

Matthew 6:25-34 (NKJV)

25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry 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?"

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

27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?"

28 So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;

29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?"

31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

Last week we approached our need to **seek first the Kingdom of God** from a different angle. We focused on some Psalms. We talked about the contrast of the **secret sins** and the **presumptuous sins**, the conscious sins, the intentional sins.

We talked about the ultimate value of the **Kingdom of God** and the **Word of God**, how both are like that **pearl** or **treasure** or **Gold** or **honey**.

And we talked about what gets in our way to seeking first the most important things.

I would like now to circle back to the end of verse 30. I think it shed some light on verse 33.

Let's look at verse 30 again.

30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?"

I want to focus on the phrase "**Oh you of little faith.**"

What does Jesus mean by that? “**Oh you of little faith.**”

What is Jesus talking about?

Well, we need to look at the context. We have stated over and over again that Jesus was addressing **true followers** described in the beatitudes. So when He says, **you of little faith**, He is not addressing people who have **no** faith, zero faith. If they are believers, they have some faith. Surely there were some in his audience that were not believers, but that is not who He is talking to. He is addressing **believers**.

Now what would have been true about people who were following Jesus up to this point?

Well they would have probably seen **Jesus as the Messiah**. They at least believed **Jesus was speaking for God**. They were more than likely **trusting Him** for their salvation in one form or another. Now they would not have understood it as well as we do. But they believed somehow this man of God will be part of delivering salvation to His people.

So on this one spiritual arena, they are good. They have the **right faith** on the **right person** for their **salvation**.

But we see by what Jesus says that their faith is limited in its scope. It is easy to illustrate it in our day.

These people are Christians. They really get that salvation is found only by faith in Christ. They really get that they were lost in their sins and they needed a miracle. Christ pulled off that miracle by dying for their sins. Then He wakened our hearts **to our need** and He **called us** to Himself. And there is no one on this earth that would **get us to deny** the things that happened in **that** spiritual arena. So the faith there is good. It is solid. It is reliable. It is real.

BUT then this pesky thing of **life** happens. Circumstances go bad. Our livelihood gets threatened. Suddenly we cannot see how we are going to eat, or drink, or make the house payments. Maybe the car is going bad and our funds are low. Maybe we get ill. That certainly happens often enough in our arena.

Now how **good** is **this faith** we have? We might think- what does **faith** have to do with **this**? This isn't spiritual. This is real life stuff. This is going to affect my here and now. This isn't about salvation. This is about my love life. This is about my family. This is about my economics. This is about my health. That isn't spiritual. That is real.

Is that not how we are tempted to think? And **that** is **little faith**. There is nothing wrong with the faith **where it is applied**. But it is way too little **in its scope**. Our faith does not reach out to the boundaries of ALL of life. It sees

areas that are not really God's business. They are areas that **our ability to provide for ourselves is sufficient**, thank you very much. They are places where we want to have faith in ourselves. Either we think **God does not want involved** in these areas or **we do not want Him to be** because He may not want what we want.

Little faith is limited to specific arenas of our lives. Big faith expands the boundaries to **EVERYTHING** in life. It trusts God for eternal salvation **and** moment by moment provision. It trusts God not only for the **destination** but also for **the journey**. It does not fight with God about how **circumstances should be different** but it trusts God to show us how to **approach the circumstances He has provided** for us. That is **big** faith. That is **wide** faith. That is **much** faith.

Mr. Jones says he met a man who said the trouble with many Christians is that they believe **ON** the Lord Jesus Christ but they do not **BELIEVE** the Lord Jesus Christ. I think I may have quoted this once before but it is a good quote.

Big faith sees **life** through the lens of all of the promises of God, not just the ones about salvation.

The rest is worth quoting.

He meant that we believe on Him for the salvation of our souls, but we do not believe Him when He says a thing like this to us, that God is going to look after our food and drink, and even our clothing. He makes such statements as 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest', and yet we keep our problems and worries to ourselves, and we are borne down by them and defeated by them, and get anxious about things. He has told us to come to Him when we are like that; He has told us that if we are thirsting in any respect we can go to Him, and He has assured us that whosoever comes to Him will never thirst, and that he that eats of the bread that He shall give shall never hunger. He has promised to give us 'a well of water springing up into everlasting life' so that we shall never thirst. But, we do not believe Him. Take all these statements He made when He was here on earth, the words He addressed to the people around Him; they are all meant for us. They are meant for us today as definitely as when He first uttered them, and so also are all the astounding statements in the Epistles. The trouble is that we do not believe Him. That is the ultimate trouble. 'Little faith'

does not really take the Scripture as it is and believe it and live by it and apply it.¹

Isn't that well put?

I felt that I needed to do **more business** with this idea of **little faith** because it has so much bearing on seeking first the Kingdom.

