

# Matthew 6:19-34: The Disciple and Kingdom Priorities

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[0:00] 111 of the Bibles provided for you in the pews. So that's Matthew chapter 6, verses 19 through 34.

Please stand for the reading of God's Word. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, for moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The eye is the lamp of the body, so if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

[1:07] 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?

Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.

They neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear? For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

[2:09] But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself.

Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated. Good evening and happy new year.

It's good to see everyone here. Pardon my voice and the fact that I'll be taking sips of water as we go along.

My voice could go out in 10 minutes, and we'll be at the Conant's faster. Or it could go on for, you know, two hours and 10 minutes, and you'll still be going to the Conant's faster.

So bear with me here, and we're going to look into God's word. One question, just to kick it off.

[3:19] What will you do this year that will outlast your life? What are you going to do this year that outlasts your life?

Can you pray with me one more time? God in heaven, in Jesus, we thank you, and we come to you praising you for the multiple times that we can actually stand up in freedom and pray in a service and not just sing or not just preach, but pray.

And thank you for that. Lord, we thank you for the word, and we pray that it would come alive to each and every one of us tonight, that you would help our minds and our hearts to be solely focused on Jesus and the word.

Lord, I realize that there's nothing that I could do to convince anyone of the truth of Scripture. We bless the Holy Spirit tonight who is the one who magnifies Jesus to us and convicts us, indicts us of our sin, and shows us the judgment to come.

We thank you for your mercy and your grace by giving us the Spirit. We pray that he would be at work at us tonight, even though I may communicate imperfectly or unclearly.

[4:43] I pray for every person here that they would be touched by the Holy Spirit of God to carry this message on their hearts for the end of transformation, the glory of Jesus Christ.

Your words are to be desired more than gold, even fine gold. And help us, God, to understand what that means for us.

In your name we pray. Amen. All right, we're in Matthew chapter 6. Actually, a few weeks ago, we, in an Advent message, I think it was preached, someone preached out of Matthew chapter 1.

Matthew, what Matthew's trying to do, he's proclaiming or writing to an audience that's primarily Jewish, and he's trying to convince them that Jesus of Nazareth is the King.

That's his primary goal. He does that for two chapters, kind of letting you know how his birth came about. And he goes into chapter 3, who was his forerunner.

[5:55] So he's trying to unfold for you how Jesus came about in his ministry. He spends a chapter on John the Baptist. And in chapter 4, Matthew kind of puts Jesus at us as he's splashing onto the scene of his public ministry.

And we also see that Jesus started to call some of his disciples. And we arrive at chapter 5, and actually three chapters, 5, 6, and 7, that have traditionally been known in the church as the Sermon on the Mount.

This sermon is one that assumes that all Christians or disciples are to be marked by the king's character, driven by the king's values, and involved in kingdom work.

Jesus actually specifies what all that means. What does it mean to follow me, to be part of the kingdom? Because Mark tells us, in Mark chapter 1, that Jesus came on the scene preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

And his first words, as we understand in terms of the start of his ministry, in a sense, were, repent and believe the gospel. So Jesus is telling us about what does a disciple look like?

[7:07] And we come into the sixth chapter. We've actually prayed part of the sixth chapter. And Jesus is marking out, he's identifying idols of the heart by saying that people often are lusting after reputation.

If you look in the first few verses, and even right before our section here tonight, that people often did religious duties so that they could be seen of men. So he exposes reputation as an idol.

And in the text today, he exposes a couple other things. And he actually tells us, he actually shows us the way of redemption from our idols in treasures, and our idols in security, and worry, and the such.

Basically, Jesus is teaching that the disciple under the king's reign trusts the king's priorities. The disciple under the king's reign trusts the king's priorities.

So there's just two sections here this evening. The first section comes in verses 19 through 24, where we're going to see the disciples' priorities for the kingdom.

