

Matthew 6:19-34

How To Be Happy.

In Matthew chapter 6 Christ teaches his disciples the how to's of life. We read *how to do good* according to Christ in verses 1-4 (read).

Then we read *how to pray* according to Christ in verses 5-15 (read).

In verses 16-18 Christ teaches his disciples *how to fast* (read).

Then finally The Savior instructs his people on another critical subject of life in verses 19-34. What is Christ teaching in these verses? I believe Christ is showing us *how to be truly happy on earth*.

The title of my message today is, **How To Be Happy.** Christ lays it out for us right here. Christ gives three happy commands. We have the blueprint from Christ on how to live an happy and purpose driven life. Souls which love God will find reasons for bounding, leaping joy.

Let us begin with verse 33.

1. Seek first the kingdom of God

We read in verse 33, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

This is the large, and overarching command from Christ.

The Lord does not say seek *for* the kingdom which is what Jesus would have said if He was addressing this command to unbelievers. Seek for it to get into it was not what He was saying.

Christ was speaking to those who are already kingdom citizens to make the interests of God's kingdom their priority.

We read in Psalm 70:4 the words of David, “Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee.”

Seeking Christ should produce rejoicing and gladness in our hearts.

When we are seeking first the kingdom of God is what I am going to say or do going to advance God's kingdom and glory?

Am I seeking the kingdom of God? The verb is in the Present tense. The tense of continuous, ongoing action.

Seeking means to attempt to learn something by careful investigation or searching. Seeking in the present context speaks of a single minded focus, as when one's eye is "single" (clear).

Seeking is a heart issue and if we seek the King of kings, and fellowship with Him it will serve to gird and protect our hearts from the allurements of the futile kingdoms of this world.

Jesus is not suggesting but commanding all citizens of the Kingdom of heaven who still live on earth to cease making material things the center of their life.

Instead the believer's lifelong pursuit is not for **things** but the presence, pleasure and **Person of Jesus Christ our Lord and our King.**

“**Seek First**” means first in time, place, order, importance. The word **first** indicates one’s first and ever dominant concern.

The concept of “**seeking first**” for the things of God is a predominant biblical concept that touches one's motivation and priorities including how one spends their "leisure" time, the goals one sets in their life, and whether or not they experience spiritual growth.

What do you “seek first”? People, possessions, power, prestige, pleasure, and other desires compete for your priority?

All of these earthly things can quickly bump God out of first place if we don’t actively choose to give Him first place in every area of life.

It is interesting that Jesus does not say we are to refrain from pursuing the material treasures of this world, but that we are to replace those desires with a pursuit that has far greater significance in this life and the life to come.

A Christian once wrote, “Only one life to live. It will soon be past. Only what is done for Christ will last.”

...Seek ye first the kingdom of God, **and his righteousness**; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

A Bible commentator writes, “righteousness means being proper or right in the sense of being fully justified. It is being or in accordance with what God requires; it is the quality of being upright. In its simplest sense conveys the idea of conformity to a standard or norm.

What does it mean to pursue God's righteousness?

One aspect is surely to submit to God's will that His children live righteously. In a word this pursuit equates with sanctification.

Are you pursuing to be more like Christ?

Paul writes in Philippians 3:10, “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.”

That’s what it means to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Donald Grey Barnhouse gives a practical illustration of what this righteousness looks like in a kingdom citizen...

A butcher was once asked what difference it made to him when Christ entered his life. He replied, "I stopped weighing my thumb." He then told how, before becoming a Christian, he put meat on the scales in such a way that his thumb trailed down, approximately the weight of an ounce. He had included that thumb in the weight of beef, pork, lard, and every other item of his merchandise. But after Christ came into his heart, he stood away from the scales and gave a full sixteen ounces of meat. And when he served customers whom he had formerly cheated, he added an ounce to make up for past peculations.

True Happiness in life is achieved on earth when we are seeking first the kingdom of God.

2. Store up treasures in heaven

Read verses 19-21.

Someone once did a Bible study, and discovered that 15 percent of everything Christ said related to the topic of money –more than his teachings on heaven and hell combined.

Luke 12:15, “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

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.”

Mark 10:21, “Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.”

"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" is a specific instance of what seeking God's kingdom involves. Seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness involves not trying to be rich on earth but trying to be rich in heaven, that is, rich in God.

