

## General Comments on Matthew 6-7

The Sermon on the Mount continues with Jesus drawing sharp contrasts between his disciples and the "scribes and Pharisees" from 5:20. In the KJV it is not entirely clear that is what Jesus is doing, but the Inspired Version (IV, also known as the Joseph Smith Translation-JST) makes it clear that is who he is mainly addressing, especially in ch. 7. Thus, whenever Jesus is addressing the bad example, the "hypocrites", or the "evil", he is holding up the "scribes and Pharisees" and telling his disciples to be just the opposite. His definition of a "disciple" is therefore behavior-based. He is saying if you act like the scribes and Pharisees, then you aren't his disciple.

Mark's account entirely omits the Sermon on the Mount, and Luke's account is considerably shorter but contains some different text, cf. Luke 6:37-49.

The IV makes considerable changes in these two chapters, as is shown in the KJV and IV parallel below. Because of the sheer number of changes, they cannot be addressed exhaustively here. Only the more prominent changes will be addressed in the comments below. Careful review of the parallel is recommended as there are substantial changes.

### KJV

1 Take heed that ye do not  
your alms before men,  
to be seen of them:  
otherwise ye have no reward  
of your Father which is in heaven.  
2 Therefore  
when thou doest thine alms,  
do not sound a trumpet before thee,  
as the hypocrites  
do in the synagogues and  
in the streets,  
that they may have glory of men.  
Verily I say unto you,  
They have their reward.  
3 But when thou doest alms,  
let not  
thy left hand know  
what thy right hand doeth:  
4 That thine alms

### IV

1 And it came to pass that,  
as Jesus taught his disciples,  
he said unto them,  
Take heed that ye do not  
your alms before men,  
to be seen of them;  
otherwise ye have no reward  
of your Father who is in heaven.  
2 Therefore  
when thou doest alms,  
do not sound a trumpet before thee,  
as the hypocrites do,  
in the synagogues and  
in the streets,  
that they may have glory of men.  
Verily I say unto you,  
They have their reward.  
3 But when thou doest alms,  
let it be unto thee as  
thy left hand not knowing  
what thy right hand doeth;  
4 That thine alms

may be in secret:  
and thy Father  
which seeth in secret  
himself shall reward thee openly.  
5 And when thou prayest,  
thou shalt not be  
as the hypocrites are:  
for they love to pray  
standing in the synagogues and  
in the corners of the streets,  
that they may be seen of men.  
Verily I say unto you,  
They have their reward.  
6 But thou,  
when thou prayest,  
enter into thy closet,  
and when thou hast shut thy door,  
pray to thy Father  
which is in secret;  
and thy Father  
which seeth in secret  
shall reward thee openly.  
7 But when ye pray,  
use not vain repetitions,  
as the heathen do:  
for they think that  
they shall be heard  
for their much speaking.  
8 Be not ye therefore  
like unto them:  
for your Father knoweth  
what things ye have need of,  
before ye ask him.  
9 After this manner therefore  
pray ye:  
Our Father which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
10 Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done in earth,  
as it is in heaven.  
11 Give us this day  
our daily bread.  
12 And forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive  
our debtors.  
13 And lead us not  
into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil:  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever.  
Amen.

may be in secret;  
and thy Father  
who seeth in secret,  
himself shall reward thee openly.  
5 And when thou prayest,  
thou shalt not be  
as the hypocrites;  
for they love to pray  
standing in the synagogues and  
in the corners of the streets,  
that they may be seen of men;  
for, verily, I say unto you,  
They have their reward.  
6 But thou,  
when thou prayest,  
enter into thy closet,  
and when thou hast shut the door,  
pray to thy Father  
who is in secret;  
and thy Father  
who seeth in secret  
shall reward thee openly.  
7 But when ye pray,  
use not vain repetitions,  
as the hypocrites do;  
for they think that  
they shall be heard  
for their much speaking.  
8 Therefore be ye not  
like unto them;  
for your Father knoweth  
what things ye have need of,  
before ye ask him.  
9 Therefore after this manner  
shall ye pray, saying,  
10 Our Father who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
11 Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done on earth,  
as it is done in heaven.  
12 Give us this day,  
our daily bread.  
13 And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive  
those who trespass against us.  
14 And suffer us not to be led  
into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
15 For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
forever and ever,  
Amen.