[8:14] And we'll see also reliance on the king in verses 25 to 34. So diving in here, we see what Jesus says about the disciples' priorities for the kingdom.

And the interesting thing here is if you're looking for kind of a laundry list of what I should be doing or what exactly it is, you're not going to necessarily find that in this text.

I think Matthew is setting it up throughout his whole gospel. And he will tell you, he will tease this out throughout the whole gospel to tell you and show you what it is to be a follower of Jesus Christ. But the priorities of the kingdom, Jesus says here, is heaven, not earth. God, but not man. We're not possessions.

And he does this by three metaphors. He first uses the metaphor of treasures in verses 19 through 21. Don't lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.

[9:20] But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Jesus was using these pictures to expound the kingdom, what he was bringing forth.

The first thing he did was talk about treasures. Now, in the first century, they didn't really have the banking system as we know it.

It was just coming on the scene and becoming, you know, developing. But there was no banking system as we know it in our Western world. But the way people measured their wealth or their assets was through their property and through their possessions contained in that property.

That's how someone could tell your wealth or measure your worth. And in some cases, some of those possessions, people would hide them away in their house on their property and sometimes dig holes under their houses in the ground and cover up their possessions that way.

[10:28] Well, Jesus said, for the person who is all concerned about their treasures on earth and investing and gaining and building your asset base on earth, it's very likely, it could happen that a thief is going to come in and dig through is actually the terminology here because they didn't have necessarily like the way we build houses.

So thieves, after a time, they could actually dig through a house or dig and find that treasure that you put under your house. So don't lay up treasures like that where thieves are going to break through or steal or a moth or rust are going to come and destroy.

My family and I just returned a few days ago from traveling through the South. And on our way back, we stopped in the city of Louisville. That's the way you're supposed to say it. And there was an exhibit going on in the science center there.

And one of the members of my family, my six-year-old son, for like four months now has been on this Titanic kick. Everything's Titanic. He hasn't seen necessarily like the movie, but he's been reading books and seeing everything possible.

But Louisville had this exhibit in the science center. So we said, we're going to go there and we're going to check it out. Well, what's really interesting is, because we're coming upon the centennial of this tragedy, is that when the Titanic sank, of course, the corrosion process started.

[11:58] But what's happening to the Titanic now is not what we would think of as corrosion, like rusting and things like that. You would expect it. That's what scientists were expecting and all the researchers.

Well, they took a few samples when they were able to go down there and actually get around. And they were taking some samples of this substance growing on the ship. And it kind of looks like, if you were to see a picture of the Titanic at the bottom of the ocean, it kind of looks like just like dried wax all over this thing.

And they thought, well, this is just rust or something like that. I don't know how rust happens underwater. I'm not a scientist, so I'm not going to even try to explain. When they finished their research, they noticed that what was eating the Titanic away and has been eating the Titanic away for almost 100 years is an actual living thing, a microbe, that actually sucks the iron out of the vessel.

This monument to richness at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean is actually covered in what they call rusticles. And these rusticles are eating the Titanic away.

And the researchers and preservationists are saying that within 40 to maybe 80 years, the Titanic as a structure at the bottom of the ocean, this museum down there, is actually going to implode because these rusticles are eating it away.

[13:28] And we all know that even though none of us lived at that time, that that story still lives on. I mean, people are dedicating their lives to research about this vessel.

And in another century, it's just going to be a legend perhaps. There's not going to be anything there because rust is destroying this.

So Jesus says, lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. We don't want to get exactly what that is, but we know that that's not putting all our roots down here on earth.

He's talking about otherworldliness, investing for another time in another place. And Jesus basically is saying here, he's talking about the placement of your treasure indicates your heart.

I guess another way of saying this, tally up your receipts. Let's check out your bank statements. I'm not going to do that. No one in our church does that. But if I will see where your heart is, you just give me a look at how you spend your money, where you spend your time, how you talk.

