

What Should — And Should Not — Motivate Us

Matthew 6:1-6

Introduction

Picture your Christian life like a rocket on a launching pad. Jesus has told us what fuel will empower us so we take off in love, obedience, faith, and witness. But Satan hates this — and tries to trick us into using a different fuel — a disastrous fuel. So what fuel does Satan try to trick us into using? And what fuel should we use? Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:1-6.

What fuel is Jesus warning us about?

Jesus warns us not to be motivated by a desire to be praised by others (vv.1,2,5).

Jesus is not telling us that all our obedience must be secret — because in 5:16 he's told us to do good works which CAN be seen by others. But the difference is that in 5:16 we want our works seen by others so they will praise God — not us.

So we should not do anything in order to have others praise us.

What happens if we do things in order to be praised by others?

We will have no reward from God. That is frightening.

In this passage what keeps us from being rewarded is not what we do — but why we do it. It's crucial that we have the right motivation.

So what should our motivation be?

What should motivate our giving, our praying, and all our obedience — is the thought of being rewarded by God (vv.3-4,6).

But we must be careful not to misunderstand the Bible's teaching on rewards —

The reward is not health or wealth — it's God Himself in Christ (Mat 5:8; John 14:21).

And the reward is not merited — it's from God's mercy alone — He gives us the obedience He rewards; He rewards tainted obedience; His reward is infinitely greater than our small obedience.

So what will this look like?

Pray — in order to receive more of Christ.
Give — in order to receive more of Christ.
Do all we do in order to receive more of Christ.



HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)

What was the Holy Spirit saying to you Sunday through this passage?

What questions, ideas, objections, encouragements did you come away with?

In what areas of obedience are you tempted to be motivated by praise from others?

What motivates your obedience? If it's something different from the reward of more than Christ — what do you think of Jesus' emphasis on rewards?

What makes you hesitate to be motivated by rewards?

What did the Holy Spirit do in your heart through this passage?

Share prayer requests that come up in the discussion, jot them down below, and pray for each other.



SERMON ON THE MOUNT

MERCY HILL CHURCH SPRING-SUMMER 2012