

## **May 15, 2016; Matthew 6:1-18**

### **“The Christian’s Secret Life”**

A short story...

Thesis: **“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven” (v 1).**

Example #1—Giving: **“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” (vv 3-4).**

Example #2—Prayer: **“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (vs 6).**

Example #3—Fasting: **“But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (vv 17-18).**

Assumptions:

1. Jesus expects his disciples to give, pray and fast—**“When you give...pray...fast...”**
2. Jesus is not after “the show” but rather he is after the inner life, “secret life,” the heart!
3. Is it wrong to pray in public? (No: 1 Timothy 2:1ff; Ephesians 6:18; Acts 2:42).

4. Why is Jesus commending the “secret life”? (not “secret” in a covert or sinister sense)

- This is a crucial theme of the Sermon on the Mount—the heart!
- Jesus is teaching against a kind of religious life primarily focused on outer forms and expressions.
  - Against mere formality
- This is a theme of the ministry of Jesus (Matthew 14:23; Mark 1:35; 6:46; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:18).
- Living for the right kind of reward—a theme in the Sermon (Matthew 5:12, 45; 6:1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 16, 18). Living our lives for an “audience of One.” “Jesus wants His disciples to be sincere before their heavenly Father, not ostentatious [“flashy”] before people” (Faithlife Bible Study)
- Your secret life sustains your public life (like an athlete) and so it is vital to your public life.
- This is how the kingdom comes...
- The quiet and “secret” ministry of the Holy Spirit
- Church leadership...

The life of a Kingdom citizen: (1) give generously, (2) much in prayer, (3) fasting often (all done in secret)