[14:41] That's where your heart's going to be. Jesus is talking about the priorities of his disciples. He says, don't root too deeply here. It's all going to go up someday.

That's not to say that we just pack it up and we're gone. The Bible does talk quite a bit about us being strangers and exiles on earth. And we live in this tension of being here on earth, but yet our place is in heaven.

And we are on our way to the kingdom of heaven, even though it has begun already in our lives now. What will you do this year that outlasts your life?

I mean, are you more concerned about how you appear, the way you're clothed before people? Are you more concerned about your clothes, your portfolios, your securities, and your trusts?

Are you more concerned about those things than about sending your resources into eternity, to invest in the eternal stock market, if you will? Now, please don't deduce from all this that I'm saying it's evil to invest in the stock market and to have money.

[15:57] I will try to reiterate this throughout, but it's not evil to have money. God never, God never curses riches. He curses the love of riches. And Jesus here, positively, is presenting disciples' priorities by saying, store it up in heaven.

I mean, where could you put your possessions where they won't be subject to corrosion or the greed of others? I think it's pretty real for us, those of us who live in big cities. We think, how in the world as a Christian, if you're a Christian here, how in the world can I live as a Christian in a big city, be part of it, try to tell the city about my God, and I have everything screaming for my money.

I mean, it's expensive to travel on the CTA. They're going to probably hike it again, right? And all these things, the parking tickets, I mean, it's hard. How do you be a follower of Christ and live in a city and trying to reach the city?

I'm not going to actually answer that. I think that would be a great topic of discussion in your community groups. My proposal simply would be what does simple living look like? And perhaps most of us here maybe don't have a lot of money and assets to speak about, but what would a simple life look like?

Sure, you might have, maybe you do have money, but what would it look like to live your life in such a way that money or no money, you are able to live in a way that reflects that the kingdom of God is my priority?

[17:31] Jesus is saying that, you know, a disciple isn't the same thing as being part of a club. When you're a disciple of the kingdom of God, in our day and age, Jesus is using the church.

So you become a member of a church, right? It's not like you're becoming a member of a club, so you kind of put your dues in every now and then and say, hey, I've paid my tithe or whatever, you know, I've put in some offering money and I'm good.

I'm good in the kingdom. That's not the way Jesus is thinking about here. It's not just about the money that you clunk down in the plate. In this three-week miniseries, we're not going to be trying to, you know, put everyone here on guilt trips and saying, Holy Trinity needs money and, you know, you've got to give more.

I think we all need to give more, but what we're trying to tell you here is that Jesus says, giving more comes by being driven by something greater than yourself and greater than your financial spreadsheet.

Jesus uses another metaphor here in verses 22 to 23 of the eye. It says, the eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light.

[18:46] But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. The eye here is talking about the inner person that sets life direction. perhaps it's a symbol of our heart as the Bible speaks about.

If you go into the Old Testament especially, even in Psalm 119, you'll see that the psalmist often interchanges eye and heart in terms of his response to the Word of God. It's the inner person that sets life direction.

The last part of verse 23 says here, if the light in you is darkness, how great is that darkness? So he's setting up a syllogism here of sorts, kind of an A plus B equals C, saying, good eye, good body, healthy body.

Bad eye or malignant eye, sick body. And then he says, his conclusion is, and I'll paraphrase it in my own words, if this gate of light, your eye gates, your spiritual eye gate, is full of darkness. How terrible that darkness must be. That what's supposed to bring in light for your whole body is actually just a gate for darkness.

[20:04] Generous heart, healthy heart, sick eye, sick body. If you can't see right, there's another way to put it, if you can't see right, you won't be able to do right.

Jesus is focusing in here, I guess the pun is intended, he's focusing in here on telling us about what the disciples' spiritual vision is like. It's clear, it's singular.

Another way to look at this word healthy, some words that have been used in other translations are good, generous, clear, singular, undistracted.

