

Pray for Righteousness and Integrity

Series: How to Pray for Your Pastor

Matthew 6:1-33

Introduction

(e.g.) I had a GREAT time last week in San Jose, ministering at Chip Ingram's church.

- Thank you to those who did pray for me ... it was refreshing :)

- For the 4th of July weekend, they had a theme of "Freedom" for their church ... and so they asked me to come and preach and meet with the their leaders (and justice ministry).
- After our weekend services ... we gave a challenge for people to start getting involved in their justice ministry (like our HBR) :)
 - And for the past few years, they had about 8 people in their justice ministry ...
 - After last weekend, more than 200 joined! :)
 - I met with them and asked what they did ... it was pretty cool.
 - (e.g.) For example I shared with them the importance of spiritual mapping and prayer walking ...
 - And then one guy said: I can help with the mapping (I oversee Google Maps for Google) ... (OK) ...
 - (e.g.) Then I shared: we need help partnering with police
 - Guy raises his hand: I can help with that ... I'm a police officer :P (OK) ...

- (e.g.) I also shared how our documentary on sex trafficking in Korea (Save My Seoul) should be finished by this fall ...

- And 2 guys were film producers ... one guy was connected to a TV show like COPS

- (e.g.) Another was a CEO of a retina scanning company ... (she was like, how about if I scan all the children in Cambodia so we can keep track of them and protect them from cross-border trafficking in SE Asia?)

- I was like ... GREAT idea ...

- It was incredible the kinds of people that were there (!)

BUT WHAT I WAS MOST BLESSED BY WAS THE REASON WHY PASTOR CHIP INGRAM AND EVERYONE CAME TO THE JUSTICE MINISTRY:

- They said: We finally realized it was time to DO what God said we must do in His Word!

- Another pastor said: I started reading the Bible ... and never noticed until now how often God spoke of justice for the oppressed ... IT'S ALL OVER THE BIBLE!

- “And I realized I need to start living this out!”
- THAT is integrity (when what we SAY ... and what we SAY WE BELIEVE ... matches how we LIVE!)
 - ... THAT is also seeking 1st His Kingdom ... and righteousness :)
- It was awesome to see :)

- It is something we ALL need to examine on a regular basis ... ARE WE LIVING OUT WHAT WE SAY WE BELIEVE?

- ARE WE LIVING A LIFE OF INTEGRITY AND RIGHTEOUSNESS?

- We are nearing the end of our series on “How to Pray for Your Pastor” ...
 - And we looked at the importance and the need to pray for protection ... and rest ... anointing ... and a yielded heart that is always surrendered to the Lord ... EFFECTIVENESS in ministry ...
 - And today ... we’ll look at the need to pray for righteousness and integrity

Turn with me in the your Bibles to Matthew 6 and let’s continue to grow as intercessors for our leaders.

- So why is it important to pray for righteousness and integrity for our pastors?

Because for one thing ...

Our actions matter to God

Matthew 6:33 ESV But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

- This is about a Kingdom lifestyle ...
- And in this Kingdom, what we do matters to God ...
 - And in our passage for today in Matthew 6, we see that Jesus ASSUMES that His disciples will live life in a certain way.

Matthew 6:2 ESV “Thus, when you give to the needy ... (this is how you should give)

Matthew 6:5 ESV “And when you pray ... (this is how you should pray)

Matthew 6:16 ESV “And when you fast ... (this is HOW I want you to fast)

- Notice He doesn't say "IF" you ever give or pray or fast ... this about this ...
 - There are certain things that ... IF YOU ARE A DISCIPLE ... you WILL DO these things.
 - Disciples PRAY ...
 - Disciples GIVE ...
 - Disciples FAST ...
 - Disciples MEDITATE on the Word ...
 - Disciples SHARE the Gospel to those who do not know Christ ...

- So there are certain actions that mark the life of a true follower of Jesus.
 - But obedience is NOT forced action ... but the FRUIT that comes through faith in Christ!
 - Romans 6:17 teaches us that through faith ... we are able to OBEY from the HEART!
 - Our outer actions change ... when the inner heart changes ... through faith in Christ!

