

Seek Ye First The Kingdom Of God

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Matt. 6:24-34

Jesus made some statements recorded in this 6th chapter of Matthew that we should trust Him and not be anxious about things in this life.

- Matt. 6:25, *“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...”*
- Matt. 6:31, *“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?”*
- Matt. 6:33, *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

Who lives up to this? Who really practices it? Especially when we are taught to be industrious.

Rom. 12:11, *“Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;”*

We are taught to make provisions for the future. Prov. 6:6, *“Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.”*

This is exactly what Joseph did in Egypt. He interpreted Pharaoh’s dream and said there would be 7 years of plenty followed by 7 years of famine, and indicated they should put away from the 7 years of plenty to provide for the 7 years of famine.

The problem comes when we become anxious and make unwise decisions, not placing God first in our lives.

We shouldn’t worry about the days to come. We do what we can and don’t worry about the rest.

In our text, Jesus requires that we put God’s kingdom and God’s business above all other things in life. This text naturally divides itself into two parts in Matt. 6:33:

- The great duty required — *“... seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; ...”*
- The gracious promise made — *“... and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

The great duty required **“... seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; ...”**

The object of the seeking.

“the kingdom of God”.

What is this? Jesus tells us. John 18:36, “*Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.*”

It is not of this world because it did not spring from this world, but it came from heaven.

It is not the same as earthly kingdoms. It is not based upon territories, boundaries, or countries. There is no capitol city or earthly headquarters. Its headquarters reside in heaven, with Jesus as supreme King.

Rom. 14:17, “*For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*”

Christianity is not based upon human desires for things of this life. Luke 17:21, “*Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.*” That is, its appearance could not be observed by the five senses.

The kingdom of God would not come with the pomp and display of an earthy monarch or government. The kingdom of God dwells within the followers of Christ.

John 3:5, “*Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*”

It's a spiritual birth. Jesus came to fulfil all righteousness.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray in Matt. 6:10, “*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*”

At the time this was said the kingdom had not yet been established, but we have it today. The kingdom of God is the rule of God in every sphere of human activity; yet this ideal has not been realized in many areas of life today.

“and his righteousness”

Righteousness is but the fruit of God's reigning in the heart. Psalms 119:172, “*My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.*”

Jesus does not tell us merely to seek righteousness, but **His** righteousness. Any righteousness of our own making is worthless.

- Isa. 64:6, “*But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*”
- Rom. 10:3, “*For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*”

His righteousness is of whole clean cloth and will not corrupt. Phil. 3:8-10, “*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death,”*

Paul said the Old Testament righteousness was to be cast aside. Faith comes by hearing God’s word.

Have you ever wondered why Jesus was baptized? Matt. 3:13-17, “*Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*”

So, we are to let God have sole dominion over us; let Him reign without a rival.

The order of the seeking — “*seek ye first*”.

“First” suggests that there are other objects of our seeking, but they are to be subordinate (lower in importance). “First” suggests that there are others.

We are not to seek the kingdom of God by neglecting our earthly duties; however, we cannot allow these earthly duties detract or interfere with our heavenly duties.

Our Lord does not require that we should be without thought concerning the things of this life.

1 Tim. 5:8, *“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”*

A careless and irresponsible spirit is far removed from the true spirit of Christianity. Rom. 12:11, *“Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord,”*

A true Christian hates slothfulness as he does drunkenness, and flees idleness as he does from adultery.

But we must put first things first, and not allow God’s business in our lives to be crowded out by matters of far less importance.

We cannot let our work, college education, sports, entertainment, or anything else come between us and our service to God. We are to place Him first in everything we do.

My experience in applying for work in a Real Estate firm. I was asked to work on Sundays. I said I couldn't do that; I had to be at church on Sundays. I was told, "Then you're not the one for this job." I replied, "No this job is not the one for me."

My experience in applying for work at the Boeing Wind Tunnel. I told them I was willing to work any day of the week and any time of the day except I needed to be at church Sunday mornings. We agreed on this and a letter of agreement was placed on my file that I would not be required to work Sunday mornings. They only tested this only once. I reminded them of our agreement, and they backed off on wanting me to work one Sunday morning. I have worked all other hours of the day except on Sunday morning.

Why must we “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”?

Because of its superior worth. Matt. 13:44-46, *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”*

The kingdom of heaven should not be something empty or worthless to us. Phil. 3:8, *“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,”*

Paul had education and prestige of the Jewish community. He considered it all dung in his work for Christ.

Because of its eternal duration.

1 John 2:16-17, *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”*

Because now is the only time we have of obtaining them. 2 Cor. 6:2, *“(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)”*

Because we don’t have a promise of tomorrow.

Today is our time for use and improvement; tomorrow is God’s, and He may give it or withhold it.

- Prov. 27:1, *“Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”*
- James 4:13-15, *“Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.”*

The gracious promise made
“... and all these things shall be added unto you.”

What things? The things necessary to support this life, such as food and clothing; not the things that we desire.

Matt. 6:24-26, *“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. 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? 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?”*

If we seek after the things we desire, then we are not serving God.

Matt. 6:28-32, *“And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 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? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.”*

The Lord has promised that He will provide everything we need in this life if we seek first “the kingdom of God and His righteousness.”

His promise is conditional.

The faithful have the certainty of the fulfillment of this promise — “... and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Not “maybe so”, but “shall”. That is His promise.

2 Pet. 3:9, *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”*

This does not mean that this presents an easy way to make a living, but it does mean that this presents a sure way to make a living.

Conclusion

Are you seeking first the kingdom of God?

If not, you will not only miss the greatest thing in this life, but also will miss heaven in the end.

We toil and feel exhaustion and pain in our work in this life. But if we are faithful and always place Him first in our lives in this life, He has promised to care for us in the life to come.

Rev. 21:4, *“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”*

