

Bible Study for Ash Wednesday B: Mt.6:1-21 Real Piety is a Change of Heart



Sermon on the Mount by Carl Bloch
(Danish Painter, 1834-1890)

Questions for Discussion:

1. How does Mt. 6:3-4 relate to Mt. 5:16?
2. How does Mt.6:3-4 relate to Mt.5:30?
3. What's meant by "sounding the trumpet" (see Mt.6:2)? What would be today's equivalent?
4. How does point 3 relate to what Jesus has just said about the Pharisees in Mt.5:17-20?
5. In Mt.6:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 18 why does Jesus repeat the phrase "so that/so as to/in order to" six times? How does this relate to Mt. 5:21-28?
6. How does the above relate to Ez.11:19; 18:30-31? Now read 2Cor.3:1-3. Any parallels?
7. When Jesus teaches His disciples the Lord's Prayer (Mt.6:9-13), are there parallels to God's instructions in the Decalogue (Ex.20:2-17)?

Mt.6:1-21 '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. ³ But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so 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. ⁶ But 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. ⁷ 'When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹ 'Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.

¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you;
¹⁵but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
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.