

Friday: *Not an Option*

Read: Matthew 6:2² “Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.

Reflect:

First of all we should notice a four letter word in verse 2 – “when”. Jesus doesn’t give us an option when it comes to helping the needy; He says **when** you do it.

Secondly, we should notice that we should not serve others with the expectation (or want) to be noticed for it. I trust that was not our intent on Sunday the 14th when we delivered groceries to those in need. We don’t want people to know how great we are – we want them to come to know how Awesome God is!

Thirdly, we should notice the hyperbole (overstatements for a purpose) in this passage. No one carried around actual trumpets and blew them when giving money to the poor. If anything the money receptacles may have been shaped like a trumpet. Fourthly, we can be concerned about other’s opinions about us (which are helpful to know because maybe we need to change something) or God’s – His ultimately counts.

Pray: Pray for Prairie View Christian Camp; another mission New Life supports. Pray for Bob Griffin and Larry Hayes – elders of New Life. Ask God to bring about change in you to be a more generous person – ask that New Life be a more generous congregation. Continue to pray for protection from sin and strength during times of testing.

Respond:

Have you been praying for the family you helped with groceries on the 14th?

Do you struggle with being generous towards others? Why? Do you have “bootstrap” mentality?

Have you ever been truly needy? Were your needs met or left unheeded? What impact did that have on you?

Saturday: *Glorifying Because of “Good Works”*

Read: 1 Peter 2:11-12¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Reflect:

After reminding his readers about their privileged status (2:9-10) Peter basically says, ‘but don’t forget that you’re here only a short time – your ultimate allegiance is to the King’. Isn’t it just like us to take a truth of our faith (e.g., grace) and distort it (i.e., not responding appropriately to it)?

Due to our privileged status we have an immense responsibility. Unfortunately, we seem prone to thinking our ‘thoughts,’ ‘feelings,’ and ‘inner desires’ are uncontrollable (e.g., that’s just the way I am). Yet if that was true, would Peter command us to “abstain” from harmful ones? I don’t think so (nor does the Bible e.g., Jas4:1,7-12).

A proper perspective of God can be further gained by better understanding the end of verse 12. It seems many take this to mean, “Even those pagans will glorify God one day... **whether they want to or not!**” Is that a renewed mind? I don’t think so... In fact, it sounds like a spiteful and vengeful spirit to me (contra 1Pet2:23). We are to do “good works” (cf. Thur-Fri) so that others gain a better perspective of God; then when the Holy Spirit works in their life...they too can enter into a covenant relationship with God.

Pray: Pray for the National Missionary Convention; a mission New Life supports. Pray for Ed Asbury, Keith Krause, and Mike Haag – deacons at New Life. Pray those the Holy Spirit is prompting to come to New Life tomorrow will be obedient and come. Pray our worship service tomorrow will be pleasing to God.

Respond:

How have you responded to grace today? How will you tomorrow?

Read and ponder these examples of God’s visitation (Gen50:24-25; Exod13:19; Lk7:16; 19:41-44).

What “good work” have you done this past week?

Our Role in “Glorifying God”

June 21 - 27

I cannot help but think that the overwhelming majority of those who are not Christians – or claim to not believe in God – believe that way based on a faulty view of God.

After all, who would not want to commit their life to service out of thanks to a wonderful God who created this beautiful world, cares for all people – because everyone is made in His image, has graciously made Himself known to us through His word, and sacrificed His own Son for our salvation? (On top of all of that, He believes in us!)

Yet it seems when people reject God it is because something bad happened to them or some “Christians” mistreated them. Others can’t understand how a loving God lets all the injustice in the world continue to happen day after day after day...

While those reasons have some merit, I fear for those people – I truly do. I fear for them because the first chapter of Romans indicates that when people don’t give God the glory He deserves (Rom1:21), something within them changes. While thinking they have it all figured out...what is really happening is they’re shutting “The Light” out of their hearts and minds. If that persists for too long they will become so hostile to God and so engrossed in their own way of thinking and sin – that nothing can bring them out of it... That is scary. It’s also heartbreaking...

Fortunately we can do something about it. Realistically we have no choice (well, we do – but that gets us off on a different area). We can, and should, live our lives in such a way that people’s perspective of God changes. This means those who already are Christians are drawn deeper into a relationship with Him and serve Him more. It means those who are not Christians rethink their beliefs because obviously we’re different. They may still be hesitant about other “Christians” – but we can stand out as different.

The Bible shows God is “glorified” because events happen. The word for “glorified” is often translated as *praised*, or *honored*, and yes *glorified* in our English Bibles. Quite often the concept is that something has happened that has either **a**) enhanced (in a positive way) or **b**) changed (in a positive way) one’s view of God.

- Matthew 9:8 – Jesus healed a man and people glorified God.
- Matthew 15:31 – Jesus performed many miracles and people glorified God.

Well, I haven’t done any miracles like those. But fortunately the Bible shows us we can do other things so that God is glorified.

- Matthew 5:16 – perform “good works”.
- 1 Corinthians 6:20 – by how we live our lives.
- 2 Corinthians 9:13 – by how we give our money to help others.
- Galatians 1:24 – a changed life.
- 1 Peter 2:12 – by our “good works”.

Yep, we can do a great amount in order to keep people from going down the path Paul described in the first chapter of Romans. That is why “Glorifying God” is a core value of New Life – if we don’t do this...we’re not a church.

Monday: One Word – Two Meanings...

Read: John 17:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you,

Reflect:
We all know that words can have more than one meaning. E.g., “When Jim *hit* Bill it was a *hit* with Barbara.” OK, so maybe violence isn’t a good example to think of during a portion of your time with God today – but you’ll get over it. The first *hit* was a physical blow; the second was a *sense of satisfaction*, or *approval*.

