LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

Matthew 6 (Part 1) :1-4

Giving To The Needy

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 18, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

We are continuing our study in the Sermon on the Mount which is of course part of Matthew's gospel chapters 5 6 & 7 and as we've been making our way through this sermon we have seen again and again how Jesus used this sermon to kind of speak to his followers about a new way of living a new standard of living when we talk about a standard we're talking about the the goal that people try to reach you know or what we consider to be the I guess the the mark you know that people ought to attain to and Jesus has been using the Sermon on the Mount to talk about that mark but he did it by confronting the people the Jews of his day and in effect telling them that the way they understood and practiced the law was subpar you know substandard because they misunderstood it and that they weren't really keeping the law in a way that was in keeping with the heart of the Lord at least the intent that God intended for those things because you see the Jews began to see the keeping of the law or the following of the Word of God if you will as kind of just really an outward expression you know you remember how Jesus confronted that he said you have said that you're you've heard that it was said rather do not murder and that's the way that you saw the law as the outward expression when the word said do not murder they always thought of that in terms of an outward sort of a well don't kill anybody from the standpoint of taking their life you know and and they didn't go beyond what was simply and merely outward and so what the law became for them was nothing more than than human effort you know that was what their religion was based on it was based on human effort what a human can do what a human can't do well then a human can't do it but this is this is kind of what we can do and you know anybody you don't have to be a Christian you don't have to be into you don't even have to believe in God to put forth human effort you know that didn't take anything because we can all try to be good we can all try to act good anybody can do that and and when we do we're we're not doing it probably any better or worse than anybody else yet Jesus shocked his listeners in this Sermon on the Mount by giving them an interesting statement I'll remind you of it by putting it up on the screen here for Matthew 520 he said I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven that's a that was you know we when we covered that in Matthew 5 I told you how the people were probably blown away when they heard that

because as far as they were concerned you know kind of like Carly Simon used to sing nobody does it better and that was true of their idea of the Pharisees in terms of keeping the law nobody did it better than them you know that the Pharisees did it the best but Jesus said unless your righteousness surpasses those guys you aren't even going to enter heaven how you like that do you know what Jesus was saying is if your righteousness is defined by human effort then you'll never make it to heaven right why because we know that you can't get to heaven with human effort can you you can't get to heaven by being good can't get there it doesn't happen that way stop trying to be a good person and go to heaven it doesn't work that way you good people don't go to heaven forgiven people go to heaven that's tough for people to grasp it always has been it probably always will be you know people the people that heard Jesus make that statement in Matthew 5 about how if you're unless your righteousness exceeds the Pharisees and the teachers of law and so forth you won't enter the kingdom of heaven they thought they probably some of them probably thought good grief where is this guy coming from he's telling he's preaching the impossible and they were right Jesus was preaching the impossible the humanly impossible right remember that every once in a while Jesus would say something and his disciples would say well then who can be saved and he'd say things like well with man this is impossible but with God all things are possible that's kind of what the Sermon on the Mount is all about and do you know that there are people who read the Sermon on the Mount and they come away with the conclusion that it is that this sermon is a wonderfully impossible message to attain to do you know that there are some who have actually read this sermon and they've said well obviously Jesus is just giving us the best of the best which none of us will ever be able to attain but it's just you know that's good that's okay Jesus is just talking to us about you know he's given us heaven when we're just living here on earth but that's alright at least we know where the top of heaven reaches I guess but we'll never get there we'll never reach that level of righteousness that's alright it's good to know that it exists and they basically say you know it's just humanly impossible you remember how Jesus kind of began to outline this he started talking about things like murder as I've already mentioned talked about adultery he talked about divorce he talked about things like that and he raised the standard from human effort to a level of the mind he said things like you know don't sit and congratulate yourselves if you've never snuffed out someone's life physically because I tell you if you've had hatred in your heart for that person you've as good as murdered him and don't sit and congratulate yourself if you've never physically committed adultery because I tell you if you've lusted in your heart over somebody you've done it it's done it's over you've committed it you're guilty and so he's raised that level so far beyond what you and I could ever possibly hope to ever achieve you know in terms of trying to be righteous that it's out of our hands it's completely beyond us in this good news but the people who reject the Sermon on the Mount by saying we could never do it are thinking the same way the Jews of Jesus Day thought about the law they're simply

