

Dwelling in the Word

Prayerfully read Matt 6:1-18 and ask: 1) What words, phrases, or images stood out to you? 2) What does this say about what God desires to accomplish in you? 3) How could you respond to what God says in this passage?

Beginning the Conversation

1. Witty Sandle introduced her sermon by having us listen to a piece of music titled, “Mirrors in the Mirror,” and asked us to reflect on the following questions: What did this music stir in you? What images were evoked? How did it make you feel? How did you respond to this practice?
2. Witty commented how Jesus’ words towards the “hypocrites” were intended to “unearth” the state of their inner selves; he is pointing out their idols. How do you hear Jesus’ words? What do they “unearth” in you?

Digging Deeper

1. Jesus did not reject the ritual pietistic practices outlined in Matt 6:1-18 (indeed, he assumed his listeners would practice them by the repetition of the “when you...” to introduce each of them), but called for a return to their intent. What do you think is their intent? What purpose do they have?
2. Jesus addresses the intent of giving in 6:1-4. What are some practical ways we can practice generous giving today that would be in line with Jesus teaching in this passage?
3. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, Jesus responded by providing the so-called “Lord’s Prayer” in 7:9-13. Read the prayer prayerfully a few times. What kind of people does the prayer invite us to be?
4. Fasting is perhaps one of the more misunderstood and neglected spiritual practices. Have you ever fasted? Reread 6:16-18 (and perhaps also 9:14-17). What is the purpose and practice of fasting? Discuss.
5. In this passage Jesus calls out the “hypocrites” whose outward piety has become just for show. We find it very easy to identify other people or institutions as hypocritical, while neglecting to realize our own conflicted motivation and whys (e.g., Witty’s examples of the “them lot, over there”; see the teaching on not judging others in 7:1-5). Do you ever find yourself “playing to the wrong audience”?

Living it Out

1. Witty asked two questions at the beginning and end of her message. Take time with your group, or during the week ahead to answer these questions: “To what or to whom do you need to return?” And, “What are you being invited to release?”
2. Witty described mission statements as a proclamation of identity. It declares, “this is who we are, this is what we care about, this is what we do”. If you were to write out a mission statement for your life, what would it be? What would it show about your principles and intent? What is one thing you could do this week to live more fully into that mission statement?

RETURN

Matthew 6:1-18



- To what or to whom do you need to return?
- What are you being invited to release?



- Alms-giving (giving to the needy)
- Prayer
- Fasting

“When you give to the needy...” (v.2)

“When you pray...” (v.5)

“When you fast...” (v.16)



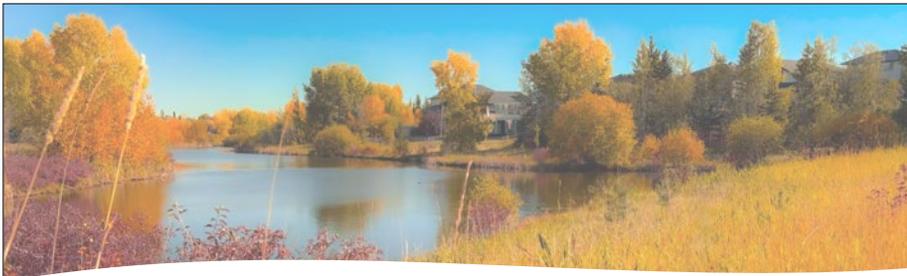
Hypocrites Mask wearers

- "Don't give like the pretenders do..."
- "Don't pray like the pretenders do..."
- "Don't fast like the pretenders do..."
- "Don't put on a façade."



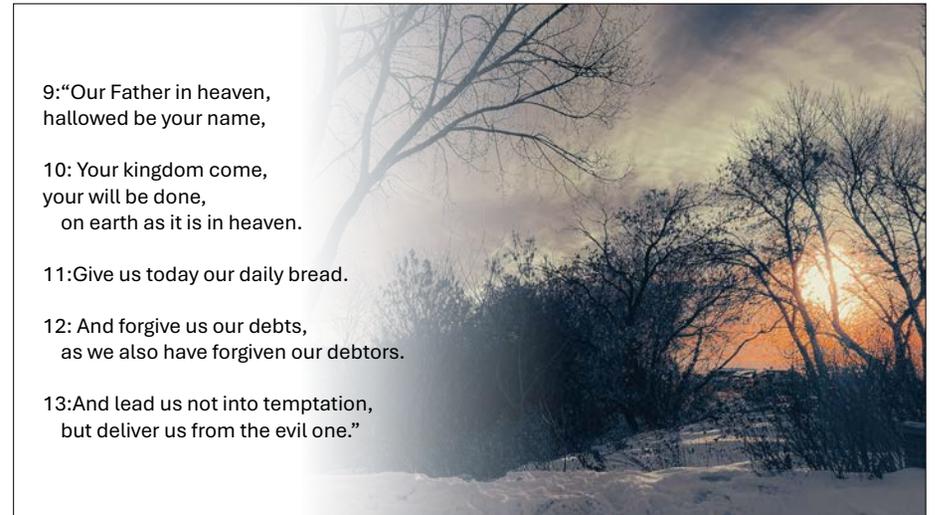
RETURN

- "Are you practicing your righteousness before other people because you want to be seen by them?" (v. 6)
- "Are you giving to the needy because you want to be praised by others..." (v. 2)
- "Are you praying in such a way that others will be impressed?." (v. 5)
- "When you fast, do it in such a way that no-one will know." (v.17)



Mission Statement

- This is who we are
- This is what we care about
- This is what we do



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

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

11:Give us today our daily bread.

12: And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

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

- To what or to whom do you need to return?
- What are you being invited to release?

