

## SEEK 1<sup>st</sup> HIS KINGDOM – Matthew 6:25-34

**Good morning**, Happy New Year's Day, welcome to Cornerstone Community Church. I am Cole McDaniel, a lay elder here at Cornerstone; this year is my 20<sup>th</sup> year as a structural earthquake engineering professor, the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 years we were at Washington State University in Pullman, Washington on the border of Idaho and the past 17 years here at Cal Poly. This coming April, Kim and I will be married 25 years, and we are blessed with 3 amazing daughters, Naomi, Maggie and Ellie. It's been a privilege to be able to serve as a Cornerstone elder the past 13+ years and it is a joy to open up God's Word with you this morning while Pastor John Marc and Paula visit their daughter and son-n-law in San Diego.

Welcome visitors, we are glad you are joining us this beautiful New Year's morning, we start each sermon by letting you know 3 things:

- 1) You are among **equals** here, all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God, we stand forgiven at the cross, our worth is solely based on the perfect life Jesus lived on our behalf
- 2) We love you enough to speak the **truth** to you, that is becoming increasingly rare, and we shouldn't be surprised, the Word of God warns this will occur
- 3) Your faith is **personal**, but it isn't meant to be **private**, many of you remember singing "This Little Light of Mine" in Sunday School. This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine, hide it under a bush \_\_\_\_\_! We are called to share the Good News of the glorious gospel of our blessed God.

Let's open our Bibles to **Matthew 6:25-34** for the passage this morning.

For this reason I say to you, **do not be worried** about your life, *as to* what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, *as to* what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And who of you by being worried can add a *single* hour to his life? And **why are you worried** about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you? You of little faith! **Do not worry** then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness**, and all these things will be added to you. So **do not worry** about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

The 1<sup>st</sup> thing that stands out to me in this passage is that Jesus commands us 3 times not to worry or be anxious, he also asks why we are worrying; we are hardheaded people and we need to hear Jesus' words multiple times.

**Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones** took a different perspective on why Jesus tells us 3 times not to worry:

There was never a teacher in this world like the Lord Jesus Christ! The great art of teaching is the art of repetition; the true teacher always knows that it is not enough to say a thing once, but that it needs to be repeated. So, He says it three times, but each time in a slightly different form. His method is particularly interesting and fascinating.

The Good Shepherd is also our Good Teacher, always pointing us in the best direction for our good and God's glory. If you spend a few minutes looking up the physical side effects of worry/anxiety, you will be frightened by the endless problems that ensue:

Disrupted sleep, headaches, difficulty concentrating, nausea, muscle pain, tension in the head, neck, jaw or back, exhaustion, irritability, fatigue, bloating, weight gain, intestinal problems...

And that is just the beginning of the physical effects of worry, no wonder God commands us not to worry or be anxious, He knows what is best for us. And that's not even getting into the spiritual side effects.

**Pastor John MacArthur** said the following about Matthew chapter 6, "Worry is a powerful force. It can steal your joy. It can rob you of contentment. It can destroy your testimony with others. It can fill you with anxiety and fear, even panic attacks are related to the kind of anxiety that fear produces, and worry produces. There are some people so committed to the sin of worry that there's nothing in the present to worry about, so they start looking into the future to find something. The Lord forbids that. Your future is in His hands."

We need to see worry and anxiety as God sees it, a sin that separates us from God and steals the joy the Jesus came to this earth to give us.

In **John 15:9-11** Jesus says, "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full."

In our text this morning Jesus commands us not to worry, one of the biggest reasons why is that worry steals our joy!

Let's see how God's Word can give us victory in this area of our lives. That leads us to the 1<sup>st</sup> point on the outline:

## 1) Do not worry about anything

Three times Jesus commands us not to worry. **Do not worry, do not worry, do not worry!** It's interesting to note that the verb form in Greek for "do not worry" changes each time. First Jesus tells us to **stop worrying**, 2<sup>nd</sup> He tells us **not to start worrying**, and 3<sup>rd</sup> He says today has enough to be concerned about so **especially don't worry about tomorrow**. Stop worrying, don't start worrying, and don't worry about the future because you don't even know what the next day, week, month or year will bring.

Let's be clear, Jesus isn't saying do not be concerned, in fact **John 13:21** tells us that Jesus Himself became "**troubled in spirit**" due to the imminent betrayal by Judas His disciple. When Jesus is telling us not to worry, He is saying not to be **excessively concerned** to the point that we forget God's promises and forfeit the peace and joy that surpass all understanding and guard our heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

### a. Why shouldn't believers worry or be anxious?

#### i. God loves His children

**vs 26** Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?

**vs 32** Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

**Matthew 7:11** If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

**Romans 8:32** He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

**Romans 5:8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

That extraordinary level of love led the apostle John to write the following in **1 John 3:1**, "See **how great a love** the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are."

