

Matthew 18 – Hypocritical Religion

Matthew 6:1-7, 16-18

Fallen Condition Focus (FCF): Our religious acts need to be motivated by our desire for relationship with Christ.

Intro: Is Christianity a religion?

- Chapter 5, moral demands of discipleship – right and wrong
- Chapter 6, religious demands of discipleship
- **James 1:27** Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

As we look at these three religious practices (giving alms, prayer, fasting), we will also see the different motivations that can drive them

Point 1 – Seeking the approval of others (first motivation)

- Hypocrisy in action
- Subtly of sin
- Not just on Sunday morning, in all of life
- Jesus calls us to flee hypocrisy

Point 2 – Seeking the approval of self (another motivation)

- Obviously we are supposed to give, pray and fast
- Not just impressing others, but the need to not become impressed with ourselves
 - Self righteous people don't need a savior
 - Self righteous people despise others
 - Self righteous people find ways to justify their sin

Point 3 – Seeking the Approval of God

- **Matthew 6:1** 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.**
- What is this reward?
 - The reward of the hypocrites
 - If your desire is to be praised by men, you can achieve it, but your reward will end there.
 - Reward from the Father