Now what kind of people do we want to be? Do we want to be people of **big faith**? Well that happens when we **think** like Jesus **says to think**. And He is **telling** us how to think. If we prayerfully and continually do our faith exercises, of refusing to allow our thoughts to follow the path of least resistance, and choosing to simply trust what God says..... if we will do those exercises over and over again, we will experience change. Oh, I know. That is not the way we want it to happen. We want God to **do for us** what He tells us **we must do**. We want the practice of worry to just disappear so it is no longer **tempting**. Well God **can do that**. But He usually **does not**. And First Peter and James both tell us why. The exercise of overcoming worry makes us stronger and more useful. I wonder how much time we waste **wallowing in the problem** when what we ought to be doing is **exercising in the solution**. I wonder when we see our lives from eternity if we will see how long our problems would have **really lasted** if we wasted less time on **not doing** what Jesus said and just worked on **doing** what Jesus commanded **more**.

What Christ offers us is a **command**, but we must not mistake its intent, it is a **grace**. He does not **want us** to live in worry. He may want us in difficult circumstances that are hard in themselves to handle. But He would not have His children live in worry. And He tells us **what we must do**. And again, I say this over and over. Our **habits** of thinking are **habits** for a reason. We gravitate to them. We are prone to them. We are good at them. And we are likely to need help. And the Lord will provide help. And it is normally sitting around you in your church somewhere. Or maybe it is in your Christian friends from other churches. Or maybe Christian specialists in this sort of thing. I am thankful for marriage.... Usually... because this woman I am married to **does not see the world** like I do. And she knows me well enough to call out my **tricky diversions** to the truth, or my excuses for not wanting to do it. It is helpful. It keeps me reorienting to truth. And those places where we share the same weaknesses, where we might unknowingly encourage sinful thinking, there are people around us who call our cards. We all need help. Because we are all messed up on our own unique way. But God's will for

¹ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, [*Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*](#), Second edition. (England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1976), 444–445.

our live is **change** in the depths of who we are. When Christ tells us not to worry, it is like when we tell our kids not to drink poison. Christ never wants us to unnecessarily suffer. **Worrying is avoidable suffering.**

Now let's jump to today's text.

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

The word for seek means to vigorously and earnestly pursue something. So to say **seek first** is like a double emphasis. Not only should you pour yourself into this pursuit but you should pour yourself into it **like nothing else.**

On first glance I think we are wise to read it like this. Jesus is saying, you know how all of a non believer's life gravitates first on making sure they take care of number 1. Do you see how there is nothing more important to a worldling than their own interests, their own survival, their own provisions. I have often noted in business that to most employees, something that will earn them \$50 more in their pocket will get more of their effort and interest than that which will make the company \$5000.

Flesh caters to flesh. Flesh is absorbed with its surviving and thriving. They seek it in earnest. They seek it, whatever they determine **IT** is, with seriousness and determination.

What Jesus is saying here is, take all that seriousness and concern and insight and focus. And pour it all into **knowing and serving God.** Or a shortened version- don't worry abouts **stuff's relationship to you.** Worry about **your relationship with God.** It is like Jesus is saying- you are worried about your bank account and your house payment. Let me tell you what to worry about. Worry about your relationship with God.

Now **worry** is not the right word for this. Because we need not worry with our pursuit of God. We can be perfectly confident that if we **seek Him** in spirit and truth, He will surely answer our call. So there is none of the uncertainty that **worry** carries. But there is the **intensity of pursuit.** And I think that is the emphasis.

Humans are usually pursuing something. And if you listen to a person for a day you will hear it and see it. The question is what is it?

Now what Jesus is saying here isn't exactly new.

Remember when He taught us to pray?

We start with Our Father who is in heaven. Hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.

Then we ask for food.

Seek first the Kingdom. First orient to the **Godness** of God. Get your life in the proper perspective. Don't let the cart come before the horse. Realize what all of life is really about. See the big picture.

Once you get that orientation you can begin to **ask**. Once you get that orientation you can begin to **think** right, **worship** right, **pray** right, **think** right, **live** right.

Now notice too that **seek first** conveys a sense of **drastic effort**.

This seeking is not a new concept. Here is the Lord's appeal to His children who would abandon Him, who would seek for other things first.

Deuteronomy 4:29-31 (NKJV)

²⁹ But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him* if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

³⁰ When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice

³¹ (for the LORD your God *is* a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.

God expects people to seek Him. He offers no apologies that this seeking takes **lots of effort** and a **whole heartedness**. God knows He is worthy of all worship, of all effort.

Now look at what he says of the wicked.

Psalm 10:3-6 (NKJV)

³ For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire; He blesses the greedy *and* renounces the LORD.

⁴ The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek *God*; *God is* in none of his thoughts.

