

## 引言 INTRODUCTION

Reading product reviews can help you make a decision before buying something. I often like to pay attention to why some people gave negative comments. Perhaps the product does not live up to their expectations, or because it is unreliable. Sure enough, reviews are not restricted to products. There are evaluations on tourist attractions, hospitals and even churches. And yes, there are people giving reviews about our church too. We are a five-star church when I checked it as I was writing this sermon. Some good comments include: “All are welcome” and “Nice people.” One person said: “It’s always cold inside.” Here is the catch: some of the reviewers are our current or former members. It is like when a kid says: “My mom is the best cook in the world.” Of course, every mom will love praises from her kids. It is a problem when we do good works only for positive comments. That is the issue Jesus addresses when we come to Matthew chapter 6. He introduces three topics: mercy-giving, prayer and fasting. Those are the basic expressions of piety of the Jews. But some religious leaders looked good on the surface to attract people’s attention. Jesus uses the same formula to convict them on all three issues. He says: “Don’t follow the example of the hypocrites. All they want is people’s approval.” Then Jesus advises: “But perform your good deeds in secret. The Heavenly Father will see it and He will reward you.” The first subject is on helping the needy. Sharing what you have with those who are lacking is a noble cause. There are always poor people in the society. However, Jesus cautions us about our mentality as we give. Our focus should be on those who are getting help, and not us getting the credit. Ultimately, God should be the only audience and final judge for our good deeds.

## 解釋 EXPLANATION

### 1. 裝出來的愛 Acting of Love (v. 1-2)

First, Jesus points out the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. They were good at acting of love. He reveals a few of their problems. Number one, they like to perform their good works in front of people. They did so in their synagogues (meeting places) and on the streets. Obviously, they wanted people to see it. They loved to hear praises like: “Oh, you’re such a generous person,” or “You truly have a loving heart toward the poor,” etc. Number two, they even blew a trumpet to alert people what they were doing. Bible scholars give various explanations to the action. First, perhaps an attendant gave a signal at the temple to remind people to drop their offering. Second, maybe the collection box was in a shape of a horn. When people donated money, coins would generate a clinking noise. Regardless, the key here is they wanted people to notice their good works. Problem number three, all they looked for was some instant recognition. Jesus states their expected result in verse 2: “... Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.” They received praise on the spot. That was it. No more reward. Then they might wait for the next opportunity to repeat their acting of love. They felt good about themselves because they liked the exposure. However, such approval is not long-lasting. People saw the effect of their good works. However, there was not much substance. It is a like morning fog. The mist spreads wide. But in reality, there is not much water there. You will only get about one liter of water when you condense the fog from the volume of an Olympic-sized swimming pool. Worse still, such mercy-

giving will have no eternal value. Jesus condemned the hypocrites because their love was only superficial, not sacrificial. The Greek word for “hypocrite” actually has its root in drama. At that time, actors and actresses put on different masks and pretended to be particular characters. People had good acting skills could fool audience into believing that they were different people. But a good guy in the story may actually be a mean person in reality. Besides, nowadays makeup techniques and computer graphics can do a lot of tricks. As humans, we like to receive appreciation from others. But if we are not careful, even sincere commendation can lead to pride. For some reason I did not know, the home church where I became a Christian has a unique practice. It attaches a monthly offering record to the Sunday bulletin. It will not include members’ full names. It will only say, for example, brother Lin gave \$100 last month and sister Lee contributed \$500. We young folks liked to guess who the Zhang and Wong were. Imagine how you would feel if you are the only person with the last-name Choi on the list. Worse still, you only offered \$10! On the other end of the spectrum, people may have a different impression on some big donors. It can easily cause a comparison, even a competition. Indeed, some people care a lot about whose names are put first and whether their names are printed in bigger fonts. Similarly, some people who use the social media like to brag about how many “followers” and “likes” they have. Surely, truthful praise for good work done can be an encouragement. But we should humbly receive commendation and not actively seek after it. Paul shares some good wisdom in 1 Corinthians 4:3-5 – **3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.** The Corinthian church was not founded by Paul. Some church members questioned why they should obey him. The matter got stickier when Paul convicted some ongoing sins in the church. Some brothers and sisters committed immorality, others spread division and even sued each other! They wondered who gave him the authority to command them what to do. Paul paid no attention to those criticism. He said he did not even judge himself. He just faithfully did the work God called him to do. He wrote down God’s truths as letters and sent them to various churches. He left the final judgment to God. People might judge Paul’s intent. Some people liked him, others did not. What mattered the most was the final score God would give Paul. We should keep the same principles to heart. Otherwise, our attitude and passion for ministries may change with people’s comments. After all, people may only see a part of our character. They may only have partial information. Most importantly, they only notice our motions. Only God knows our motives. We should patiently wait for His final assessment.