And actually, this word is used, generous, the same word in other passages of Scripture. So if you're generous, your eye is single, as it's focused, you have a generous eye, your body's going to be healthy.

It's not talking about your physical body necessarily, but your whole spiritual well-being. To have righteous priorities is to have singular focus and vision for what God is doing on earth into eternity for his own glory.

[21:10] It's not just focusing on the here and now. It's not being so heavenly minded that you're no earthly good. It is focusing on what Jesus commands you to do and what God is doing particularly on earth and what your involvement on earth is and how God is projecting that into eternity for his own glory ultimately.

Is your focus so singular and undistracted that you'll be able to do something this year that will actually outlast your life? As a disciple of Jesus, do you have that kind of vision?

Is it clear? Are you generous? Are you generous in all areas of your life? Are you generous, yes, with your money?

Next metaphor, the last metaphor that Jesus uses here to talk about the disciples' priorities for the kingdom is that of mastery. Verse 24, no one can serve two masters for either they will hate the one and love the other or will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and money. I think the NIV, I really like how the NIV does it. They actually capitalizes the word money here, the M in money, and personifies it, setting it up as a kind of person, a kind of Lord, as a kind of master.

[22:38] That's what Jesus is doing. See, in our Western world, we cannot, we can serve two masters, right? You can have maybe two part-time jobs or two full-time jobs or you can moonlight on the side, right?

But we have to kind of get past our world and we have to kind of think in first century world about slavery. And we probably even need to think past like the 17th, 18th, and 19th century imperialism and all the abolitionism that was going on.

Let's not enter that fray. We don't need to. Think about the first century. A slave in the first century was exclusively the property of his owner. Property, yes.

As much as we chafed to hear that he was property, there was no contracts, there was no saying on the part of the slave, well, you know, I've got to go do something.

No, if the master called four in the morning, I need you here to do this, the slave was there.

Exclusive ownership, exclusive allegiance. It's that two-way street in that first century slave relationship.

[23:44] Jesus says, there's no way you can do that. In the kingdom, the only way that you can be effective in the kingdom is to be holy gods, to be under the king's reign.

as a disciple. He uses the word mammon and interestingly, the word money is the word mammon, which is a word that Jesus used in his day that talked about possessions or wealth.

But the source of that, going back even into the Old Testament, was that this word often indicated a source of confidence. People often use this term mammon to be equal to something that you put

your confidence in, that you could rest on and lean on and rely on.

And through the ages and through time and as we all know today, there's no way that money can do that. Money disappoints incredibly, even though it might satisfy for a time.

But Jesus says, you either hate the one or love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. The word hate there is pretty strong. I think we perhaps react negatively as it's such a low-energy term, right?

[24:53] The Bible does talk about hate, and here's where hate is appropriate. In the sense that we will not love anything more than our king. And it's not necessarily even talking about lesser loves.

You know, like Jesus in Luke 14, he says, if any man will come after me, he will hate his mother and father. And we're like, oh wow, I actually have to hate my family and my friends to follow Jesus? No, what he was saying here is that your love for me is going to be so much so that it looks like hate.

I would actually like to take a little bit different approach here with the word hate in this passage and say that Jesus is saying that if it competes for total allegiance to the king, you hate it.

And really, it's not about hating the thing as much because often the things that compete for total allegiance to the king are the very things that the king gives us. Are they not?

The very gifts that the king blesses us with. Just like in the garden, we hold up and say, this is my God. We're deceived. So anything that's in competition that distracts us from that clear, singular allegiance to the king ought to be despised and there ought to be changed.

[26:14] So, in these verses, Jesus is setting up the disciples' priorities. He's saying the priority for the disciple is heaven, not earth. It's God, not wealth. It's God, not other men.

So the disciple under God's reign trusts the king's priorities. So we've seen the priorities. Let's look in verses 25 to 34 now is our last point. He's talking about reliance on the king.

