

## ***The Sermon on the Mount continued*** ***Matt. 6:1-24 – Don't take credit for God's work.***

*The command "Be ye perfect" is not idealistic gas. Nor is it a command to do the impossible. He is going to make us into creatures that can obey the command. . . He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a god or goddess, a dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly His own boundless power and delight and goodness.*

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*.

### **Starting with the end of the last chapter**

- *Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.* Matt. 5:48
- Not a command, but a goal. \_\_\_\_\_
- A starting point for the next chapter. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Giving, praying, and fasting: behaving in such a way that reveals the true source of blessing and charity.**

- Don't practice your righteousness (dikiosune: gr.) in order to be seen by others, 6:1.
  - Righteousness/justice. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Why shouldn't others see it? \_\_\_\_\_
- Regarding giving and charity, 6:2-4.
  - "hypocrites" (actors): \_\_\_\_\_
  - Don't do it for your credit. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Keep it a secret from yourself. \_\_\_\_\_
  - How does the reward from God work? \_\_\_\_\_
- Pray in private, 6:5-6.
  - Again, don't put on a show. \_\_\_\_\_
  - The value of private prayer. \_\_\_\_\_

***The subject here is not the specific act or practice of charity, or the act or practice of prayer, but rather the person who gets the credit for the blessings of the acts.***

- A guideline for effective prayer, 6:7-15.
  - Meaningless repetition: prayer wheels. \_\_\_\_\_
  - "Many words": not the same as "many prayers." \_\_\_\_\_
  - The example known as "The Lord's Prayer."
    - Know whom you are addressing, our heavenly, Holy Father. \_\_\_\_\_
    - Recognize that God's will comes first. \_\_\_\_\_
    - Don't ask for more than you need. \_\_\_\_\_
    - The forgiveness equation, *opheiletos*. \_\_\_\_\_
    - Please protect us from evil. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Reiterating the importance of forgiveness and its connection to salvation. \_\_\_\_\_
- Fasting, the practice of meditative self-denial. 6:16-18.
  - Fasting from all of our forms of consumption. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Again, no self-glory. \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't pursue personal wealth, 6:19-24.
  - Earthly treasures and wealth have a short life and are always at risk. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Seek eternal treasure. Always a problem for the materialist in us. \_\_\_\_\_
  - The "eye" analogy, v.22-23: we tend to visualize what we love and desire, and earthly treasures bind us to worldly and dark visualizations. \_\_\_\_\_
  - One or the other will ultimately "own" us. \_\_\_\_\_

*These particular teachings of Jesus fly in the face of so much of what is being taught in contemporary evangelical Christianity. The idea of pursuing a form of religious faith which promotes personal comfort and wealth as a result of that faith appears to be opposite to what Jesus has said here. How this really breaks down.*

- *Jesus assures us that God knows our needs and will take care of us.* \_\_\_\_\_
- *Whatever we receive or experience in this life will be easily eclipsed by the blessings of eternal life.* \_\_\_\_\_
- *Step out from behind your ego and begin "doing" for the kingdom of God.* \_\_\_\_\_
- *Get off the fence and decide who you will serve.* \_\_\_\_\_