## 2. 行出來的愛 Acts of Love (v. 3-4)

Jesus convicts the hypocrites for their acting of love. Their mercy was only skin-deep. What God considers as commendable are acts of love that come from a pure heart. How can we tell that we have a clear conscience when showing mercy to others? The word “secret” is used twice in the passage. Jesus describes this secrecy in two ways. First, He says that we should perform our good works secretly such that not even our left hand knows what our right hands is doing. How can that be possible? Let us think of some scenarios. Perhaps one day you have an urge to bless the next beggar you meet on the street. You decide to pull a bank note randomly from your wallet. That act of love will be done in secret. Or perhaps one day you want to give away your

takeout dinner to the next homeless person under a bridge. Your act of love is done in secret because you cannot predict where you will see that person and you have no idea of his/her background. You just give as your heart so leads you. The second way to conduct secret good works is when no one knows it. Only the invisible God sees it. I always admire anonymous donors. They do not want any TV interview for their charitable work. They do not want to expose their identity on news headline either. They only have a simple heart to help people in need. You can perform acts of love in secret too. Perhaps you know that a church family is going through financial difficulty. For example, the husband is laid off from work or a family member incurs a huge medical bill. Rather than presenting a check to the people, you ask a third person to pass some cash to them. The recipients do not know where the money comes from. They do not know who to thank except God. Brothers and sisters: that is a tangible way to show God's love to others. I told you before how my family was blessed by people's kindness. I did not have any income during the three-and-a-half-years when I was in the seminary. My two boys were born during that period of time. Members of my former church gave money to support us. A sister helped collect the fund and deposited it to my bank account. I had no idea who gave and how much they did. God faithfully provided for our mortgage, food, my tuition and other expenses. One Bible verse that resonates deeply in my heart is Proverbs 19:17 – **Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed.** People may be forget to pay back when they borrow money from others. But God will always keep an account of our good works. Jesus brings up this concept of reward from God in the Matthew passage. In fact, the same promise is mentioned throughout the Bible. What kind of reward will that be? First, it can be blessings in this life. Very often, they may come so naturally that we do not even realize them. For example, God makes your career successful. You complete your tasks more efficiently or you bring new contributions to your company. Perhaps God may help students get better grades. Subsequently, the parents can save money when their kids receive scholarships. God may also bless you with good health to avoid medical expenses. In addition, God may protect your home and car and keep everything running without any issue. He may also watch over your family when they are on the road, in school or at work. I am not preaching a prosperity gospel. No one can predict how God will reward you when you help others. But God promises that He will surely bless those who bless others. Better still, God's reward does not only come to us in this life. Many New Testament passages talk about God's eternal reward for His faithful servants. The Bible tells us that there will be two forms of future judgment. First, those who do not accept Jesus in this life will receive their eternal penalty. In other words, they will go to hell. The second judgment is only for believers. We can imagine that it will be like an award ceremony. God will present various prizes to different believers. We do not know what those rewards are. But the Bible teaches that the size of our rewards depends on how we conduct our lives after we are saved. Every Christian will have a place in heaven. But their rewards will differ. It is like all the employees will get their monthly salary. However, the year-end bonus is contingent upon their performance. This should encourage us to work hard for God's Kingdom. Offering money to support Christian ministries is only one of the many ways to serve God. You should also use the gifts and talents God has given you to serve Him in and outside of the church. Of course, another form of good work that ties in to our discussion today is showing mercy to needy people. God is pleased when we perform acts of love as His representatives. Jesus uses a parable in Matthew 25 to illustrate it. A King gives praises to people who served others in their lifetime. Listen to verses 34-36: **34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was**

hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.” Those righteous people scratch their heads when they hear it. They have no idea what the King is talking about. They never served him when he was hungry, thirsty, traveling, naked, sick or imprisoned. The King reminds them in verse 40: ...“Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.” We are serving God when we serve God’s people because every person is made in God’s image. I am sure our attitude will be totally different when we serve a brother or a sister like serving the Lord. We will give people the best treatment regardless of their age or social status. We will be more gracious and patient. God will keep a record of your acts of love, and He will reward you accordingly.

## 結論 CONCLUSION

Ultimately, God should be the only audience and final judge for our good deeds. In closing, let us ponder on a few questions. First, will you feel bad if no one sees your good works? Do you think that you did everything in vain if there is no open recognition? Second, is your help conditional? Do you feel that the recipients owe you a favor? Do you expect them to repay you in the future? Third, do you have joy when you help others? Indeed you have to invest time, money and effort. Do you feel glad that God gives you the opportunity to show people mercy? Fourth, do you give thanks to God at the end? Do you praise Him for blessing you first, so that in turn you can bless others? Those four questions are good tests for us to examine our intent. Let me share with you a true story before we end. Isaac Hann is a little-known pastor who served in a small church (called Loughwood Meeting House) in England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. When he retired from ministry, the church only had twenty-six women and seven men. Many of them did not attend service regularly. In today’s standard, Pastor Hann would not be considered as “successful.” He seldom traveled to another town to preach. He never spoke at any conference. He did not write any book. Yet, when he died at eighty-eight his church members remembered him. They placed a plaque on the wall of their little sanctuary that remains to this day. It reads in part: *Few ministers so humble were, yet few so much admired: Ripened for heaven by grace divine, like autumn fruit he fell; Reader think not to live so long, but seek to live as well.* Pastor Hann did not attract a lot of followers. But he touched every life he met. His name was not recorded in the hall of fame. There was no building designated in memory of him. But God will surely remember all his works. The only remarks Pastor Hann and all believers should desire to hear is: “Welcome home. Good and faithful servant.”

## 引言 INTRODUCTION

閱讀產品評論可以幫助你在購物之前做出決定。我經常喜歡留意為什麼有些人給出負面評語。也許產品沒有達到他們的期望，或者因為它不耐用。除了對於商品的評論之外，還有人會評價旅遊景點、醫院甚至教會。沒錯，也有人給我們的教會打分數。當我寫這篇講道時查到我們是一家五星級教會。一些好的評語包括：「我受到熱情的歡迎」和「你們好友善」。另一個人說：「你們的冷氣太強了。」問題是：一些寫評論的人是我們的現任或過去的成員。這就像一個小孩說：「我的媽媽是世界上最棒的廚師！」當然，每個媽媽都會喜歡孩子的讚賞。問題是，我們不應該只是為了別人的表揚而做好事。這正是耶穌在馬太福音第 6 章中所要討論的問題。祂提出三個主題：施捨、祈禱和禁食。這些是猶太人虔誠的基本表現。但有些宗教領袖表面上看起來很好，以吸引人們的注意。對於那三件事情，耶穌用同樣的方式來責備他們。祂首先說：「不要效法假冒為善的人的榜樣。他們只想得到人們的認可。」然後耶穌告訴聽眾：「你們的好事要行在暗中。天父會看到的，祂也會獎賞你。」第一個主題是幫助有需要的人。與缺乏的人分享你的資源是愛心的行動。社會上總有窮人。然而，耶穌警告我們在施予時要注意的心態。我們的重點應該是那些得到幫助的人，而不是我們得到稱讚。神應該是我們行善的唯一觀眾和最終的評判。

