

Title: First Seek the Kingdom of God

Text: Matthew 6: 19-34

Date: December 31, 2015

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Last Sunday, I made the statement that it would be the last sermon you heard this year. Emma was shaking her head, “No.” I had in mind that this would be the 1st rather than New Year’s Eve. So that was the next to the last, this will be the last sermon you hear this year. Our text is Matthew 6: 19-34. But let me just read verse 33.

Matthew 6: 33: But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

On the eve of a New Year, as think back on how God provided for us this past year and as we look forward to what this year will hold, I hope God will bless this scripture to start us off looking to him and make us continue the whole year long.

Subject: Seek the Kingdom of God First

You have heard it taught that seeking the kingdom of God first, is to prioritize a list: first, is seek Christ, then the next important thing, then the next and so on. That is not what it is to seek the kingdom of God first.

Proposition: Seeking the kingdom of God first is for Christ to have the preeminence in our hearts in all things all the time.

There is no list of greatest to least importance. In everything, Christ has the preeminence. When looking for a church, Christ has the preeminence. When attending services, Christ has the preeminence. When looking for a job, Christ has the preeminence. When working that job, Christ has preeminence. When dealing with my family in good times, Christ has the preeminence. When dealing with my family in sad times, Christ has the preeminence.

Colossians 3:23: And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

CHRIST IS OUR TREASURE

Matthew 6: 19: Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Earthly treasures are self-righteous religious treasures, as well as, temporal treasures such as money and garments, homes and careers, even our families. Christ is warning us against covetousness, against have a mind set on worldly things, against saving up and hoarding riches unto ourselves.

I recall a story about a man who died. His family was cleaning out the attic and found bags of old coins. The coins had been there so long they were rusted and molded. Some save up riches till they rust because they are not given to those in need. Yet, that man died and his rusty treasure was taken away from him.

Every kind of earthly treasures shall be taken away from us—“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.”

But when Christ is our Treasure in heaven, when whatsoever we do we do it as unto the Lord, this is to lay up treasures in heaven. Only Christ and his kingdom, only eternal life, only eternal redemption, eternal righteousness and holiness which Christ is unto us, only fruits Christ produces in his people are eternal. This is the only lasting treasure—“neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” Christ said,

Luke 12:33: Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

Our Lord is not saying that by giving alms you will earn treasures in heaven. Alms-giving is the fruit of grace, the effect of Christ making himself our treasure in heaven.

Here is the reason Christ gives us this warning. This is the Master speaking. So heed his warning, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” If our treasure is upon earth then our hearts will be set on earthly treasures. Then when we have to make the choices in life, the preeminent thoughts ruling our hearts will be earthly treasure: how will I make the most money?, how will this get me and mine more earthly treasure?, how will this get me ahead in the world?

But if our treasure is in heaven our hearts will be set on Christ at God's right hand. When we have to make the choices in life, the preeminent thoughts ruling our hearts will be: will this glorify Christ?, will this be best for those for the church for whom Christ died?, will this keep my family under the sound of the gospel of Christ and him crucified?

Brethren, Christ is our Treasure. Whatsoever ye do, do all unto Christ. In him is the unsearchable riches.

CHRIST IS OUR LIGHT

Matthew 6: 22: The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. 23: But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

The light of the body is the eye. For the believer it is the eye of faith. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen by the carnal eye. If we have God-given faith then our eye is single--whole, woven in oneness, looking at all times to Christ.

Ephesians 6:5: Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

This "singleness of heart" is what Paul meant when he said,

2 Corinthians 11:3: But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

So many worldly things vie for our affection. The serpent will use any means necessary. He is very subtle.

Why is it so important to have our eye fixed on Christ at all times?—"if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." [no part shall be dark] ["as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light."] How does a candle give you light? It lightens your eye and lightens your path so that the light of the candle steers your whole body. You have confidence in your heart because the light shows you which direction to walk. The Psalmist says, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance." (Ps 89: 15)

But here is the warning—"But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" Christ said "is thy eye evil because I am good" this evil eye is not having faith to wait on Christ to work his will for our good. If our eye is fixed on this cursed earth, on our sin-dead flesh then our whole body shall be full of darkness. In other words, if Christ is not our Light then darkness is our light.

