

# Seek Ye First

Matthew 6:33

In Matthew chapter six verse 33 Jesus said, but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. The goal of every Christian ought to be to seek first God's kingdom, to put spiritual things first in life. You know, sometimes that's easier said than done. After all, we live in a world that is filled with materialism. We think about the secular versus the spiritual.

What Jesus is saying is that we need to make sure that we make spiritual things the focal point or the hub of life. You remember, for example, the Apostle Paul, when Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia, he would say, it's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. In writing to the church at Philippi, Paul makes this statement for to me to live is Christ.

I think what Paul was saying is simply that he lived a Christ centered, Christ focused life. Why? Well, because that's the summation of life. That's what life's all about. Making him preeminent in all that we do. Now, that being the case, you recall when Paul wrote to the church at Colossae, Paul is writing to Christians and he said, if then you've been raised with Christ.

He said, seek those things which are above where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. In verse two he said, set your mind, set your affection on things above, and not on things which are upon this earth. In verse three Paul said, for your life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is our life, appears, he said, then we will appear with him in glory.

In verse four, Paul makes a very interesting statement. He said, For Christ, who is our life. Could you echo those words? Would you say that in your life that Jesus is the hub, that you are indeed seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness? When the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Philippi in Philippians chapter three and verse 19, he talks about some who are minding listened to him earthly things.

In contrast, though, Paul said, but our citizenship, that is, those of us who belong to the body of Christ. He said, our citizenship is in heaven. Whence also we wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now understand those of us that live in America. We are American citizens. And though Paul was a Roman citizen, Paul said, look, I've got a greater a higher citizenship.

Well, that citizenship is in heaven. Same for us. We live in America. We're American citizens, but we have a greater citizenship. Our citizenship is in heaven. The goal is to one day get to heaven. And so when Jesus said, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. The intent is to try to the best of our ability to live the kind of life that will be rewarded by the Lord.

We long to hear him say, well done, good and faithful servant. Now here's the question. How can I make sure that I'm seeking first the kingdom of God? What are some keys that will keep me locked in on seeking first God's kingdom? Good question. I mean, again, what's the goal? Well, the goal is to get to heaven. But if I'm going to get to heaven one day, I've got to make sure that my life is lived in harmony with God's will.

So, number one, and let me just preface our study by saying this. We're not trying to

reinvent the wheel here. The keys that I'm going to give you today are basic, fundamental principles that will help you stay grounded, that will help you be what you ought to be so that you can seek first the Kingdom of God. So, number one, if we're going to look at some principles that will keep us locked in on seeking first the kingdom.

Number one, I want to submit to you that we have got to stay grounded in the Word of God. And by that I mean we need to stay in God's word, that we need to spend some time and gain a working knowledge of this book. You know, the psalmist said in Psalm one verse two that he meditated on the law of the Lord, and they did that.

Listen to him day and night. Here's somebody that treasures the Word of God, who is constantly thinking about what the Bible says. I remember years ago when I was in college and a Bible teacher that talked about spending listened this very I mean, at least to me, it's very interesting. Here's a guy that said he spent 200 hours locked in on one verse.

Now you talk about meticulous study, concentrating on one verse to try to glean the great truths in that verse. That's what this brother did. Now, I'm not saying that you got to spend 200 hours on one verse, but I am saying that if you'll begin reading and studying this book, I promise you this it'll bless your life. This is a beautiful book.

This is this where you might save the book of all books. Now, there are a lot of good books out on the out in the marketplace. There are books that have been written that can help you, that can help you achieve certain things in life, certain goals. But this is the book of all books. This is the only book that I know of that will safely get you from planet Earth to Heaven.

No. One of the psalmist said in Psalm one 1997. Oh, how I love your Lord is my meditation all the day. Is it any wonder he would say your word? Have a light up in my heart that I might not sin against you, or that he would say, great peace. Have those who love your law to understand that peace is derived in knowing the word of God, in knowing the Prince of Peace, the one who has the ability to provide peace in life.

Paul talks about the peace that passes all understanding. Now, getting back to Psalm 119, the psalm said in verse 104, he said, through your precepts I get understanding. Therefore that is in light of the understanding that I've gleaned. He said, I hate every false way God's Word can equip me so that I can make wise decisions in life.