## 解釋 EXPLANATION

### 1. 裝出來的愛 Acting of Love (v. 1-2)

首先，耶穌指出宗教領袖的假冒為善。他們擅長裝出來的愛。耶穌揭露出他們的一些問題。第一，他們喜歡在人們面前表現自己的好行為。他們在猶太人的會堂（就是他們的聚會場所）和街道上表演。很明顯，他們吸引人們的注意。他們喜歡聽到別人的讚美，比如：「嘩，你真是一個慷慨的人」，或者「你對窮人真是有愛心」等等。第二，他們甚至吹喇叭提醒人們他們在做什麼。聖經學者對這一行動有各種解釋。首先，也許有服事的人員在聖殿發出信號，提醒人們奉獻。其次，也許收集箱是號角的形狀。當人們捐款時，硬幣會發出叮噠的響聲。無論如何，這裡的重點是那些宗教領袖希望人們看到他們的好行為。第三個問題，他們所追求的只是即時的讚賞。耶穌在第 2 節中指出他們預期的結果：「...我實在告訴你們，他們已經得了他們的賞賜。」他們當場被人表揚。僅此而已，不再有其他獎勵。然後他們可能會等待下一次機會重複他們裝出來的愛。他們的內心感覺好舒服，因為他們喜歡曝光。然而，這種認可並不持久。人們看到了他們行善的效果。然而，並沒有太多實

質內容。那就像早晨的霧。霧氣蔓延很廣。但實際上，其中並沒有多少水。當你把奧林匹克規模的游泳池的體積的霧凝結時，你只能得到大約一公升的水。更糟糕的是，宗教領袖所表現的憐憫沒有永恆價值。耶穌責備假冒為善的人，因為他們的愛是膚淺的，並沒有帶著犧牲。希臘語文的「偽君子」這個用詞是源於戲劇。那時，演員們戴著不同的面具，假裝成特定的角色。演技好的人能夠讓觀眾感覺他們是不同的人。但故事裡的好人，在現實生活中卻可能是個不好相處的人。此外，現在的化妝技術和電腦圖像可以弄假成真。作為人，我們喜歡得到別人的讚賞。但如果我們不小心注意，即使是真誠的讚揚也會導致驕傲。我剛信之時參加的教會有一個有趣的做法。他們每個月都有一週在崇拜的程序表中公布上一個月的奉獻記錄。他們不會公佈會友的全名。它只會說，例如，林弟兄上個月捐了 100 美元，李姐妹捐了 500 美元。我們年輕人很喜歡猜誰是張弟兄或是黃姐妹。想像一下，如果你是全教會唯一姓蔡的人，你會有什麼感受。更糟糕的是，他只奉獻了 10 美元！另一方面，人們可能對一些奉獻很多的人另眼相看。於是很容易導致比較，甚至競爭。但確實有些人很介意誰的名字放在前面，是否用更大的字體印出來。同樣，一些使用社交媒體的人喜歡吹噓自己有多少「粉絲」和「讚」。當然，對好事表達真誠的讚賞可以成為一種鼓勵。但我們應該虛心接受表揚，而不是主動追求讚賞。保羅在哥林多前書 4:3-5 中分享了他的智慧：**3 我被你們論斷，或被別人論斷，我都以為極小的事；連我自己也不論斷自己。4 我雖不覺得自己有錯，卻也不能因此得以稱義；但判斷我的乃是主。5 所以，時候未到，甚麼都不要論斷，只等主來，他要照出暗中的隱情，顯明人心的意念。那時，各人要從神那裏得着稱讚。**哥林多教會不是保羅創立的。一些教會成員質疑為什麼他們應該服從保羅。更加複雜的是，保羅在書信中責備那所教會中的一些罪。有些弟兄姐妹有不道德的行為，有的人搞分裂，甚至上法院互相告狀！他們懷疑誰給了保羅權力命令他們做事。保羅沒有理會這些批評，他說他甚至不論斷自己，他只是忠心地完成了神呼召他去做的工作。保羅把神的真理寫成書信，寄給各個教會。他把最後的審判留給了神。人們可能會批評保羅的企圖。有些人欣賞他，某些人不喜歡他。最重要的是神會給保羅最後的分數。我們應該記住同樣的原則。否則，我們的事奉的態度和熱誠便會隨著別人的看法而改變。畢竟，人們可能只看到我們性格的一部分。他們可能只掌握部分信息。更關鍵的是，他們只看到我們的行為，唯有神知道我們的動機。我們應該耐心等待祂最後的評估。