- So we must PRAY that our pastors will LIVE A LIFE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND INTEGRITY so that OUR LIFE will match God's WORD!
 - This is a blind spot for MANY people because ... like James warns us ... if we just HEAR the Word without DOING it ... we deceive ourselves!
 - We often HEAR ... and AGREE ... and then think we're OK!
 - (e.g.) We HEAR and AGREE ... that we should exercise
 - (e.g.) We HEAR and AGREE ... that we should eat better ...
 - **So we think we're healthy!!! :P**

- (e.g.) We HEAR ... people need Jesus ... we must share our faith!

- We say: AMEN!

- (e.g.) We HEAR ... God has blessed us to be a blessing!

- We say: AMEN!

- So we begin to GET USED to the **disconnect** between what we BELIEVE and how we live!

- And that's a dangerous thing to used to ... because it begins to compromise our integrity!

- James 1:22 says: Do not merely listen to the Word and so DECEIVE yourselves ... DO WHAT IT SAYS

- So what we do is important to God.

- We are not **SAVED** by what we do ... but the **SAVED** ... will DO ... what God desires!

- Because what we do **DOES** matter to God.

- One danger of serving as a pastor or minister as a PROFESSION ... is that what we do becomes a JOB ... (instead of a lifestyle!)

FOR EXAMPLE:

(e.g.) One survey found that many pastors struggle to find time for personal prayer and QT ...

- The busyness of ministry has effected many people's personal walk with God
 - In this survey, 57% of pastors pray less than 20 minutes a day ...
 - 34% pray between 20 mins and an hour
 - And 9% pray an hour or more (this might of have been Koreans) :P

- And by country: Australian pastors prayed on average 23 mins a day
 - NZ 30 mins a day
 - Japanese 44 mins a day ...
 - Koreans ... 90 mins ...
 - US: Evangelical pastors averaged 17 mins ...

- So PRAY for righteousness and integrity in our inner being ... so that there WILL be righteousness in the deepest part of who we are.
 - Pray that we **WILL** be a people of prayer ...
 - ... that we **WILL** be a people of His Word ... who DO His will!

- Pray that what we STUDY and TEACH and PREACH would become a part of who we are! :)

Another reason this is important is because ...

Our attitude matters to God

- What we do is important (yes!) ... but **WHY** we do them is MORE important!
- Our actions are important ... but our attitude is even more important!

Matthew 6:1 ESV “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

- Jesus is WARNING here against wrong MOTIVES in our service to God!
 - Be careful of doing things with the MOTIVE of trying to please and impress people (with your spirituality!)

Matthew 6:2 ESV “Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

- The temptation to GIVE (and give a lot) also comes with it the temptation to MAKE SURE PEOPLE KNOW HOW MUCH WE GAVE ... so that they will be impressed with us!
 - (e.g.) I felt this a couple of years ago when Torch had its opening ceremony for their new building.
 - They had a donation wall, where people who gave to the school had their names on a wall ... and the more you gave ... the bigger the plaque!
 - We gave large amounts before ... (before they did this donation wall thing) ...

- And when I saw the names of other ministries who gave on BIG plaques ... I was like: “WHAT ABOUT US!?!?! WE GAVE SO MUCH BEFORE!!!”

- And then my heart felt convicted ... “why are you upset? WHY did you give to Torch?”
- Was it for this wall recognition?
- Or to bless the ministry of this school?

- Our motives matter greatly to God!

And Jesus also warns for prayer and fasting too:

(v. 5) “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

(v. 16) “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

- They do it to be SEEN BY OTHERS ...

- So praying is important ... but HOW you pray ... and WHY you pray is more important!
- Fasting is important ... but HOW you fast ... and WHY you fast (and even how you break your fast) ... is more important!
 - If you fast ... and all you do is think about food, research what you’re going to eat ... order pizza at midnight and have a countdown to the SECOND on when you can eat again ... not sure if that’s the kind of fasting God had in mind! :)

- I think Jesus picks these 3 as examples (praying, giving, fasting), because these are 3 things that we can EASILY get spiritually PRIDEFUL about doing!

