

# First Things First

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[0:00] First things first, Matthew chapter 6 and verse 25. It reads, As our Lord is speaking, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor yet for your body, what you 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? Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature?

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 clothed the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

[1:22] 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. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Take therefore no thought, for the morrow, for the morrow shall take care of the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Back to verse 33, but seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

So, our Lord's talking about the body, about a life, about what we wear, about what we eat, and comparing to the lilies of the field. They don't have concern for that.

[2:28] They're clothed by God. God clothes the grass of the field. And then he says, what about you? Take no thoughts, no anxious thought, for what we shall eat or drink, or with what we shall be clothed.

For your heavenly Father knows that you need these things. And then he says, seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things, all of that, shall be added unto you.

So the context here is, our Lord's talking about, taking anxious thought, or worries. Anxiety's for tomorrow. It's got that thought of thinking about tomorrow, and being worried about that.

You know, some, in the context here, it talks about, some being worried about food, about what they shall drink, about their clothes. someone has written that the average person's worry and anxiety, focuses on 40% of things that will never happen.

Never going to happen, 40%. 30% of things about the past, that can't be changed. Can't do anything about that, but people worry 30% about what's happened back then.

[3:38] 12% worry about criticism by others, mostly that's untrue. 10% worry about their health, which gets worse with stress. So that doesn't help.

And then 8% maybe have some real problems that will be faced. But our Lord's saying, don't be worried really about anything that you face, about your daily cares, and trust yourself to him.

When we think about first things first, seek ye first. What's the most important thing in your life? What do you count as first, number one? And how do you show it?

It's a good question I've put to you. So you show what's important, I've put to you by how you spend your time, how you live your life. And it's saying here, seek.

Seek. Now, this seeking, it talks about an intensity, about a persevering, of seeking, of pressing on seeking, of a zeal to achieve what you're looking to get.

[4:40] It's that seeking that you want it. And our Lord says, seek first the kingdom of God. What is it that we count a priority when we look at life is submitting to the Lordship of our God, first consideration in the decisions we make.

On what do you set your heart and your mind? Here's a good quote I picked up. We need have only one care, that we put first things first, the kingdom of God, really, isn't it?

Faithfulness to God. Put that first. Put that as the top priority. Then all else we need for both worlds will be supplied. Think of this world and the world to come.

Faithfulness to God. Put God first, the kingdom of God first. And God will never fail us. Sometimes in our rejoicing, we lack the claim of that divine promise.

I'll read on it. It will not always be easy. Tomorrow, it may mean a distasteful task, a disagreeable duty, a costly sacrifice, life's full of sore testings.

[5:43] But we can have that assurance as we take Christ as our guide through life, that he'll be with us. So, seek ye first, number one. That's the priority, the kingdom of God. Lots of other things can take our time and attention, compete for our priority.

For some, it could be people in our lives. It could be possessions. It could be power, prestige, pleasure, or all manner of desires. We see one of the real key verses of the Old Testament.

Our Lord said in Exodus 20, in the Ten Commandments, the very first one was, thou shalt have no other gods, none, no other gods before me.

And so, he wants to have that highest place, doesn't he? He's due that. And we show what matters most by our use of our time. Do we find time for God? Do we commit time to that, make time for that through scheduling it, making it something that you count as something you want to lock in that, as something you want to keep to?

Are you willing to put yourselves out and trust God, to put him first in all the considerations of your life? What about your commitment to meeting with God's people?

[7:01] That's the priority, isn't it? When the church gathers to receive God's word, when we encourage one another, when we get together, when we're edifying, building up one another, the Bible talks about doing it so much the more as you see the day approaching.

So, again, it's putting God as the first things first, isn't it? Put God as that first consideration. When we're making decisions, do we base it on our own comfort or convenience or on obedience to our Lord?

Am I willing to trust God and put him first? If you neglect your soul, you miss what is the most important in all of life, isn't it? Really, Christ says, seek you first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Talking about our soul. Are you seeking the best in life? What attention do we give to the Bible? Do we put time in that? How's our devotion to God?