10 times in **Matthew chapter 6** Jesus reminds us that God is our Father and that He provides for us in His perfect timing.

One of the ways God provides for His children is through the local church; each week people in our congregation give to the Deacon's Fund to help those in our congregation in need of money for gas, groceries, rent, car repairs, medical bills and much more. Please talk to a deacon, deaconess or elder if you have a need that our church can help meet. Now you might be wondering who the deacons and deaconesses are in our church. I'm glad you asked... we rarely get the opportunity to highlight the deacons and deaconesses who do some many acts of service behind the scenes.

### **Deacon/deaconess/staff slides**

- ii. **God is sovereign** – God is not only the believer's heavenly Father, He also is the sovereign Ruler of the universe

**Romans 8:28** And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

**Colossians 1:16-17** For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Jesus spoke the universe into existence, including **all time, space, energy and matter!** Jesus is sustaining all of this as we speak, He literally holds all things together by the word of His power without effort as **Hebrews 1:3** tells us!

- iii. **God is omnipotent**

Not only is God our loving heavenly Father and the Sovereign Sustainer of the universe, God also has the power to bring every promise in the Bible to fruition, including the promise to provide for all of His children's needs.

**vs 27-28** Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you?

**Observe the lilies of the field!** Something as simple as a wildflower declares the handiwork of God. Take a look at the photos of this orchid in our kitchen, the complexity and colors are amazing. If God provides the soil, rain and sunshine for a flower that is alive today and withers tomorrow, how much more will your heavenly Father care for you?

**Philippians 4:18-19** But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

**Ephesians 1:18-19** *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what the hope of His calling is, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

What is this power able to do? **Jude 24** states "To Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy".

We know that every knee will bow down before and tongue confess Jesus Christ as Lord one day, but only those who know Jesus as their Lord and Savior will be kept from stumbling and **made to stand** in God's presence. We get a few glimpses of awe-inspiring sights here on earth, one that comes to mind is driving to Yosemite National Park and emerging from the tunnel that opens up to a view of the valley, each time I see the valley for the 1<sup>st</sup> time I get goose bumps in amazement of the grandeur of the Granite peaks surrounding the lush valley. This is far, far less than one percent of how awe struck we will be in the presence of God one day, and to think that Jesus will enable us to stand in God's presence.

The same God who created the universe, who holds all things together, parted the Red Sea, calmed the Sea of Galilee with a word, fed the 5000, and conquered death at the resurrection is the One saying to us this morning "Do not worry" because I am your Father, I love you, I know what you need and I am able to provide for all of your needs and more.

As a father I try my best to provide for my children, but I can't control my health, the weather, my boss, the economy... I can only try my best to provide. But our Heavenly Father not only loves us perfectly, He is also both sovereign and omnipotent and therefore can and will "cause all things to work together for good to those who love Him!" as He promises in **Romans 8:28**, Amen?

## **b. How can you overcome worry?**

### **i. Recognize the sin!**

**Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones** in his commentary I mentioned earlier said the following: If you believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior "then **you must realize it is a sin** for you to be anxious and worried because God is your heavenly Father and if He takes care of the birds then how much greater will be His care for you!"

**Pastor John MacArthur** put it this way, "Worry declares that we don't trust God. Either we don't trust that He's aware, **when He is**; we don't trust that He cares, **when He does**, and we don't trust that He can do anything to protect us, **when He can**. This is really a sin against the God who loves you."

So, what do we do when we succumb to the temptation of worry? Run to our heavenly Father who loves us and released us from our sins by the blood of Jesus!

**1 John 1:9** tells us that "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

### **ii. Feed on Scripture** – go on the offensive with the sword of the Spirit

**vs 25** ...do not worry about what you will eat.

When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the desert, He quoted God's Word to resist each temptation, **Matthew 4:2-4** says "After Jesus had fasted forty

days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'"

**Psalm 119:9-10** How can a young man keep his way pure?  
By keeping *it* according to Your word.  
With all my heart I have sought You;  
Do not let me wander from Your commandments.

There are many verses that come to mind that can help us battle the temptation of anxiety and worry, one of the best is **Philippians 4:6** "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Now you may be here this morning saying to yourself that you do not struggle with anxiety or worry. First of all, thank the Lord for that. Maybe your struggle is with something else, if you struggle being gentle like Jesus in frustrating situations and instead lose your patience you raise your voice in anger, go to **Ephesians 4:29-31** "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need *of the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice."