looking at the Sermon on the Mount based on human effort and if you look at the Word of God based on human effort you're gonna read the Bible and then you're gonna close the Bible and then you're gonna say I'm not going back there because I can't do that I can't do this Christian thing it's too hard and you're right you're absolutely 100% correct it is too hard it is impossible but let me tell you something the true righteousness that Jesus is talking about here in the Sermon on the Mount has nothing to do with what you and I can do it has everything to do with what he can do in and through you that's what it's talking about and that's what Jesus is trying to do you see because as I said before the Pharisees of his day were fixated on keeping the law from the standpoint of human effort and Jesus is telling them oh guys it goes so far beyond that if you're keeping God's life you're if you're walking with God by human effort oh what a what an exercise in futility walking with God is not something you do in your own strength it's something you do in his strength living the life that is pleasing to God is impossible for you and I to achieve in and of ourselves it is something that is only accomplished in his power in his strength God wants you and I to see life that way he wants you and I to realize that because we're born-again Christians and because the Holy Spirit lives in us that we can really truly start thinking about what now can take place through his power and not ours and so forth the Apostle Paul actually got a hold of this that surprise you it doesn't me but Apostle Paul got a hold of this and he wrote things Like this I can do everything through him who gives me strength We love to sit and quote that verse, but we never really lay hold of what it really means It means that I cannot also do things through my own human effort. I cannot do all things through human effort But I can do all things through him through the divine power of the Spirit working through me as I yield To him and his ability in my life. That's what it means. Those are the implications of what that means and Paul was Painfully aware of his own personal limitations as a man And do you know that he even tells us in 2nd Corinthians God gave him a thorn in the flesh to remind him of those limitations Sometimes God will do that He'll allow something in our lives to be kind of this issue that keeps reminding you and I that we are just human Paul needed that lesson he needed that on a regular basis because he was called into a level of ministry that so Desperately and daily and minute by minute required the power of the Holy Spirit that Paul could not Fall back on the ways of the flesh even for a moment or he'd be just dead And there was so much riding on his ministry as an Apostle That he needed that constant reminder Paul. You cannot do this in and of yourself You need me and so Paul wrote about that remember in 2nd Corinthians He says there was given to me a thorn in the flesh a messenger of Satan to torment me, but he says I know why now Because He see I came to God and I asked him to take it from me I asked him to remove that thing from me and he said no, I'm not going to it's there for a reason Why God would you give me that thorn in the flesh?

