



Sermon on the Mount  
*Alms & Charity*



## Alms & Charity

Welcome to Jesus Time where we spend time with Jesus in His time and culture.

Jesus continues with His “Sermon upon the Mount.”

✝ 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.

Matthew 6:1 ESV

Here Jesus is issuing an unspoken stipulation a moral qualification as for us being similarly Christlike. When Jesus says as we give charitably or do good acts & deeds, we are to do so with pure motivation and without any ostentation. It is also a forgone conclusion of Christ that those in Him will be charitable.

While “Ostentation” is a big word that simply means someone is putting on a pretentious display more for gaining attention rather than for whatever the reason may be for this act of charity.

Of course there are literally countless ways people will put themselves on display just to impress others. Jesus knows this, and He warns us in advance that our acts of kindness are to be truly from the heart.

Now within a 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish setting by putting the word “Practicing” as in the doing of our righteousness; this means our kind deeds or charitable giving.

While likewise practicing “Righteousness” is doing & being right for and before GOD in all that we do.

The words of our Lord that Matthew records here within the original Greek are “merciful deeds.”

Word number # 1654 in the Strongs Concordance which means:

“Compassion toward the poor or for those in need being alms of charity or deeds.”

As in being charitable & merciful.

Alms means the giving of ones funds, food, or time. Even from ones possessions or helping with labor. Alms were and still are an exceedingly important feature of Jewish piety.

The Apocrypha book Tobit 12:8-9 exemplifies this sentiment when it says: “Good is prayer with fasting and alms and righteousness, for alms rescues from death and will cleanse from all sin.”

For the Jews still do believe that by heritage and works with deeds such as charitable Alms earn salvation.

When Jesus says that those seeking attention for their charity such as these have already received their reward- this being the attention they craved. Jesus said to be seen and noted as merciful was their intended motivation and as such they have been already paid in full.

No further Heavenly reward will remain in store for this seemingly wonderful deed because it was given for selfish recognition and not for another in need.

This entire lesson demonstrates that being Jewish or piously religious of any creed, that no matter our works or deeds that are selfishly conceived will not garner Salvation as in saving anyone!

Yet so very many insist and persist in the humanistic belief they can do enough, be good enough, or know enough to get into Heaven. Remember the Pharisee’s thought taught and believed GOD actually owed them Paradise.

✝ For we all have become like one who is [ceremonially] unclean [like a leper], And all our deeds of righteousness are like filthy rags; (we wear)  
We all wither and decay like a leaf, (because of our sin)

And our wickedness [our sin, our injustice, our wrongdoing], like the wind, takes us away [carrying us far from God’s favor, toward destruction].

Isaiah 64:6 AMP

Continuing

✝ 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. Matthew 6:2 NIV

Yes, in Jesus Time in the local Synagogues or within the Temple of Jerusalem, in addition to all of the required taxes and tithes were various voluntary alms and when someone made a large charitable donation actual Trumpets were sounded aloud either in a Synagogues solemn service or amongst Jerusalem's thronging crowds. All to garner attention unto the giver.

Today we think of a "Hypocrite" as someone who does not practice what they preach.

This is usually by someone who condemns the behavior of another publicly while privately they themselves act in like manor.

In Jesus Time a hypocrite was actually the profession name of a Greek actor.

Of course the actors wore different stage masks with costumes to portray different people.

Thusly calling someone a hypocrite in first century Israel meant that someone was acting falsely as in hiding their true intentions & in this case being charitable in order to gain attention and affection.

Jesus concludes His remarks upon Charity & Alms giving:

✝ But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Matthew 6:3-4 RSV

Now for some good news; there actual was a "Treasury of silence" in the Temple for anonymous giving for the poor children of Israel.

Meaning those aggrieved by the oft displayed Spiritual gaudiness of the Pharisees could actually give to the orphaned or poor children of Israel secretly as it was supposed to be.

The Apostle Paul describes for us just when our life's work is refined in Heaven at what is known as our "Bema" rewards Judgement by Jesus. Every believer will have a life review by which what we thought, said, or did that is Christlike will be rewarded. Everything selfish, apathetic, or complacent will be exposed & discarded as such. Our Salvation is never in question only our loss or gain of Heavenly reward is in question. Salvation is free for us by Grace of Faith but rewards are earned.

✝ For no one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, <sup>13</sup> each one's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each one's work. <sup>14</sup> If anyone's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet only so as through fire. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:11-15 NASB

The "Day" the Apostle Paul mentions here the Day of the Lord of Christ Jesus, just prior to when He returns to Earth & restores everything in preparation for "Thy Kingdom Come."

Gold, Silver, and Precious stones are our gold Salvation, (Faith) then what we do for others to help them gain their Salvation, (silver) as well as our charity & deeds as in our (Jewels) of Alms giving.

We are rewarded for these. Likewise we suffer loss (of reward) when our motivations are selfish ambition, need for attention, or thirst for power or gain these burn up all of our good intentions.