Jesus here in this passage, and these are a lot of verses here. I don't know how the guys who preach here normally, like they have to preach three chapters at a time. They've given me 16 verses and I'm sweating it. Okay?

Because I really like to dig deep, so I have a long way to grow as a communicator. But in these verses, Jesus is talking about reliance on the king. He sets up a positive statement, a positive point, saying it negatively many times in the text.

I mean, how many times can you count there? Do not, do not, do not, do not. And you're thinking, is this all this discipleship thing is about don't do this, don't do this. I mean, that's how my unsaved friends think of me.

[27:19] My friends who don't know Jesus, they're always saying, can you do this? Can you do that? My wife was at work and she's trying to have a relationship with a girl in the office and she knows that my wife follows Christ.

And often, the religious conversations start by, you know, girl in the office to Rachel, hey, can you do this?

Are you allowed to do that? And that's not, Jesus is not, Jesus is not setting up the miserable life of the disciple. Don't, don't, don't.

He's talking about relying on the king. What does it mean to rely on the king? Relying on the king means there's three things here. We're going to actually just slow through the first part here.

First of all, it means not being worried about what's necessary for survival. Relying on the king means not being worried about what's necessary for survival.

[28:23] And he gives some reasons. And in a rhetorical kind of fashion in verses 25 to 32. That don't be anxious about your life, what you will eat, what you will drink, about your body, what you will put on.

Making an argument from greater to lesser. He's saying, here's your body, here's your life. Well, to sustain your body you need food and drink. To, you know, have your body clothed and warmed, you need clothes, obviously.

Jesus is saying, there's more to life than food or clothes. Right? Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? And he goes on to expound on that based on a consideration of the created order.

He uses some commands here. He says, look at the birds. And a little later he says, consider the lilies of the field. Now remember, I personally don't like to call this part of Matthew the Sermon on the Mount.

Because what it is, it's the definitive discourse. It is the manifesto of Christian discipleship that happened to be given on a mountainside. Okay? But we can keep it at Sermon on the Mount.

[29:35] Okay? So Jesus is out there. If you can imagine he's outside and he points out, look at the birds in the sky. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns.

Birds actually do stuff. You've observed. I am no ornithologist. I may be trying to do ornithology here.

But Jesus is saying, look at the birds. Okay? That is not my term, by the way. I borrowed it. I confess. But it's pretty cool, you have to admit. Look at the birds.

They're not completely lazy. They don't work like a farmer does. They're not planning according to their calendars. They don't pull out their farmer's almanac and see, you know, when's the moon? When's it going to rain?

And get the ground ready. Well, they look for worms. And perhaps, you know, as Jesus is talking, they're pecking on the ground for something.

[30:32] Look at the bird. God provides for them. And he says, are you not of more value than they? I'm going to skip verse 27 and move to verse 28.

And why are you anxious about your clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Solomon was up to that point was the richest Jewish monarch in history. Ton of wealth, ton of wisdom. And Jesus is saying, there's more to life than food or clothes.

And you look at Solomon, he says, check out the lilies, the roses, whatever other flowers dotted the Palestinian landscapes of the day.

He says, they don't even work. God is so interested that he has put them together, he has arrayed them in such a way that this Jewish monarch, there's no way that he could have put the clothes together.

[31:42] I mean, maybe in a jargon, I mean, Sophia Loren couldn't dress Lady Gaga like this. All right? The flowers are more important, more beautiful, more becoming.

And yet, consider them, this creation of God gets trampled on by my six-year-old in the yard. Oh, there goes another flower. Or the one tree that I have in my city property that flourishes for two weeks.

And then for the rest of the year, we're cleaning up whatever it dropped. You can tell I'm really into botany and stuff. But, Jesus is saying, those flowers, back in their day, we trample on them and we let them, we mow them, right?

That's the modern day paraphrase. They were scooped up and thrown into an oven just to stoke the flames, just to get an oven going. And God pays careful attention to his creation.