- It's so easy to get prideful ... by letting people know how much we give, pray, or fast.

- Deut 6:5 says: "Love the Lord your God with all your HEART"

- So we are called to love and serve the Lord with our HEARTS ...
- It is the attitude of the HEART that God looks at!
 - People look at outer appearance, but God looks at the HEART!

- So Jesus gives this warning saying: BE CAREFUL!!!! (**GUARD YOUR HEART!!!!**)

Matthew 6:1 ESV "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

- Why does He give this warning?

- **Well for one thing, to protect our motives!**

- It's EASY to go through the motions ...

- (e.g.) *Prayer meeting "attendance" to the pastor*

- We HAVE to see the pastor ... otherwise ... what a waste that we came here so early!!! :P

- (e.g.) And also Sunday worship in our consumeristic generation makes us CONSUMERS who gather instead of SERVANTS who serve!
 - CAN YOU IMAGINE THE REVOLUTION THAT WOULD TAKE PLACE IN OUR CHURCH IF ALL OF US SAW OURSELVES AS HOSTS TO SERVE OTHERS ... INSTEAD OF GUESTS WAITING FOR PEOPLE TO SERVE US?
 - You see, as a result, we are constantly EVALUATING the service, the sermon, the songs ... instead of letting the Word EVALUATE our hearts!
 - So what is your HEART MOTIVE and ATTITUDE in worship!?!?!!!! THAT is crucial to monitor!

- So He says BE CAREFUL!!!

- And I believe He also gives this warning to protect us from the empty praise of people.

- The world will praise you one day ... curse you the next ... and then forget you after that ...
 - *(e.g.) For example ... the Korean World Cup Soccer team ...*
 - When they made the TEAM (You made the team? We love you!)
 - When they qualified to be IN the World Cup (We love you!!!!)
 - When they didn't win a game (We hate you!)
 - And in a few years (Hey! Who are you?)

THAT'S THE NATURE OF THE PRAISE OF PEOPLE (Fickle ... fleeting ... and empty)

- (e.g.) My generation LOVED MJ ... but many in this next generation won't even know who he is ...
- The praises of people are TEMPORARY and EMPTY. (**Don't live for it!**)
- And JESUS DOES NOT WANT US TO LIVE FOR SUCH EMPTY THINGS!

- But throughout this chapter, Jesus also gives another reason for this warning. He wants to PROTECT us from LOSING eternal rewards!

[2] "Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. [3] 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. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

- What Jesus is revealing here is what we can call the "Work-Compensation Theory", which simply means "you get paid from the people you work for"

- So if I work for Samsung, come pay day time, I don't got to LG for my pay check (I worked for Samsung)
- If I work for Nike ... I don't go to Reebok ...

- Spiritually, it's similar ...

- You see, sometimes we fast, or give, or evangelize ... and we MAKE SURE others find out.

- My favorite story of this is with my friend "Steve" in college.

(e.g.) Steve and fasting :)

- (e.g.) Steve ... fasting ... "R U OK?!?!?" "Yeah, I was just fasting for 4 DAYS ..." that's all ... WOW!!!! 4 days!!!!
- Suddenly got energy! :P

- You see, what you do is important ... but WHY you do it is MORE important.

- And the MOMENT we get that PEACE of being RECOGNIZED ...

- (OK ... someone knows)

- (OK ... it wasn't a waste) ...

- Jesus is saying: then don't expect anything from me ...

- Don't expect anything from my Father in heaven ...

- Because YOU GOT WHAT YOU WORKED FOR!!!!

- If you're doing it for the praise of people ... then that's all you're going to get.

SO JESUS SAYS: BE CAREFUL!!!!

- SO PRAY THIS FOR YOUR PASTORS AS WELL ... that our MOTIVES ... our heart's DESIRES will always be for the Lord!

