

Seek first the Kingdom of God Matthew 6:25-34

Jesus has just started His ministry in Galilee. This passage is part of the famous “Sermon on the Mount”. Earlier in the chapter, He has already taught his disciples how to pray, then talks about how God knows what we need as He is always seeing us. Then, Jesus pivots and starts talking about priorities in life. What are we doing with the time given to us? We are all collectors, but what are we collecting? Treasures, for sure, but will they make it to heaven? Our heart will be in what we treasure.

We have a choice to make about what to value.

Finally, Jesus brings it home by pointedly saying we can either serve God (because we treasure Him) or we can serve money/wealth (because we ascribe it supreme value). Again, we have a choice to make regarding who we will serve.

The message here was simple, if one makes the right choice, then there is no reason to be anxious!

Vs 25-34 is a message and this message in the passage we just read is to the Israelites, the Jews, God’s own people not to the Gentiles or those who are unbelievers in God and this message is still the same today. It is for us believers in Jesus Christ!

This message is for the lost house of Israel. The children of God who don’t seem to know God! They are not able to recognize the attributes of God or even His purposes!

1. God does not want us to be anxious about anything in this world.

The things that we are anxious about are usually temporary and they change with the seasons!

What do you think makes a 2-year-old anxious? It is usually when they feel insecure and do not see any sign of their parents, they get anxious and start to cry!

What do you think makes a high-schooler anxious? Lots of silly things (or at least what seems to be silly to us but serious to them). Their hair, clothes,

their cool toys all of which lead to acceptance among friends. (Marketing gold-mine! Anxious teens and iMessage).

So what were we anxious about say 10 or 15 years ago? Are we still anxious about that?

How does Jesus describe the things we are anxious about?

Vs 25 Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

The Greek word used here for life is same as that used for soul, (pronounced soohay) which is immortal / non-perishable. And the Greek word used for body is literally our body (pronounced soma), which is mortal / perishable.

Jesus wants His listener to see how upside down we might be sometimes. We are the only creature created in the image of God with a body (flesh that we see), soul (heart/seat of emotion/thinking/mind) and Spirit (given by God)

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the garden of Eden, our Spirit was in complete fellowship with God's Holy Spirit. The entry of Sin through mankind's disobedience, broke that communion and fellowship we once enjoyed with God. But because of Jesus' death on the cross on our behalf, God restored His communion with mankind, provided, we accept the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. That is why, we become a believer in Christ Jesus by faith, God literally seals us with His Holy Spirit. This is simply unexplainable and marvelous. The proof that this Christianity stuff is real and tangible is the fact that when we are saved, God's indwells in us by His Holy Spirit. This is NOT the case before we accept Him into our life. That's why the change is dramatic and testable! You can actually do an experiment yourself. Whenever we sin purposefully as a believer, we grieve the Holy Spirit and He pricks our conscience. We immediately know something is NOT right. And until we confess our sin to Him and seek forgiveness, we are NOT at peace! We are miserable, sadly some of us refuse to recognize our sin for a long time!

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit would descend on an individual for a particular task and could leave. Jesus promised to send “The Comforter” permanently after His death.

As promised, after the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, the Holy Spirit came once and for all to mankind during Pentecost. And His job is to convict the world of sin, through the guilty conscience! And this conviction is out of love, because God loved us while we were still in sin, to send Jesus to die for our sin and in our place. Jesus is God’s gift to us. Therefore, God is longing for us to accept His gift to us and so that He can come into our life and dwell there.

In other words, what was convicting us from the outside when we were unbelievers, is now living INSIDE us as believers in Jesus Christ.

2. Believers in Jesus Christ, have the indwelling Holy Spirit to help us live our life

All of this was background for what Jesus says in Matthew 6:25.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:23 we saw the hierarchy or chain of command outlined. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Spirit is mentioned first, then followed by our soul /mind/intellect/seat of emotion and last of all is mentioned our body or our flesh!

So what is the chain of command? Or How does the decision making process work?

Read Romans 8:14 NLT For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God (or sons and daughters of God).

So how does this apply to our Spirit, soul and body?

When we are following the leading of the Holy Spirit, our Spirit is in complete communion with God’s Holy Spirit and therefore our soul / mind / intellect / seat of emotion is being transformed to being obedient to the Holy Spirit. We begin to “see” NOT with our eyes, but with the understanding of

our heart what God wants us to focus on. And as a result of this transformation, we can direct our earthly body to also fall in line with what God has in store for us.

Matthew 6:25 Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

Who is running the show here? The fleshly body craves something so, it tells our soul / life what to think about. Totally upside down. The inmates are running the asylum. The tail is wagging the dog.

The flesh and its cravings are to be put to death, but here we see the flesh is hale and healthy and is directing the soul /mind!! And the Holy Spirit is nowhere in the picture!

How does Jesus address this upside downness? He provides 2 examples. He first addresses our soul and then addresses the needs of our body.

Look at the birds. Birds live for today. They are NOT like squirrels or other mammals or insects that think about tomorrow and store food! Birds eat for the day. They have the potential to run into supply chain issues. The worms go on strike for better pay and such! Those that cant fly are always crossing roads! Birds don't have intensive agricultural practices, yet YOUR heavenly FATHER feeds them. Jesus didn't say, ...yet God feeds them, which would still have been factually accurate. Instead, Jesus says YOUR heavenly FATHER.

What is the focus here? The God of the universe is personal, He is OURs. Next, He is familial. He is related to us. He is our Father and we are His children. Finally, He is in heaven, while we are on this earth. This heavenly Father left His abode, came down to fallen mankind, walked with us, died for us so that one day He can take us to His abode! That is the Gospel message!

And then Jesus hits the home run in a rhetorical question, Are you not of more value that they?