"Seeking the kingdom means treasuring God and freeing yourself from the drag of earth."

Store up originally meant to amass or reserve, keep in store, lay, store or treasure up goods for future use.

The root word **thesauros** means that which is deposited = a place where something is kept and gives our English word thesaurus, a treasury of words. In secular Greek **thesauros** means a treasure chamber, a storage room, storehouse, granary, strong-box or a treasure per se.

The verb **thesaurizo** is used similarly in the sense of (1) storing up as treasure or offerings of money put aside.

Like we read about in 1 Corinthians 16:2, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

(2) Keep something in store like what we read in 2Peter 3:7, “But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

Evidently there are two ways to live: you can live with a view to accumulating valuable things on earth, or you can live with a view to accumulating valuable things in heaven.

Jesus says: the mark of a Christian is that his eyes are on heaven and he measures all his behavior by what effect it will have on heaven.

If Jesus means "devote your life to accumulating treasure in heaven" what is the main thing he has in mind that we should do now?

It is giving rather than accumulating. If laying up treasures in heaven is the opposite of laying up treasures on earth, then probably laying up treasures in heaven will be NOT laying up treasures on earth but giving them away in ways that magnify the worth of Jesus.

There are several other teachings of Jesus that confirm this meaning: laying up treasures in heaven is giving money away for Christ's sake rather than accumulating it.

For example, consider Luke 12:32-33, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 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."

Here Jesus explains how you "provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old" and how you "provide yourselves with treasure in the heavens that does not fail," namely, "Sell your possessions and give to the needy." That's how you do it.

In other words, possessions on earth are not for accumulating, they are for distributing in ways that Christ is honored and our joy in heaven is increased.

When we give— especially when we give so generously that we have to sell something to have anything to give – we show that Christ is our treasure and that we love others more than we love our own security and comfort.

John D. Rockefeller once said, “I have made many millions, but they have brought me no happiness.” and “The poorest man I know is the man who has nothing but money.”

Cornelius Vanderbilt added, “The care of millions is too great a load ... there is no pleasure in it.”

Henry Ford at a time when he was immensely wealthy once remarked, “I was happier doing mechanic’s work.”

A Roman proverb says that money is like sea water, the more you drink the thirstier you get.

True happiness on earth is experienced when we store up treasure in heaven.

3. Don’t be anxious about your life.

Four times Christ exhorts his people not to worry.

We read in verse 25: “Therefore I say unto you, Take no 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?”

Verse 28, “And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:”

Verse 31: “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?”

Verse 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.”

Christ is saying, “Do not be worried - Stop fretting, being weighed down with cares, being distracted and distressed, being troubled.”

Clearly God's will for His children is not to worry which is an important truth to recall to your mind, for whatever God wills (His desire is we do not worry and fret), He always enables by His grace and His Spirit.

Worried divide - draw different directions - which is exactly what **anxiety** does to most of us!) means literally to stop letting yourself be drawn in different directions!

There is a subtle distinction between worry and concern, for whereas worry tends to "paralyze" us and decreases initiative, genuine concern tends to motivate us to take the initiative.

Worry fears the worse and tries to control the future, whereas godly concern hopes for the best and redeems the future.

Worry does not give God the glory due Him and tends to take our mind off of the things that are important, whereas genuine concern tends to direct our focus to those things that are truly important.

A good antidote for present worry is to maintain a "future focus", continually contemplating the things above and the things to come, especially our blessed future hope.

Colossians 3:1-2, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Titus 2:13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."

A Christians author offered a great prescription for anxiety, worry and fretting...

Look around and be distressed.

Look inside and be depressed.

Look at Jesus and be at rest.

J C Ryle sums up this section writing that, “Jesus forbids us to keep up an anxious spirit about the things of this world. Four times over he says, “Do not worry” (Mt 6:25, 28, 31 and 34). About life, about food, about clothing, about tomorrow, “do not worry.”

Do not be over-careful, over-anxious. Prudent provision for the future is right; wearing, corroding, self-tormenting anxiety is wrong.”

Christ commands his disciples don't be anxious about earthly things. Christ provides, and protects His people. He is in control.

In closing, Christ teaches his disciples how to be happy on earth: seek first the kingdom of God, lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, don't worry about your life. May the Lord help us to be happy in the Lord. Let us pray.