Matthew 6:33 ESV But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

- Pray that we would reflect a life that seeks FIRST the Kingdom of God!

- Because by nature we are always seeking our OWN kingdom!

- And even for ministers ... that can become a huge temptation.

- (e.g.) It's strange that in our social media age ... there even exists a term called the "celebrity" pastor ...
 - Where people by the hundreds of thousands follow the John Piper's, the Mark Discoll's, and the Rick Warrens of the world.
 - And what we also see happening is that many YOUNG ministers suddenly have a desire to become famous like them ...

- So we need to PRAY for our pastors ... both young and old to seek FIRST HIS Kingdom ... and not our own.
 - PRAY for pastors to be a people ALWAYS consumed with a PASSION FOR HIS NAME AND HIS NAME ALONE!

 - Pray that we will NEVER do ministry in order to build a name for ourselves ... but that the name of JESUS would be cherished!

- May our MOTIVE always be for the GLORY and HONOR of Christ and Christ alone!
 - Because through Christ ... we are already accepted ... we are already made right! Through the perfect life and sacrifice of Jesus!
 - Instead of being SLAVES for the approval of others ... we are now SONS AND DAUGHTERS ... who will forever be accepted because of what Jesus has done!
 - THAT changes our motives and our attitudes ... as we serve our Savior.

So we pray for righteousness and integrity for our pastors ... because our actions matter ... and our attitude matters ... and there's one more reason we do this ... and it's because:

Our audience matters to God

- Your actions are important, yes.
- Your attitude is more important, yes ...
- And what is MOST important in our service to God ... is our audience ... WHO are you doing it for?
- Are you living for the audience of many? Or are you living for the Audience of One?
 - We must live for the Audience of One ... we must live our lives for the Lord!

Col 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with ALL your heart, as for the Lord and not for men, [24] knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

- We are serving the Lord ...

- And this is why Jesus is introducing the importance of this “secret” Christianity here.

Matthew 6:3 ESV 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. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Matthew 6:5 ESV “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. [6] But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

- So ESPECIALLY when no one else is there ...
 - How do you live?
 - How do you serve?
 - How do you worship?
 - How do you pray? **DO** you pray?

- (e.g.) Picking up garbage ... in the sanctuary ... “because God, I want to honor you and bless your people” ... THAT COUNTS!!!!
 - (e.g.) Giving that anonymous donation to that family in need ... THAT COUNTS!!!!

- You see, the test of true integrity is WHO YOU ARE WHEN NO ONE IS LOOKING!
 - THAT is our true character.

- Is your private passion, faithfulness, and devotion the same as your public one?
- Is your kindness on Sunday the same as it is on Monday?
 - If it’s different, Jesus is saying: BE CAREFUL!

- In the secret place ... in the private place ... when NO ONE is looking ...
 - When NO ONE is there to give you a pat on the back and say “Good Job!”
 - When you do for GOD ... then Jesus says: “GREAT is your reward in heaven!”

- It is NEVER in vain ... when it is done for the honor of HIS NAME!

Hebrews 6:10 tells us: God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.

- God will NEVER forget the labor of love you do ... for Him ... and for His people!

- Even if NO ONE else is there ... God is!

- Even if NO ONE else sees ... God sees!

- God will remember ... God will reward ... because God is always there! :)

- And we will either be humbled or honored ... depending on who we are in secret.

- So PRAY for your pastors ... that we would always live for the Audience of One!

- NOT caving into the pressures of people ... but for the glory of God and God alone!

Conclusion

- You know, during the Reformation ... a central cry of that movement was CORAM DEO, which means “in the presence of God” or more accurately “Before the FACE of God!”
 - It means: “to live one’s entire life in the presence of God, under the authority of God, to the glory of God”

- It is understanding and living in light of 2 Chron 16:9 that says:
2 Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.

- So when the eyes of the Lord are looking throughout the world ... may the eyes of our hearts make EYE contact with His!
 - And may we all grow to BE a people of righteousness and integrity!

Let’s pray ...

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