

## Secret Rewards

By Don Kimbro

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus introduces his disciples to a reward system for doing good things in secret. I know that sounds foreign, maybe even heretical to our Christian way of thinking but nonetheless it's biblical — according to Jesus. There are rewards promised by God when we do certain things without others knowing about it.

The first time Jesus mentions a reward for “acts of righteousness” (Mt. 6:1), has to do with our giving to the needy or the poor — in secret. “Don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,” Jesus said, “so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (Mt. 6:3-4). We don’t need to announce it or make a big deal of it — we just need to do it. In fact, if we do make a big splash out of our giving, Jesus promises that there will be no reward at all, except maybe from a few other people. Quite frankly, that wouldn't be worth two cents!

The next occasion regarding a reward from our heavenly Father, follows the first one and it has to do with prayer. “But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (Mt. 6:6). As a pastor I am frequently called upon to pray publicly. Now I don’t mind doing that and hopefully my prayers are edifying but I know that prayers that are seen and heard are not my best prayers. My best prayers are those that are done in secret — between my heavenly Father and myself and no one else needs to know about them.

The last word from Jesus about our heavenly Father’s reward system has to do with fasting — going without food for an extended period of time for spiritual reasons. All we have to do is look around to notice that not many of us spend much time fasting but when we do Jesus said that we should do it in such a way “that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen, and your Father, who sees what is done in secret will reward you” (Mt. 6:17-18).

So there we have it. Our Lord’s guaranteed threefold reward system from our Father in heaven — for giving, prayer and fasting. Now, am I practicing what I am preaching? I’ll never tell. It's a secret!







