't get their cheek. They get your other cheek. Ooh. You've heard it said that you've got to love your neighbor, but you can hate your enemy.

But I tell you, you've got to love your neighbor and you've got to love your enemy. I'm out. I guess I don't get the kingdom. And I argued that two weeks ago that Jesus' point is to bring us to a place of brokenness.

To see what he started the Sermon on the Mount with. The blessed are the poor in spirit. He wants to drive you to the point of saying, I'm penniless.

I don't have a spiritual penny to my name. I am bankrupt. Which means, which means the only option I have is to look to the one who fulfilled the law.

Chapter 5, verse 17. Jesus is the only hope I have to get into the kingdom. Because if the bar's that high, ain't no way I'm jumping it.

[36 : 59] A million trampolines and I still ain't jumping it. But Jesus lived the perfect life that I cannot live. And so I trust him by faith.

And in him, the law is fulfilled. Is everybody with me? Okay. So that's how that ended. So why? You must be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect.

And immediately the very next phrase is, beware of practicing your righteousness before others. What's the connection? Please listen. How do people respond when they realize how high the bar has been raised?

Here's how most people respond. Rather than humbling themselves and admitting their poverty of spirit, they present themselves as having it all together. You must be perfect, but beware of practicing your righteousness before others.

Jesus knows that the temptation of showing you how high the bar is, is you're going to fake it. Or put it this way.

[38 : 08] When faced, notice it on the screen, with the high bar of righteousness, rather than fall on our knees, most people put their best foot forward. Which is the exact opposite of what we're supposed to do.

When we see how high the bar of righteousness is, the temptation is to act like a Pharisee, rather than admit the spiritual prostitute, we are.

It's why Jesus, when he says the bar is perfection, immediately says, but you better be careful not to present your righteousness in a way that makes you look good.

Because he knows the default of the heart, is when you realize you can't reach that high bar, you'll just act like you do. And you'll use religious things to show others that you do.

Oh, listen, faith family, I know this. Religious leaders always want people to think they are right, while demanding others repent. That is what religious leaders do every time.

[39 : 15] But listen to me, listen to me. If chapter 5, am I preaching tonight? Oh my goodness. If chapter 5 has done its proper work in your life, if it's had the proper impact in your life, namely, it brings you to your knees.

It helps you see how high the bar is, so that you come to grips with your poverty of spirit, who's with me? Then and only then will you have the right motivation to do good.

When you see how high the bar is, admit you can't reach it. That it's only by God's grace that you could ever be in the kingdom. Now, you have the right motivation.

May I explain? Giving. We give to the needy, not because we want to look good, but because in seeing our inability to get into the kingdom on our own, we know what it's like to be needy.

I'm a beggar who gladly gives to beggars. If getting into the kingdom is only by grace, how can I not show grace to people who are in need?

[40 : 28] And that has nothing to do with me, and everything to do with God. Praying. We pray, not so that we can show off our righteousness.

We pray because after realizing our inability to get into the kingdom on our own, we have come to realize how desperate for God we are. Which is why, we'll talk about more next week, we pray, hallowed be your name, and your kingdom come, and your will be done, and give me the daily bread that I can't get on my own.

Prayer takes on a desperate focus because you realize just how desperate you are. And now prayer isn't about you, it's about God.

Fasting. We fast, not so that we can show the world how much we suffer for Jesus. Look how much I suffer for Him. No, no, no. We fast because in realizing our inability to get into the kingdom on our own, we intentionally experience physical hunger to remind us how much we hunger and thirst for a righteousness that's not our own.

In other words, we fast because we're satisfied in God, not because we seek the praise of man. It changes everything. Do you see that in the text, Faith Family?

[41 : 56] We're about to wrap it up, but do you see that? Jesus ends the chapter. Here's how high the bar is. It's perfection. And the very next warning is this. You're going to go out and try to do good to look good rather than fall on your face and admit you aren't.

And in experiencing God's grace, you will then have the motivation to do good. See it on the screen. What gives us the right motivation to do good is never our goodness.

It's always God's grace. Can I get an amen? At least Neil's excited, all right? Listen, a life that is aware of its need for God will give.

A life that is aware of its desperate need for God will pray. A life aware of its hunger for God will fast.

And that's the proper motivation. I close with this. There was a gardener, some of you may have heard this story, a gardener that grew this enormous carrot and he took it to the king and he said, King, this is the greatest carrot that I've ever grown.

[43 : 12] I want to present it to you as a token of my love. The king was touched, discerned the man's heart and he said to the man, he said, as he went to turn away, he said, Listen, you have been a good steward of the earth and I own a pot of land next to yours.

I want to give it to you freely as a gift so that you can garden it all. And the gardener was amazed and went home rejoicing. A nobleman overheard what the king said and he thought, My goodness, if that's what you can get for a carrot, imagine what you could get for something better.

And so the next day, he came before the king with this handsome black stallion. He said, King, I breed horses and this is the greatest horse I have ever bred. I want to present it to you as a token for my love.

And the king discerned his heart and said, Thank you. And he took the horse and dismissed the man. The man was obviously perplexed at this and then the king discerning his heart turned to him and said, Let me explain.

The gardener was giving me the carrot. You were giving yourself the horse.

[44 : 31] Motivation matters. And in the kingdom of God, our motivation must match the motivation of our king.

A king who came not to be served but to serve. A king who came not to glorify himself but to glorify his father in heaven.

A king who refused to please the crowds because he only cared about pleasing his father. A king that didn't care about his life but laid his life down as a ransom for many.

That, faith family, is the motivation of the kingdom and that's where greatness is found. And all God's people said, Amen.

Let's pray. Let's pray together. Amen. God, what a convicting passage as it is intended to be.

[45 : 42] This is why we preach the gospel every week. It's why we preach the gospel of grace every week because it's just so easy to be addicted to the drug of the praise of others.

to see the high bar of righteousness and think, yeah, maybe I can jump it. And so we go about life doing good just to look good and it's so opposite of Jesus.

The one who was truly good and yet he did good for others. And God, one of the things that we knew in preaching through this sermon is the contrast of the kingdom of God and the culture of man would be very, very clear.

And this is certainly one of them. So would you help us in experiencing your transforming grace be motivated properly to do good as we are to do good not to look good.

But to give you glory. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.