I can determine what's right and what's wrong. I can say, you know what? That's true. That accords with divine truth. That's Ara. I can know that, but I will not know it. If I don't know this book in Psalm 119 105, the psalmist said, your word is a lamp unto my feet, a light under my pathway. There is a reason why we have headlights on our automobiles.

Can you imagine driving in darkness without headlights? Imagine if you can. You're on a narrow, winding road. Maybe you're up in the mountains or up on a ridge top. And you're trying to make your way. Traffic, trying to navigate your way without any kind of headlights. Dangerous, yes. Well, imagine, if you can, trying to navigate your way through this world without the light of God's truth.

You can't do that. You see, the Word of God gives light and direction to life. Now, John said, the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. We live in a world that is engulfed in spiritual darkness. When Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, he said, on one occasion, you were once darkness, but now you're light in the Lord.

Walk as children of light. Jesus said during his earthly ministry that light has come into

the world, but men love darkness rather than light. So I'll look around in the world today and I see a lot of spiritual darkness. I see a lot of people that are groping, that are living, if you please. In spiritual darkness, they make bad decisions.

They continue to make bad decisions. And one of the reasons is because their life is not grounded in the teaching of God's holy Word. Let me ask you a question. How can you ensure that your marriage will be what it ought to be? Now, marriage is a beautiful thing. There are a lot of people, though, that enter into the marital relationship.

They have absolutely no understanding about what's involved. They fail to understand that marriage is a lifelong commitment. We live in a day in time in which if people have problems, they just terminate the marriage and move on. Is that what the Lord wants? Well, how are we going to know? You remember in Matthew chapter 19 when the religious leaders, the Pharisees, came to Jesus.

Now they didn't come because they were really interested in learning from him. Their goal was to entrap, to ensnare him, to tricking. They wanted to know, is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? How did Jesus answer that question? Do you remember? The Lord did as he often did. He answered a question with a question.

He asked, have you not read? Could I say to you that the taproot of a lot of the problems that we face in society today, particularly when it relates to the home and marriage, is because men and women have not taken the time to open this book and read its sacred contents. Now, when we talk about seeking first the kingdom of God, have you ever thought about marriage like a triangle?

If God is at the apex of the triangle and you've got a husband on this end and a wife on this end, and they're both striving to draw closer to God, what happens as they draw closer to God? They they draw closer to one another. That's why Jesus said, you need to seek first the kingdom. Why? Because it will bless your life.

Now in Matthew chapter 19. When Jesus responded to that question with a question, he asked, have you not read he that made them at the beginning made them male and female? For this call shall a man leave his father and mother Cleveland, to his wife? They too shall become one flesh. Wherefore, he said, there are no more two but one flesh.

Now listen to what therefore God has drawn together. Let not man put a son. If so, what are you saying, Lord? What's God's original intent for the marital relationship? One man, one woman for life. That's what God wants. Well, is that best? Yes. Well, how am I going to know that? I spend time in this book, Donna. You know, one of the reasons why people have problems in life, in many cases, is because they get started on the wrong foot.

They don't start out right. And before you know it, they got all kinds of problems in life. What I'm trying to say is that if you want to eliminate problems in your life, eliminate troubles, and trials. Follow this book. Now, again, we're talking about seeking first the kingdom of God, making sure that the Lord is the hub of our life.

When we spend time in this book, what's it going to do? It's going to help us draw closer to God in Hebrews chapter five. The writer is talking to Christians that we're not advancing spiritually like they should have, rather than being mature Christians. They're still babes in Christ. But he said one of the byproducts of growing and maturing in the faith is that it enables someone to discern between good and evil.

And so there again, how am I going to know what's right or wrong? How can I discern between

good and evil, truth and error? I know this book. Don't. Didn't Paul ask the question one time? What does the scripture say? So if I want to make sure that my life is on track, number one, I've got to stay rooted and grounded in this book.

Oh, I know that there are a lot of folks in the world today like the Philippians, who are minding earthly things in contrast to spiritual things. Jesus talked about laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven. A lot of people in the world today, some in the church, it's all about the material. It's all about money. It's all about acquiring more and more of the world's goods.

Well, Jesus said, you need to seek first the kingdom of God. Now, you can have a lot in the bank here on planet Earth. Nothing wrong with that. But you better make sure you're doing some banking in heaven because Jesus said, where your treasure is, there where your heart be also. So number one, spend time in this book.