Is he first or maybe a close second or third or who knows what? We could consider that, couldn't we? Does our priority and our love for God fall much less in second place or third place to some other interest?

[8:13] Make him your joy, make him your focus, your delight. As the psalmist said, delight thyself also in the Lord and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

If your delight is in the Lord, his desires will be your desires and he'll give you those that are rightful desires. Delight yourself in the Lord, delight in him.

May he be your joy in your life. When we're thinking about priorities, it's good to consider this truth of putting first things first.

Now, people might have heard this illustration. People that talk about time management use it to illustrate how we use our time. Some of you might have heard about it.

There was a time where a lecturer was talking to some students and he pulled out this large wide-mouth jar and he put in these big rocks, these large rocks, as much as he could squash into the jar.

[9:21] He talked to the class and he said, is this jar full? The class said, yes. He said, really? Then he pulled out a bucket of gravel like

small stones and he poured it into that glass jar and the small gravel stones fell into the jar and he shook it around and eventually all those filled up and then he asked again, is this jar full?

And the students were on to him now and they said, no. He said, good. Then he dumped in a bucket of sand into that glass jar and it fell down between the big rocks and the little rocks and then he said again, is this jar full?

And they said, no. And then he got some water and he poured the water into the jar until it was full to the brim. And so he explained what he was demonstrating as showing about how we use time. And he says, the point is, you've got to put the big rocks in first or you'll never get them in at all. You know, we could fill the glass jar with the gravel, the small stones, we'll never get those big rocks in. And so we could consider that spiritually speaking, that Jesus is the big rock. You know, we want to put the Lord Jesus in the jar of our life. We want the Lord Jesus to be the one that gets the first place of our time and then we'll fit all the other things in as we can.

[10:47] The pebbles, the sand, the water, the other things will fit in. So it's a great illustration really, isn't it, of prioritising, of putting God first, then the other things we can fit in.

But sometimes we make the mistake of putting the temporary things before the heavenly things, the things that are earthly, worldly, worldly cares. We can put those in first and then God doesn't have any space for filling us with himself, with eternal things, with his truth, with those things of our soul, our state before God, of our eternal future, of our walk with God.

God, it's important to put the first things first. Imagine if you had an invitation to attend a palace, to see a king, who'd like that?

You had to see a king in a palace or a queen, to have an audience with the royal majesty himself, not only that, but to be invited to have that palace as your home forever.

That's what our king has done, isn't it? the king of kings and the lord of lords, he's given his royal invitation from his royal majesty himself to such as we, that we can have that real invitation to heaven.

[12:05] And it's not some luck thing, some lottery, some chance thing, that's something we can know, it's something that he promises, something that he guarantees, he assures, his promise is sure.

But you can decline or you can accept the invitation. So it's really important. Will you seek his kingdom first? The king is inviting you to his kingdom, he wants you to put his kingdom first, to accept his invitation.

So seek this king. So what of this kingdom? What is it? What is the kingdom of God? He says, seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. Some thoughts about the kingdom of God. What is the kingdom of God? What does it mean for you and me? To become a citizen of this kingdom, there's certain requirements, rights and responsibilities.

Requirements, rights and responsibilities. Requirements. To gain admission to this kingdom, it requires that you first bow to the king. Doesn't it?

[13:15] If you want to be a citizen of the kingdom of God, you should bow to the supreme king, his majesty himself, the great king of kings and lord of lords.

Acknowledge him as your lord. Bow to the king. Are you ready for this next world to come? For his empire, his dominion, it's going to be worldwide. It'll be a global empire and he will be a benevolent king.

He won't be a dictatorial, onerous king, a slave master kind of master, but he will be a benevolent king, won't he?

He'll be a generous king. He'll be a kind and loving king and the best master, the best one we can follow. I know when you have a job, I know I had different discussions with people about jobs and having a good boss makes all the difference, doesn't it?

