

Matthew 19-08-11a

Good morning, welcome to Sunday at Grace and Truth Bible Church. We're continuing our study this morning in the Gospel of Matthew, resuming in chapter 6. This is the continuation of what is commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount, teaching on the hill for the inner circle of disciples who have climbed up that slope to listen to Jesus teach those who are serious about their spiritual life. And those of us who are here this morning to spend time in fellowship in the study of God's Word are serious about our spiritual life and we look to the Word of God as we've recently seen in Psalm 119 to enlighten us to be a lamp for our feet and a light for our path.

And this morning we're going to be looking at something that Jesus has introduced in this chapter that is a prominent biblical concept but in the six chapters of Matthew it hasn't occurred until now. It is an Old Testament facet, it is a New Testament facet and something we need to look at. It's going to be referenced in this gospel about 16 different times but the first time is here in chapter 6. So we'll pause to take a look at this concept and see Jesus speak of it in this chapter three times and he will go on to talk about it in chapter 7 and again in chapter 15 and 16 and 22 and a number of times in chapter 23.

It's an important concept and one that we need to fully understand and that in popular parlance we have not really gotten a full grip on. But as I mentioned last week Jesus spoke Aramaic and the term that he uses here gains a much more fulsome sense for us when we see its roots in the Old Testament and its roots in the language that Jesus spoke and then added to that is going to be the concept that is imported when it is translated into Greek. But let's begin by asking God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study and we'll get started.

Father it is a privilege and a great honor for us to be related to you through the Lord Jesus Christ to be called by his name to represent him on this earth as his body to know that we have a certain future guaranteed by your promises by his work on the cross on our behalf and by the constant sealing and filling and indwelling of the Holy Spirit that is our privilege as believers in this age we thank you for the Lord Jesus and the incomparably great things that have come to us through him and that will come to us through him when he returns to bring us before your throne to enter us into that realm where there are new opportunities and reunion with the saints who have gone before and fresh insight and a greater understanding of your character and your person your plan and the outworking of all things that continues in this day and extends into the future well beyond our limited human sight we thank you for the cleansing power of the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross we thank you for the grace that forgives us of our sins that renews us and restores a right spirit within us the Holy Spirit that ministers to our souls and brings to our hearts your word especially as we reflect on it and look at it and seek to hide it away as treasure in our heart we pray that as we look at this portion

of your word this morning that the Holy Spirit will teach us and give us insight and understanding and remembrance and facilitate our application as it comes into play for testing and for application in our circumstances and in our thoughts we ask your blessing on our fellowship and study this morning and we ask these things in Jesus name amen

Matthew chapter 6 if you will recall began take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men to be seen by them otherwise you have no reward from your father in heaven and we've seen as we progress through this chapter that the contrast is who do you live your life to please you really have three choices if you think about it you can do like Ricky Nelson sang in his song Garden Party you got to live your life to please yourself I'll let you look that up later if you don't remember that little tune but he got panned by a lot of fans and critics and such because he did a concert at Madison Square Garden and he was of course famous for his early songs he was the son of Ozzie and Harriet Nelson and came up he grew up sort of on that television show in the late 1950s and went on to become a he had a really good voice and he was a talented musician and he had some teenage hits in his early career but of course he wanted to progress and move on and develop his artistic expression and so he continued to write songs and people didn't like the new songs like they liked the old songs and famously he went to Madison Square Garden and sang a couple of his old songs and then tried out some of the new material and he started getting booed and you know rotten vegetable time and so he was disappointed that all people wanted to do is hear the the young Ricky in here this is 10, 12, 15 years later so he wrote this song Garden Party went to a garden party visit with some of my old friends and there were other artists that were there he makes references to Chuck Berry and a few others in that song but the upshot of it is he says you can't please everyone in the chorus so you've got to please yourself well that's there are certain little song lyrics that stick in my mind that one and you've heard me reference many times I kind of pick on Barbra Streisand for multiple reasons but she sang a song that expresses certain human viewpoint characteristics as did the gal that checked out early that sang about the greatest love of all is loving yourself Whitney Houston Barbara sang I love the way he makes me feel you know it's not that he's got qualities or character but I like how I feel because of his attention and there are just a few secular songs that sum up a lot of things that we are prone to all of us as human beings but you can live your life to please yourself you can live your life to please others try to impress others be approved of others be embraced and enfolded by your circle of acquaintance and of course what you have to do depends a lot on what that group values if you go into the cowboy culture why you need boots and a hat you don't necessarily need cattle it helps if you drive a truck if you're in the biker culture there's an ethos and an appearance and a set of interests lots of different choices you can make the college sorority and fraternity scene or subcultures within college the you get I don't know what they call them now they used to be sort of the geeks and nerds and and the ones that were not just interested in actual learning at school but sort of made it a point of pride to look down on and cast aspersions on the jocks and popular crowd this is not anything new but it is a feature of our life that our immediate circle can influence our

