

Small Group/Sermon Notes for The Greatest Sermon Ever: Part 4

Remember, small groups are primarily for growing closer relationships with other believers. We can learn wonderful things in this environment but keep relationships first.

- Make sure everyone knows each other's names. Have everyone share a little about themselves and how life is going right now.
- **Part 4: Acts of Righteousness.**
- Jesus talks about putting on a front and receiving rewards from God. **Matthew 6:1.**
 - Ever met someone who puts on a front? Ever put on a front?
 - Bad news: if you put on a front your reward in full is that you get to be a fraud. That isn't a good reward. You are smarter than that!! ☺
 - Ever needed some help from God? Then pay attention and get your reward!
 - It's ok to try to get rewards from God. **Hebrews 11:6.**
 - It's not ok to be selfish and greedy. It's not ok to try to control God. It's not ok to throw a fit when you don't get what you want. But...
 - It is ok to believe that God will respond and reward you when you are serving Him fully with a right heart.
 - When do these rewards come? Sometimes in this life. **Acts 10:1-6.** Sometimes the next.
- There are three "acts of righteousness" that Jesus discusses. First one is giving.
- **Matthew 6:2-4.**
 - How strongly should we take this? Where are the ditches on either side of the road?
 - Cultural reference: **Luke 21:1-4.**
 - Apparently everyone could see what everyone was giving!!
 - Jesus didn't say "You should be hiding this!"
 - Rather, give in humility and obedience. If someone knows that is ok but don't do it for that reason. (gain friends?? **Luke 16:9**)
 - What is your definition of Holy Spirit led giving?
- Next one: prayer. **Matthew 6:5-8.**
 - Two main points before the example of The Lord's Prayer.
 - Point 1: Don't try to impress.
 - Pray to God, not people.
 - Get good at this by praying when no one else is there!
 - Corporate prayer has its place, just like personal prayer does. (One Minute Blessing, etc.)
 - Point 2: Length of prayer does not affect the reward or the answer.
 - You don't earn points by babbling on and on.
 - What is the difference between "praying through," "persevering in prayer," and "babbling on and on?"
- "This, then, is how you should pray," the Lord's Prayer: **Matthew 6:9-15.**
 - Five verses, five themes: Reverence for God, Submission to God, Provision from God, Righteousness from God, Protection from God.
 - Jesus makes a very important point in v14-15.
 - Unforgiveness is opposition to the cross.
- Third one: fasting. **Matthew 6:16-18.**
 - Same deal. Don't put on a front or that is your reward.
 - What are rewards of fasting?
 - If your spiritual growth has plateaued, it is time to fast.
 - What have your fasting experiences been like?
 - God moves when His people pray. This is even more true when they fast!
 - If you want to understand fasting, be a person of fasting and prayer!
- Pray for each other before you finish up!