

Notes for Matthew -Chapter 6 (Page 1 of 6)

Introduction- We are in the middle of one speech given by Jesus covering Chapters 5-7

1. The central theme is all about keeping God on the "throne of your heart".
 - a. This is a moment-by-moment thing, as our egos constantly want us to be in charge.
 - b. In order for God to be in charge, we have to personally get off the throne ourselves, or dethrone whatever issues or emotions we are focusing upon at that moment.
2. Remember in Chapter 5 we dealt with such issues as not being angry, praying for your enemies, showing love (giving of oneself) to the unlovable and those who hate you.
3. Chapter 6 goes to the next step, which are our religious acts.
 - a. It is as if our old self-ruling nature is saying, "Well, if God won't let me be in charge of my relationship with God and my relationship with people, maybe I can still be in charge of doing 'religious stuff'". If God is going to rule over our lives, it is over every aspect.
4. Chapter 6 starts with a discussion of prayer, fasting and giving.
 - a. The chapter does not condemn these actions. It talks about proper motivation.
 - b. Our egotistical -self wants to "serve as good examples", so we parade our religious acts publicly. Ultimately, we are glorifying ourselves and not God.

Chapter 6 Verse 1: "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

1. Verse 1 is a good summary verse for most of chapter 6. The next 15 verses illustrate Verse 1.
2. The word to underline in Verse 1 is "no". "You will have no reward in heaven for this."
3. The things we are going to talk about in Chapter 6 are not bad things; it is only the motivation that Jesus calls into question.
4. One of the key words to underline in your bible in Chapter 6 is the word "when".
 - a. Jesus says, "When you give to the needy" (Verse 2), or "when you pray" (Verse 5); or "when you fast" (Verse 16).
 - b. There are no "if you give, pray or fast" statements here.
 - c. If you have a heart for Jesus, then you just want to do these things!

Verse 2: "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.

1. Notice that the topic of giving to the poor is given priority over the topic of praying.
2. In the historical context, there were religious leaders at this time that would literally blow trumpets in the town square as they were giving money to the poor.
3. Modern examples: Giving for the sake of recognition or buildings with people's names on them.
 - a. Jesus is teaching in effect, "Well, that was a generous act, good for you, hope you enjoy the public recognition, because that is all the reward you are going to get."

Verses 3-4: But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

1. The idea is when you give of your money and resources, it should be in a way that is so casual, so quick that it is almost as if you are unaware of your giving.
2. "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2nd Corinthians 9:7, NIV)
3. Giving of your money (and your time) to the church isn't so much for the church's benefit as it is your own. It is about trusting God for today's and tomorrow's financial provision as you are trusting him with the first of your earnings.

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Verses 3-4: (cont.)

4. Think about stock market investments. You want to pick companies with good earning potential. The same should be with your giving. Is the place where you are giving “making a spiritual profit” for Christ? Support ministries that are “spiritually successful” and/or bless your life.
5. Remember all that you have belongs to God. God asks that you give ten percent (called a “tithe” in the bible) as a way of testing and trusting.
6. “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.” Malachi 3:10, NIV
 - a. This is the only place I know in the bible where God dares you to test him!

Verse 5: “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

1. The words to underline here are “to be seen by men”. Jesus is questioning our motivation.

Verse 6: “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.

1. Notice Jesus doesn’t say anything about what time of the day to pray, or how one should dress when praying, or even the position of the body. Jesus emphasis is on privacy when praying.
2. Jesus is encouraging us to go to a place with a minimal amount of distractions.
3. Jesus is not condemning public prayer. He is condemning bad motivation for prayer.
 - a. There are times when public prayer is important: “For where two or three come together in my name, there am I (Jesus) with them.” (Matthew 18:20, NIV)

Verse 7: “And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

1. First of all, there is nothing wrong with a repeated prayer. It is a condemnation about our ego’s thinking, “God must answer my prayer, because I’ve said it 17 times and now God owes me”.
2. Jesus prayed three times to avoid the path of the cross, but finally accepted the idea of not Jesus’ will but God the Father’s will has to be done. (See Matthew 26:39-44)
3. The point is our attitude in praying, not our number of repetitions.

Verse 8: “Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

1. John’s loose translation of Verse 8: “When you pray, get to the point”. ☺
2. An old Christian idiom is, “It is not the length of the prayer, but the weight of the prayer that matters”. (Source John MacArthur’s Commentary on Matthew)

Verses 9-13: General comments on the “Lord’s Prayer”

1. There is a classical debate among Christians as to whether or not one should pray this prayer literally (word-for-word) or whether one should use this prayer as a model as one should pray.
2. What is important is that we understand what we are praying when we recite this prayer and mean it when we pray it. The danger of a memorized prayer is going through the motions without giving it much thought.
3. Notice most of the pronouns in this prayer are in the plural. (for example: “Our Father”)
4. Notice the prayer is mostly about God’s actions.
 - a. The only verse about us is the part, “as we forgive those who have sinned against us”. The rest of the prayer focuses on who God is, and what we ask God to do for us.