⁵ His ways are always prospering; Your judgments *are* far above, out of his sight; *As for* all his enemies, he sneers at them.

⁶ He has said in his heart, "I shall not be moved; I shall never be in adversity."

This is the attitude about stuff that Jesus was telling us about. Everything comes down to their pride in their own ability. The wicked man does not expect God to provide. That would be offensive to him. He is saying I will control my environment so expertly that I will never have a need for God. So we see the seeking that happens **when a person gets serious**. When that happens God **takes center stage** in a person's heart. That is seeking the kingdom first.

When a man is **not** a child of God, we see **the opposite**. God does not even get **near the stage** of this mans heart. He may be a prop in the play, but He never gets a serious billing.

I think we all have an idea of seeking. We know it is a good thing. But the idea is a bit ghostly. It doesn't have flesh. We ask ourselves, do I have strong feelings toward God? Do I sometimes cry out to God with great sincerity and seriousness? And we hope that we are seeking the way Jesus was talking about.

But if our seeking of the Kingdom of God was a business, would it be profitable or would it die from lack of attention? If we had a business and put as much time and energy into it as we pour into our walk with God, how long would that business make a profit? Those kinds of questions reveal more truth than when we evaluate our feelings and intentions toward God.

If our efforts in **knowing God** and **growing in Him** was a garden, would that garden be thriving, or would the weeds be killing it?

The point I am trying to make is that we do not expect most things in our lives to take care of themselves. We expect that they take constant effort, constant focus, constant oversight. And if we do not pour ourselves into the effort, we are not surprised at the results. Of course they waiver.

But I sometimes think we view our spiritual walk differently. We are surprised at the states we find ourselves in after neglecting time and effort to grow and maintain spiritually.

I am gathering from our text that Jesus's evaluation would be, of course you are foundering. You aren't **seeking**. You have weak faith, little faith. You are not doing what I said to do. You think I am supposed to **do it for you**. But I **will not**. I will do all kinds of things for those who seek. I promise tremendous reward over and over. But **seeking** is their job. I will **motivate** that seeking. But **we** must seek. God will do lots of things for those who ask. But He expects that **we will do the asking**.

We have about as much of God as we truly want. And if we want more? Seek the kingdom like we would seek finding a job if we suddenly lost one. Seek the kingdom like we would search out some food as if we have not eaten in a day. Seek the kingdom like we would seek some shelter and warmth after having been out in the snow all day.

That is what Jesus is saying.

Brother Jones says this.

We can paraphrase our Lord's words thus: If you want to seek anything, if you want to be anxious about anything, be anxious about your spiritual condition, your nearness to God and your relationship to Him. If you put

that first, worry will go; that is the result. This great concern about your relationship to God will drive out every lesser concern about food and clothing.²

Now one more look at our text.

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

We see two things that we are seeking here.

The kingdom of God

His righteousness.

Let's look at that.

What is a kingdom like?

A kingdom has **citizens**. It has its own **identity**. You are either **in it** or you are **not**. It **defines who you are** and **who you belong to**. A kingdom has things **that it stands for**. It has things **that define it**.

Now we know that we enter that kingdom **by faith** in Christ. We are **brought into** this kingdom. Once in, **we are in**. And we are to get behind everything endemic to that Kingdom. We are **for** everything King Jesus is for. We are **for** every project and every goal that this kingdom has. That is our identity.

But isn't this much like the difference in **believing in** the Lord and **believing** the Lord?

We enter the kingdom by **believing** in the Lord.

But **His righteousness**? That requires **believing** the Lord. That means I must submit **my will** to **His will** in everything. Simply being a member of His Kingdom is not my destiny. God's will for my life is to **be like Him** because **I am His**. So I must take on the **righteous attributes** of Christ. I think we could use a synonym here and say the **fruit of the Spirit**. Because Christ exemplified the fruit of the Spirit perfectly.

Galatians 5:22-25 (NKJV)

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

²⁴ And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

² D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, [*Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*](#), Second edition. (England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1976), 461.

This is a Christian **seeking the righteousness of the Kingdom**. We talked about this last week but it is the **Christian walking in the Spirit**.

It is not enough to be **identified as a citizen** of the Kingdom of God. That is certainly essential, but God's will is not limited to just filling all the empty seats in His kingdom. It is God's will that we **put on Christ**. It is God's will that **every day that we live** we look **more** like God's Son. He wants us to be more than citizens. We are also to be **ambassadors**. He wants our lives to **represent** Him. He wants us to show a **family resemblance**. **Romans 8:29 (NKJV)**

²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Having a passport of the Kingdom is not enough. God wants us to show DNA evidence, family traits.

So, while getting saved is **essential**, entering the kingdom is **vitaly important**, that is only the **beginning** of the process. That process will continue until we die. And given the number of years that God gives most of us, there must be a lot of seeking that yet needs done.