Maybe you are saying "I don't struggle with worry or anger", well how about discontent? In this world that is becoming crazier every day there is plenty for each of us to be discontent about from the woke culture to the current state of politics to the soaring \$31 trillion dollar national debt to Covid restrictions to the new definition of a woman to preferred pronouns... do I need to say more because you and I know there are countless crazy issues out there! The Apostle Paul gives us the key to contentment in **Philippians 4:11-13** "Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

**iii. Prayer/meditation** – in order to be “doers of the Word and not merely hearers who delude themselves” we need to meditate on the Word of God

**Psalm 119:11-12** Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You. Blessed are You, O LORD; teach me Your statutes.

We sang earlier “Jesus knows our every weakness, take it to the Lord in prayer... what a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer, oh what peace we often forfeit, oh what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer”. We don’t realize how fortunate we are to pray to God at any time or in any place. One of my favorite verses on prayer is in the book of Nehemiah as the cupbearer for King Artaxerxes, he was called into the king’s court:

**Nehemiah 2:4-6** The king said to me, “What would you request?” So, I prayed to the God of heaven. I said to the king, “If it please the king, and if your servant has found favor before you, send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may rebuild it.” Then the king said to me, the queen sitting beside him, “How long will your journey be, and when will you return?” So, it pleased the king to send me.

When King Artaxerxes called Nehemiah into his presence, Nehemiah used the few precious seconds as he walked toward the king to pray to God for wisdom and blessing. That’s a great example of praying without ceasing, continually seeking God’s counsel and blessing in all situations.

**Philippians 4:4-9** Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

**iv. Give thanks**, it’s God’s will for you and it’s good for you!

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.



**Psalm 28:7** The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; Therefore, my heart exults, and with my song I shall thank Him.

#### v. **Seek out accountability**

**Proverbs 27:17** Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

**Ecclesiastes 4:9-10** Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up.

“Do not worry!” This is easier said than done right? I know from personal experience, I lost sleep this past spring for the first time in my life due to worry about a number of issues, so I had my community group praying for me, friends praying and praise God a few months later I was back to a normal sleep pattern and able to wake up at 5am again each day to spend time praying in the hot tub, the Lord knows I need to start each day talking to Him and listening to His counsel.

Like we noted earlier, Jesus isn't saying do not be concerned, He is saying do not be **overly concerned** to the point that you lose your focus on what is most important. Remember Jesus' reply to Martha in Luke chapter 10?

**Luke 10:38-42** Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but *only* one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Martha was distracted from the most important thing by worry over temporal duties, focusing on these things rather than focusing on the opportunity to listen to Jesus. Mary chose the good part, focusing on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

**Verse 33** states, "Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you". After 3 negative commands, "do not worry,

do not worry, do not worry." Jesus gives us a positive command that we can live out each day.

**Pastor John Mac Arthur** put it this way, "What sets worry aside, **what buries it** is to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. Be concerned about God, His glory, His righteousness. Be concerned about being an obedient believer, trusting believer; and God will pour out heavenly blessing on you."

This leads us to the 2<sup>nd</sup> point on the outline:

## 2) Seek 1<sup>st</sup> His kingdom

**vs 33** Seek 1<sup>st</sup> His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you

We are called to pray "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done" a few verses earlier in Chapter 6 at the beginning of the Lord's prayer. What does it mean to seek 1<sup>st</sup> His kingdom and righteousness?

Look at **verses 19-21 in Chapter 6**, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

And a few chapters later in Matthew, Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven in two parables:

**Matthew 13:44-45** The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid *again*; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

So, the 1<sup>st</sup> question we need to ask is, what do I treasure?

### a. What do you treasure?

Jesus calls us to treasure the Kingdom of God, above everything else seek a relationship with our heavenly Father!

**Psalm 34:10** The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing.

**Matthew 16:24-26** Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

To seek 1<sup>st</sup> God's kingdom is to pursue knowing God with all your heart, making it your greatest passion. That leads us to the next point, storing up treasures in heaven.

**b. Store up treasures in heaven** – to store up treasures in heaven while here on earth we need to go all in!

**i. Go all in!** God promises to bless those who seek Him with all their heart. What does that look like?

A few years ago Michael Jordan spoke at Kobe Bryant's memorial service and he described Kobe Bryant's passion for being the best basketball player in the world, Jordan said "if you love something, you will go to the extreme to try to understand it or try to get it... whatever you have a love for, if you have to walk miles for it, beg for it, you'll go get it."

What would be a Christian example of someone who went all in to seek 1<sup>st</sup> God's kingdom? There are many, one that comes to mind for me is **Scottish Pastor Robert Murray M'Cheyne**, he only lived until the age of 39 before he died from typhus fever but in that short time he left a lasting impression on the people he served. Robert M'Cheyne was known for setting aside hours each morning to pray. Even when pressed by duties which were numerous, he kept by his rule, 'that he must first see the face of God before he could undertake any duty'. M'Cheyne said "a calm hour with God is worth a whole lifetime with man".

