“God Sees In Secret” – 08/30/2015

Matthew 6:1-8

Certainly one of the best things about the Bible is that it says something about the big questions of life. Whenever you read or listen to the words of Scripture on any big subject, you can always know this: along with every word from the LORD comes this promise “I will be with you.”

For example, Joshua 1:5 *“There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so* ***I will be with thee****: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.”*

Joshua 3:7 *“And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so* ***I will be with thee****.”*

Judges 6:16 *“And the LORD said unto him, Surely* ***I will be with thee*** *...”*

I Kings 11:38 *“… that* ***I will be with thee*** *...”*

Psalm 91:15 *“He shall call upon me, and I will answer him:* ***I will be with him*** *in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.”*

Isaiah 43:1 *“But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. (2) When thou passest through the waters,* ***I will be with thee****; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”*

You can see how time after time, the LORD’s promise is this. “I will be with you.” Obviously then, that’s His will. That’s the LORD’s desire and that’s His will for each one of us.

And from the NT, here’s what the LORD says. Hebrews 13:5 *“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said,* ***I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*** *(6) So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”*

And just one more. Matthew 28:20 *“… and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”*

Those are beautiful, wonderful, and true promises. God *promises* to be with everyone who puts his confidence, not in himself and his ways or his ingenuity, but in Him alone. He has promised to be with you.

And I’m sure that the LORD must love it when you decide to go ahead by faith in Him with His promises as your strength. So, as you read His word with me today, remember this word from the God Who made you “I will be with you.”

You see, the LORD is in no way a Pharisee. He wants you to know not only how to please Him, but to know also that He will be with you constantly if you will but learn to trust Him.

Now, in light of that, please open your Bible with me today to the Gospel of Matthew and chapter six. I’d like to read with you verse five.

Matthew 6:5 *“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (6) But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”*

I’ve titled today’s sermon “God Sees In Secret.” Shall we pray?

Isn’t it interesting that God is concerned about what you do in secret? I think a lot of us do a lot of things in secret really believing that no one sees them. But the truth is that God sees you – completely, whoever you are, wherever you are, and whatever you’re doing.

Here in Matthew six, you will find the idea that “God sees in secret” three times. It’s in verse four, verse six, and verse eighteen.

Matthew 6:4 *“That thine alms may be* ***in secret****: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.”*

Matthew 6:6 *(6) But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is* ***in secret****; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”*

Matthew 6:18 *“That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is* ***in secret****: and thy Father, which seeth* ***in secret****, shall reward thee openly.”*

It’s easy to see what Jesus is preaching here. When you give charity to someone, do it in secret. When you pray, do it in secret. When you fast, do it in secret. And why? Because the LORD sees it.

Today, I want to say something about what kind of God God is by seeing Him as a God Who wants you to pay attention, to remind yourself that whenever you do something, He sees it.

So, let’s look at the LORD and see what this part of Jesus’ sermon says about our Heavenly Father.

First, your Heavenly Father sees in secret. Most of us know and believe that the LORD sees our actions; the outward things that we do. We know that God is omniscient. That’s exactly what Jesus says in verse one. “Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.”

“When you give your alms don’t do it before men to be seen of them.” Even though others see your *outward* works, the Father sees what happens in the depths of your heart where no one but God can know what really takes place. In other words, the LORD sees your motives. Look with me at verse four. *(4) “That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.”*

Alms-giving in the Christ’s day was simply giving to those in need. And really the same holds true today. Today we use the term charity. And yes, it is both good and Biblical to give to the poor.

But let me clarify this with you. The teaching of the Jews, in particular the Pharisees of the LORD’s day was this. The highest righteousness a Jew could engage in was to give an alms; to give food or to provide money to someone in need.

And the Book of Deuteronomy does teach this. Deuteronomy 15:11 *“For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.”*

But when you look at the interpretation given by the Rabbis in the Jewish Talmud, you find that giving to the poor is the way to obtain righteousness. The Talmud is the book of the interpretations of Moses given by the Jewish Rabbis. Rabbi Assi, for example, teaches this. “Alms-giving is as important as all the other commandments put together.”

Rabbi Eleazer says “Charity is greater than all the sacrifices.

