

Let's Visit

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How Tight Is Your Halo ?

I remember telling a young preacher one time to always remember that a sermon does not have to be eternal to be immortal. I am not a fan of long sermons. Jesus didn't preach long sermons. He did however say what needed to be said.

Have you ever been around folks who do good things, and yet they want to make sure that others know about the good things that they did? You see, for some people it's all about image, about looking good. To the Jew there were three great cardinal works of religion. They were charity, prayer and fasting. Jesus did not have a problem with these things. However, in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter 6 and verses 1 through 18 we find that He did have a problem with people performing those acts with the wrong motive.

A person may give to charity, not to really help the person in need, but to demonstrate their own generosity so they can receive praise for what they have done. An individual can pray in such a way that their prayer is not really addressed to God but to man. Someone may fast, not really for the good of their own soul but simply to show off their self-disciplined character.

What do you say when someone has their religion or piety on display? We say they are wearing their halo too tight! When you halo is too tight all kinds of complications set in. Wear a hat too tight and you get a headache. Wear your halo too tight, and you give others a headache. You run them off and make Christianity distasteful.

Advertising is a good thing in the retail business. Yet, there are some things that advertising kills. One is humility. Advertise it and it becomes pride. Humility is a gift that at the moment you realize you have it, it's gone. Advertising also kills spirituality.

Advertise it and it becomes hypocrisy. In the passage we cited a moment ago, Jesus speaks out against wearing your halo too tight. He warns us we are to avoid any demonstration of superior piety.

When we do good deeds for attention, our halo is too tight. Did those folks Jesus referenced really go around blowing a trumpet? I think not. However, Jesus is telling us when we do something good, we are not to go around tooting our own horn. If we receive the applause of men we have our reward. When things are done with the wrong motive, it is like God turns his back and does not give notice to our good deed.

Jesus continues by telling his audience they are not to pray to impress others, not to pray like the hypocrites do. Our prayer is to be a sincere matter between us and God. For Jesus, prayer was personal, private communication with God. He told the disciples to pray in private. He said that God would see and reward their prayers. Jesus is not here condemning all public prayer. It is not wrong to pray in public. It is however wrong to pray in public if we are not in the habit of praying in private.

Jesus also warns that the halo is too tight when we fast to appear spiritual. Like charity and prayer, fasting must come from the right motive. If it doesn't, it loses its value. The Jewish fasting customs were pretty simple. It was mandatory that

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In Search Of The Lord's Way



Tune in to this Television Ministry
KSLA 12 - Shreveport - 7:30 a.m. Sunday
DISH channel 239 - 6:00 a.m. Sunday
DIRECT TV channel 307 - 6:00 a.m. Sunday

Gathered Here and There



Today's Sermon

"God Demands Obedience"

Our text comes from I Samuel 15:22-23. This passage describes an event in the life of King Saul and God's Man, Samuel.

FOR THE PANTRY....

Cake Mix

How Tight Is Your Halo? – Continued from page 1

you fasted once a year on the Day of Atonement from morning until dark. Other than that it was up to the individual when they fasted.

Many of the Pharisees fasted twice a week on Mondays and Thursdays. Those two days also happen to be the major Jewish market days. There would be farmers, merchants and shoppers everywhere. On those days they would have a bigger audience. There would be more folks to see and admire their piety.

The hypocrite would walk in the crowd calling attention to himself by not having his hair kept clean, wearing torn clothes, putting dirt and ashes on his face and some would even use makeup to look pale or sickly. The reward they wanted was recognition by men. That reward was the only reward they received in full according to Jesus.

Jesus said that when we fast, we are to comb our hair, wash our faces, and put on clean clothes. Our fasting is to be between us and God. We should do everything to make ourselves look normal and not attract attention to ourselves.

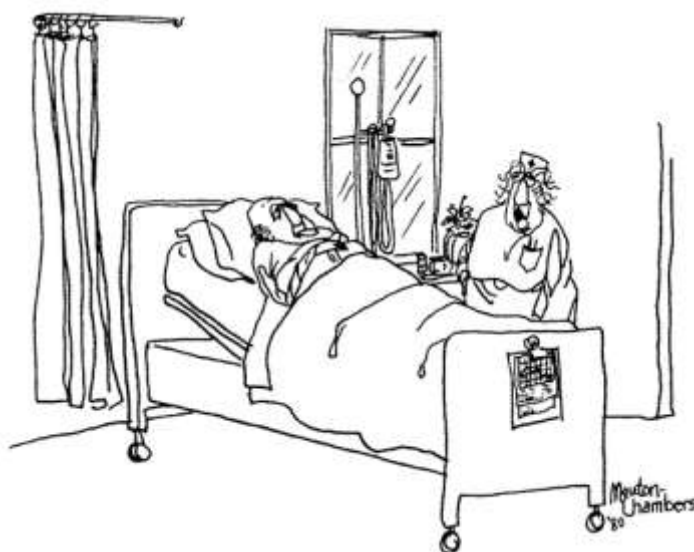
Obviously most of us are not accustomed to fasting. Jesus' point in this whole part of the sermon is that the good things we do are to be done

for the eyes of God and for his glory and not for our own glory and the "attaboys" of men.