That's what makes a good job really, is having a good boss I think, that's one of the main considerations but when you serve the Lord, he's the greatest boss ever, isn't he? He's the greatest master, the greatest lord and being in his service is the greatest privilege and joy to be honoured to serve, to be under his lordship and the Bible talks about let the peace of God rule in your hearts,

that's Colossians 3, 15, let the peace of God rule in your hearts, let him rule, let the king rule in your life, in your heart, in your heart, let his peace rule, let him govern, surrender to his lordship.

[14:48] It's a requirement that we bow to this king, isn't it? That we make heaven our home, that we can enter his kingdom and now his kingdom is not one that you're born into.

You've got to apply, you've got to make application to enter, to migrate to. I know years ago my folks made application to come to Australia from some far distant land, the pagan land of the UK and thankfully our invitation, our application was accepted.

And it's the same with entering the kingdom of God, isn't it? We can make application to enter, to migrate to the kingdom of heaven, as it were. So if you're not born again, you'll never even see this kingdom.

So that's something we have to make application and it talks about that we enter God's kingdom when we're born again. We are adopted into God's family, we're made citizens of heaven.

Our Lord Jesus says, verily, verily, he says, truly, truly, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

[15:56] So this nation, this place, this heaven is a kingdom, the kingdom of God. And its king is perfect, the very best government. He's true and he's just.

The question is, is he your king? The good news is you can be translated from the power of darkness, essentially not the domain of darkness, the kingdom of darkness, the devil's domain, into the kingdom of his dear son.

And it talks about he's translated us, doesn't he? He's taken us out of the kingdom of darkness and into his marvellous light, as it reads elsewhere. So are you part of his kingdom?

Or do you need to make the change to receive him? It's very important that we make application, that we meet the requirements. And that is simply to trust him. It's simply to receive his promise. It's simply to accept his invitation. And as it says, to as many as received him, to them gave he power, to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name.

[16:59] So if he truly is, then our king and our kingdom are due our first and absolute allegiance. And we're subject to the rule of a new king.

And he deserves to rule over us. And he knows what's best, what we need. And for him to rule, for Christ to rule, the current ruler of your world, of your life, needs to be deposed, dethroned.

Talking, of course, about the devil. That he would be really, he is the king we belong to before we get saved, isn't he?

We're in his domain. And he needs to be deposed and dethroned. The Bible talks about a ruler of this world, a god, small g, a prince of this world.

And he, the devil, he wants to receive your service and affection. And he's a con artist. He's really good at tricking people to think that they've got freedom when they're serving him.

[18:01] But really, he's holding them in chains. The devil wants to steal God's rightful place. And you must deny the devil. Deny him. And deny self.

Let Christ reign over the throne of your heart. And this kingdom, the kingdom of God, it will not fail. It's forever, the kingdom of God. God. And so, there's a wonderful joy there, there's contentment, there's hope to find the kingdom of God.

And he is the one worthy of the crown and of the throne. So the kingdom has requirements, number one. Secondly, there are also rights.

There's rights. When you become an Australian citizen, you know that you get rights. There's some privileges that you have. There's benefits. And it's the same as a citizen of heaven.

There's rights that you have. Once you become a member of his kingdom, you enjoy certain rights or privileges. Think of it. You can approach the king as his subject.

[19:04] Really, you can approach the king at any moment. There's an open invitation for you to approach him. And you can receive his infinite pardon. You can receive his fair and loving rule.

You can meet personally with the sovereign ruler of the universe and gain a hearing at his throne. I think sometimes we dismiss how extremely wonderful that is, isn't it?

To think that we can have a private audience with the king. You see how earthly rulers or important people, their diaries pack.

You've got to make an appointment if you can even make an appointment. But for this one, you don't have to wait for an appointment or go on some waiting list. He's always available for you to talk to him, privately talk to him.