14 For if ye forgive men  
their trespasses,

your heavenly Father  
will also forgive you:

15 But if ye forgive not  
men their trespasses,  
neither will your Father  
forgive your trespasses.

16 Moreover when ye fast,  
be not, as the hypocrites,  
of a sad countenance:  
for they disfigure their faces,  
that they may appear  
unto men to fast.

Verily I say unto you,  
They have their reward.

17 But thou,  
when thou fastest,  
anoint thine head,  
and wash thy face;

18 That thou appear not  
unto men to fast,  
but unto thy Father  
which is in secret:  
and thy Father,  
which seeth in secret,  
shall reward thee openly.

19 Lay not up for yourselves  
treasures upon earth, where  
moth and rust doth corrupt,  
and where thieves  
break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves  
treasures in heaven, where  
neither moth nor rust doth corrupt,  
and where thieves

do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is,  
there will your heart be also.

22 The light of the body  
is the eye:  
if therefore thine eye be single,

thy whole body  
shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil,  
thy whole body  
shall be full of darkness.

If therefore the light  
that is in thee be darkness,  
how great is that darkness!

24 No man can serve two masters:

16 For if ye forgive men  
their trespasses,

who trespass against you,  
your heavenly Father  
will also forgive you;

but if ye forgive not  
men their trespasses,  
neither will your heavenly Father  
forgive you your trespasses.

17 Moreover, when ye fast,  
be not as the hypocrites,  
of a sad countenance;  
for they disfigure their faces,  
that they may appear  
unto men to fast.

Verily, I say unto you,  
They have their reward.

18 But thou,  
when thou fastest,  
anoint thy head  
and wash thy face,  
that thou appear not

unto men to fast,  
but unto thy Father  
who is in secret;  
and thy Father,  
who seeth in secret,  
shall reward thee openly.

19 Lay not up for yourselves  
treasure upon earth, where  
moth and rust doth corrupt,  
and where thieves  
break through and steal.

20 But lay up for yourselves  
treasures in heaven, where  
neither moth nor rust doth corrupt,  
and where thieves

do not break through nor steal.

21 For where your treasure is,  
there will your heart be also.

22 The light of the body  
is the eye;  
if therefore thine eye be single  
to the glory of God,

thy whole body  
shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil,  
thy whole body  
shall be full of darkness.

If therefore the light  
which is in thee be darkness,  
how great shall that darkness be.

24 No man can serve two masters,

### Matthew 6.3

for either he will hate the one,  
and love the other;  
or else he will hold to the one,  
and despise the other.  
Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

25 Therefore I say unto you,  
Take no thought for your life,  
what ye shall eat,  
or what ye shall drink;  
nor yet for your body,  
what ye shall put on.  
Is not the life more than meat,  
and the body than raiment?  
26 Behold the fowls of the air:  
for they sow not,  
neither do they reap,  
nor gather into barns;  
yet your heavenly Father  
feedeth them.  
Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you by taking thought  
can add one cubit unto his stature?  
28 And why take ye thought  
for raiment?  
Consider the lilies of the field,  
how they grow;  
they toil not,  
neither do they spin:  
29 And yet I say unto you,

for either he will hate the one,  
and love the other;  
or else he will hold to the one  
and despise the other.  
Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.  
25 And, again,  
I say unto you,  
Go ye into the world,  
and care not for the world;  
for the world will hate you,  
and will persecute you,  
and will turn you out  
of their synagogues.  
26 Nevertheless,  
ye shall go forth  
from house to house,  
teaching the people;  
and I will go before you.  
27 And your heavenly Father  
will provide for you,  
whatsoever things ye need for food,  
what ye shall eat;  
and for raiment,  
what ye shall wear or put on.  
28 Therefore I say unto you,  
Take no thought for your life,  
what ye shall eat,  
or what ye shall drink;  
nor yet for your bodies,  
what ye shall put on.  
Is not the life more than meat,  
and the body than raiment?  
29 Behold the fowls of the air,  
for they sow not,  
neither do they reap,  
nor gather into barns;  
yet your heavenly Father  
feedeth them.  
Are ye not much better than they?  
How much more will he not feed you?  
30 Wherefore take no thought  
for these things,  
but keep my commandments  
wherewith I have commanded you.  
31 For which of you by taking thought  
can add one cubit unto his stature?  
32 And why take ye thought  
for raiment?  
Consider the lilies of the field,  
how they grow;  
they toil not,  
neither do they spin.  
33 And yet I say unto you

That even Solomon  
in all his glory  
was not arrayed like one of these.  
30 Wherefore,  
if God so clothe  
the grass of the field,  
which to day is,  
and to morrow is  
cast into the oven,  
shall he not much more  
clothe you,  
O ye of little faith?  
31 Therefore take no thought,  
saying,  
What shall we eat? or,  
What shall we drink? or,  
Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things  
do the Gentiles seek:)

for your heavenly Father knoweth  
that ye have need  
of all these things.

