

Lenten Devotional Reflection
26th February, 2020 (Ash Wednesday)

Scripture: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

¹“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.⁵“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever 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.

¹⁶“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Reflection

Give alms (verse 2), pray (verse 5) and fast (verse 16) are the three pillars of Jews’ piety practice. However, at the time of Jesus, these piety practices had become a means of people such as Pharisees and lawyers to gain respect from others or gain higher political position. This has become a barrier between man and God.

Thus, Jesus’ teaching of “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth” tells us to do charity works for God. Only by doing wholeheartedly for God can we truly “love your neighbour as yourself”.

Meditation

1. What are you thinking when doing charity works?
2. What do you expect to get?
3. What does God expects us to get?

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