Who comes to mind when you think of men and women in the Bible with extraordinary passion for the Lord? Here are just a few:

**Daniel** – he is known for his wisdom and prayer life

**Enoch** – he is known for walking with God and being taken straight to heaven before dying because he was pleasing to God; if Kim and I had a boy I would have named him Enoch, maybe that's why God gave us 3 girls

**Mary and Joseph** – they trusted God with the miracle of a virgin birth and the responsibility of raising Jesus

**Barnabas** – his given name was Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, but he was nicknamed Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement)

**Tabitha** (or you might recognize her as **Dorcas** in Greek) – she is described as abounding with deeds of kindness and charity, if my wife and I were blessed with a 4<sup>th</sup> daughter, I would have named her Dorcas, she is described as abounding with deeds of kindness and charity, what a beautiful description of one's life!

**Lydia** – she was a seller of purple fabrics and a worshipper of God, known as the 1<sup>st</sup> convert in Europe

**The Apostle John** – he is known as the disciple whom Jesus loved; does it get any better than that!

These brothers and sisters in the Lord are great examples of people who have **gone all in** to seek 1<sup>st</sup> His kingdom.

You may be saying to yourself that you are not sure if you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, if that is the case, I implore you this morning to seek Jesus, God promises that those who seek Him will find Him!

### **Isaiah 55:6-7**

Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon!

If you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, I implore you this morning to **go all in**, to passionately pursue knowing Christ and making Him known. One of the best ways to grow in your passion for the Lord is to share this Good News of the glorious gospel of our blessed God which you and I have been entrusted with.

## **ii. Share gospel**

**Romans 10:11-15** For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." FOR there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear

without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!"

**Let's encourage one another to "make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel!"**

Before we conclude this morning, let's review the main points. Jesus commands us 3 times in this passage not to worry or be anxious because God is our sovereign, omnipotent heavenly Father! Let's praise Jehovah Jireh, as Abraham did when God provided for all of his needs, including a ram to sacrifice in the place of his son Isaac; a precursor to the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus would make on Abraham's behalf and on behalf of all who call on the name of the Lord for salvation!

How can we have victory over the temptation of worry and anxiety? It begins with recognizing worry as the sin that it is, then confess your sin to the God who forgives and restores. Feed on God's Word, pray to God for help and meditate on His promises to provide. Give thanks to God who is continually supplying all of your needs, far more abundantly beyond that. Finally seek out a brother or sister in Christ to help keep you accountable, it will be a blessing to both of you as you watch God work in and through you.

**Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones** concluded his commentary on **Matthew chapter 6** with the following:

Finally, a large part of faith, especially in this connection, consists of just refusing anxious thoughts. That to me is perhaps the most important and the most practical thing of all. Faith means refusing to think about worrying things! The devil and all adverse circumstances will do their utmost to make me do so, but having faith means that I shall say: "No; I refuse to be worried!"... The God whom I am trusting for today, I will trust for tomorrow... May He, in His infinite grace, give us wisdom and grace to implement these simple principles and thereby rejoice in Him day by day.

As we put off worry we are called to seek 1<sup>st</sup> God's kingdom and His righteousness. In doing so let's go all in! Make it your life's pursuit to know your Creator, Savior, Provider, Heavenly Father! Don't forget to share this good news, the best news that Jesus came to seek and save the lost!

Matt Gaughan shared lyrics from a song at the Men's Bible study a few weeks ago that is apropos to end with today, the song is called **Before You Call Me Home by Mike Shultz**, a few of the lines go like this:

Did I live a life of love, did I give myself away?  
Will my kids think of you when they speak my name?  
Was I always full of hope, always reaching out?  
I want to cross the finish line and know I made it count  
before you call me home.

So, Cornerstone, this is where the rubber meets the road, or as the great theologian Nacho Libre once said, let's get down to the nitty gritty! We all talk about New Year's resolutions this time of year so even if you already have one, I'm challenging each of us to make a resolution to live a life that focuses on what matters most.

There's a blank line at the end of the sermon outline for each of you to fill in,

**2023 daily prayer: I pray to be remembered for \_\_\_\_\_ .**

If you are not sure what to fill in, consider what comes to mind when you think of Jesus' earthly ministry? Jesus was a disciple-maker, He was a friend to His disciples, He often rose early in the morning to spend time with God, Jesus loved people, made time to inspire children, stood up for the truth, cared for the lepers, the poor, Jesus was always thinking of others above Himself even telling the disciple John to take care of His mother Mary as He was dying on the cross. Jesus gave people 2<sup>nd</sup> chances such as Peter, Paul, Mary Magdalene, those with little faith..., Jesus was full of joy even in the most difficult circumstances.

Make sure you share what you wrote down with someone who can be praying for you this year and you can pray for them as we seek 1<sup>st</sup> God's kingdom and His righteousness!

**Please join me in prayer.**