thoughts and decisions our priorities because we don't want to displease and many times we do what we do primarily to gain approval could be at work could be in a in any form of association of course and obviously for us the proper guiding principle is to live our lives to please the lord to please god and that is something that Jesus addresses here so he says take heed that you do not do and he's going to talk about several things the first one is alms or charitable deeds before men to be seen by them otherwise you have no reward from your father in heaven and reward either comes from being seen by men or being seen by god in the sense of approval to be seen by them actually means to be approved by them to be embraced and and applauded by them and in principle it's easy to say well of course i would want god to be pleased but in practice god's far away people are close at hand and it's a lot easier to say well i'm going to get in trouble with my circle if i do this or i will be well thought of if i do that so this is the theme that begins this section chapter six this chapter break is a good one jesus has finished loving your enemies you have heard it said but i say up above but the transition in verses 47 and 48 if you greet your brethren only what do you more than others not even the tax collectors do so therefore you shall be mature you shall be perfect you shall be complete just as your father in heaven is perfect complete mature established on a solid foundation and lacking nothing this is the idea and there's a great transition there then into chapter six uh if you are going to be like your father then you should act in a way that is pleasing in his sight and not have your priority elsewhere this is a pretty straightforward concept initially but as jesus moves forward he says when you do a charitable deed do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do it's the first time in this gospel therefore the first time in the new testament in our order of books that this term occurs hypocrite and jesus mentions the hypocrites here in verse two do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogue and in the streets interesting duality there in the synagogue this is sort of the inner circle of fellow believers and in the streets which is any old body but the trumpet is designed to attract the attention of the inner circle and anybody else that might be within earshot this is what hypocrites do why that they may have glory from men two categories of men those in the synagogues and those in the streets and so we have our circle of of family and friends for us these generally comprised believers when they are close to us and then there's the larger fringe and and onlookers beyond that assuredly i say to you they have their reward but when you do a charitable deed do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing and this is the extreme opposite sort of a hyperbolic opposite of sounding a trumpet so that any and all can know this should be so private that it's as few as possible no left hand not know what the right hand is doing and we mentioned before that this is a little bit of review but hands have occurred in previous chapter talking about cutting them off if they lead you astray that your charitable deed may be in secret and your father who sees in secret will himself reward you period we've crossed out openly right openly is not anywhere in this chapter that's imported and added later your father who sees in secret will himself reward you where are we looking for purpose meaning satisfaction sometimes we want to be appreciated we want to be noticed we especially in areas

