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SERIES: Matthew (The King, His Kingdom And Me)

TITLE: Program 10 – Righteous Rewards

FRIDAY

OPEN

I'm sitting among the ruins of an ancient site called Susita. It's a recent excavation. An earthquake hit and everything came tumbling down. O Beloved, there is a day when the things of this world are going to come tumbling down and only what you have done for your Father is going to last. We're going to talk about it today as we look at God's precepts for life.

PART ONE

We're continuing the Sermon on the Mount, that portion of the gospel of Matthew, in Matthew 5, 6 and 7, where Jesus is teaching about the importance of "righteousness." Why are we to be "righteous?" ["We're to be righteous because we are sons of our Father."] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:45a, b) And that's why He tells us in Matthew chapter 5 that we are to "...Love [our] enemies...." (Matthew 5:44) We are to "...pray for those who persecute [us] so that you may be....," Jesus says, "...sons of your

Father who is in Heaven....” (Matthew 5:44c-45) Remember, He has told us that we are to **“Let [our] light shine before men...that they [might] see [our] good works, and glorify [our] Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)** He brings Matthew 5 to a close, with this statement, **“Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48)** O Beloved, He’s talking about our character. He’s talking about our behavior. He’s talking about what we’re to be like so that we can be “blessed” of God. [“Blessed” because we’re pure in heart. “Blessed” because we’re peacemakers. “Blessed” because we are merciful. “Blessed” even when we are persecuted.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:8, 9, 10) Now, having said all of that, having taken the law and saying, [“This is what you’ve heard, but I say to you,”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:17-20, 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44) He’s not contradicting the law, but He’s fulfilling the law. He’s showing how the law is an issue, not of just externals, but it’s an issue of the heart. Now we come to Matthew chapter 6, and He’s going to change His tactics a little bit. He wants us to see something else. We’re to be “righteous.” We’re to be like our “Father.” But we are to **“beware...,”** chapter 6, verse 1, **“...of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them....”** Otherwise, **“...you have no reward with your Father who is in Heaven.” (Matthew 6:1)** You know? He’s in Heaven. He can see everything that’s going on down, right here, on this earth. I’m sitting among ruins, as I told you in the opening of the program. They’re the ruins of an ancient city called Susita. This city suffered an earthquake, and behind me pillars that have been toppled. Well Jesus, now, is about to topple some pillars. He’s about to topple some pillars that the Pharisees and the scribes have erected. They’re pillars of [practicing their righteousness before men to be seen of men.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 6:1a) As we look at Matthew chapter 6, you want to continue to mark the word “righteousness.” You want to continue to mark every reference to “Father.” As a matter of fact in Matthew chapter 6 you are going to see “your Father, your Father, your Father,” over and over

and over again, because we are to practice our “righteousness” before our “Father” rather than by men. So you’re also going to see a phrase, and that is, “...**You have no reward with your Father who is in Heaven.**”

(**Matthew 6:1**) [If you’re practicing your righteousness to be seen of men, then you’ve gotten your reward.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 6:1, 2) So He says in verse 2, “**So when you give to the poor, [don’t] sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues....**” He says, “**...and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men....**” (**Matthew 6:2**)

Literally, I know it sounds crazy, but they were sounding trumpets as they gave their money to the poor. And then everybody would notice, “Oh look at what the scribes and the Pharisees and the others are doing!” and they sound the trumpet and people come running. He says, they do it “**...so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you give to the poor, [don’t] let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.**” (**Matthew 6:2-3**) [Keep it so secret and so

before you and God that your left hand is doing something and your right hand doesn’t even know anything about it.] (PARAPHRASE, 6:3) “**...So that your giving will be in secret, and your Father....**” there it is again, “**...who sees what is done in secret will reward you.**” (**Matthew 6:4**) So

He talks about giving. Now, He’s going to move from the practice of giving, to the practice of praying. And He says, “**When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites [who] love to stand and pray in the synagogue....**” (**Matthew 6:5**)

Now, let’s just stop and talk about “hypocrite.” “Hypocrite” means to wear a mask. And in the days of the Roman Empire and when they would have their plays, the actors would come out and they’d put on a happy face, or they’d put on a sad face so the audience could get that low hung mouth or that big smiling mouth and they would be able to tell what mood the character--the actor--was in. Well, that’s hypocrisy. It’s changing. It’s putting on a mask. And He says, “**When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and**

on...street corners so that they may be seen by men....” And He goes on to say, **“...Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.”** (Matthew 6:5) Did you notice “Truly” again? He’s said it twice now, **“...Truly I say to you....”** (Matthew 6:5) Remember “Truly” is: “I am telling you the absolute truth.” And the absolute truth is this, that [if you do it, Beloved, if you pray to be heard or seen by men, if you give to be heard or seen by men, then you have your reward in full. You got it. You wanted to be seen by men. You’ve got it. There’s no more reward that is coming.]