He says it was given to me to because of the exceedingly great Revelations that had been given to me over the years He said God knew that I had a propensity for being puffed up about those things And so this thorn in the flesh he gave me was there to remind me that I'm a man To keep my feet on the ground and keep my my focus on God And then he went on to say that Jesus told him He said I've given you this difficulty in your life so that you'll trust in me because you see Paul My grace is sufficient for you And my power is made perfect not in your effort and strength my power is made perfect in your weakness And so you see Paul had to learn what it meant to be weak So that he could be strong for the Lord and you and I need to learn that same lesson that in order to be strong We have to learn to be weak. We have to learn to literally repudiate the flesh We have to come to a point of saying I don't have the goods to be able to do this whatever this is in your life Whatever your ministry whether that's your ministry in marriage Whether it's your ministry of child raising whether it's your ministry in the church to some aspect of outreach teaching serving encouraging leading overseeing administrating Helping it doesn't matter You know doesn't matter Your power your strength comes from him and it comes through your weakness Recognizing that you don't have what it takes but that he does have what it takes, you know That is one of the reasons frankly why When I'm talking to a couple about their marriage problems and it happens, you know fairly regularly That I make sure first of all, I'm dealing with believers and I'm making sure that they are people who are prepared to apply Philippians 413 which again as we saw says I can do everything through Christ See Can I tell you There's probably no more joyless experience in life than counseling a couple who don't have Christ in their life Because the best I can do is is talk to them about human effort well, let me tell you how far that falls short of making the grade and Doing anything effectively To change their lives, you know people call me from time to time and and they'll they'll say, you know, do you do? marriage counseling And I got to tell you that every time I hear that question my spirit groans a little bit because I know that what they're asking for is How they what they can do to make their marriage better and people will even say that they'll even use those words pastor Paul we'd like to get together with you and find out what we can do to make our marriage better and I'm just I Just I want to groan out loud What you can do to make your marriage better. You know what they're saying We want you to give us the law So that by human effort we can improve our marriage guys, I'm not interested I'm not interested. The flesh just doesn't have the goods And when people and I know that and some may not actually use those words But that's kind of what they're thinking or they'll even say things like well, we're working on our marriage.

Really? And And what they're doing is they're in their own human effort. They're trying to make things better and I understand the mistake But it's still a mistake What people need to do where they need to start and I'm using marriage is just one example could be any number of things But if it is a marriage issue where a couple needs to begin to improve their marriage Is to get a hold of the power of God Find out

what he can do with this thing, right? It's like it's like I've seen what you can do and I'm not very impressed Let now let's see what God can do now. Let's see what God can do with your marriage You know that sort of thing you having marriage problems Well, you guys both individually need to get a hold of one single truth that you can do everything through God who gives you strength You can get everything through Christ.

You need the Holy Spirit that he can enable you To to be the spouse that the other person needs you to be and that and that God has called you to be in the Context of that marriage relationship. He can do that. You can't you know and The sooner we come to terms with our personal weaknesses related to that the better off we're going to be That's why I don't it's why I don't counsel and believers when it comes to marriage I'm not a marriage counselor who's gonna sit there and talk about human effort I mean to me it truly is an exercise in futility And one of the things I'll ask couples from time to time and if I haven't I've wanted to I've wanted to ask them Let me ask you a question. Can you get to heaven based on human effort and they'll say well no So I'll say well then why would you apply that to your marriage if it can't save you? Why would you put that same effort into your marriage then?

I Mean think about it We our theology is good, but our practice really needs some help You know, our theology is good. We know that we can't be saved apart from the power of God apart from Christ But in practice we keep putting the the effort of our humanity behind everything around us You know and think that we're gonna somehow Make things different make things better and I'm and and and and God comes along and he tells you and I to put off the flesh and to put on Christ and We know that we understand that but We think somehow that it just kind of only applies to like going to heaven But what about again look at you whatever issues in your life again marriage, whatever Put off the flesh and put on Christ The reason we have marriage problems is because of the flesh the flesh cannot heal itself So There you go, that's a little mini sermon before we even get into Matthew chapter 6. So anyway There we go be careful he says in verse 1 Not to do your acts of righteousness before men to be seen by them If you do you will have no reward from your father in heaven He goes on to say so when you give to the needy do not announce it With trumpets at the as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets to be honored by men I tell you the truth. They have received their reward in full 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 Then your father who sees what is done in secret will reward you We're gonna stop there not for the whole time. But just let's pray for a second.

