

*Word, and our relationship with others! Then, no matter what happens here, we are blessed forever!*

**Conclusion:** As disciples of Jesus Christ, *we are different* – we are forgiven, so we function as salt and light so that → God is glorified and → others are blessed!

Even though most people do some form of ♦ giving, ♦ praying, ♦ fasting, and ♦ treasuring, may God help **US** to do so – *not as hypocrites but as His forgiven children!* And all God's people said: *Amen!*

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### What to **GIVE UP** in Lent

- Give up grumbling** – Instead, *in everything give thanks!*
  - Give up 10 or 15 minutes in bed** – Instead, *use that time in prayer, memorizing Scripture!*
  - Give up looking at people's worst points** – Instead, *concentrate on their best ones!*
  - Give up speaking unkindly** – Instead, *let your speech be generous and understanding!*
  - Give up your worries** – Instead, *trust God with them!*
  - Give up your hatred or dislike of anyone** – Instead, *take action to love others!*
  - Give up concentrating on the daily newspaper** – Instead, *study your Bible!*
  - Give up TV one evening a week** – Instead, *visit some sick or lonely person!*
  - Give up buying anything but essentials for yourself** – Instead, *give the money to God's work!*
  - Give up the fear which prevents Christian witness** – Instead, *seek courage to speak to others!*
  - Give up judging by appearances** – Instead, *love all people unconditionally!*
- We should never give-up things to earn something from God; instead, we may choose to give up something as a reminder of what Jesus gave up for us in His perfect living and sacrificial dying for our sins!**

# “Don't Be Hypocrites!”

Based on Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 NAU



**Ash Wednesday – 2011**  
**March 9 → 11:00 & 7:00**

**Introduction:** Dear fellow-believers, on this Ash Wednesday 2011, we find ourselves continuing in the Sermon on the Mount; therefore, *Jesus is continuing to teach His disciples* – you and me and all who trust in Jesus as Savior – *how to function as His followers.*

In this section, Jesus wants us to remember that *we are different*, thus ♦ forgiven, ♦ redeemed, and ♦ heaven-bound! Since we are different, *we should NOT function like hypocrites* – people who *say or pretend* something is true when in fact it is not. Jesus addresses us today on the topics of → giving, → praying, → fasting, and → treasuring. This opening statement applies to the first three topics: <sup>1</sup> **“Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.”** So practicing righteousness – doing good will result in a reward, *but from who would you like to receive that reward:* ✦ from a sinful human being or ✦ from your Father in heaven?

1. **Giving:**

- a. No – <sup>2</sup> **So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.** *Don't brag about what you give!* If you do, the satisfaction of others knowing what you give will be your reward!
- b. Yes – <sup>3</sup> **But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.** Literally, *do not let know the left of you what does the right of you*. Therefore, *how much more* should we keep secret our giving to the needy! Then, somehow, *someway, God will reward us!*

2. **Praying:**

- a. No – <sup>5</sup> **When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.** We should never pray *to impress others!*
- b. Yes – <sup>6</sup> **But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.** Prayer is us – *God's forgiven children* – communicating to Him with words and thoughts. Let's rejoice and use that privilege often, *but never to impress others!*

3. **Fasting:**

- a. No – <sup>16</sup> **Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites *do*, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.** We should never fast to impress others, *to be noticed by others*. Fasting – *if we choose to do it* – should always be done ✦ to remember what Jesus has given us for us – *His life* – and ✦ to draw us closer to Him!
- b. Yes – <sup>17</sup> **But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face <sup>18</sup> so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.** In other words, be *somewhat* the opposite of a hypocrite; *you are hungry but you appear as if you are not!*

4. **Treasuring:**

- a. No – <sup>19</sup> **Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.** As disciples we are thankful for earthly things, *but we should never treasure them!* We use them; *then leave them!*
- b. Yes – <sup>20</sup> **But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; <sup>21</sup> **for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.** As disciples we know the things of this world are temporary, so we treasure eternal things – *God, His***