

**MID-MORNING FEATURING DR. MITCHELL KRUSE
JULY 17, 2012**

WRAP UP “INSIDE OUT RIGHTEOUSNESS” AND PART I OF “THREE ACTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS: DO GIVE” (MATTHEW 6:1-4)

NEXT SHOW: AUGUST 21

PART 3B OF “INSIDE OUT RIGHTEOUSNESS” – BE HATE FREE (MATTHEW 5:43-48)

Do you hate someone? Is there a person or people group that you simply don't love? "It might be someone with a different sexual orientation or religion, someone who is addicted, unsaved, rude, late, or disorganized." It could be someone who is introverted or extroverted, rich or poor, conservative or liberal, irreligious or religious, attractive or unattractive. Most likely, it is someone who has wronged you. In our humanness, we make lists. One of them is a list of those we love (those who love us) and a list of those we hate (our enemies). We want to treat others as they treat us.

Jesus offered a different way. In His final illustration of *six examples of inside out righteousness*, Jesus taught His disciples to *be hate free*.

The Old Testament command: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor’” (Matthew 5:43). The command came from the Old Testament Law (Leviticus 19:18). Israelites who were moving from slavery to freedom were commanded by God to not withhold their love from one another, even from someone who had wronged them.

The Legalistic Interpretation: “*Hate your enemy*” (Matthew 5:43). Two thousand years later, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law added a loophole to love. In essence, they said, “*Treat others as they treat you.*” This axiom followed the letter of the law, but it missed the spirit of the law. It was outside in righteousness.

We do the same today. If someone mistreats us, we withhold love. If our business competitor criticizes our company to a potential client, we withhold love toward that competitor. If our spouse is rude, we withhold love until it he or she repents. If someone disagrees with us, we withhold love. If someone cuts us off on the highway, we withhold love. If someone gossips about us, we withhold love. If a church differs on disputable matters, we withhold love. The problem is that withholding love is hate.

The Spirit of the Law: “But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). The spirit of the law was to love everyone without parameters. God's design was that hate would never flow from one's heart (Leviticus 19:17). Paul said that love fulfills the law (Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:13-14).

Jesus offered two ways for His disciples to model the heart of God: (1) love our enemies and (2) pray for those who persecute us. Jesus fulfilled the law by giving us the ultimate picture of God's heart. He loved His enemies and He prayed for those who persecuted Him (Luke 23:34). Jesus revealed that these practices flowed from a heart like God's, one that is perfect, meaning complete, or whole (Matthew 5:45, 48). God withholds His love from no one (Psalm 145:9) because God is love (1 John 4:8). Christ is the perfect picture of God's boundless love (Ephesians 3:18; John 1:14). In a parallel passage, Luke quoted Jesus as saying, “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36). Mercy doesn't treat others as they deserve; instead, mercy loves its enemies and prays for its persecutors. The pagan culture in Jesus' day wasn't merciful (Matthew 5:46-47). Two millennia later, things haven't changed.

STREET SMARTS FOR THE RESTORATION ROAD...

Inside out righteousness desires a heart like God's. This week, be complete in your love. First, love your neighbor *and* your enemies. When someone wrongs you, sacrificially serve his needs. Second, pray for those who persecute you. When someone mistreats you, pray for him to be blessed in the same way that you want to be blessed by God. It won't be you doing so; rather it will be Christ in you.

Conclusion

Jesus offered tools that would radically transform our lives. Imagine a world ridded of retaliation and hate. We can contribute to that campaign by applying His words to our lives today.

THREE ACTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS PART 1: DO GIVE (MATTHEW 6:1-4)

Why do you give? Do you ever do good deeds to be recognized and honored by others? When we give, we often want to let others see our acts of righteousness in order to be rewarded for our efforts. Our names are placed on buildings, printed in church bulletins, and presented in prominent periodicals. Two thousand years ago, people experienced the same temptation. Jesus offered a different way by exposing the motives of the heart.

In His *Sermon on the Mount*, Jesus described the *be-do-go of full surrender*. In essence, He said, “Who you are to *be* determines what you *do* which determines where you *go*.” In Matthew, Chapter 6, Jesus moved from who we are to *be* to what we are to *do*. He began with three acts of piety in Judaism: (1) giving to the needy, (2) praying, and (3) fasting. In each, Jesus cut to the heart of the matter exposing why we do what we do. We either have a selfish motive or a selfless one. With each good deed, He described what not to do, then what to do. Jesus said, “Do give.”

First, do not give with the motive to be recognized and honored (Matthew 6:1-2). Acts of righteousness by definition are done as a result of intimacy with the Father and flow from a heart surrendered to Christ (Matthew 5). Doing acts of righteousness to be seen by others is done with an unrighteousness motive and not rewarded by God (Matthew 6:1). Jesus said, “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, 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” (Matthew 6:2-3). Trumpets were the shape of the giving boxes in the synagogues. The crowd surrounding the giving boxes would know who gave large sums by the sound of the coins hitting the box. Large coinage made loud noise when dropped in the boxes. Little coinage made little noise. Motives were often no different inside the synagogues than they were on the streets. Outside Judaism, on the Roman roads, Greeks gave in order to be recognized as significant among their peers.

Hypocrites were actors. They wore masks on stage, pretending to be one way on the outside, though they were another on the inside. Jesus said that if being seen (outside) was one’s motive (inside), then the attention he had received was His reward in full, (a reference to payment in ancient business receipts). There would be no reward of an intimate relationship with God because of the selfish motive.

STREET SMARTS FOR THE RESTORATION ROAD...

Are you giving to get? Ask the Holy Spirit to identify any area in your life where you are giving to someone in need with the selfish motive to get something in return. It might be time, talent, or treasure that you are investing in someone or something in order to receive honor and recognition from your church, friends, relatives, or organization.

Second, do give in secret. Jesus said, “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” (Matthew 6:3-4). Not letting the left hand know what the right hand is doing was hyperbole for giving in secret. Synagogues actually maintained secret giving places for anonymous giving and receiving. Believers were often described as members of Christ’s body. The left hand not knowing the right hand’s giving activity meant that one believer wasn’t announcing his gift to another. This does not mean that we cannot receive public recognition for our giving. It means that we should not seek selfish recognition and honor. We should not desire attention for our giving. However, when our giving motive is unselfish, our reward is intimacy with God.

STREET SMARTS FOR THE RESTORATION ROAD...

This week, give in secret out of intimacy with your heavenly Father. Don't be motivated to give anything to anyone out of recognition or honor. Rather, give from your gratitude to the One who gave you life. Your reward will be intimacy with Him.

Conclusion

When our motives on the inside focus on God, then what we do on the outside honors Him. This frees us to grow in our relationship with God in Christ.