Another one teaches this. “Charity is one of the pillars on which the worlds rests.” (Avot. 1:2)

And another one “Everyone who occupies himself with charity shall behold the face of God," as it is written (Ps. xvii. 15, *Heb.*): “I behold Thy face by almsgiving” (*ẓedeḳ*; see Midr. Teh.*l.c.*, B. B. 10*a*).

“Alms-giving will deliver you from the condemnation of Hell.”

“Alms-giving will make one perfectly righteous.”

“Alms-giving is equal to the whole law.”

You see, the Jews of Christ’s day taught that alms-giving and righteousness were one and the same.

Now, as important as it is to do such things as alms-giving, please fill your heart with this one great thing. Your Father sees in secret. In other words, he sees what you do in secret.

So, when you give an alms, when you help those in need, when you fast, or when you pray, do it because you are aware that the LORD sees it. He sees everything you do in secret.

Can you see why Jesus peached this? It’s because *we* are so consumed with the approval of men that we neglect the approval of God, Who is continually concerned with our hearts and our motives. And what exactly does the LORD see? He sees *why* you do it. And, aren’t you glad He sees them? He’s fully aware of your motives. He notices each and every time you give to the poor or when you fast or when you pray to Him in secret. He also knows if we’ve given just so others can see that we give.

Can you tell from these words that the LORD is more concerned about *why* you give than *what* you give? That’s at least part of the reason Jesus teaches us that our Heavenly Father sees in secret.

What have you done this week thinking that other people will see and know that you did it and, of course, think well of you because you did it? You see, when we say that the LORD sees in secret, we mean that the LORD sees not only what we do, but why we do it. He’s the God Who is determined to purify your motives. And He does so as you fill your heart and mind with that truth that He watches in secret.

Now, there’s another side of this that is just as true. If the LORD sees your heart when you give to the poor with your eyes on what others see in you, then also He sees what you do when no one sees it. What happens in your heart when you do what’s *right* in His eyes? Do you not know that He is pleased and that He’s fully aware of what you’ve done? Imagine today that you’ve done what was honoring to the LORD this past week. Do you think it doesn’t matter with God? Believe me, it does.

As often as I’ve said it before, I’d like to say it again. He’s watching your heart. He knows you inside and out because He’s the God Who sees in secret.

And one more thing here. When you consider God as the One Who sees in secret, remember this. He gazes at you. It’s not a mere glance and He’s off to other things. And His gaze is both comforting and convicting at the same time. So when you find God as He presents Himself in His Word, rejoice because the way He is in the Bible is the way He is with you right this very moment. He gazes at your heart. It’s simply a “you and Him” program when it comes down to the bottom line. Hallelujah!

Someday, as we all know, we must stand before the LORD and given an account of what we’ve done while we lived in the flesh. And do any of us think that He will judge us unfairly? Here’s how we know that He will be completely fair. He will judge your motives. Only you and only He knows what they are. So, be glad. Rejoice. Do whatever you do for His glory and approval. This week, each day, let Him purify your motives by reminding yourself that He is the God Who sees in secret.

By the way, one of the many Hebrew names for God is El Roi. Its interpretation is this “The God Who sees me.”

Your heavenly Father sees in secret.

Who would ever think that a true relationship with God happens when we do things alone, just between you and God? It’s as if we have a “one-on-one” relationship with God; which we certainly do.

Now, some people will ask, “But why? Aren’t we called of the LORD to be a Christian out where people can see us? And the answer is simple: God is concerned about your motives. Outward living is what we do every single day. But don’t you have an inward life? Don’t you think and believe and love and live in a world that no one else sees? Well, that’s the same world Jesus is talking about here. That’s the same world that the Father wants you to know that He’s watching over. He sees in secret.

First, your Heavenly Father sees in secret.

Second, He promises to reward you openly.

Matthew 6:4 *“That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself* ***shall reward thee openly****.”*

Matthew 6:6 *(6) But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret* ***shall reward thee openly****.”*

Matthew 6:18 *“That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret,* ***shall reward thee openly****.”*

Now, here is a special and wonderful promise. “Openly” simply means “out in the open” where it can be seen by others. You see, this is a marvelous promise. If you choose to carry on a one-on-one, secret, away from others relationship with Him Who sees in secret, He promises you an outward reward. It may not be today or even tomorrow. But it will be according to His word.