And by the way, the reason we pray Because we can't understand these things by human effort Father God open our hearts We ask you to clarify We ask you to clarify and illuminate The Word of God in our

hearts through Jesus Christ. That is our prayer. Thank you Lord Amen, Jesus begins by saying be careful not to do your acts of righteousness Good deeds is what that means the good stuff the stuff that impresses Be careful not to do that before men to be seen by them now Some people have read this verse actually and wondered if perhaps might be contradicting himself because back in chapter 5 he made a similar sounding statement but it seemed to be the converse of this let me put it on the screen just to remind you what he said back in chapter 5 was let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds well that seems kind of strange in light of the fact that now he's saying be careful not to do your acts of righteousness or your good deeds before a man it's like Jesus get it straight here what do you do you want me to do this so that people can see it or do you not want me to do this so that people can see it ah you got to make sure that you take a whole verse approach to understanding God's words over it really comes to down to the to looking very carefully at the words around the verses look what he goes on to say in the first one let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and what praise your father in heaven you see what the focus is of making sure that they do see the things that you do in other words make sure that you let your light shine in such a way that when they see good things coming from you that they don't praise you but they praise your father in heaven because you are constantly being reminded of the fact that you by human effort don't have the goods he does and he receives the praise from those things right and then that second verse be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men to be seen by them in other words to be admired by men do you get the gist of what's going on here you see that between Matthew 5 and Matthew 6 really he's kind of saying the same thing make sure that when you do what you do it's not for the wrong reasons so be careful that you're not doing things for your own glory to be you know to be seen by men and so forth so I think it's interesting that in that in that last verse that you see there on the screen that's in red to be seen by them do you know that that word seen is actually it's kind of a difficult Greek word to pronounce I'll try it thea the atom I I think is the way it's pronounced and it's where we get our word theater isn't that interesting don't do your acts of righteousness in a way as to put it on the theater for show it's kind of what's being said here we are rather to do things in a different way what is that way well verse two you look with me again there in your Bible it says when you give to the needy and that's an example of right an acts of righteousness do not announce it with trumpets as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets to be honored by men he says first of all I tell you the truth they have received their reward in full why because they've only done it so that they could gain attention from it they could get the admiration of people notice Jesus calls them hypocrites and the word hypocrite literally means in the Greek one who wears a mask and it was used to define actors and actresses on a stage we come back to the stage again we come back to kind of playing in front of an audience he says don't be like that make sure you're not putting on a performance and then he lays out you know how we

are basically to live I guess I I'm skipping ahead a little too quickly first of all it gives us the why the reason is because there's not going to be any recognition by God if we seek the recognition of men there isn't going to be any recognition by God and by the way why would you even think that God thought that was important I mean stop and think about it for a second before we move on why is that important I mean why is God taking the time to kind of outline this stuff for us well the reason is because he cares about what's going on inside of our hearts and frankly there's all kinds of reasons that we might have to do good things for people to do acts of righteousness to do an act of benevolence if you will there's all kinds of reasons that we might do it there are reasons that are sincere and there are reasons that are hypocritical we may be doing the good thing either way but God is is concerned with what is the the motive behind it and let me tell you something I think it's very difficult sometimes to figure out what that motive is even by the person doing the act of righteousness I think it's even maybe even tougher for them to know in their own heart you might be convinced in your mind of why you're doing what you're doing but you know God knows the heart and we're so good at rationalizing our actions that we can easily deceive ourselves but Jesus is warning us here not to do things to impress others but I've learned that we can even do things to impress ourselves maybe you might say you know what I don't I don't care what others think about me when I do this I'm giving to the poor I don't care what people think of me I'm giving to the poor for you know for different reasons than that doesn't necessarily mean they're good ones do you know that sometimes it's enough for us just to impress ourselves I've heard people actually say this in Christian service I've heard them say well I do this I do it because it gives me just such a good feeling to do it do you know what they're admitting that they're doing it for themselves that's what they're admitting when they say that I you know I like to feed the poor because I just I love the look on their face when I give them the food that they need or I hand them the money they need to go buy that food I just I just love the look on their face you know what you're saying you're saying that it makes you feel good to do it that's not why God wants us to give it that's just impressing yourself so you see it could be impressing others it could be impressing yourself we are we are so naturally self-centered that if somebody were to say to us I just I just love the look I get when I from people when I do that when I help them we don't even hear anything wrong with that I mean that's how self-centered we are I mean that's how used to those kinds of things that we are in our in our culture and so forth but again if I'm helping the poor because it gives me a good feeling inside then I've just revealed my reason for doing it I get a good feeling you know and that's still all about me so I'm not saying that we shouldn't help people obviously we should but we shouldn't do it just because it makes us feel good that's not a valid reason the reason for our service to the Lord should be patterned after the heart of our Savior do you know he came to give us an example of even why we serve even why we give even why we help let me show you this from John chapter 8 he said the one who

