

Sermon Supplement from December 1

The Joy of a Praying Life – Matthew 6:1-18

WARM UP

- Consider ways you can connect Christmas giving in your life to the Gift of Salvation through Jesus. How could you communicate this to your family, to your neighbors, or to those at work?
- How could you personally remind yourself that “The Greatest Joy of Christmas is in the Gift of Jesus?”
- Who is the most generous person you know? How does that influence those around them?

DIG IN

Verses 1-4: The Problem of a Grand Celebration with Your Name on it

- Think of ways the world cheers for giving with your name on it.
- How can this happen in “Christian” settings?
- Can you think of times that you let it “slip” that you were generous?
- Did you ever think that this nullified your gift?

What does it mean that you shouldn’t let your right hand know what your left hand is doing?

Assignment #1 – Give to someone this week and don’t tell anyone about it.

Why is this so hard?

Verses 5-15: The Problem with Grand Prayers

- Have you ever felt intimidated by praying out loud?
- Have you ever listened to prayers by others and thought they were more impressive than your prayers?
- Read Luke 18:9-14.
 - What was the religious problem with the first prayer? (the Pharisee)
 - What was the blessing in the second prayer? (the tax-collector)
 - Why did this seem so strange to the people who were listening?
- What is the problem with the book title: Getting Things from God?
- Critical to having Joy in a Praying Life is listening first! How is this done?

Assignment #2 – Listen to God for 15 minutes and pray without asking for anything.

- What would you say to someone who thought this was a waste of time?
- If your prayers are blocked after 15 minutes – notice that the result of the Model Prayer in the text is to lead us to Forgiveness!
- Ask yourself some forgiveness questions.

Verses 16-18: The Problem of Fish on Friday!

- If you fast and everyone knows, what is the problem?
- Is fasting something that only spiritual people do? But then doesn't that negate the point that Jesus is making?
- Fasting isn't limited to food! What else could you fast from?

Assignment #3 – Set aside something in your life and focus on the Goodness of God in prayer. (And don't tell anyone.)

A Greater Prayer Life isn't developed in a day. But it begins with the motives of your heart. How much do we love the Lord Jesus?