## 2. 行出來的愛 Acts of Love (v. 3-4)

耶穌責備假冒為善的人裝出來的愛。他們的憐憫是膚淺的。神認為值得稱讚的是出於單純的心行出來的愛。我們怎樣才能知道自己在憐憫別人時是動機純淨的呢？經文中兩次使用「暗中」這個字。耶穌用兩種方式描述這種暗中的善行。首先，祂說我們應該暗中行善，甚至連左手都不知道右手在做什麼。這怎麼可能？讓我們考慮一些情況。也許有一天你有感動，想要幫助你在街上遇到的下一個乞丐。你打算從

錢包中隨意抽一張鈔票給他。這種愛的行動是行在暗中的。或者有一天，你想把外賣晚餐送給天橋下的一個流浪漢。你的愛心行動是行在暗中的，因為你無法預計你會在這裡碰到那個人，你也不知道他的背景。你就是按照你的心引導去施予。第二種暗中行善的方式是在無人知道的情況下做的，只有看不見的神知道。我從來都很敬佩一些匿名捐助者。他們不希望電視採訪他們的慈善工作。他們也不想在新聞頭條上暴露自己的身份。他們只有一顆單純幫助別人的心。你也可以在暗中付出愛的行動。也許你知道一個教會家庭面對經濟困難。例如，丈夫失業了或家庭成員有巨額醫療費用。你不是直接把錢給當事人，而是透過別人將款項交給他們。收款人不知道錢從哪裡來。除了神之外，他們也不知道該感謝誰。弟兄姐妹：這是向人表達神的愛的具體方式。我之前告訴過你我的家人如得到別人的祝福。我在神學院的三年半期間沒有任何收入。我的兩個兒子都是在那段時間出生的。我以前的教會成員奉獻金錢來支持我們。一位姐妹幫我收集款項並將其存入我的銀行帳戶。我不知道誰捐錢及捐了多少。神信實地供應了我們的房屋貸款、食物、學費和其他費用。箴言 19:17 在我心中有深刻的共鳴：**憐憫貧窮的，就是借給耶和華；他的善行，耶和華必償還。**人或許向人借錢之後忘記還錢。但是神會一直記念我們的善行。耶穌在馬太福音中提到神會獎賞我們的概念。事實上，整本聖經都重複同樣的應許。那會是什麼樣的獎賞呢？首先，它可以是今生的祝福。很多時候，它們可能來得如此自然，以至於我們甚至沒有意識到。例如，神使你的工作順利，你可能是事半功倍，或者為公司帶來新的貢獻。也許神會幫助學生取得更好的成績。於是，孩子拿到獎學金，替父母省錢。神也可能會保護你身體健康，避免醫療費用。此外，神可能會保守你的家和汽車，讓一切正常運作。當你的家人在路上、上學或上班時，祂也可能會看顧他們的安全。我並不是在鼓吹成功神學。沒有人能預計當你幫助別人時神會如何獎賞你。但神答應說，祂一定會祝福那些祝福別人的人。更美的是，神的獎賞不只在今生臨到我們。新約聖經的許多經文都談到神對祂忠心僕人的永恆獎賞。聖經告訴我們，將來的審判有兩種形式。首先，那些在今生不接受耶穌的人將受到永恆的懲罰。換句話說，他們會下地獄。第二種的審判只針對信徒。我們可以想像它是一個頒獎典禮。神會給不同的信徒不同的獎賞。我們不知道那些獎勵是什麼。但聖經教導我們，我們得到的獎賞的大小取決於我們得救後的生活方式。每個基督徒都會上天堂，但他們的獎賞會有所不同。就像所有員工都會得到他們的薪水一樣。不過，年終獎金是根據他們的工作表現而定的。這應該鼓勵我們為神的國努力。奉獻金錢支持基督徒事工只是事奉神的方式之一。你也應該善用神賜給你的恩賜和才幹在教會裡外服事祂。當然，與我們今天討論相關的另一種服事是憐憫有需要的人。當我們成為神的代表表達愛的行動時，神會感到喜悅。耶穌在馬太福音 25 章用一個比喻來說明這一點。一位王讚賞一些服事他人的人。請聽第 34-36 節：**34 「於是王要向那右邊的說：『你們這蒙我父賜福的，可來承受那創世以來為你們所預備的國；35 因為我餓了，你們給我吃，渴了，你們給我喝；我作客旅，你們留我住；36 我赤身露體，你們給我穿；我病了，你們看顧我；我在監裏，你們來看我。』」**那些義人聽了都摸不著頭腦。他們不知道王在說什麼。他們從來沒