Because God is personal, because He is familial and because He promised to take us to be with Him, we are now of infinite value in His eyes!

3. God values us because of Jesus Christ

So, the remedy for our soul / our mind or our thinking process, is that we are valuable in God's sight and therefore He has our best interests. We shouldn't let our fleshly cravings dictate our thought process. Following the Holy Spirit will help transform / renew our minds so that we can think properly (Paul talks about this in Romans 12:1).

Jesus then addresses our body. He is acknowledging that we cannot just "live on love" (like the signs from the 60s ..all we need is love). Jesus acknowledges that we have physical needs to keep our bodies alive.

Notice, that Jesus uses the lilies of the field as this next example. Fall colors are absolutely beautiful. They are literally here today and gone tomorrow. Jesus mentions exactly that. The glory of the lilies in the field is temporary. The grass of the field is used as fuel in a fire.

And then the home run rhetorical question, if the grass is here today gone tomorrow and the heavenly Father is so careful to provide for them, how much more will He care for us seeing that we have an ETERNAL destiny. Do we have the faith to believe that we are indeed ETERNAL!

Perhaps, the problem is OUR lack of trust in a loving heavenly Father.

Remember the example of the child asking for bread, will you give him a stone or if a child asks for fish, will you give him a snake. If you who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more the heavenly Father to those that ask Him.

Example of the minivan rental in Chicago Blizzard

4. We need to trust God to provide for our needs

Jesus now draws attention the most important aspect of our life. And this is directly related to that fact that we are made in God's image and therefore

are eternal like Him! But our eternal destiny is entirely dependent on how we live our life here on this earth!

And there is a choice involved. It is easy to get busy with life and get distracted from the one thing that matters the most.
The Kingdom of God.

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

So, Jesus is saying that whatever we thought were important are actually secondary and furthermore, if we get our priorities in order, the secondary things will be automatically taken care of! It is the opposite of what the world teaches us! We are to work hard to achieve the American dream!

What does the bible say, surely Goodness and Mercy will follow me all the days of my life...this my friend is better than the American dream!
I don't have to chase the dream, the dream chases me! When I turn right, the dream is right behind me. If I turn left, the dream is right behind me.

The real question is who AM I FOLLOWING?!

David answers that in Psalm 23:6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me, *All the days of my life*; And I will *dwell in the house of the Lord Forever*.

What was David chasing? Who was David following? He answers it in verse 1.

Psalm 23:1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

David was following the LORD, who is the King of the 'The Kingdom of God' that Jesus is talking about in Matthew 6:33!!

5. Seeking the King will get us into the His Kingdom

Seek first Kingdom and His righteousness. These 2 go together. We cannot be seeking the Kingdom of God and reject His righteousness or NOT wanting His righteousness!

Wait a minute, what does that mean? Means I can pretend to be a believer in Jesus, go to church or take part in a worship service and still be lost in sin. In Matthew 7, Jesus tells about a time, when people will call out to Him as Lord for entrance into the Kingdom. And they will have proof as well.

Matthew 7:21-23 21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ 23 And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

What’s happening here? Kind of a little Louisiana going on here. I have lived here long enough to come to realize that who you know takes you a long way in south Louisiana!

People are calling on Jesus claiming to KNOW Him. And they even provide proof such as prophesying in Jesus’ name, casting out demons in Jesus’ name and doing miracles in Jesus’ name!

His reply to them will be “I never KNEW you, now beat it, depart from me.”

What’s the point here? 2 things.

Firstly, it’s not only important that I KNOW Jesus personally, but more importantly He needs to KNOW me as well and vouch for me before the heavenly Father!

Secondly, we already saw, how knowing, acknowledging and accepting Jesus’ sacrifice for my sins, sets up the entry of the Holy Spirit into my life. So, I need to be led by the Holy Spirit, I need to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit to do the Father’s will

Matthew 7:21 Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

So how do we KNOW Jesus and how do we do His will?

Spend time in His Word. Set aside time to read His Word and meditate on it. Pray and ask God to speak to us through our time in His Word. And recall the passages throughout the day. And when having to make decisions in life, ask the heavenly Father to help us and give us wisdom in the choices we make, ask Him to lead our thinking process and decision-making process. Honor Him by involving Him in every area of life.

And it is so encouraging to see the Holy Spirit lead individuals, especially when they do wrong, and the Spirit pricks their conscience, and they do an about turn in life. That is the true mark of a man or woman of God.

Jesus has already said that we have enough trouble for today, forget about tomorrow.

One of the perks of being led by the Spirit is the ever-present opportunity to “Never let a crisis go to waste”! Only a Christian can Exploit a crisis for God’s glory! That is where the leading of the Holy Spirit comes in. Not always will God allow us to Make lemonade with the lemons life throws at us, but when God leads us to do so, it is sweet.

David had that experience in **Psalm 23:5**

God prepared a ‘dining opportunity’ / table for David in front of his enemies!!! What is the normative behavior in front of our enemy? We are to fight, be on guard. But Bible says quite the opposite occurred! David got to sit down to eat.

Proverbs 16:7 When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

When do we sit down to eat?

We sit down when we know everything is done and taken care of. After Jesus finished His job on this earth, He ascended and sat down at the right hand of Father. Unlike other priests who had to keep standing because their job was not finished.

We can sit down to eat and relax when we know the Shepherd is watching over us. He is taking care of us and our Guard and will protect us. That's the only qualification to sitting down calmly in the presence of our enemy (devil). Knowing that Satan can't touch us unless God gives permission! And even if God gives permission for Satan to touch us (like Job), then it will turn out for His glory according to **Romans 8:28**

6. Only the King of the Universe has the power to turn my broken situation into something of Glory for His name

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