Intro: 1 “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. 2 “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. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

• We have heard the old saying “alms for the poor” and immediately we think of money. Yes, money is involved but it is not only money where alms are needed. The word almas (eleēmosynē) mean’s “to have compassion in doing good works that will benefit others.” It has always been God’s plan for the church to take care of each other and not the government. Now the government takes so much money away from the church, many churches can’t afford to take care of the poor. A well devised plan by Satan.

I. Doing Righteous works needs a disclaimer on it – 1 “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

a. We must guard ourselves with the deception of giving

• It is very easy to be lead down the road of self-righteous alms. Remember that our righteousness is as filthy rags in the eyes of God, no matter how many good deeds we do.

° 9 He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: 10 “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” Luke 18:9-14

b. We must give alms with the right motives in mind

• What are our motives for tithing, doing charitable work, looking in on a sick loved one? The charismatic sees God as a bank teller machine, with a tremendous interest rate that will give back to your multi-times 100 when you give to their ministry. Others see God as a tax ride off for their local charitable events, but one thing both of these have in common is that they are doing it for the wrong reason. We should be doing alms to help the poor, not pad our pockets.

° 2 All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirit (motives). Proverbs 16:2

II. The wrong motives for doing Good are – 2 “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.

a. Giving to be recognized is a wrong motive

1. To be praised by men and not God

• Do we look for the applause of men or of God. The Pharisees were very good at acting in front of a crowd. They would pretend to fast in front of the public then go in the backdoor and eat a full meal. They were crowd pleasers. We are not much different today. We need to do alms to please God and not man. We will deal with this more later.

° 16 “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Matthew 6:16-18

2. To ease your conscious from self-guilt

• If we were to give money to the poor it would make us feel less guilty about being rich. If we hire a less fortunate person to clean our house, it will help us feel less guilty about owning a mansion. If we give to a charity, it helps us feel less guilty about fixing the ghetto suburbs.

° 14 But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, 15 having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. 16 So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man. Acts 24:14-16

3. To give out of obligation and not out of love

• Christ never did away with the Law, instead he fulfilled it. So, He didn’t do away with the Law of murder, but fulfilled it. He didn’t do away with the Law of the tithe but fulfilled it. How did He fulfill them you may ask? He did it by love, we love our neighbor, we don’t kill him, we give not because He demands it, but because we love Him.

° 17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. Matthew 5:17

° 34 But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” 37 And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 22:34-40

b. Giving for recognition is characteristic of hypocrisy

1. It is the sound of a trumpet for self-glorification

2. It is the sounding of a trumpet to be seen in church

3. It is the sounding of a trumpet to be seen in public

• This is what the religious leaders of Christ day was known for, putting money in the church offering plate to be seen by the community. They would put in the huge amount while the poor would put in their little amount in order to show that they were superior and better off financially than them. This is why Christ called them out with the poor widow’s mite.

° 41 And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. 42 And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. 43 And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. 44 For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.” Mark 12:41-44

III. What is the right motives for doing righteous alms (works) – 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

a. Give without excepting anything in return

• This is why I disapprove of the pay it forward program on channel 4. I know we need to see some good news, but the Bible says this is not the way we should do it. Someone does good alms in the community, and we want to reward them for doing good, but the bank comes in and has to announce their bank, where are they from, how much they are getting, and the count it out one by one, the money in order to get their 5 minutes of fame. Do good and don’t expect anything from someone else because the bank will come pin the limelight on their good deeds.

b. Give with a humbled heart – “give secretly, quietly, privately”

° 8 Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. 9 Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. 1 Peter 3:8, 9

c. Give with a cheerful heart

° 6 The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. 9 As it is written, “He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” 2 Corinthians 9:6-9