Sadly, when darkness fills a man, he thinks himself wise, he thinks darkness is really light. And this is a terrible state to be in, especially if that darkness is false religion—"If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

All God's elect come into this world in darkness. But Christ the Light shines and makes us behold the glory of God in his face. Then we are given the Life and Light of Christ. Brethren, all we are in ourselves is darkness. All this ungodly world is, is darkness. But in Christ is no darkness!

Beware of this world. People post catchy sayings by poets and so on. They often sound good to the ear. Yet, they simply are not true. Or you may hear a thought-provoking philosophy. Remember this: if it is not of God—IT IS DARKNESS. Truth cannot embrace error without forsaking itself.

Isaiah 8:20: To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Christ is our Light! Whatsoever ye do, do all looking to his Light to guide you. He said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

CHRIST IS OUR MASTER

Matthew 6: 24: No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Christ says it is absolutely impossible to serve God and to serve worldly riches—"either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other."

Mark 4: 19: the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

DeWitt Talmadge said, "Prosperity is like salt water; the more you drink it the thirstier you get."

This coming year, which one of these do I desire to serve—God or riches? We cannot serve both. Which one will make us content? Which will destroy us? Listen to apostle Paul speak the word of God,

1 Timothy 6: 6: Godliness with contentment is great gain. 7: For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. 8: And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 9: But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10: For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11: But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 12: Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

CHRIST IS OUR PROVIDER

Matthew 6: 25: Therefore I say unto you, Take no [anxious] thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Christ has clothed us in the everlasting garment of Righteousness, in the garment of Salvation. We have eaten the Bread and Wine of heaven. So Christ's sheep know indeed the "life is more than earthly meat, and the body is made for more than earthly clothes."

Romans 14: 17: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. 18: For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. 19: Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

Knowing our Heavenly Father provides for his creatures, we know he will provide for his dear children--**Matthew 6: 26: 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? 27: Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28: And why take ye [troublesome] thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: [they are not worried and anxious] 29: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30: Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?**

Believer, you have a heavenly Father—**Matthew 6: 31: Therefore take no [anxious, worrisome] thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32: (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.**

The Lord keeps repeating "your heavenly Father." Take no anxious thought—your heavenly Father will feed you. Take no anxious thought—your heavenly Father will clothe you. Take no anxious thought, your heavenly Father knoweth you have need of these things.

When Christ makes himself preeminent in our hearts then Christ is preeminent! He commands his child effectually, saying,—**Matthew 6: 33: But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;**

Does he say, "Seek a job first then seek a church where you can worship God?" No, seek a church where you can worship God then seek a job nearby. While you seek a job, seek first Christ—seek a job that will enable you still worship Christ. While you work your job—seek first Christ doing all things as unto the Lord. In all things, all the time, seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. "And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;"

And we do so knowing that our heavenly Father shall provide for his children—**Matthew 6: 33...and all these things shall be added unto you.**

When we did not love God, yet in everlasting, unchangeable love, God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Christ gave himself to suffer the shame of the cross and the pain of separation from God to satisfy justice for us, forever! God our Father and his Son gave us the Holy Spirit who gave us eternal life and keeps us by the power of God so that none shall be lost!

Romans 8: 31: What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? 32: He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

So Christ says to you for whom he died and rose again—**Matthew 6: 34: Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.**

Brethren, most of what we worry about never even comes to pass. God will provide for you tomorrow in the face of every evil just as he is doing today. Did God provide for us this past year? In every way! Now, I pray God will use this to start us off in the New Year trusting that he will continue to do the same. And during the year, if we find one of our brethren anxious and troubled, may he give us grace to encourage them to go listen to this again. And may God once again settle our hearts, our eyes, and our bodies entirely on Christ alone so that we can sing in faith:

Be still, my soul, thy God doth undertake
To guide the future as he has the past
Thy hope, thy confidence, let nothing shake
All now mysterious shall be bright at last
Be still, my soul, the wind and waves still know
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below

Amen!