

# Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

*A Discipleship Journey*



## **Sermon on the Mount**

Week 16

Mirror for Our Heart

Matthew 6:1

### Opening Prayer:

Loving Father,

Open my heart to the areas of my life that need to change so that I can carry out the mission you have imagined for my life. Inspire me to live my faith in ways that are dynamic and engaging.

Show me how best to get involved in the life of my parish. Make our parish community hungry for best practices and continuous learning and help us to realize that we each have a role to play in making our parish a perfect place for imperfect people trying to walk with you.

Amen

(from *Rediscover the Saints*, Matthew Kelly)

### Reflection

We've reflected on a disciple's characteristics (the Beatitudes) and how those are to be lived out day to day (*"You've heard it said....but I say"* statements). We now go deeper. Jesus probes and examines our direct relationship to God.

*Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father.*

Matthew 6:1

This passage is the undercurrent, the underlying question beneath the entire teaching in Matthew Chapter 5. Beneath it all is the question, "What is the true motivation of our heart?" What is behind our thoughts, words, and actions? Do we say and do for ourselves, or for God?

We live in a merit-centered culture: hard work is expected to result in increased pay, volunteerism is recognized and appreciated, and philanthropy ensures some benefit to the

giver. Good works gain us status and respect and we feel a certain amount of satisfaction from that. On the surface, there isn't anything wrong with feeling good about doing good. But sometimes we find ourselves distracted by the impression we make on others. Or maybe altruism has become a competition among friends. We may share openly about what we contribute in time and talent, "complain" about how much time our volunteering is taking or slip a "humble-brag" into conversations. This is the very temptation that Jesus is warning us about in the passage above. When we get snagged or hung up on what other people think of us, we are no longer acting for God. We are acting for ourselves.

This passage is a mirror for my heart. What is my true motivation? Am I working to glorify God or myself? If we are honest with ourselves, this question might be really tough to answer. You see, Jesus is trying to get us to own our identity and motivation from within. He wants us to go deep into our heart and mind, exploring those hidden, secret places in our hearts where we tend to hide our truest intentions. "Go there," Jesus says, "and see what your heart is thinking while your hand is doing good works." We might find we are trying to seek the approval of others. We might choose to stay anonymous in our giving, but secretly congratulate ourselves for our goodness. Or we may authentically desire God's approval alone.

The only reward a disciple seeks is the blessing of God Who is their heavenly Father and Who sees all in all. Let us trust in the Psalmist's prayer: "Not to us, not to us, O Lord, but to Your name be the glory." (Psalm 115:1)

*Reflection Question:* Why do I do what I do?

#### Closing Prayer

Speak to Jesus about what is on your heart, then rest in silence for a few moments listening for His response.