Everyday Ethics #10 Pastor Rick Baker

June 26 2022

**PUBLIC RELIGION:**

*How to do “Acts of Righteousness” so your own heart also expands*

(Matt. 6:1-4)

*“If you do something good, then, after a while, if you don’t watch it, you start showing off.*

*And then you’re not as good anymore.” (Holden Caulfield, Catcher in the Rye, 1951, p.164)*

In almost every and any setting, instead of denying ourselves, we fight the urge to benefit ourselves and regularly give in to ourselves—if we are not vigilant or discover we have wrong motives, we make almost everything and anything about ourselves, especially the things that are meant to be about and for the Lord.

Performance is so popular because adulation is so intoxicating—we love to impress people and put on a show, because we love to be praised.

But we are called to be “perfect” (Matt. 5:48) – What does that live like? (cf. 1 Tim 4:7-8)

1. **Righteous acts might actually become unrighteous**. (Matt. 6:1)

*Our righteousness can be more dangerous than our sin.* (Luther)

“your righteousness”

“to be seen”—theatrical righteousness

We were made to notice and be noticed by God!

1. **There are Good Works to be publicly noticed.** (Matt. 5:16)

Works seen to bring praise to the Father vs. works seen to bring praise to us.

*“Show when tempted to hide; hide when tempted to show.”* (A. B. Bruce)

These 3 are better in private...charity, prayer, fasting...

1. **Practice your good deeds of charity in secret.** (Matt. 6:2-4)

High priority deeds (tzedakah) need to be done in a high humility way.

Hypocrites are outed by their craving for “self-glory”. No external or internal trumpets!

IN SECRET *where only the Father sees* – resets motives – in our obedience, motive matters

Since acts of righteousness are core to those who have acquired the righteousness of Christ,

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

WHY ARE YOU DOING IT?

HOW ARE YOU DOING IT?

**If you are doing it for yourself**, you have your reward in full.

**If you are doing it for the Lord**, your reward is from the Lord—the harvest of righteousness is growing in God’s character (perfecting) which is rewarded with His pleasure and presence, and ultimately eternal life (not earned, but authenticated).

If you are addicted to personal glory, and throwing glory at one another, how do you demonstrate the reality of God—if the supposed righteousness of Jesus we possess, does not actually bear witness to the righteousness of Jesus, how can His righteousness really be in us? We are then simply marketing our own righteousness which to Jesus is as filthy rags.