(PARAPHRASE, Matthew 6:5) **“But you, when you pray...,”** you, Righteous One, **“...go into [the] inner room, close [the] door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”** (Matthew 6:6) Now, is He saying we can’t have corporate prayer in church? No, He’s not saying that. But He’s saying, [“Listen, it’s the intent of your heart.”] (PARAPHRASE, Luke 18:11-13) When you pray, why are you praying? Are you praying these long, lavish prayers in order to be heard by others? In order to impress them with your spirituality? If you are, go ahead, you’ve got your “reward.” But no “reward” from God. He says, **“And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. “So [you] do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”** (Matthew 6:7-8) [And yet we are to ask.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 7:7a) He says, **“Pray then, in this way....”** (Matthew 6:9) And He’s going to give us what we call the Lord’s prayer. It’s really our prayer. But He’s telling us how to pray. Now, in Luke, they say **“...Lord, teach us to pray....”** (Luke 11:1) And He gives them, basically, the same thing. And what He’s doing is, He is giving index sentences. He’s giving them a way to pray that covers every aspect of prayer. Now, I’ve written a book and it’s called “Lord, Teach Me to Pray.” And it deals with this in detail. And as I told you earlier, I’ve done a course on the Sermon on the Mount and we go into the Sermon on the

Mount in detail. But since I'm teaching Matthew, I'm not going to go into these details because you can study them on your own. Well, what is the prayer? It begins with, **"...Our Father, [who] art in Heaven..." (Matthew 6:9, KJV)** It acknowledges who God is, and it acknowledges where God is, and it acknowledges His right to be hallowed. **"...Hallowed be Thy Name." (Matthew 6:9, KJV)** Prayer begins in worship. It begins in acknowledging God for who He is. Then, it is allegiance to His kingdom. **"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." (Matthew 6:10)** It's saying, ["God, I want Your kingdom to come. And I want Your will to be done."] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 6:10) Now, remember, Jesus has come saying **"Repent...the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:2)** But the "kingdom" that He's talking about right now is His ultimate rule on the earth, when God's will, will be done. [When the nations will give obedience to the Lord, and all men will bow and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.] (PARAPHRASE Daniel 7:14, Philippians 2:11) But what we're saying is, ["I want Your kingdom to come, I want your will to be done on earth as it is in Heaven."] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 6:10) And if I say that, what I'm saying to God right now is, ["I will to do Your will. I have submitted myself to You."] (PARAPHRASE Luke 22:42) Have you done that, Beloved? Do you know who He is? Have you worshiped Him for Who He is? Have you given your allegiance to Him? Have you submitted to Him and said, "All I want is Your will." O Precious One, if you understood what it's going to be like when [He comes in His glory and His reward is with Him] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 40:10, Isaiah 62:11) you would want and I would want nothing else. O Father, keep us from looking at the world through the eyes of the world, let us look at the world through Your eyes. He goes on to say, **"Give us this day our daily bread." (Matthew 6:11)** Give us what we need today. You know, that's all you need is today's daily bread. Because He's promised to supply your needs. When they gathered manna, they gathered just enough for that day. Why? Because God was going to supply

what they needed for the next day. And then He says, **“And forgive us our debts, as we [have also] forgiven our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)** [“Forgive my debts to the degree that I have forgiven those who owe me something. I owe You, God, absolute righteousness. Others owe me things. As I forgive those who owe me a debt, I’m asking You to that same degree to forgive me.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 6:12) And then He says, **“...Do not lead us into temptation....” (Matthew 6:13a)** There again you see that poverty of spirit. You see that total dependence on God. “[Lead us not] **...into temptation, but deliver us from evil....” (6:13a)** Another way that that could be translated is, [“Deliver us from the evil one.”] (PARAPHRASE, 6:13a) What it’s showing is, [“I know God. That my deliverance comes from You. I know my vulnerability, I know that my flesh is weak. And I’m telling You that I don’t want to be led into temptation, but I want You to deliver me from evil.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 6:13) Why this prayer? We’ll talk about it in just a minute.