And what's more, our sovereign, he stoops to hear your voice. He stoops down from his throne to hear your very hearts crying. Think of that. Believe it today. The privilege you have to come to him, to the sovereign.

[20:09] And when you become a child of the king, you become a heavenly people with a heavenly destiny and a heavenly father. And the one who extends this offer of life to you, it's everlasting.

An everlasting life. This one is one you can know. You can know him. You've got the right to become God's own children, as I read before. So you have the rights and privileges of being a member of his new empire and dominion, to be a part of the colony of heaven on earth.

Some have compared how like a local church is kind of like a colony of heaven. We're colonising the planet for heaven. There's a sense of it, isn't there, that we're like a little outpost here in this planet as a gathering of God's people.

We're like a little colony of God's people from all kinds of walks and persuasions, countries and cultures and backgrounds. God's brought us together as one family to be this colony of heaven on earth.

And you have in store, also as a believer, you've got in store a wonderful inheritance. You've got the right to claim a crown. As Paul tells Timothy, 2 Timothy 4, verse 8, he tells Timothy, 2 Timothy 4, verse 8, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.

[21:28] It's just around the corner. It's laid up, he says. It says, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all them, also that love his appearing.

Unto all them, also that love his appearing. That's all of us, isn't it? That know him. Now, think of this crown, it says. Paul tells Timothy, it's laid up for you.

It's like waiting there. Maybe it's in a glass case or I'm not sure how you could picture it if you like.

That there's a crown and your name's on it and it's just a hair. For you that are loving his appearing.

For you that love the Saviour. For you that are longing for his appearing. For you that are trusting in the blessed hope of his coming again. You that love the Lord as a crown for you. Think of that.

It's mind-boggling, isn't it really? I know I mentioned it before. As a youngster and then later in life, I've been to the Tower of London and I've seen the crowns and jewels of the kings and queens of England.

[22:29] And it's a dazzling sight to see these precious jewels, these gold and silver and jewels. And yet the crown that awaits you is far greater.

Far greater than any king or queen of this earth. It's the crown that he will give. The crown of righteousness. So friends, be encouraged as citizens of heaven that this crown is a preparing for you.

And as a believer, as a citizen of heaven, you've embarked on a wonderful adventure, a voyage of faith. You follow in the steps of the greatest men and women of all humanity.

The martyrs and the saints of the Bible and beyond. Think of that. And we'll get to meet some of them. Won't that be good? I think they're the real superheroes or they're far above any film stars or sports stars or rock stars that these ones that have gone ahead, that have loved the Lord and laid down their life for the gospel, gone into dangerous places to take the message, to witness to souls, to reach continents for Christ and have laid down their life, some of them in missionary endeavour or martyrdom.

We're going to meet them one day and we can be privileged to be their brothers and sisters, can't we? So as well as requirements and rights, we see a third thing, responsibilities.

[23:50] responsibilities, this privilege that you have as a citizen, as a subject of the kingdom of heaven, you've got responsibilities.

Think of that. Likewise, Australian citizens have responsibilities. There's certain expectations. There's certain expectations we have, isn't there?

And as a subject under God's reign, as citizens of the kingdom of God, we've got the wonderful blessing of serving our King and doing our duty for Him.

You have responsibilities, obligations as one who holds that high name of Christian, as we said before, a Christ one, to be a real one, a dinky-dye Christian, true blue Christian, a born again believer.

You've got a privilege and a responsibility. So be fair dinkum about that. Be true blue, as it were, the real deal. No artificial colours or preservatives.

[24:56] Be a straight down the line Christian. All right? Try to be fair dinkum, 24 by 7, to live for Christ. That there won't be any variableness with you.

That some would say, oh, I work with him and he doesn't seem to act like a Christian or she. But that you're actually above reproach. That we stand up. Stand up and be counted.

Paul tells the Thessalonians, 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 12. He urges them that you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Walk worthy of God. And that's 24 by 7, isn't it? It's not like you switch it on when you come to a church meeting, when you're around Christians, that you've got one face there and a different face somewhere else.

