

Sermon Notes for 10/19:

Matthew 6: 1-8, 16-18—“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.

“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 others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 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.

“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 others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 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. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him ...

“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 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.

Matthew 5:46-47—If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?

Father James Alison: “Whether it is a matter of love or hate, reciprocity is the same in both cases: you are run by the social other, and you become a function of that social other. So, you love those who love you, and become more and more dependent on their approval, which means that you allow your behaviour to be shaped by their expectation, and find yourself automatically tied into having shared attitudes of contempt for those who they despise. But, says Jesus, there is nothing especially good about that.”

Proverbs 14:31—“The one who oppresses the poor, taunts or dishonors his maker, but the one who is gracious to the needy, honors him.”