PART TWO

As I told you I’m in Susita. Susita was the city and the Decapolis. It’s on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. And the ruins that I’m walking among came from an earthquake. It was in the 700’s A.D. And as I stand among these ruins, I want you to catch an image in your mind, Beloved. An image of what happens when you and I live only a “righteousness” to be seen by men. It will all come tumbling down. And this is why Jesus said that [their righteousness was to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees]. (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:20) And yet, as He told them that, He said, “[Now, I want you to] **beware of practicing your righteousness before men, to be [seen of men]....” (Matthew 6:1a)** This is the “righteousness” that was of the scribes and Pharisees. It was an external “righteousness.” It was seen in their giving. It was seen in their praying. And now He’s going to address the fact that it was seen in their fasting. He says in verse 16,

“Whenever you fast....” which implies that you and I are going to fast.
(6:16) “Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will noticed by men when [they’re] fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.” (Matthew 6:16) Here they are, let’s say, in the marketplace. They have not made themselves neat and tidy. They have, maybe, ashes on their forehead because as they walked through the marketplace they want this person and that person to know that they are fasting. Have you ever gone on a fast? And how many people knew? And why did you tell them? Why did you tell them that you were fasting? Because fasting is before God. **“Fasting”** is going without food in order that you might get a hold of God, not that you might be noticed by men. He says, [“Truly I say to you, if they do it to be noticed by men.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 6:16) **“...Truly I say to you they have their reward in full.” (Matthew 6:16) “But you, when you fast, anoint your head...wash your face, so that your fasting will not be noticed by men....” (Matthew 6:17-18)** [“I want you to fast in such a way that no one will know that you are fasting.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 6:17-18) And then He says, **“...But by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:18)** And then as I stand in these ruins, these were marvelous, marvelous Roman ruins. This marble of this pillar was carried all the way from the land of Egypt. And I walked all the way up to this Tel. And it’s very, very high. This was the splendor that they were living in. This was not a city that was governed by any of the Herods, it was an independent city here in the Decapolis. And it was a beautiful city. It was full of treasures. And Jesus says, **“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in [and] steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew**

6:19-21) If your treasure was in the magnificence of the city, or the magnificence of your home, and your home goes down, then your heart goes down also. He says, **“...If your eye is bad, your...body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is [in] darkness, how great is the darkness!” (Matthew 6:23)** Listen carefully, very carefully, because we’re so materialistic even in the church. **“No one can serve two masters. For [he will either] hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to [the] one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”**

(Matthew 6:24) Now, the Aramaic word there is “mamona,” and it’s a symbol of money. It’s a symbol of the things that money can buy. I would underline it in my Bible. I would highlight it in some way. And I would remember this, **“...You cannot serve God and wealth.” (Matthew 6:24d)**

There’s nothing wrong with being rich, but there’s everything wrong with serving those riches. When God makes you rich, He gives you money to do things with so that you might further the kingdom of God. So look at where you spend your money? Where do you spend the majority of your money, Beloved? He says, **“For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about**

your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; or for your body, as to what you will put on....” (Matthew 6:25) Look! When you and I have our focus on the things of life, those things can come tumbling down. He says, **“...Do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat...what you will drink, nor for your body as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food? And the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns.**

...Yet your heavenly Father feeds them....” (Matthew 6:25-26) He’s going to feed you, and He feeds the birds. **“...Are you not worth much more than they?” (6:26)** Aren’t you worth more than those birds? **“And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to [your] life?”**

(Matthew 6:27) You can’t add a single minute to your life because God is in control of how long you live. And He says, **“And why are you worried**

about clothing...? Observe...the lilies of the field [how they] grow, they do not toil nor...spin. Yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one [like] these.” (Matthew 6:28-29) He says, “...If God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you?” (Matthew 6:30) And then once again, He says “...You of little faith! Do not worry then, saying ‘What [shall] we eat?’ ...‘What [shall] we drink?’ [with] ‘What [shall] we wear for clothing?’ For the Gentiles seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.” (Matthew 6:30-32) He’s your heavenly Father, He’s your Abba. He’s going to provide for you. “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (6:33) What is He saying? He’s saying you and I have only two things to do: (1) “Seek His kingdom;” (2) “Seek His righteousness.” He’s your heavenly Father. If he’s your heavenly Father, Precious One, [“all these things are going to be added to you.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 6:33) Your heavenly Father is God, and He is able to provide all your needs. So what’s the bottom line? “So don’t worry about tomorrow...tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” (Matthew 6:34) So do not worry. If you’re pursuing God, if God is your goal, then, Precious One, you don’t have to worry about a thing. You don’t have to worry about what you are going to eat. You don’t have to worry about what you’re going to put on. You don’t have to worry about shelter. You don’t have to worry about a thing, because you belong to your heavenly Father. He is going to provide for you. So His message today is examine everything you do and ask yourself, “Am I doing it for me, or for Him? My “kingdom,” or His? My “righteousness,” or His “righteousness?” If it’s for Him, you’ve got His “blessing” all the way.