No matter what it is that we do. Preach, teach, sing, pray, fast, give to others or do good works. Jesus is telling us it must be done with a pure heart and the right motives for the glory of God.

tp

On The Lighter Side.....



Good news preacher! The men had a business meeting and voted 4 - 3 to pray for your recovery!

Ponder these thoughts. . . .

A true love for humanity will save us from becoming pessimists.

The size of your troubles usually depends on whether they are coming or going.

Did you hear about the man who worried so much and was so booked up on worries that he told a friend that if anything happened today, it would be two weeks before he could worry about it!

There are many individuals who throw their tongue into high gear and overdrive long before they get their brain started!

Miscellaneous



MARK YOUR CALENDAR – NEXT SUNDAY

December 6, 2020 we will be having a covered dish luncheon and celebrating birthdays and anniversaries for December, January and February. Make your plans to be here!

Special Announcement

Remember, that even though we are not requiring the wearing of masks in our assembly, we do still want to do everything we can to be safe both for ourselves and for others. We would therefore ask that we all remain aware of social distancing and being respectful of other's personal space.

-thank you

How Would We Feel. . . .

If God gave us the same amount of time and attention that we devote to Him?

If God put as many things ahead of us as we put ahead of Him?

If God offered as many excuses as we do? And if the excuses were no more justifiable than ours?

If God's promises were no more certain than our own?

If God withheld his blessings from us as we withhold our offering from Him?

If God loved himself as much as we love ourselves and gave as little thought to us as we give to Him?

Think on these things again and again!

-Just A Moment



Those To Remember In Prayer

Cody Butler (*Debra Pate's grandson*) is recovering from surgery he had this past Wednesday.

Hudson Perkins was released from Children's Medical Center in Dallas on Saturday.

THOSE WITH ONGOING NEEDS:

Roxie Bostick (back issues); **Gene Bradshaw** (Pending surgery); **Wayne Sims** (cancer); **Cody Butler** (Debra Pate's grandson) **Gracie Elam** (2 month old baby born with heart defect) **Lamar McCormick** (friend of Sarah Fletcher, multiple health issues) **Pat Tate** (Jana O'Brien's mother, broken hip); **Myrtle Turner** (Norma Perkins' mother, broken arm) **Charles Williams** (Janice Williams brother-in-law, COVID 19)

THOSE IN THE MILITARY AND FOREIGN SERVICE :

Amanda Bradshaw, Andrew Bradshaw, Leland Bradshaw, Lucas Tate

If you want someone added to the prayer list, please fill out a card and put it in the offering plate.

Love Is Beautiful

Love is the most beautiful thing in all the world. Love lives not for itself, but always for others. It must find its deepest expression in sacrificial living. For "love that is hoarded, moulds at last." It must be kept pure and strong and active to make human life worthwhile.

The sacredness of love must never be forgotten. Life without love becomes lonely and aimless. But life with love takes on new meaning. And only as we have a true understanding of God's love for man will we be able to appreciate the importance of love in the home. The foundation of the home is based on religion and love.

It becomes a religious obligation that we shall keep the altar fires of love burning brightly. When we are tempted to let the fire die, let us remember these words: "Being true means doing nothing that would bring grief and heartaches to the other party. It means being faithful to the other person's wishes and expectancy. It means being loyal to your highest ideals of what a home should be and can be when you are united."

Love makes faithfulness a pleasure.

-borrowed



Across The Preacher's Desk

The imagery that David presents for us in Psalm 23 is one of abundance. In writing of the gracious provisions of God as our Shepherd, he writes, "my cup runneth over". Have you ever done that? Have you ever filled a cup to overflowing where it ran over the sides of the cup into the saucer or on to the table? Can you actually picture a more adequate description of the abundant blessings that we enjoy as the children of God?

This is the season of the year that we set aside as "Thanksgiving". Yet, why do we need a special time to be thankful for all that God has blessed us with? Oftentimes we are like the child on Christmas morning, surrounded by an abundance of presents who looks up plaintively and asks "is this all"? Like spoiled children, we are often prone to take God's lavish provisions for granted or, worse, to grumble when something is not to our liking.

We need to pause and reflect and understand that every good thing we enjoy in this life is a gracious gift from God. We should thank God daily for our food, our clothing and our shelter. We should express our gratitude for all the material provisions of this life he has given to us. Yet, we must realize that the greatest gift that God has given to us is His Son, who came to this earth and went to the cross to save our souls. Take the time to thank God for his bountiful material provisions, and also to thank Him for the gift of Jesus. Not just at "Thanksgiving" but every hour of every day.

it's something to think about. . . .tbp

**Great Churches are built with
Commitment!**