

## Matthew 5:6

### opening prayer

Begin your time together by asking the Lord to open hearts to receive and respond to Shane's message about righteousness and generosity.

### overview

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- Righteousness is not about avoiding bad things; it's about actively doing good things.
- Righteousness and generosity are inseparably connected in Scripture
- Knowing God is demonstrated through generosity
- Generosity shapes how we see the world

### discussion

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- 1** Shane mentioned that, in his upbringing, righteousness was about "not doing bad things" (don't sin, don't smoke, don't drink, and so on). How might this limited view absolve us from our responsibility to actively do good?
- 2** People can know God through **zakat**: generous acts done freely without obligation. How have you experienced knowing God more deeply through either His generosity in your life, or through your own acts of generosity?
- 3** Generosity is a posture of the heart. What do you find most difficult about being generous with your love, time, money, skills, possessions?

## go deeper

What if our understanding of righteousness has missed the point? **Matthew 5:6** invites us to rethink what it means to *hunger and thirst for righteousness*. For many, righteousness has been about what we avoid; a checklist that keeps us spiritually safe but disengaged from real need. The truth is, righteousness and generosity are inseparable.

Scripture consistently links knowing God with how we treat others. From Jesus' teaching to the prophets and apostles, righteousness is expressed through active generosity, through giving without expecting anything in return, just as Christ modelled.

This challenges us to see the cross not only as something to trust in, but something that reshapes how we live. The Easter story reminds us that suffering isn't failure, nor is death the end, but that Resurrection invites us to a new way of life.

Each day is an opportunity to meet a need, regardless of what we might receive in return. Oh, to live righteous lives, as people who know the Lord, who pour out our lives for others just as Christ did for each of us.

## bible study

**Read Matthew 6:22-23 aloud together.**

Now that you understand the '*good eye / bad eye*' idiom, discuss how this passage takes on new meaning.

**Read Matthew 25:31-46 aloud together.**

This is Jesus' last teaching before His arrest. Why did Jesus place such emphasis on caring for the least of these, and how does this passage challenge you personally?

**Read 2 Corinthians 9 aloud together.**

How do we discern what resources in our lives are *seed* (to be sown/given) versus *fruit* (intended for our own enjoyment)?

## application

Discuss and consider how you could commit to both of these applications in the coming weeks.

### Option 1 - Practice Zakat

Carry out one generous act this week, which:

- Is not done out of obligation
- Is done to show the love of God
- Is for someone who cannot repay you

### Option 2 - Meet A Need

Identify one specific need in your community and take a concrete step to meet it this week. Make a plan to meet the need together as a group. Focus initially on the unsaved and/or the vulnerable. Think mowing lawns, cooking meals, etc!

## prayer points

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- Transformed understanding of righteousness, rooted in generosity rather than works or merely avoiding doing bad things
- Eyes opened to see the need around us
- Courage to sow the seed we've each been given, even when there's no return or recognition
- Hearts shaped towards righteousness by living generously

## scripture memory

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In Jewish understanding, **Matthew 5:6** is literally about waking up every day, desiring to make someone else's life better. Commit this passage to memory and meditate on it this week:

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." **Matthew 5:6**

# MORE RESOURCES

Guest Speaker

Shane Willard

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*This topic challenges our understanding and application of the word righteousness, aligning it so closely with generosity. Be mindful that we live in financially stressful times, so it may be worth acknowledging that the answer is not merely to "be more financially generous". Really, it is a heart position into which each of us is invited.*

Prayer/praise report from your group? Anything else you think we should know? [Click here](#) to pass it on to our Pastoral Team so we can address it in our weekly meeting.

## additional questions

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Q1 - How did you previously understand the word righteous, and how does Shane's teaching challenge or expand that understanding?

Q2 - Consider an area in your life where you've been, to quote Shane, "sitting on your butt waiting to go to heaven" instead of participating in bringing heaven to earth? Remember, this is about growth, not guilt!

Q3 - The sermon mentioned **Tikkun Olam**: the repairing of the world. Where do you see brokenness in your community, that God might be inviting you to help repair?

## deeper bible study

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**Matthew 25:31-46** - The Sheep and the Goats

**2 Corinthians 9** - Generosity and Sowing

**Jeremiah 22:16** - Knowing God through justice

**James 1:27** - Pure religion