

“MOTIVES”

Matt 6:1-4

Pastor Glen Davidson was a businessman who felt the call to preach. He informed his boss he was quitting. The owner of the company told his boss, offer him a \$500 raise, and if he takes it, fire him on the spot! Jesus deals with the issue of motives.

I. UNDER THE SURFACE

A. Life involves actions – ministry involves actions; There are things that we do – things we do that are right

1. But underneath our actions are motives: *Reason for doing something, especially one that is hidden or not obvious*

a. Q: *Why* are you doing what you are doing?

b. Reality: We can be doing the right things – for the wrong reasons!

2. Many motives revolve around our ego

a. **We want attention from other people:** Praise from other people

1. *V1 to be seen of men.* 2. *V2 sounding a trumpet on the streets...*

b. **We want position:** Which we assume will give us more attention

1. *Grant that we sit on the right and the left* 2. *Chief seats at feasts*

c. **We want power:** Being able to tell people what to do

1. *Jesus warned his disciples of ‘Lording’ over people*

B. The problem is that our motives can be hidden to ourselves

1. *Proverbs 21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart*

a. We feel spiritual – all for Jesus! But actually there is raging pride/selfishness/ambition

II. DAMAGING MOTIVES

A. Wrong motives can cause us problems – they are destructive!

1. **They cause conflicts with others**

a. We view other people as competitors for what we want: *Attention/position*

1. So we fight with them (conflict)

a. The issue people are fighting about is often not what they’re actually upset at

b. We envy them (upset at their blessings). c. We hate them

2. **They cause conflict with leadership**

a. We become offended when leaders fail to give us what we really want

1. *Elder brother: You never gave me a goat!* 2. *Man leaving the church – you didn’t thank me for working on the van!*

3. **They hinder the blessing of God:** In God’s economy – doing right is rewarded

a. But wrong motives stop God’s rewards:

1. *Matt 6:1 ...otherwise you have no reward from your father in heaven. V3 they have their reward*

III. HEALTHY PERSPECTIVE ON MOTIVES

A. Immaturity refuses involvement in right actions

1. *I don’t want to be a hypocrite...so I won’t do anything!*

a. Lazy/envious/bitter people sue this as an excuse – as a reason to despise others who are laboring

B. Total purity of heart is exceedingly rare: Most of us operate on mixed motives

1. Part of us wants to do right for/right reasons – and part of us wants to do right for the wrong reasons

a. God is able to accomplish His will – even with imperfect motives!

2. We can work on this: **V3-4** in secret...going against pride/selfishness

C. Most of salvation and ministry involves course corrections

1. God deals with us/exposes us in preaching/word of God/prayer

2. Events/conflicts/crises expose us

3. There can be major life course corrections – that involve major crises/revelation

a. *The Iroquois Indians gave developmentally challenged children a place of honor in the tribe and treated them as gods. It was felt that in their lack of self-centeredness, they were a transparent window into the Great Spirit. It is interesting that in their ancient culture those early Native American people learned to think of people without mixed motives as divine – godlike.*