33 But seek ye first  
the kingdom of God,  
and his righteousness;  
and all these things  
shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore  
no thought for the morrow:  
for the morrow shall take thought  
for the things of itself.  
Sufficient unto the day  
is the evil thereof.

that even Solomon,  
in all his glory,  
was not arrayed like one of these.  
34 Therefore,  
if God so clothe  
the grass of the field,  
which today is,  
and tomorrow is  
cast into the oven,  
how much more will he not  
provide for you,  
if ye are not of little faith?  
35 Therefore take no thought,  
saying,  
What shall we eat? or,  
What shall we drink? or,  
Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

36 Why is it that ye murmur  
among yourselves, saying,  
We cannot obey thy word  
because ye have not  
all these things,  
and seek to excuse yourselves,  
saying that,

After all these things  
do the Gentiles seek.

37 Behold, I say unto you  
that your heavenly Father knoweth  
that ye have need  
of all these things.

38 Wherefore,  
seek not the things of this world  
but seek ye first  
to build up the kingdom of God,  
and to establish his righteousness,  
and all these things  
shall be added unto you.

39 Take, therefore,  
no thought for the morrow;  
for the morrow shall take thought  
for the things of itself.  
Sufficient unto the day  
shall be the evil thereof.

## Comments on Matthew 6

This chapter continues the Sermon on the Mount with two main topics designed to contrast the superficial with the substantive. The first set of points addresses outward appearances versus inward convictions with regard to religious

worship (v. 1-18). The second set contrasts materialism with spirituality and states the two are mutually exclusive (v. 19-34).

**1 TAKE heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.**

v1 The introduction to v. 1-18. Jesus tells his disciples to not do good works only for appearances, he then discusses at length a number of acts which should be private but have become public, namely charity (v. 2-4), prayer (v. 5-15), and fasting (v. 16-18). While Jesus specifically comments only on these three topics, clearly he is similarly referring to any sanctimonious overt act of religiosity.

"do not your alms before men", a poor translation in the KJV. A better translation would be "do not your righteousness before men". The KJV rendering of "alms" suggests v. 1 is continuous with v. 2-4 rather than an introduction to v. 2-18.

**2 Therefore when thou doest [thine] alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: 4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.**

v2-4 When practicing charity, do not make it a public act. Those who practice charity discreetly will be blessed discreetly.

The issue here is what motivates the giver. If the person is motivated by a genuine desire to help those in need, then they do not require any public adulation, and the Lord will bless them in their selflessness.

**5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites [are]: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. 7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen [do]: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things**

ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as [it is] in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

v5-15 The disciples are taught the true order of prayer. Do not pray publicly or pretentiously so as to appear pious (v. 5), do it privately and sincerely (v. 6-8). Prayer is the means of reconciling oneself to God's will (v. 9-10), asking Him for mercy (v. 11-13), and acknowledging His power (v. 13). Jesus then parenthetically points out that in order to obtain forgiveness from the Father, one must also be forgiving (v. 14-15).

The ideal Semitic concept of prayer is that of introspection. The purpose of prayer is to meditate upon the Lord's will for yourself, your own shortcomings, your own relationships. To make it a public act of self-righteousness is precisely the opposite of its purpose.

v7 "vain repetitions", the purpose of prayer is not to make your needs heard, as God already knows what you need (v. 8), it is to reconcile yourself to God's plans for you. Those who use meaningless repetition think they have to do so in order to be heard by God, but Jesus makes it clear this is not the case.

"as the heathen do", the IV changes the "heathen" to "hypocrites", referring to those in v. 2 and 5.

v8 If the Father already knows what we need before we pray for it, then what is the point of praying? It is to humble ourselves before Him, to confess before Him, and to reconcile our will to His, cf. D&C 46:30, D&C 50:29. This is why repetition is vain, because if the prayer is not doing us any good, then it is completely pointless.

v12 "forgive us our debts", the IV changes the "debts" to "trespasses", keeping it more consistent with the substance of

v. 14-15.

v13 "deliver us from evil", this could be more accurately translated "deliver us from the evil one" or "deliver us from the wicked one".