And Jesus' point is saying, you are more important than that. And what does he say in these verses? The key phrase, I think heaven's a key part of this whole text.

[33:00] But the key phrase is found there in verse where he says, God, your heavenly Father, knows that you need them all.

The end of verse 32. So we get into verse 30, well, verse 27. Here's another way that we know that we have everything necessary for survival.

He says, there's nothing that you could do, verse 27. You can't just sit there and think and stew to somehow add another hour onto your life or another week. You know, we always kind of joke around, oh, if I had, you know, if I had an eighth day in my week, how much more productive would I be?

God is saying there's no way in the world that by thinking and by worrying and then by planning it out that you can add more to your life. And some of you are great planners and God is not against planning.

But some of us are such mega planners. We live and die by our Blackberries or our whatever technology that organizes our life that we have everything planned out so well that we get just

tossed into a tizzy if God in his providence allows something into our life that wasn't planned.

[34:16] But God is saying there is no way that you can arrange your spreadsheet, your Microsoft money or whatever your money tool is in a way that you could solve your problem.

You can't do it. Jesus also says, and again, be reminded, Jesus is speaking to a primarily Jewish audience. So at this time, as you get closer to chapter 10, chapter 10 is when Jesus sends off these disciples to go evangelize the other Jews, the towel of the kingdom.

So right now, they're looking at the Gentiles in a sense of they're not the chosen people of God. So he uses this word Gentiles. You could also put in here unbelievers. For our day and age, the unbelievers, logically, people who don't know God or who are not under God's reign, all they do, they work to get what they need for drink and clothing and food.

And at the end of the day and at the end of their life, what do they have that's invested in heaven? Jesus says that the life of the disciple is qualitatively different to the one who is in the kingdom of God.

How much more, he says in verse 32. Will he not clothe you, O you of little faith? Jesus wasn't dealing with the perfect disciple.

[35:41] If you are a perfect, well, really good disciple of Jesus, please come forward and I will gladly sit down because his, will he call these people?

The people of little faith. How often do we, as the followers of the king, perhaps many of us know the Bible pretty well, and yet many of our days are characterized by very little faith.

We try to hack it out to add another few bucks into our checkbook or another day into our lives and we can't do it. At times we act faithless. At times we seem like the people who don't believe.

And Jesus says, your heavenly father knows that you need them all. There's nothing wrong with being provident that is providing for yourself or for your family. But don't get in the position where you're being miserly and hoarding it for yourself or spending it constantly because you have to have the latest thing.

I mean, who are we to think that we need the latest, the fastest thing out there or the thing that makes us look younger, whatever it is?

[36:52] and we spend our money and our time or our worries on ourselves instead of investing in our resources into eternity, into the kingdom of God.

God's omniscient. He's providential. He will provide. He will show up. Do you believe that? As a disciple of Jesus, do you believe that?

If you're not a disciple of Jesus Christ, we're happy you're here. And I can understand how this can sound a little bit quirky. But those who have chosen, those who God has chosen and those who come to Jesus, and that's the language of discipleship often in the New Testament is that people are coming to Jesus, have a life that is qualitatively different.

Jesus does not promise a bed of roses for your Christian path. Unfortunately, to Christianity's chagrin, there are purveyors of prosperity in the church today.

They call themselves pastors, evangelists, whatever. And they often say that God wants you to be comfortable. If God is a God of love, He wants you to be comfortable.

[38:18] Of course. What kind of God would that be who wouldn't want His children to be comfortable? I mean, and then they go on to reason, right? It's a serpentine kind of logic that says, well, I mean, as a father, you wouldn't do that.