Folks, the LORD will make it evident to you that your time alone with Him, your secret, “away from others” time is and will be to His glory. But He also says that it will be to your personal and practical benefit. A reward is a benefit. In other words, it’s worth it to pay close attention to the One Who sees in secret because He’s ready and willing and has promised to reward you outwardly.

Do you recall that earlier on in His sermon Jesus says He wants people around you to see your good works? And what will these good works do? They’ll glorify your Father which is in Heaven.

Here Jesus adds and emphasizes the behind the scenes work, the right heart attitude, the willingness to do whatever you do with a true desire to please your Father.

And when people see your good works, they will glorify God because behind every good work there lays a motive. And we all know that motives are extremely difficult to judge. Yet, who is you can trust to correctly judge your every motive? No one, but God.

Outwardly means that it’s obvious to someone else. Folks, only He can see your heart. All that the world around you sees is what you are on the outside. No one can really see your heart.

But, if you live in the confidence that He sees your heart, that He knows the motives of your inner man, that He watches and even gazes upon your inner man, then let Him reward you according to His good pleasure in His time as He happily bestows upon you His blessed rewards in every part of your life.

Here’s a promise from the Apostle Paul. Ephesians 3:20 *“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, (21) Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”*

He’s the God Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you ask or even think, by that power that is working in you right now.

Maybe we can say it like this. What reward can I expect if I am walking in secret with my Heavenly Father? Here it is; at least, in part. It’s the reward of a Pleased Father Who is observing a pleasing child. He’s pleased because you’re doing what you do, not so you’ll be recognized by someone else, but because you are choosing to honor Him in doing it.

Take a practical example of my son. If Dan and I have a good relationship; if he has respect for me; if he desires to honor me; if he values my opinion; (that’s all the inward things); then when you see Dan in the outward things of his life, you just might think that his father had a hand in the way he lives his life in the present; ion his outward life.

And it’s true. It’s not that I’ve given him everything he’s ever asked for. Rather, the reward, if you will, is a life that shows that he has taken to heart what I’ve said and done on his behalf.

And it’s the same with the LORD. He wants to be seen in you. He wants to be see for Who He is. And He is – when you live with Him in secret, when you fast in secret, when you do your giving to those in need in secret, and when you pray in secret.

But there might be just one more aspect to this “reward you openly.” Here it is. Above everything else, God works *His* will upon your life. He could never answer your prayers with things that are contrary to His will. So, when He rewards you openly, He shows the blessedness of the working out of His will upon a human life – you.

You see, the picture Jesus gives here is the difference between wages and true satisfaction. Don’t you get paid outwardly when you *earn* your wages? That’s one type of reward. But the second type is the reward that brings true satisfaction to your heart. And that satisfaction is evident to those around you. You’ve honored Him. He’s simply pleased with you. And it’s obvious.

Wages, by the way, is the word Jesus uses here for what the hypocrites do when they do their service to be seen by people. Jesus says this. Matthew 6:2 *“They have their reward.”*

But there’s a blessedness and a contentment and satisfaction in doing it from the heart and doing what you do in secret because He sees in secret. That’s a second type of reward.

Ultimately, it’s a question of “whose eyes are you considering when you do what you do?” If it’s people recognition, then you’ve already received your reward. If it’s His eyes you are concerned with, it’s a deep down sense that He’s the True Judge and He knows. And He will reward you accordingly.

In other words, when you give so that people notice what you’ve done, you’ve *got* your reward for doing it.

You can honestly say this. “I’m getting the reward of “people recognition.” But with the LORD, there’s a “reward” that really counts - His pleasure. Folks, when He is pleased because you’ve done it without wanting the approval of the eyes of man, He promises to make it evident to them that you’ve done what He has asked.

First, your Heavenly Father sees in secret.

Second, He promises to reward you openly.

Third, the greatest prayer is secret prayer. Look at the words of Jesus again in verse six. Matthew 6:6 *“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”*

Prayer in secret sounds like no one else knows about it but you and your Heavenly Father, doesn’t it? And doesn’t it sound like True Prayer? Prayer in secret sounds like you’re serious when it comes to praying. And prayer in secret sounds like you believe when you pray.

Folks, whatever kind of prayer you pray, this is the kind that Jesus advocates.

Now, if it’s secret prayer, no one else knows either *where* you do it or *when* you do it. Nor do they need to know. And, if it’s secret prayer, even if you don’t know how to do it well, you also know that you don’t have to be quote unquote “good” at it. After all, it’s your Father that you’re meeting with. And if it’s secret prayer, you can be sure that every time you do it, your Father is listening. He’s always available in the Secret Prayer Room.