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Verse 9-13 (cont.): Overview comments on the "Lord's Prayer" (cont.)

5. The request for daily sustenance (give us our daily bread) doesn't come until after we recognize who God is ("hallowed be thy name"). One should keep that in mind when we pray.
6. The prayer is often titled, "The Lord's Prayer". It is not a prayer for Jesus, but a prayer for us.

Verse 9: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

1. This opening line has great balance between personal relationship with God and having reverence (respect) for his Holy name.
2. One has to have balance in our relationship with God the father:
 - a. One cannot get too personal and not respect God as the sovereign ruler of the universe.
 - i. E.g., "God & I are buddies. I can do what I want because God & I are bud's".
 - b. The other is to fear God's wrath as to be afraid to approach God as a loving father.
 - c. The word used here for "Father", in Hebrew, is a personal term.
 - i. The best English paraphrase would be "daddy".
 - d. The balance is the second sentence: "hallowed be your name".
 - e. God is sovereign. He is in control of the universe. Yes God loves us unconditionally, but He also is perfect and can stand no sin whatsoever.

Verse 10: "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

1. Another classical debate in Christianity has to do with the phrase "your kingdom come".
 - a. Some argue it is just a reference to the second coming of Jesus.
 - b. The other view is to see Verse 10 as one continuous thought about putting God on our thrones and letting him rule over our lives.
2. We cannot let God rule in our life without prayer. It is not through self-discipline.
 - a. This prayer is about God ruling in our lives now just as when we get to heaven God rules in our hearts then.

Verse 11: "Give us today our daily bread.

1. After praying for our recognition of God's love and holiness (Vs. 9), and God's will to be done in our lives (Vs. 10), now comes the request to provide for us "our daily bread".
2. One can read this literally as bread, or more likely, it is about our daily sustenance.
3. This prayer reminds us to be grateful for what we have and to trust God/not our own resources.
4. If we look at our refrigerator and think "I'm set for awhile" or we look at our bank statements and think, "I'm set for awhile", we start to get our focus off of God.
5. This part of the prayer is our reminder that all our blessings come from God.

Verse 12: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

1. The word "debts" are also translated "transgressions" and "sins" in other bibles.
 - a. The idea of debts here is that we are indebted to God for forgiveness.
2. "Forgiving our debtors" is a prayer request for God to help us be forgiving to others who have hurt us. Jesus comments on this in Verse 14, which we'll get to.

Verse 13: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

1. The final request is to ask God to keep us strong against temptation.
2. This verse, in the English is misleading. It sounds like God leads us into temptation.
 - a. James said: "When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;" (James 1:13 NIV)
3. This verse is about rescuing us from temptation. Our old, egotistical nature constantly wants to take God off the throne of our hearts and put ourselves, or something else back on.

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Verse 13: (cont.)

4. Paul also comments on this. It is one of the more famous verses in the Bible:
 - a. "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. (1st Corinthians 10:13 NIV)
5. Finally the verse ends with "deliver us from the evil one."
 - a. Whatever is not of God is "satanic in its origin" as it is not God's will for our lives.
 - b. "He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work." (1st John 3:8 NIV)

Verse 13b: "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (NKJV)

1. That sentence is not in the NIV translation. It is debated whether or not it is in the original Greek.
2. Whether or not this verse exists in the original text has no philosophical bearing on the teachings and concepts of the Sermon on the Mount.
3. If this text itself is not in the original text, certainly the concept and ideas behind this verse can be found all over the New Testament.
 - a. "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." (Revelation 4:11 NIV)

Verse 14-15: "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

1. Here is Jesus' commentary on the prayer He just finished.
2. Notice Jesus does not comment upon anything on God's part. Most of the prayer are things we ask God the Father to do for us. He doesn't comment on that because Jesus knows God the Father is faithful to do his part.
3. It is important to understand that these two verses are not about eternal salvation.
 - a. This verse is not saying that if we don't forgive others, we don't go to heaven.
 - b. This is another verse about rewards in heaven.
4. When we're angry with somebody, it blocks our relationship with God.
 - a. We may be absolutely right in that argument. There may be a legitimate reason why a person hurt you. But when you pray, you are now focusing on that hatred. This in turns, blocks our love-relationship with God.
 - b. Peter talks about this principal as it relates to our married life.
 - i. "Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered." (1 Peter 3:7 NKJV)
 - c. If we have hatred in our heart, it gets our focus off of God and hinders our prayer life.

Verses 16-18: "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that it will not be obvious to men 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.