Stay rooted in the Word of God. That is an imperative when it's all said and done. We want to go to heaven, don't we? Paul said on one occasion. For to me to live is Christ. To die is gain. When the Apostle Paul, when he penned his words to the church at Colossae, he instructed them to set their mind, set their affections on things above, and not on things which are upon this earth.

In verse four, when he said, When Christ, who is our life. And really what Paul was saying is that's the summation of life. That's what Jesus was saying. You make sure your life revolves around the kingdom of God. Number two, first, I need to stay in the Word of God. But secondly, I need to make sure that I stay faithful in my worship to God.

Now, here's a problem. One of the problems that we have in the church today, one of the problems in life, is that folks have not spent enough time in this book. You get to spend more time in this book. You can't just open this book on Sunday and Wednesday night. It's not going to help you in terms of the grand scheme of things.

Well, there are a lot of folks that are members of the church, but they're not regular or faithful. When it comes to worship. So let me ask you how faithful, how regular are you when it comes to worshipping God? The psalmist said in Psalm 95, on one occasion, O come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our maker.

The word worship means acts of reverence paid to deity. Does God deserve worship and adoration? Well, the answer would be yes. We're going to worship something. The question is, what? Or who will we worship? Well, Jesus said, God is spirit and they that worship him listen to him, must worship him in spirit and truth. In verse 23 of John chapter four, here's what Jesus said.

The father seeks such to worship him. In other words, God wants people to worship him well, how? In spirit and truth. That means when I come to worship, I need to have the right attitude. I need to be thinking about the various acts of worship. When we partake of the Lord's Supper, what are we thinking about? Sunday afternoon meal.

What we're going to do on Sunday afternoon? Are we thinking about what we got to do in the realm before the following week? Or are we thinking about school or some type of project? Or are we thinking about the body and blood of Jesus? Paul said in first Corinthians chapter 11, as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show forth the Lord's death till they come again.

The early church. They remembered the Lord's death every first day of the week. How do I

know that? Because I can read in acts chapter two, verse 42 of the ancient church, continuing steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and prayers. Acts chapter 20, verse seven. I read about the saints meeting on the first day of the Lord's, or the first day of the week, or the Lord's Day.

First Corinthians chapter 11 I see where I am instructed to remember the death of Jesus every Lord's day. Well, that's an important part of worship. But again, one of the byproducts of worship is spiritual strength. And edification. When I come to worship on the first day of the week, the Word of God is preached. The Word of God is what's going to build me up.

It's going to help sustain me. In acts chapter 28, verse 32. Paul talked to the Ephesian elders and Paul said, I commend you to God, to the word of his gracious name, which is able to build you up, give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified by faith. Right? So are you saying, then, that the word of God will build strengthen the Christian life?

Yes. And one of the ways that we gain strength is by listening to God's Word proclaimed every first day of the week or in the classroom Sunday morning, Wednesday night, maybe Sunday afternoon. The point is that we make sure that we're in worship, and that we are locked in on the various things that are taking place in worship, that we live in the heart of what I would call SEC country.

And just about everybody in the South loves football, particularly in the fall. And if it's not fall, people are already thinking about fall coming rolling around the next year. Let me just say this. There are a lot of people that have tremendous love for their team. And I tell you this, when Saturday rolls around, it doesn't matter what team they're following.

If they have the opportunity to be in the stands, they're going to be there. They spend hundreds, if not thousands of dollars on tickets, refreshments, merchandise, etc.. Why do they do that? They love their team. They want to be there. They want to see their team play. They want to pull for their team. Well, they do it because there is this intense desire to be supportive.

Wouldn't it be amazing if members of the body of Christ could translate somehow their enthusiasm and love of football, if they could somehow translate that to worship in an amazing people set out when it's raining sleeting. I've seen folks, in instance when snow is coming down, freezing weather. Sometimes they're individuals that will sit on those cold pews, cold hard pews for 3 or 4 hours and watch a team and it's subfreezing weather.

Can you believe that? I can't. Why they do that? Because they love it. What about worship? Do we love God to the extent that we're willing to come to worship Sunday morning Sunday evening, Wednesday night I had a fellow say one time, we do what we want to do. When people don't come back on Sunday afternoon, Sunday evening.

What do they say? Don't you think that we typically do what we like to do what we love to do? You think anybody is forcing people to sit on a cold, hard stadium seat on a Saturday to watch football? I think everybody's being pressured to do that now. What do they do? Because they love it. If we love God with all of our heart, soul and mind, it's not a question about coming back.