16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; 18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

v16-18 Do not fast in an overt fashion such that all can see you are fasting. Rather, fast privately so none will be aware you are fasting, except God.

The practice Jesus is commenting on is when people would deliberately dress down and put ashes on their face. In some cases the Lord encourages such things as an act of humility, cf. Esther 4:1-3, Jer. 6:26. But, in this case, it is being done as a public act of self-righteousness, so Jesus rejects it. In doing so, Jesus echoes Isaiah, cf. Isa. 58:5

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. 23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great [is] that darkness!

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

v19-34 Jesus contrasts materialism with spirituality. Clearly, this is problem that afflicted the religious elite during Jesus' time, but is also persistent problem today, and ever has been.

v19-24 Jesus encourages his disciples to focus on spiritual treasures, which cannot be stolen (v. 19) over material treasures which are fleeting (v. 20). Whatever a person treasures is where their desires will be focused (v. 21). The



disciple is to keep their eye on heavenly and eternal things (v. 22) instead of on carnal and temporal things. Whatever the person's eye is focused on, it leads their entire body to, so beware an eye that looks after carnal and temporal things (v. 23). Materialism and spirituality are mutually exclusive (v. 24).

v22 The IV on this verse indicates the eye is to be single to the glory of God.

v24 The IV inserts three verses following this one. The first two tell the disciples to go out into the world expecting rejection, but they are expected to go and proselyte regardless. And, in their ministry the Lord will go before them, meaning He will prepare the way for them.

The third verse is an explanatory lead in to the subject started in v. 25. It states the Father will provide all of their physical needs for them in their missionary labors, therefore they should not worry about those physical things. This promise of Providence is conditional upon them keeping the commandments, as the IV insertion after v. 26 indicates.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, [shall he] not much more [clothe] you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day [is] the evil thereof.

v25-34 Jesus tells his disciples to not be concerned about

their basic physical needs (v. 25). He then gives a series of natural examples of the birds of the air and flowers of the field, which grow and prosper even though they spend no time planning or worrying (v. 26-30). Following this example, the disciples should be similarly unconcerned with their physical needs because God will provide for them (v. 31-32). As long as the disciples have the kingdom of God as their priority, then God will see their needs are met (v. 33). Don't worry about tomorrow, as God will make sure they will not encounter any adversity too great (v. 34).

v25 "Take no thought", a better translation would be "Do not worry". The Greek term for worry is "merimnao" whereas the Greek for "thought", as in the contents of your mind, is "ennoia". This is the same for the v. 28 reference to thought.

v26 The IV inserts a verse after this one making it clear the various promises of divine support given in the preceding verses are conditional upon the individual's keeping the commandments. As long as the disciples are vigorously doing the work of the kingdom, then God will provide for them.

v27 This verse tells the disciples who are engaged in missionary work to not spend their time thinking about physical matters. The metaphor used says that one cannot add to their physical stature by merely thinking, and so they should cast their thoughts upon other things. Which in this case would be the ministry.

Naturally, one has to think when putting on clothes or cooking food or doing whatever physical necessity is being met, but that is not what is being addressed. Jesus is saying the disciples should be putting physical things after spiritual things, and having the faith to let God take care of the physical things. If the disciples put these physical things first they would get very little missionary work done because they would have to pursue their livelihoods of fishing, tax gathering, or what ever it was they were doing before. What Jesus is saying is "Forget about your careers, you work for me now." Hence the events in Matt. 4:18-21 and then again in John 21:3-17 when they think that Jesus' death has ended their ministry. Also cp. John 6:27.

v30 "O ye of little faith", the IV changes this from an

accusation to a conditional "if ye are not of little faith".

v31 The IV inserts a verse after this one explaining that v. 31 is addressing some of the disciples apparent lack of faith. They are murmuring and they want to excuse themselves from the rigors of the missionary calling. They want to live just like everyone else does.

V34 "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof", in other words "you will not be challenged with more evil than you can face", cp. D&C 122:9. Note the disciples are not promised to be spared evil, only that it will be mitigated to manageable amounts.

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