sent me he's talking about his father is with me and he has not left me alone for I always do what pleases him you know that's really an interesting sort of a take on why we give and why we do things isn't it he doesn't have anything to say about it pleasing the people he doesn't really have anything to say about it even pleasing himself that's not in view the reason that he does what he does is because it pleases the father and I think that ought to be our attitude to no matter what you do maybe you don't like cleaning toilets I know don't know that many people who do there's a few strange ones out there and God bless you if you're one of them but you know if you don't like it that's no reason to stop if the job needs to be done you know it's like well I'm not gonna do this anymore because it doesn't please me or now people usually wouldn't say that but what they do say sometimes is I'm not going to do that anymore because it doesn't please other people what they're saying is I've never gotten any recognition I've actually heard people say I've been serving for five years in this ministry and never once has someone said thank you do you know what they just revealed they just revealed why they were doing it they wanted appreciation and not that there's anything wrong with us appreciating people and expressing it when it becomes a motive for service it becomes a self-centered thing what are you and I to say why do you clean those toilets it pleases the father you see why are you giving food to the poor it pleases the father does it please the people you help yeah but that's not why I do it does it please you yeah sometimes but that's not why I do it it pleases the father Jesus came to tell us how to serve what the goal what the motive is what the heart effort behind it is all predicated upon I want to please the Father and that's why I'm doing what I'm doing anything else is Either for others or for me You see So, there we go Verse 3 Jesus is going to give us some guidelines here because it's so easy to Be led astray by our own hearts as to why we're doing things so he gives us this he says 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 Then your father Who sees what is done in secret? will Reward you now. This is by the way, Jesus just outlined here for us in just two verses How to avoid doing things for the wrong reasons whether it's again giving serving in whatever way that you do The way to avoid Hypocrisy and wrong motives or whatever is not to stop giving or stop doing what you're doing But it's to do it with secrecy Now, let's think about what that means You know, don't sit and talk about it to everybody Don't don't be your own advertisement of What you do I Mean it's not to say that you're gonna be able to constantly be able to do that in private Somebody may walk in on you while you're cleaning the toilet.

I'll grant you that That's unavoidable. The point is You know, we're not going around talking about. Yeah, I'm the toilet cleaner over at Calvert Chapel. Thank you very much Or even saying it in a way is just to say well, you know, I don't do much around there I just clean the toilets and I want to make sure you know You know Keep it between you and the Lord When we think about giving Money because it's another way of serving the question might come up. Does this mean it's wrong to give openly?

well not necessarily You have to be careful that you don't become legalistic about this, you know Do you remember you remember in the book of Acts At the end of chapter 4 we're told in the book of Acts that There were people in the body of Christ who began to sell off pieces of property that they owned and they brought the money from the sale of that property and laid it at the Apostles feet so that it might be distributed among the people and so that there might not be Any need among them? We're told at the end of Acts chapter 4 that Barnabas was one of the guys who sold a piece of property and gave the money to the Apostles So obviously that means Barnabas didn't do it in secret doesn't mean he meant to do it for the purpose of getting you know Recognition by the people but he didn't do it in secret Then we are given in the very next chapter of Acts Yeah in Acts chapter 5 we're given that story of Ananias and Sapphira. Remember that one? where they saw what happened with Barnabas and they thought hmm, let's sell some of our property and give it to the Apostles to but Let's tell them we sold it for less than what we really did that way We can keep some of the money and we'll give the rest and we'll still get the credit and yet we'll be able to make a Little money on the sale of the property on top of it. Yeah, great idea bad idea Because you remember how the story goes the Holy Spirit found them out Of course, you can't lie to God right and that's what Peter basically said when he confronted each Ananias and Sapphira, which he did Separately he asked them the question.