Are we coming back? Not that decision was made a long time ago. We are in the pew on Sunday morning. We're in the pew on Sunday afternoon or Sunday evening. We're in the pew on Wednesday night because we love the Lord and we love his people, and we want to be in the

middle of them. In Hebrews chapter ten, the writer said that there were some who were forsaking the assembling of themselves together.

And he said, one of the byproducts is that we are edified through our worship. You see, when you don't show up on Sunday morning or Sunday night, I'm not encouraged. Matter of fact, I'm discouraged because you ought to be there to encourage me, and I vice versa. But if you're not there, well, I'm discouraged. And your absence? Doesn't that say something about your love for the Lord, or lack thereof?

Whereas your presence in the assembly, doesn't that say. Doesn't that send this signal loud and clear that your goal is to live a Christ centered life, that you're trying to absorb spiritual things into your life, that you're trying to the best of your ability to seek first the kingdom of God. Again, I get back to the idea. We do what we want to do.

There are people, and I've known people, and I've tried my best to preach, to teach, to give both chapter and verse why we ought to be in the worship service. And I've said before, and I believe there are some people I can't shame with the Word of God to come back on Sunday night or Wednesday night. What mine's already made up.

Rather sit home, watch TV, play golf, hunt, fish, whatever. Again? We need to stay focused in life. Number one, stay in the word of God. Number two, stay in worship to God. Number three, I want to encourage us to stay involved in the work of God. What's the old saying? And out of mind. Devil's workshop. The Lord has created us anew.

To do what? We've been saved, all right. But I believe we've been saved to serve the Lord. You think about your talents and your abilities. The abilities that you possess are unique. Can you not use those abilities to the glory of God? In First Corinthians chapter 12. Paul talks about the body of Christ, one body. But as he said, many members.

Well, the human body, one body, many members. I've got arms, I've got hands, I've got fingers. Well, the various parts of the human body work together. For what? For the good of the overall body. I can I can button my shirt using my two hands and fingers. By the same token, as a child of God, I can use my unique abilities or talents to the glory of God.

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, you remember he said, we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus under good works, which God before prepared that we should walk in them. All the ideas we've been saved. And because we're saved, people we are. We ought to serve the Lord. When Paul wrote to the church at Rome, Paul said, God be thanked, though you were the servants of sin.

You're bound from the heart. That form of doctrine delivered to you and being set free from sin. He said, you became the slaves or servants of righteousness. So it's a voluntary servanthood. I made up my mind. I'm going to serve the Lord, and I'm going to get involved in the work of the Lord. I can hear Paul saying that we are to be zealous for good works.

And Titus 2:14 I hear Paul say, be ready under every good work. And Titus three, verse one. I can hear Paul say that we are to show ourselves as a pattern for good works. And Titus chapter two, what about you? If you're seeking first the kingdom of God, you're not of no show when it comes to the work of the church.

No. You're involved. It might be that your work is behind the scenes, might be hidden from visibility, but you're working. You're laboring. When you send a text of somebody who's not present on Sunday and you say, we missed you, we want you to come. When somebody is hurting, when somebody has just lost a loved one, and you show up at the funeral home, or you go to

their home and you bring food and you sit down with them and talk to them.

Are you not fulfilling the words of Paul when he said, bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ? Or when Paul said that we are to weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice. Is that not a work of the church? Yes it is. When you talk to your friend or coworker, sit down with a classmate and you say, you know, the Bible says that living a God centered life is an imperative.

When you try to teach somebody the gospel to help them come out of a life of sin, is that not a good work? Didn't Jesus say, go into all the world? Preach the gospel to every creature? Are we not responsible for making disciples and all the world? Well, the answer is yes. Well, how do we do that? Well, we use our abilities, our talents, to the glory of God.

Here's what Jesus said. Let your light so shine before men, that they might see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven. Now look, we all enjoy a pat on the back. It's always nice to hear somebody say, well done. But isn't it a greater thing to hear the Lord say, I want to be a greater thing to hear the Lord say one day.

Well done, good and faithful servant. My prayer is that we're seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. In closing, if you're not a Christian, what do you need to do? You need to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. John eight 21-24. If you haven't repented, then you need to repent of your sins. 17 verse 30.

And then name the name of Christ. Acts eight, verse 37. Be buried with Christ in baptism to be saved. Mark 16:16 then live a faithful life. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Hope to see you back here next week. Until then. God bless you. I'm.