When Jesus prays for the Father to “glorify Your Son” Jesus is talking about being caused to have splendid greatness – to be clothed in splendor – being caused to be seen as great. Yet Jesus didn’t desire this for His own benefit.

Jesus desired the Father to “glorify” Him so that “the Son may glorify” the Father. The type of glory Jesus spoke of concerning the Father is that people would praise, or honor God. This would happen because one’s opinion has been positively influenced about God. If I were to give you a check for \$1,000,000 – chances are good (if the check was legit) your opinion of me being a generous person would increase. You might even tell others about what I’d done for you...

Respond:
Is the glory of God a concern to you? In what ways?

Do you know what Jesus was speaking of when He prayed for God to *glorify* Him? (cf. Jn7:39; Jn12:23-26).

What events have positively influenced your opinion of God? Why?

Would you tell others if I gave you that check?

Pray: Pray for the CEA; a Kansas church planting organization New Life supports. Thank God for the privilege of worshipping Him yesterday. Thank God for four specific ways He has acted in your life this past week. Pray for the Youth Group as they leave to serve in Omaha, NE today. Continue to pray for workers in God’s Kingdom (Mt9:36-38).

Tuesday: Same Two Meanings...

Read: John 17:4-5 ⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

Reflect:
Jesus “glorified” God while on earth. In other words, through His life Jesus brought about a change of opinion about God – and/or further enhanced already proper opinions about Him (we can also substitute the word “belief” for “opinion”). Yet how did Jesus do that?

Jesus healed a man’s son from a distance and an entire household came to trust in God (Jn4:53). He healed a lame man and people “glorified” God (Mt9:8). Those were miraculous – I have not performed a miracle lately... Yet simply by living among us, Jesus revealed things about God (Jn1:14) – and in doing so perspectives of God shifted...

In verse five we again see the aspect of “glorify” where one is clothed in splendor, or seen as great. It is beyond our comprehension what Jesus “gave up” in order to come to earth and redeem humanity. Yet in hindsight I think (hope) He doesn’t view that as giving anything up – but gaining a whole lot of people...

Respond:
What “work” do you believe God has called you to do? How is that work going?

How has your perspective of God shifted in the last year? Why has it shifted?

What are you willing to give up for God’s glory? Will you?

Pray: Pray for Lincoln Christian Seminary, Manhattan Christian College, and Ozark Christian College; missions supported by New Life. Pray for the Unity and Purity of New Life. Ask God for an ever-increasing proper perspective of Him. Continue to pray for God’s people to have boldness to speak for Him (Acts4:29).

Wednesday: Outrageous...

Read: John 14:13-14 ¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

Reflect:
These verses sound too good to be true don’t they? Be honest, they do. In fact, I imagine it is verses like these that sometimes lead people to doubt the truth of God’s word. I mean, when we factor in v12 (doing greater things than Jesus), this set of verses seem “out there”. What are we to do?

First off, we need to realize to whom it is Jesus spoke. It’s not us – it’s the disciples (i.e., the “11”). Secondly, we need to remember what happened on the day of Pentecost (Acts2) – 3,000 entered into a covenant relationship with God that day. That’s a whole lot more followers than Jesus ever had (remember, the crowds deserted Him).

The word for “ask” is a strong word – it implies a demand; asking with an expectancy of an affirmative answer. Jesus makes a similar statement in Jn15:7-8. Notice there He spoke of abiding (remaining) in Him. Tie all of that up with a bow and ponder what the disciples may have been praying about between Jesus’ ascension (Acts1:8-9) and the day of Pentecost (Acts2). The time period was 10 days. Do you think they may have been earnestly praying for people to come to know the truth about God? Do we?

Respond:
Why is it important to realize to whom it is anyone in the Bible is speaking?

Please note, just because Jesus spoke directly to “the 11” does not mean we can’t draw principles for our lives...

How many outside distractions do you think the disciples had while the time between Acts 1:8 and Acts 2 passed?

Pray: Pray for Shiloh Home and Emporia Christian Schools; two missions New Life supports. Pray for those at Prairie View Christian Camp this week (3rd & 4th graders). Ask, and expect, God to help you be more faithful in prayer (as you do your part) each day. Continue to pray for God’s Word to spread rapidly (2Thess3:1).

Thursday: Good Works

Read: Matthew 5:16 ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Reflect:
On Sunday we sang “make me salt, make me light” – the song has a good message, but it is also ironic. Christians already are salt and light. The flip side of that fact is that if we aren’t doing our job...then who is?

I don’t know why “good works” get such a bad rap in Christianity. It is a rather biblical concept. Fortunately, no one who talks about “good works” thinks we “earn” our salvation...at least not if they follow the model of Jesus (above) and Paul (Eph2:10).

Since we’re on the Core Value of “Glorifying God” this week we need to be honest with ourselves. God is glorified (or not) based on what we do (or don’t do). We can sing an older praise song of “glorify Your name in all the earth” – but if we aren’t doing anything to bring that about (e.g., how we interact with others, how and where we spend our money, how we serve with our gifts, etc.) then we are fooling ourselves. God is active in the world today – but He is active through His people in whom His presence (i.e., the Holy Spirit) dwells.

Respond:
How have you recently enhanced someone’s view of God?

How have you recently degraded someone’s view of God?

How can you be a “light” today – and tomorrow?

Pray: Pray for Cookson Hills (a Christian Children’s home); a mission New Life supports. Ask for the Holy Spirit to guide your actions today so God is glorified. Pray for Brent McCrory – the preaching minister at New Life. Pray for the Youth’s last full day of service in Omaha. Continue to pray for open doors to share God’s Word (Col4:2-6) and the boldness to do so.