But that you walk worthy of God. Every step you take of life's journey, that you walk, that you'll walk worthy of God. And he's called you, it says, unto his kingdom and his glory.

[25:56] So do you walk worthy of the king? Think of it. You're a child of the king. You're one of his subjects. I trust one of his loyal subjects. Does your lip and your life measure up?

Your lip and your life. It's always a challenge, isn't it? To think, not that you need to be some oddball or anything in a workplace setting, but you want to be consistent with your testimony that you're a consistent believer in whatever setting that you are.

Even if it means scorning and mocking. As people would talk behind your back, as I know some have done of me. As best that you'd rather stay true to your calling.

Walk worthy of God. And then we see Romans 6, 12, again talking about a rulership. Paul tells the Romans, let not sin therefore reign or rule in your mortal body.

Don't let sin rule. Don't let sin be king, that you should obey it in the lust thereof. It could be put, stop letting sin rule constantly as king in your bodies.

[27:05] That's the sense of it. Don't let sin rule as king. Let Christ rule as king. Amen? Let Christ rule as king in your mortal bodies. It's his vessel. It's his.

Each one that are here, you are his. So let Christ rule, not sin. Let Christ rule as king in your body. Is he your king?

This is a fundamental question. Talking about first things first. Seek ye first, number one, the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Is he your king? No one is more deserving to be your king. Beware of rival kings. There's lots of voices, there's lots of parties that would vie for your love, for your affection. Is he king?

Is he chief? Is he sovereign? Is he your master? Do you walk here below in your life on earth as would line up with the one who will ultimately walk the streets of heaven?

[28:02] Because that is true for you, believer. You're going to walk the streets of heaven. So we ought to walk here below in the light of the fact one day we will walk the streets of heaven. Do you live like you truly are an inhabitant of the kingdom of God?

Do you speak that language as it were? The heavenly language as it were, the heavenly walk that your lip and your life line up. Do you consider your soul, the needs of your soul or the souls of your fellow men?

The kingdom of God first. That's what counts. And we want others to come into the kingdom. Don't we? That's why we care about soul winning because souls matter.

Do we consider our soul and the souls of fellow men? Do we attend to spiritual things? Are the spiritual things that which occupies our mind your need of salvation?

If you've yet to trust him and when you have trusted him that your salvation matters. The infinite value of your eternal soul. These are more pressing needs than all the cares as the context is of the

worries of this life of earthly needs.

[29:14] Where is your heart? Where is your interest? It's reflecting how you spend your time, your money. Are you making the mistake of seeking some other good yet missing the best, the ultimate?

God's rightful position in our lives. That's the first foremost consideration. Do we pay him the allegiance that he deserves? That's determined to be kingdom minded.

It's a sense where we should be kingdom minded. That the kingdom matters above any other thing. How can I please God? Do I place my own pleasure before him?

My comfort is he dishonoured, disregarded. Sometimes life crowds out. It's like the illustration of the jar, isn't it? All the little rocks.

We put the little rocks in first or the sand in and then the big rocks. God's wishes for us. God's will for us. There's no room to put the big rocks in because we've left God as secondary.

[30:12] Think of our Lord, our King. He came dressed in the clothes of a commoner, didn't he? You hear stories about kings and queens when they kind of go undercover, don't they?

Because they've got the paparazzi after them all the time. Sometimes they wear a disguise and they kind of go undercover and walk amongst the common people and really that's what our King has done, isn't it?

He's clothed himself in the form of a servant. He's come down and he's visited his people and the Bible talks about how he did such a thing and it says, let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2 verse 5, who being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself, made himself of no, no reputation and took upon him, it says, the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Think of the King. Not only did he step down from his glorious throne in the highest heaven, he took upon him the form of a servant, he was made God manifest in the flesh, he was made a man, a true, a real man, the perfect man, the man without sin, the God man and he humbled himself and the King took the penalty of our sin.

