

Sovereign Grace Church
“You've Gotta Serve Somebody” outline
August 19, 2018

Matthew 6: 1-4

Have you ever been recognized for useful service or good works? Have you ever received a public honor for courage or benevolent service? Have you been positively recognized for your efforts in education or in the workplace? Have you ever had a positive newspaper article written about you or your business? Is your family name recognized in a positive way in your community? None of these things are bad in themselves and Jesus does not ask us to avoid them. He only asks that we not be motivated by them! To be motivated by them makes them less than what they should be.

This morning we will consider Jesus' teaching on motivations for alms-giving and in the coming weeks this will be followed by motivations for prayer and fasting. All of these are religious works and are certainly good things to be doing. However, the reasons for which we do them will demonstrate in who's “kingdom” we are currently living! The scribes and Pharisees thought they were living in God's kingdom when in point of fact they were living in Satan's! Motivations aren't anything you can give yourself....they lie at the center of who you are. They tend to arise from where you choose to focus your mind. Why do you do good things? What is the focus of your life? We will consider these questions in the context of Jesus' teaching on alms-giving during this mornings message.

1. The Religious Work of Alms-giving 1a

- **Biblical teaching concerning alms-giving**
Lev. 19:9-10; Deut. 5: 11; Ac. 10; Ac 9:36

- **Alms-giving is Good**

2. The Motive of the Flesh/World vv. 1b-2

- **“to be seen”**
Rom. 1:21; 24a; 26a; 28a

- “hypocrites”
- “sounding the trumpet”

3. The Motive of the Spirit/Kingdom vv. 3-4

- “Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.”
- Such a person knows the Fellowship of God
Jms 1:12; Jn 17:3; Heb. 12:2; Phil 3: 8-11

Questions for Reflection and Conversation

1. What public recognitions have you received over the course of your life? How important are they to you? Do you encourage your children to work for them? Do you put them up for display in your office or business? Could there be a good reason for doing so?
2. What sort of worldly recognition did Paul have? [Phil. 3: 1-11] How did he respond to them? Why? Do you know of anyone in your own life who demonstrates such a response?
3. What is the most treasured description of who you are? [Presbyterian? Reformed? Baptist? Independent? Free? Wealthy? Poor? Benevolent? Friendly? Nice? Good? Wise? Educated? Uneducated? American? English? Spanish?] Would you be willing to give it up for your identity with Jesus? Would you be willing to count it as “dung”? Why or why not?
4. What do you do in such a way that “your left hand does not know what your right hand is doing”? How can such a mentality be developed? Where does “grace” play into this effort? Where does your effort come in?