1. This section is a comment about fasting. The idea is not to fast to be seen by men. Jesus is even teaching to "make yourself look good" so no one knows you are fasting.
2. Fasting is simply giving up something to better focus on God. It is usually associated with the deprivation of food, but it can also be the deprivation of certain items (Reference: Daniel 10:3).

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Verses 16-18 (cont.)

1. Fasting is a way of saying "God is more important than my stomach right now. I want to give God priority over eating or whatever other activity is important to me at this moment."
2. Reasons for fasting include sorrow, repentance, corporate prayer (e.g., prayer for a nation) and seeking God's will for a major decision. Fasting can also be when you are so content in prayer, or reading your bible or in doing some service for God you simply forget about eating.

Verses 19-20: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

1. Most veteran Christians have heard sermons on the topic of "You can't take it with you".
 - a. I am here to tell you that is wrong. You can "take it with you".
 - b. The key is to "send it up ahead of time!" ☺ Again, Jesus is teaching on eternal rewards.
 - c. Jesus says in Verse 20 "store up for yourselves treasures in heaven". That is a command.
2. Jesus uses the illustrations of "moths, rust and thieves" to remind us about what can happen to our "stuff" here on earth.
 - a. In that culture, they didn't have bank accounts or stock certificates to store their wealth. Any "savings" were put in expensive clothes, grain, oils, etc. These were small commodity items that could be sold or bartered if other things were needed.
 - b. This verse is not a condemnation of owning things; it is a reminder on our perspective on things as compared to eternal rewards.

Verses 21: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

1. Verse 21 is a good summary verse on the idea of keeping God on the throne of your heart.
 - a. Read this verse carefully. It does not say where your heart is, there is your treasure.
 - b. It specifically says your heart will follow after where your treasure is.
2. Let me give you a prime example. Did Jesus "feel" like dying on the cross?
 - a. Did Jesus say, "You know, my heart tells me I need to do this, I just feel it is the right thing to go to the cross, so I'll do it?" No! Three times Jesus prayed not to go to the cross.
 - b. Jesus followed "his treasure" so to speak. The heart follows.
3. We need to be leery of "feelings". "Feelings" have their place. Often those feelings keep us alive as reminders of needs or dangers. Jesus is saying our motivation is what drives our behavior. The "feelings" should follow.

Verses 22-23: "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

1. One needs to read these verses with the following text in mind:
 - a. When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12, NIV)

Verse 24: "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

1. As a slave, you had to be loyal to only one master. You can't have two.
2. To read this verse in context Jesus is saying we have to make a choice. Either we serve God, or we serve ourselves. Money is a symbol of wanting things for ourselves.
 - a. Money in itself is not bad. It is the love of money that is condemned as the root cause of all sorts of evil. (See 1st Timothy 6:10)

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Verse 24: (cont.)

3. This verse can be read two ways:
 - a. The first is about eternal salvation. One has to make a choice in life about either following Jesus or focusing our efforts on our life here on earth.
 - b. The other view is another reminder of our moment-by-moment choice in life about having God on our "thrones" or having something else be our primary motives at that moment.
 - i. "Who I am glorifying at this moment, God, or myself"? You cannot do both.

Verses 25-27: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?"

1. The previous section was about totally giving of one self to others. While reading that section, one could think, "What about my needs? I still need to eat don't I? If I spend all of my time focusing on God and serving others, when do I stop to eat or shop for clothes?"
 - a. Verses 25-34 are Jesus' response to that thought. It is about perspective on our needs.
2. The key word here is "worry". Jesus is not talking about planning, just about worrying.
3. A bible teacher friend once told me, "Most of the things we worry about in life never happen".
4. "Worrying is taking responsibility upon yourselves that God never intended for you to have". (Source unknown, heard via Chuck Missler).

Verses 28-32: "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

1. This whole section of scripture is a good one to read over and over again in times of trouble. It is a reminder that God is still on the throne, even during difficult times.
2. Jesus uses Solomon as an example of wealth and glory. Solomon was known for his riches.
 - a. Jesus is saying that the lilies of the field, "were not dressed as well as Solomon".
 - b. I believe Jesus is referring to "spiritual clothes" being superior to expensive clothing.
 - c. "Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride (the church) has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Revelation 19:7-8, NIV)

Vs. 33: But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

1. This verse is a promise that if we seek God first in our lives, he will take care of all of our needs.
 - a. David said, "I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread." (Psalm 37:25, NIV)
2. God has put his reputation on the line here. He is making a promise that if we seek Him continually and regularly we will never have to worry about our needs.
3. Remember that "needs" are not desires. You will not get a fee new car if you seek God first.

Verse 34: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

1. Notice this verse starts with a "therefore". The "therefore" connects to God's promise that He will supply all of those needs if we seek God first in our life.