where we might have some insecurity uh the approval of people near and or far can allay our tendency to have a lack of self-esteem in the psychological sense of the term there are people whose opinion of themselves is too low unhappily low problematically low scripture encourages us not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think scripture also encourages us not to think less of ourselves than we ought to think we shouldn't spend a whole lot of time navel gazing or thinking about ourselves except to examine ourselves to see if we're in the faith not comparatively well that person is and does and possesses i am not and i don't do and i don't possess in these certain areas and there is this sense of inferiority i i am less than i'm i compare unfavorably with others my my physical appearance isn't up to the average or above my my accomplishments aren't up to the average my education my my standing economically or we know what this is and you've also probably by this point in your life no matter how old you are seeing people who are dysfunctional because their self-estimate is low you can recognize i've known since i was in grade school that i'm not athletically gifted not uh built for sports i i've got good hand-eye coordination but combination of a lack of opportunity lack of training i was in schools where they didn't really encourage children and teach in the early years the basic skills for sports never was taught how to dribble a basketball never was taught you know how to pitch or how to bat or how to catch you know played in the backyard with my dad and my brothers but it was just no coaching no training and no opportunity to develop by playing team sports as many schools do almost to a fault now they start you in the earliest grades and kids play soccer and and do gymnastics and such and and uh it's really neither here nor there in terms of is that good or bad uh yeah there's an argument to be made that kids are being driven into sports so early now that there's injury and there's you know you blow a knee out when you're in the fifth grade you know you're done for sports and uh but my point in this illustration up is um when you're a kid going through school there's a lot of taxing of your self-esteem uh if you find yourself comparing unfavorably with classmates and others well what do you do with that you can say well maybe i'm not a great athlete but i get good grades i i study hard i pay attention in class and so my area of accomplishment is just different here's a guy that just isn't really mentally gifted doesn't doesn't do well doesn't have good study habits had some combination of heredity and environment that that makes him not a great student may have a terrible home life it's almost impossible to do any homework at home who knows what it might be but has a knack for shooting baskets or hitting baseballs running track and and that's their area and uh children who are raised and trained and learned to be balanced recognize that you know there's pluses and minuses and that combination is going to be different for for different people some girls are just naturally innately pretty and cute and others are are not they're not they're not uh you know horrifying but some are just distractingly uh good looking in their appearance and that can be a real problem because you end up being dealt with at a very superficial level and you don't know if people are paying attention to you because they're just fascinated by your face and figure or if they see who you really are and and would be your friend and and and stick with you even if you weren't um same thing with

athletes same thing with smart people same thing and and so we have this push and pull and it continues all through life and if you start out having a knack for impressing people with your looks you're handsome or you're pretty that's going to be the entree into doing what you do looking how you look taking care uh with your appearance because that's been your entree that's been your foot forward that's been how you achieve a comfort level uh in your circle and when you enter a new circle and you say well i'll dazzle them with my uh you know magazine cover looks other times it it's important for people to bring some natural ability that they have um this this to me and i can say this because i make an attempt to play the guitar but the the world is full of people who play the guitar the thing's got six strings and uh you can be uh mediocre or average on a guitar with with not a whole lot of effort but if somebody figures something out on the guitar and they're they're reasonably good or the piano it's it's interesting that many times they've got to put that foot forward very early on i didn't know my roommate even played the guitar i knew him for a whole year and didn't really know it for most of that time because that that wasn't what he needed i'm talking about uh in college uh he had plenty of other uh other attributes and was a naturally pretty balanced guy so he didn't feel the need to say uh well hi there my name's x and uh here i got i got something to show you and then try to dazzle you with with what was actually a really uh great ability but didn't have to put that forward didn't feel a need to impress this is what jesus is talking about uh do you have a need to pull something out of the quiver and shoot it at people so that to be sure that they appreciate you accept you um notice you approve of you uh and he says do not do as the hypocrites and when he uses the word hypocrite at least our text uses the word hypocrite that's a greek word so what is a hypocrite is that what hypocrisy is uh you can do a word study and and look at the greek lexicons and the word has a well-known and storied history going back into classical greek and ionic greek well before the koine greek that is used in our new testament and uh hoopoe uh is is hypo like a hypo i always the way i remembered hoopoe as soon as when i first started taking greek is i knew that u turns into a y and so it's hypo and hypodermic goes under the skin right under the skin so hoopoe means under it can also mean behind uh if something is under wraps it's it's behind a curtain it's it's not visible so hoopoe and then krites k-r-i-t-e-s was the mask that was used by actors in greek plays from famous tragedians and and greek uh playwrights wrote these things and they were centuries old by the time of christ and they were enacted and re-enacted and were known the way movies are known you say oh the ten commandments or cleopatra or how the west was won or a lot of the movies that were extremely popular when i was young the high and the mighty and a lot of westerns and they're just known by everybody well these plays were a part of the greek-speaking culture and were known the way that that titanic and i don't know jurassic park and things are known today they were just known and they they the the form they didn't have all of the varieties of entertainment that we have now you pretty much could tell stories or you could have people act out stories and that was entertainment in the ancient world no radios no phones no tv and the rest of it so everybody understood what an actor was and in greek that's what a hypocrite was hypocrite was not a negative word