What are you doing trying to lie to God? Don't you realize you're lying not to men but to God and both of them after being confronted dropped dead on the spot Because their hearts became just caught up in this whole thing of doing something for the the applause of People and the recognition and the admiration of people, you know Man our hearts just have to be our hearts have to be right before the Lord or or or you know It's going to be tainted and that story from from acts really kind of helps us to understand how easy it is to deceive ourselves into thinking that what we're doing is Okay, or that giving you know is Is all right, even when we do it in our our human effort it becomes a performance again either for the people's benefit or for our Benefit and in Ananias and Sapphira was for both So if you and I are going to live only to please the father We're gonna have to operate in a realm that goes beyond human effort, aren't we I Mean if that's our goal If your goal is to please the father if my goal is to please the father Then I guess I can't do it in my own ability I you can't either we've got to come to him and recognize that we can only accomplish those things through Christ the power of Jesus Christ Living in us and so forth. I want to I want to end with one last passage on the screen from Galatians chapter 2 Paul writes I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live but Christ lives in me But Christ lives in me the life. I live in the body. I live by faith in the Son of God Who loved me and gave himself for me?

What Paul is saying here in this verse in? A very powerful way is that the life he lives and that includes the service He gives is no longer lived by human effort it is now lived by faith and And and and that kind of faith is the faith that knows that God is able I I wish you know In addition to that passage in Philippians chapter 4 I wish that this is another verse that people would would lay hold of when they come in for marriage counseling and They'd come in literally with this on their lips. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live But Christ lives in me and the life I live in this body, which includes my marriage to this person I am no longer going to live in the power of my human effort. I'm gonna live rather in it by faith I'm gonna apply faith to that you know Faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. Do you see how that just changes everything?

It has to be by faith that's the kind again, that's the faith that knows that it knows that it knows That I can't but he can so if you're facing a situation right now in your life and It's becoming increasingly apparent to you that you can't Whatever it is Then I want to encourage you today to lay that lay that down and to admit it admit your weakness before God and And to just say Lord what you said to Paul is no less true to me My your power is Made perfect in my weakness. And so I'm going to readily and heartily accept my weakness So that your strength might operate through me in Every situation Let's stand together I'm gonna ask our prayer teams to come down and Ready themselves if they would please to to just join in prayer with you And and that's the the focus of what they're here to do today is just pray with you Agree with you in prayer for whatever needs are pressing on your heart and life And and certainly they're not the only ones that can pray with you They're here in case maybe you don't know anybody else to pray with But if there is somebody else, you know to pray with grab them ask them to pray with you after the service doesn't it can Be anybody you do you need somebody to agree with you in prayer? Great wonderful Just grab somebody, you know, and just say I need prayer today. I need to lift this before the Lord I need to lay it down at the foot of the cross and just trust God because I'm not strong enough But he is and I know that I can give it to him So let's pray together father. Thank you so much for giving us the power of your word Lord we thank you so much for The Sermon on the Mount and the the wonder of the things that we learn in these passages We are so grateful to you Lord And we pray that the word that we've that we've laid hold of today would go deep within our hearts and and That what we would learn that whether it's giving or serving or Being married or having children or raising those children or working in our job or whatever it is that you've called us to do That we would not do it in any sort of a way to draw attention to ourselves To do it for ourselves But we would do it to please you that our heart always to would be to please you and Lord We know that to do that we need to do it in the power of the spirit pleasing others and pleasing ourselves is human effort pleasing you comes only by the power your power

living within us so we pray for that in our lives we ask it in jesus precious name and all god's people said together amen