Prayer is the LORD’s way of bringing you into closer, sweeter fellowship with Himself. He doesn’t want you to go through life on your own, without His help. But He doesn’t want you to presume upon His help either. So, He invites you to join Him in the Secret Place of prayer, the Secret Prayer Room; your own private Upper Room.

Doesn’t it amaze you that what Jesus tells you to do? And you already know that you should be doing it. But with Jesus Christ, there’s much, much more. He, along with His exhortations to your practical obedience, He commits Himself to be your personal enablement to accomplish His words.

As you’ve heard me say so many times before, He is the One Who enables you to do the Father’s will. He will also enable you to be a man or woman of prayer. It’s impossible to do it on your own. Who, but Jesus knows you inside and out and yet loves you perfectly? And, Who is ready and willing to not only show you His Father’s will, but provide you with all the resources you need to accomplish it? Only Jesus.

Fortunately, there is one thing you can do and be completely glad about today. Here it is. You can do whatever you do with the complete assurance that the LORD as your God is watching your heart every single moment of your life. This includes your prayer life.

Folks, only God’s way works. We’ve all had situations where we’ve given to the poor or fasted or prayed when it’s been just to be seen of men. I have one guarantee for you. You’ve already gotten your reward.

But, think about this. If you’ve become a “pray-in-secret” person, then you’ve got this wonderful promise. “Your Father, Who sees in secret, will reward you openly.”

My admonition for you today is this. Set your heart on the one thing that will matter for eternity: have you done His will?

The Apostle John puts it this way. I John 2:17 *“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”*

Here’s a prayer I’ve given to you time and again. It will enable you to walk with the LORD today and this week with a heart of complete dependence. It’s the Prayer of Submission.

“LORD, I surrender everything that I am, and have, and ever will be. I take my hands off of my life and release every relationship to You--every habit, every goal, my health, my wealth, and everything that means anything. I surrender it all to You. And by faith I take my place at the Cross,

believing that when the Lord Jesus was crucified, according to Your Word, I was crucified with Him. And I am trusting You to live Your life in me and through me that You might receive all the glory. I thank You now by faith for accepting me in the Lord Jesus.”

Aren’t you glad for the work Jesus came here to accomplish for you? Aren’t you glad He didn’t stop with just an explanation of the law? Aren’t you glad that He kept every single command of the law? And aren’t you glad that He went to the Cross as a condemned one, as someone who had broken all the laws; when in reality He’d never broken even one of them?

Aren’t you glad He went to Calvary for your sins?

Well, your response to the condemnations of the law upon you personally is to repent of your sin and turn to the Only One Who could possibly remove the stain of those sins on your life.

Now, you might be here today without Christ or fully aware of your own standing before the law and before the LORD. Here’s my question to you. Wouldn’t you want to be sure that you’ve been completely forgiven of all your sins? Fortunately you can have that assurance.

The largest need in your heart and the biggest problem in your life is your sin and the fact that your sin is separates you from God. The Prophet Isaiah said this so long ago. “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”

Yet, out of love, God sent His son to become your Substitute. Jesus Christ came here for the purpose of being the LIGHT and showing us the right way.

The Apostle Paul in the Book of Romans says this. (Romans 3:23) “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” and (Romans 6:23) “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

There’s only one way to receive God’s Salvation. It’s through God’s Son. And here’s how. The Bible says (Acts 20:21) “… repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Will you repent and exercise faith towards Him?

Today is the day of Salvation? What will you do about the condition of your heart for eternity?

* REPENT - “to change your mind about God, Christ, your sin, and God’s free gift of salvation.”
* BELIEVE - “to simply trust Jesus Christ alone as the One Who paid the entire penalty for your sins.”

Here’s a simple salvation prayer for you to pray if you’ve never trusted the LORD for His free gift of eternal life. Salvation Prayer

“LORD, I admit that I am a sinner and in need of your grace. I believe that You sent Your Son to the Cross to die for me. Please forgive me of all my sins and make me Your child. Thank you.”

Everyone who calls upon the Name of the LORD will be saved.

Now, please find with me Hymn # 624 and sing with me “His Eye Is On The Sparrow.”