in ancient greek just now in our culture in a hundred years ago an actor was an extremely low form of life they were they were not well thought of it was kind of like saying a uh a fool in the sense of the the guy in the throne room that amused the king you know wore the little hat with the bells on an actor and fool were kind of at the same level uh in the sense of you're only here to amuse me you don't have any actual skills you don't have any uh fruitful value you're just an amusement you know you're you're good for a chuckle and actor used to be you know marry anybody just don't marry an actor of course as as time has progressed now that's like the pinnacle of achievement is to be a hypocrite to be an actor but in greek hypocrite just meant someone who speaks from behind the mask from under a mask well we do this all the time so point one here is hypocrisy in the original and true sense of the word is something all of us do it's something all of us do um i'll give you an example uh because i was taught in seminary that a visual will stick in your mind longer than almost anything um i broke my wrist a couple of weeks ago and uh they had to go in and you know scur in some metal and all that to put it back together well it takes a long time for that stuff to heal up but if you look at me today what do you see you wouldn't know look at this there's no visible signs of distress appearance is one thing reality is something else when class is over i'll put the splint back on and you know wait for my next doctor visit but the appearance and i've tried to keep this kind of behind the laptop screen for the last few live classes because it is a distraction truth truth however true it is can be a distraction well i'm not really interested except this morning for purposes of illustration in talking about my wrist what am i interested in we are here to look at the truth of the word of god assimilate it into our hearts and souls have it there for to help us to understand appreciate be transformed by it have it active and energetic in our thought life which will then work itself out in our decisions and in our actions that's why we're here we're not here to commiserate we're not here to wonder well gee i wonder if that thing's gonna swell up or or whatever it's it's a distraction so what what have i done just using myself as an example i have been a hypocrite i have left an appearance of one thing when reality is something else ever been invited to a dinner sat down and the you know i cooked the steaks and they were overdone or it's a vegetable that gets you this close to running from the room with a case of nausea but courtesy good manners and politeness you take a fourth full you stick it in your mouth and you say this is a wonderful meal i appreciate you preparing it and inviting me and the effort that went into it do you tell them this is absolutely the worst bite of squash i've ever eaten in my entire was this off how long have you had this what did you cook this in kerosene you know you could you could feel that way but you don't say that guess what in the greek sense that is hypocrisy the bible teaches you to be a hypocrite i can show it to you in this chapter look down at verse 16 verse 16 jesus has just been condemning hypocrisy but what does he say moreover when you fast do not be like the hypocrites with a sad countenance they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting assuredly i say to you they have their reward but you when you fast anoint your head and wash your face so that you do not appear to men to be fasting did you catch what jesus just said don't be a hypocrite look

different than what's really going on hide the truth don't let on do not be like the hypocrites who when they fast are sad and so they put on a sad countenance when you fast anoint your head and wash your face so that you do not appear to men to be fasting you're fasting but you don't look like you're fasting isn't that putting on a mask isn't that acting one way and feeling another look ma no no splint right acting one way reality is another you're not letting on is this not a deception somebody looks at you i would never know they're fasting can't tell by looking they've anointed their head they've washed their face so this raises the question at least in my mind and because it's in my mind you're going to have to suffer through me trying to figure out the answer what is it to be a hypocrite if not i thought transparency was speak the truth what you see is what you get it's it's on if i'm suffering i look like i'm suffering if i'm happy i'm happy i look like i'm happy jesus says look different to men than what's really going on so that you are not a hypocrite so obviously hypocrisy can't be what we think it is so what is it well how do we figure that kind of thing out what's the best way to study a concept in the bible i've got a theological dictionary here i've got a topical analysis i what what should we do what is the best way to study a biblical concept what does the bible have to say where else does this concept occur and i was fascinated because i did not know this i love the fact that after so long a time i still get surprised and learn really interesting challenging and useful things and one of the things i learned is that uh well just let me ask you can you think you've you know your way around your bible you know where genesis is and you can go from the index to the maps and kind of have an overview can you think of any place in the old testament where it talks about hypocrites think of any verse have we ever memorized a verse out of the old testament that says go to the ant thou hypocrite or thou sluggard i guess it's a sluggard there can you i say i can't think of one i can't think of a verse i've been looking at the old testament my whole life i can't think of a single old testament verse i can't think of a passage i can't think of an episode can't think of a character and yet there is a bible book in the old testament that mentions hypocrites about eight times there's there's 16 references to hypocrites in the gospel of matthew there's eight references to hypocrites in this old testament book you say well hmm what would my guess be well you'll never guess it i wouldn't if i at least maybe you would i couldn't have guessed it but i was quite shocked and surprised it is the book of job it is the book of job job 8 13 job 13 16 job 15 34 job 17 8 job 20 verse 5 27 verse 8 34 30 36 13 it's all the way through the book it starts in chapter 8 and goes all the way through verse through chapter 36 and hypocrite and hypocrisy is mentioned all the way through that book so in job 8 13 for example so are the paths of all who forget god and the hope of the hypocrite shall perish that by the way job 8 13 is your first biblical occurrence of the word hypocrite you've got a concordance or a computer you can or a phone you can look that up and find the others but in job hypocrite obviously does not translate the greek word hypocrites behind the mask and it is not talking about an actor so what is the nature of hypocrisy hypocrite in the old testament translates a different word and and the word there is a word that does not mean to appear one way like a mask but be something else behind the mask or say something from behind the mask it is instead a