有在他飢餓、口渴、旅行、赤身露體、生病或被坐牢時服事過他。王在第 40 節中提醒他們：「...『我實在告訴你們，這些事你們既做在我這弟兄中一個最小的身上，就是做在我身上了。』」當我們為神的子民服務時，我們就是在服事神，因為每個人都是按照神的形象被創造的。我相信當我們事奉弟兄姐妹好像在事奉主之時，我們的態度會完全不同。無論他們的年齡或社會地位如何，我們都會給予他們最好的招待。我們會更有恩慈和更有耐心。神會記念你行出來的愛，並且獎賞你。

## 結論 CONCLUSION

神應該是我們行善的唯一觀眾和最終的評判。最後，讓我們思考幾個問題。第一，當沒有人看到你做好事時，你會感到難過嗎？你是否認為如果沒有公開的認可，你所做的一切都是白做的？第二，你對人的幫助是有條件的嗎？你是否覺得受惠者欠你一個人情？你期望他們將來回報你嗎？第三，幫助別人時你覺得心中喜樂嗎？的確，你必須付出時間、金錢和心力。你是否因為神給你機會向人施憐憫而感到快樂？第四，你最終會感謝神嗎？你是否感謝祂先祝福你，使你能祝福別人？這四個問題可以幫助我們檢視自己助人的動機。讓我分享一個故事作為結束。有一位鮮為人知的韓牧師 (Isaac Hann)，他曾經在 18 世紀的英國的一家小教會服事。當他從事工中退休時，教會只有二十六名女士和七名男士。他們中的許多人沒有定期參加聚會。按照今天的標準，韓牧師不會被視為成功。他很少去另一個城鎮去佈道。他從未在任何會議上發言。他也沒有寫任何書。然而，當他八十八歲去世時，他的教會成員都記得他。他們在小小的崇拜大堂的牆上掛了一塊牌匾，該牌匾至今仍保留著。它的部分內容是：很少有牧師如此謙卑，但也很少有人如此受人欽佩：他因神的恩典而成熟，進入天堂，就像收割秋天的果實一樣；讀者們不必求活得那麼長久，但求活得同樣的豐盛。韓牧師並沒有吸引很多跟隨者。但他啟發了他遇到的每一個生命。他的名字沒有被記錄在名人榜裡，也沒有建築物以他命名。但神一定會記念他的功勞。韓牧師和所有信徒唯一盼望聽到的一句評語是：「良善又忠心的僕人。歡迎回家！」