[31:48] Wow! Astonishing, isn't it? My sin, he took the payment, he took the penalty, he took the judgment and he paid, sheltering me from the wrath of the Father, he took it all.

And this King, he's due our highest praise, isn't he? Shouldn't we give him our highest praise? It says, Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every name shall bow of things in heaven and things in earth and things onto the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

This King is due our highest praise. No other sovereign deserves such love and affection and honour as this one.

Will you bow to him? One day you will. Everyone will. Rather bow now. Bow this side of heaven. Bow now to this one, this King.

Give God his rightful place, the first place. It says, Seek ye first the kingdom of God. Seek ye first the kingdom of God.

[33:10] Let that be the first place, the first consideration. God deserves no less than our best and our first. Now sometimes they make a big fuss when there's talk and I think there's talk already of a royal visit.

There's a royal visit. Let me tell you today there is a royal visit and it's not far away and when there's a royal visit when there's a royal visit you want to make sure you're ready, don't you?

I know it's almost like in a work situation when the big boss comes they all go busy, busy to make everything just fine and tidy and I heard tell about a royal visit where the king was coming and the whole village was just a hubbub of activity.

Everything had to be just set just so so that everything could be perfectly ready. The royal visit is not far away amen because the king is coming isn't he?

The king is coming the king of glory is coming he's returning to reclaim planet earth any day now the kingdom of God and advancing it must be our chief and foremost concern our utmost priority seek ye first the kingdom of God the king is coming the royal visit is just not far not far I put to you and so that should be our chief and foremost concern our utmost priority seek his kingdom now I haven't elaborated much on the second part here but it also says seek his righteousness seek his righteousness now it's a good thing that it's his righteousness amen because it's his righteousness that we need isn't it because I know if I if I if I sought my righteousness that wouldn't that wouldn't do that wouldn't be enough amen and it's the same for you and me isn't it it's not seek your righteousness it's seek his righteousness his righteousness the bible says the lord our righteousness he is our very righteousness the righteousness of God and he's he tells us that you are the righteousness of God in Christ the righteousness of God it tells us all that God is all that he commands all that he demands all that he approves all that he provides he gives you by faith in Christ not by works of righteousness that we have done but according to his mercy he saved us it's his mercy it's his grace not works of righteousness that we have done but his righteousness and we know it talks elsewhere about as a robe of righteousness it's like he gives us he grants us he bequeaths it he bestows it his righteousness he bestows his righteousness on you by faith and so believer today seek ye first the kingdom of God the king seek his will make him your priority your highest concern in all your decisions of life the king of glory is coming seek to be in his kingdom to know the requirements of the kingdom you must be born again you must believe trust Christ as your lord and saviour and then the new birth happens it's it's a miracle isn't it the new birth that requirement you've seen the rights that you have as citizens of his kingdom such benefits such glorious privileges are yours as a believer as a citizen of heaven and also such responsibilities too as you represent heaven here on earth so seek his kingdom and seek his righteousness his righteousness first things first and that's through faith in Christ seek the things of God first and he will bless your life let us pray lord we thank you that you tell us seek first your kingdom and your righteousness lord we pray help us to be so minded help us to have that heart that will that our lips and our life will not be out of accord with that essential resolve that this matters matters the most pray for each one here to know that trust that heart's peace of the new birth to know they're born again by faith as they've trusted you as lord as saviour they've answered the very kingdom of God by faith and are ready for the kingdom to come lord we thank you that you give us such grace to hear such glad

[38:14] gospel news today and to trust you lord for the rights and responsibilities we have as citizens of heaven help us to have that heart to seek first the kingdom and what is in the interest of the kingdom rather than of our own selves and seek also your righteousness lord that will have that heart to yearn after a closer walk with you a closer leading of your spirit a closer fellowship that will not be out of accord with your will help us lord to see it and fulfil it in every life for your glory we ask in jesus name we pray amen a closer Thank you.