

Seek First His Kingdom

June 30th 2019

A ten-year-old boy was failing math. His parents tried everything to get him to do well in school, but nothing worked. Finally out of desperation, they enrolled him in the local Catholic school. To the surprise of his parents from his first day, the boy spent every night poring over books. When his first report card came, he had received an A in every subject including math.

"Son," his father asked, "what made the difference in your classes and especially math? The nuns? The textbooks?"

"Dad, you know I had never taken math seriously before," the boy admitted. "But when I walked in and saw that guy nailed to the plus sign, I knew this place meant business!"

Well that is not exactly the message Jesus wants to convey by his life.

But if I asked you: "What was Christ's message while here on earth?"

Answers:

- Good New
- Salvation
- Love God and your Neighbor
- Self-Sacrifice and love like Christ's
- Etc.

But what did Jesus say was the very first thing we should be doing?

Hint: It is about loving God with everything you have.

Our answer is found in a very powerful and profound passage.

Matthew 6:31-34

*So **do not worry**, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 **But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness**, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 **Therefore do not worry** about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

What was Jesus message while here on earth?

- "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness!"

This is to be our #1 priority and Jesus goes on to promise that "***all these things will be given to you***", not just the material but the spiritual.

Pray

Matthew 14:22-26

22 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. 23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, 24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

27 But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

- Jesus sends his most efficient means of transportation away when he sends the disciples to the other side of the lake in their boat.
 - It's 15 miles (roughly) from where Jesus was to the other side. A days walk or 20 min. by bus.

What was Jesus doing?

- Jesus sends them off because His number one priority was to “**seek the Kingdom of God**”. He did this by making spending time alone with God the most important thing even if it meant sacrificing something.
 - In this case it was sleep and an easy way to get across the lake.
 - It was more important to spend time with God – seeking his will, i.e. His kingdom.
- So, apparently, he didn't worry about how he was going to get across the lake, rather he was only focused on spending time, alone, communicating with God.

And I, sincerely, doubt that he was thinking “I'll spend a couple hours with God then go walk on the water out to them.” Jesus was focused on his desire to talk with God and allowing himself to be directed by God through the Holy Spirit.

That's how he could say in Matthew 6 not to worry about what's coming next. If your number one priority is your relationship with God, then what comes next is in God's hands and nothing to worry about. *The past is past, the future is in God's hands. This moment is all you have.*

But, if “*seeking the kingdom of God*” is **not** your # 1 priority then the repeated message in the Old Testament becomes true.

- “*If you abandon God's purpose in your life then you abandon God help.*” Repeat.

So, Jesus didn't worry about how he was going to get across the lake, he was only concerned on spending time being recharged by God and focusing on God purpose. Then at the right moment he's directed to go out to the disciples by doing something that defies the natural law by walking on the water.

Jesus lived a life being focused on seeking the “*kingdom of God*” and everything else followed without him forcing it to happen.

Jesus is to be our Lord – our example. He was focused on God's will first and when we follow his example God will take care of the rest.

Now, if it was you or I standing at the edge of the lake before the disciples left we probably would have been making sure we had some food, water, and maybe a change of cloth because walking around the lake would have taken a couple of days.

So, we would have planned to be prepared, to be in control of what ever happened.

There is no evidence of this with Jesus. He was only focused on getting alone with God (**seeking first the kingdom of God**) then

everything he need would be given to him by the Father who know what we need better than we do.

So, Jesus taught his disciples this.

- **Mark 6:6-13** Sends them out with nothing but a staff – forcing them to trust God for everything as they went.

We call ourselves Christians.

When we do that, we are saying that we are **aligning ourselves** with Jesus Christ.

- We believe that:
 - **His example**
 - **His thinking**
 - **His beliefs are true** and that:
 - **We want to live by and under them.**

Paul in **Colossians 1:15** states that “*the Son is the image of the invisible God.*” He is our physical example of how to live every day and in every situation.

So, if his priority was “*seek first the Kingdom of God*”, and it’s what he taught his disciples in various ways, then it stands to reason that it should be our first priority.

When it is everything else will follow, and that is also clearly evident in Jesus’ life as we see God taking care of his every need and directing his life. Even to the point of allowing him to break the laws of nature by talking a shortcut to the other side of the lake by walking on the water.

In the gospel of Matthew, the writer focuses on the idea that we need to be seeking the “kingdom of God” first almost 50 times.

I would say that Matthew though this was incredibly important.

I want to challenge you to consider what you seek first.

Is it your own will and desires and if they align with God’s you think your doing great, or is the first thing you consider God’s will?

If it’s your own don’t expect God to help you!

If you first seek his kingdom and His righteousness then the promise is available for you and you can expect His help in every situation.

So, we want to spend a couple of weeks exploring Matthews gospel and to see what he learned from Jesus about “*seeking the kingdom of God*” and the various ways he is telling us to “*seek the kingdom*”.