word that means to pollute to pollute to take a thing and defile it so you have this word kanaf ch starts with the hate you can have a lot of extra resonance on these letters since we've been looking at the hebrew alphabet so closely in psalm 119 but this is a this is a word that starts with hate kanaf and the primary meaning of this word is to profane a thing to defile it to pollute it you add something that ruins it is translated 13 times in the old testament as hypocrite godless profane but the the root verb there is to pollute so the idea here is that by your presence or by your actions you take away the purity and the value of a thing you think about your food waiter brings you your order you look in there excuse me waiter there's a fly in my soup well it doesn't matter how much of the soup is good the fly has kanafed your soup right spoiled your enjoyment your anticipation that's the idea to pollute so you go back to jobe the paths of those who forget god the hope of the polluter any place you find hypocrite in old testament you can usefully substitute defiler or polluter or corrupter so the paths of those who forget god the hope of the polluter will perish isn't that what jesus is saying here if you do what you do to be seen by men you have your reward you've got no hope for the future in terms of from god if you want reward from god you cannot corrupt that thing i would wager that the aramaic equivalent of this verb is what jesus used when he gave this teaching on the hill jesus did not teach his disciples in greek he taught them in aramaic and when they heard this word spoken from the lips of the lord jesus they didn't think oh he's talking about actors impersonators people who put on a show that's not the old testament idea the old testament idea is you are taking a good thing and you're ruining it you're perverting it you're corrupting it you're defiling it so when we see this word hypocrite as we go through the rest of the of the gospel of matthew and we're going to see it 16 times we're going to see it three times just in this chapter don't think because there's nothing intrinsically wrong with an appearance being different than reality in reality uh i might have a bruise or i might have a an ugly mark on my face is it wrong to cover that up and and hide the distracting value of it is that hypocrisy am i you know they talk about cosmetics you know people use masks of all different kinds to try improve the look of their face if your hair is thin and you're putting mousse in it and fluffing it out the appearance is not reality is that are you a hypocrite not at all we we've come to think of hypocrite as someone who is disguising evil as good and there's an element of truth in that i appear to be righteous but i'm really doing this in a nefarious way it means but it's not what the concept initially connotes that's one facet perhaps that's one way that you can be a hypocrite but it's not the only way and it's not the primary way the primary way is you take a good thing and do you remember all of the things here alms charitable acts charitable acts are a good thing right but jesus talks about someone who takes that and perverts it and corrupts it you can take a good thing and make it ruinous make it bad so is prayer a good thing the hypocrisy in prayer is not having evil thoughts but praying a good prayer disguising evil it's it is the reason you pray you're taking prayer which is the privilege of addressing god and using it to try to please people instead of its intended purpose you've corrupted it and polluted it and defiled it you've taken prayer and turned it into an empty thing turned it into you're you're taking the golden implements that

were supposed to be used for worship in god's tabernacle and god temple god's temple and it would be as though a priest took those home and ate his own dinner with them and invited people over and said look at my fancy shovels and forks and knives here when they were never intended for that they were intended for the service of god you've perverted them to serve yourself that's the genuine idea of hypocrisy so with that in mind we're going to pause here and take our break and when we come back we're going to review what we've seen and move forward starting at verse 16 and see that this concept of hypocrisy greatly aids us in seeing what jesus is talking about and preventing that thinking and that behavior in ourselves it's i can tell you from my own thoughts about it this past week or two that it's it's very convicting it catches us it certainly catches me in places that i didn't expect so we'll take our break and come back and and see how the rest of this chapter plays out in that light