You want your kids to be comfortable, right? But see, when Jesus came, proclaiming the kingdom and bringing this phenomenon in, this rule of His, is He was turning everyone's concept, Jews first. He was turning everyone's concept of what it meant to be liberated on its head. And in some cases, He says, I promise you, death. And the Son of Man didn't even have a pillow to lay His head on. He was born in a barn in straw. This is the king that Matthew's proclaiming. And Matthew is setting it up here about what it means to be, can I use this phrase, rich towards God.

and not rich by earth's, by our world's or society's standards. It means to be, to rely on the king means not to be worried about what's necessary for survival.

[39:28] It also means to just blurt it out, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. I like to work backwards here. When he's talking about righteousness, this is not talking about the righteousness that we are granted by the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

It's not talking a righteousness not your own. If you just flip back a page to 520, check it out here in this sermon or this discourse, Jesus is telling, talking to us about righteousness and He's talking about the righteousness that you need for the kingdom.

He says, for I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you'll never enter into the kingdom of heaven. Kingdom of heaven, kingdom of God, same thing. He says, you need a righteousness that is not your own, holy other, alien righteousness, if you will.

But when Jesus says, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, it is not that other righteousness that we need. It says one writer on this text said, it is to pursue righteousness of life in full submission to the will of God.

That's the kind of righteousness. We ought not to be so enamored with justification in a sense. And our righteousness in Christ, which we ought to be, don't get me wrong, that's why we're studying Romans, but there's a lot of talk in the scriptures about being righteous, doing righteously.

[40:51] And it is living your life and pursuing full submission to the King. Take, for example, the people of Israel who came back probably about 500 years before this, before Jesus was on His ministry.

They came back after being deported and they came back to their homeland, Israel, to Jerusalem. Shambles. Everything's wrecked. They're trying to figure out where's our property lines, where are we going to live?

And so the people of Israel that were there, you can look at this on page 791 in Haggai chapter 1. This is really an interesting text. I think it's very appropriate for us to consider because this is not an American dream problem, folks.

This is a plague. Worldliness and greediness was a, I mean, it was an Israel thing too. Haggai 1, verse 2.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, these people, and that's the remnant that just came back, say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord. Remember, the temple was wreck. That was a priority to God.

[42:00] Then the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet. Is it time for you, yourselves, to dwell in your paneled houses? Now that word paneled houses, we could take it as to be exquisite decor, really nice houses, or it could mean, and I like to think of it this way, finished houses.

You finished your house. The last panel is up there. Your last brick is there. This is a time for you to dwell in your paneled houses while this house, the house of the Lord, lies in ruins.

Now therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. Check this out. You have sown much and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough.

You drink. Think of Matthew chapter 6 here. You drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. I wonder if Jesus or Matthew was thinking about this.

The remnant that came back from Israel. And what was the first thing they tried to do? Man, security. Our own security. My trust fund. My house. My property lines. I've got to get that up.

[43:08] I've got to get my house in order first. And God said, hang on. What about my house? What about my dwelling? What about the king's priorities?

And if only they would have been rich toward God. God would have supplied all of these things. So don't worry. What are you going to drink?

Where's your next paycheck and your next meal? Your clothes? Don't worry about that. Work. Do what you can. But past that, don't worry. When you seek the king and his righteousness, all these things will be added to you.

What does it mean to seek the kingdom of God? It's various things. And we don't have time to get into it. It's the whole book of Matthew. But to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness means to seek the king himself.

That's a New Year's resolution. You need to seek Jesus more. I think it means to evangelize. I think I'm well founded in saying that evangelism is a priority for the kingdom.

[44:15] And may I just vent for a second? Often as Christians, we like to bless our agendas and our pursuits as kingdom this and kingdom that.

I would really challenge us to think and study the scriptures on what the kingdom of God is. It's hard to come up with a definition. But let's not just be slap happy and say kingdom this and kingdom that and bless God.

We're spiritual because it's a kingdom pursuit. Now I think Matthew makes some things clear. Seek the king. Evangelize. When Matthew finishes this book, what is Jesus doing to his disciples? Again, he's talking to disciples.

He says, go. Go. Anyone know what the next phrase is? Make disciples. It's a huge priority. seeking the kingdom of God. It means seeking his holiness. It means repentance. It means seeking to obey God. Taking the word of God seriously.

[45:15] It's not just seeking that relationship, but taking the words of God and trying to obey them. It means generous. It does mean your pocketbook. It really does.

I have no idea what anyone here makes. Really, I don't. So I think it's easy for me to say, I mean, why do we worry?

Why do we fret about trying to serve money or get money? And then also, we struggle with the guilt when the pastor gets up and says, we need more money, our budget's low.

You know, everyone here at Holy Trinity has kind of heard that. You know, it's the economy, right? Or maybe it's just all churches and nonprofits are always struggling, right?

You feel this guilt, in a sense. You're struggling with that. How can I keep going and hold on to my lifestyle, and yet, how in the world am I going to give to the church? I think we need to turn that around.

[46:13] I say, how can I invest in the kingdom of God more? And whatever's left over, God will provide.

God provides. And I can be comfortable with that. So the whole thought of God wants us, his children, to be comfortable? Yeah.

Sure. With what he's given us. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 6, if we have food, we have clothing, we'll be content with these things. We have the basic coverings, the basic necessities for survival. Do we somehow prioritize an extra that passes outside the realm of the kingdom? Do we make our wants, our needs, somehow? Proverbs 30, verse 7.

Verse 37 through 9 is a great text about our attitude towards money and God, ultimately. The writer there says, you know, two things I ask of you.

[47:23] Deny them not to me before I die. Remove far from me falsehood and lying. Give me neither poverty nor riches. Feed me with the food that is needful for me. Lest I be full and deny you and say, who is the Lord?

Or, lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of God. So, greediness and miserliness and these things are not necessarily a rich person's problem. God is not, in Matthew chapter 6, God is not indicting the rich.

If he were, many of us could just kind of sit back and say, okay. you might say, I am no, I am no Bernard Madoff or Jeff Skilling.

I'm not out there duping people into some Ponzi scheme. Thank God, I'm not like that guy. It's like a lot of people when you ask them about their status with Jesus, what is it they often say?

Well, I've never murdered anyone. Sure, I haven't either. Probably two-thirds of the world hasn't murdered anyone. But we do murder. We do hate. We are greedy.

[48:35] So this text is for all of us. This text is about smashing the fist that keeps grabbing and grabbing and grabbing for more. Jesus closes the text in verse 4.

It kind of a, it doesn't seem to really flow with the text, but it's kind of an aphorism, if you will, a wise saying, therefore, don't be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself.

Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Translated this, it's pointless to worry about tomorrow. Don't try to predict it. Tomorrow will run you over when it's ready.

And, and the grace of Jesus, which super abounds, all those problems, will be there. So don't worry. We all, friends, we all have messed up priorities, right? And, some of us here need to recalibrate. I dare say, as a New Year's resolution, we all need to recalibrate. Think over our priorities.

[49:39] According to the King, we need to trust Jesus more. And I hope this text, that the Spirit of God will take this text on your heart and recalibrate your heart.

But there might be some here who may not even be following Jesus. and what you really need, my friend, is you need a heart transplant. That's a great thing to have because those of us who have followed Jesus have been given new hearts.

We've been, in a sense, we've been giving the life principle. We've been wired for the kingdom and for the King. And ultimately, His grace is going to win out in our lives. You may not see it right now. You may be going through a hard time. You may be really sinful right now. You may be extremely greedy. You may be planning your life out with rarely a thought of what God wants.

But Jesus can redeem that. But if you, none of this really makes sense to you, what you need is just to become a disciple first.

[50:38] Take the first step and follow Jesus. Come to Jesus. The disciple under the King's reign trusts in the King's priorities. What will you pursue this year that will outlast your life and display your trust in God's spirit?

Thank you, God, for this text. And we pray that it would be powerfully applied to our lives in the coming days and months.  
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