

Sunday School Lesson for February 1, 2026

Matthew 6

Welcome to Sunday School on the go from the First Baptist Church in Tallahassee. I'm Jim Glass, one of the teachers in the Pairs and Spares Class, and, on this first Sunday of February, we're moving chapter-by-chapter through the gospel according to Matthew, with Pastor Trey preaching from the odd-numbered chapters and our Bible Fellowship lessons drawn from the even-numbered chapters. Following Trey's message from the first portion of the Lord's Sermon on the Mount found in chapter five, our lesson today comes from chapter six where the Lord explains what a life of righteousness looks like as we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

As Jesus announced that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, He explained here in the Sermon on the Mount what that kingdom is, what advantages it offers, who the people are who belong to it, and what's required of those who belong to this Kingdom of Heaven. With those questions answered, a final question would naturally be on the minds of His hearers: "How can I be a part of this Kingdom of Heaven?" The answer comes from a warm and loving heart that's broken from the woes of the weary and heavy-laden people, beginning with "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The King of Heaven has come to bless.

Chapter six follows closely behind as the Lord answers the question of what's required of those who belong to the Kingdom by instructing us to live out a disciplined life characterized by righteousness in terms of our giving--verses one through four--, our prayers--verses five through fifteen--, our fasting--verses sixteen through eighteen--, our priority--verses nineteen through 24--, and our dependance on the Lord--verses 25 through 34.

First, the Lord speaks to how we live a disciplined life of righteousness when it comes to our giving--verse one: "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will

have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.”

This righteousness that we are to practice has a far greater scope than simply truth and honesty, for it’s a matter of the heart. Back in verse twenty of the previous chapter, Jesus said, “For I tell you, unless your righteousness **exceeds** that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” The Pharisees’ righteousness was practiced before other people in order to be seen by them. It was an outward righteousness alone. External conformity to the Law was and is good as far as it goes, but it doesn’t go far enough--true righteousness has to exceed the outward to permeate the inward person down to the deepest recesses of the heart.

So, it’s the motive behind the acts that reveals the true worth of a person’s acts of righteousness. Back in verse sixteen, the Lord had said, “Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” Our good works **are** to be seen, but they are **good**, not primarily because of the “good” those works produce, but the “good” that motivates and inspires those acts. And this same principle is applied to giving, praying, and fasting.

There were those, however, whose motive was to be seen and heard and praised for their acts of generosity. Jesus called them “hypocrites.” The word came from the theater and spoke of those who played the part of others--not speaking or doing what they would, but presenting themselves as if they were someone else. As used by the Lord and others in the New Testament, it refers to those who put on an act to hide their real feelings or intentions for the purpose of personal gain or praise.

In Jesus' illustration here, these hypocrites would announce their giving by sounding trumpets in the synagogues or in the streets, perhaps to call the poor together to receive their gifts--whether the sounding of trumpets was actual or just a figurative expression--, but, in reality, they were bringing attention to their presumed charity--what they wanted everyone else to see, but that wasn't the true motive of their hearts. Put another way, the giving of these hypocrites was theatrical--merely a show for others.

One nineteenth century British pastor put it like this: "When a man's self, and not the glory of God, is the chief end of any action, that cannot be called a good work, nor will it have any reward; whereas a good work, which springs from a principle of grace, and is directed to the glory of God, will have a reward, not of debt, but of grace, from whence it arises."

What's the corrective to ostentatious, theatrical giving--giving for the purpose of being seen?--verse three: "But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret." In this proverbial expression, the Lord is saying that giving should be done with so much secrecy, that, if it was possible, you might not know / you did it yourself, much less make it known to others; after all, the truly righteous person only has an audience of One in mind, and since God sees everything--as we know from Psalm 139--, our giving should be hidden from everyone else. When we give in this way, we can be sure that our Father, "Who sees in secret," will reward us accordingly, for it is He Whom we live to please and not ourselves.

We live a disciplined life of righteousness first, in terms of our giving, and, second, we live a disciplined life of righteousness in terms of our praying. Once again, the hypocrites prayed to be seen and heard for their prayers, much like the Pharisee whom we read about in Luke, chapter eighteen, verse ten, who, "standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'" But the Lord's warning is not

limited to such a shameless setting oneself up as an exemplar of righteousness. It also applies to praying with a sanctimonious voice or super-spiritual vocabulary that are out of the ordinary--using words and phrases that you wouldn't expect to hear from the person praying. Here again, since they pray to impress people and not so much to be heard by God, they have their reward.

The resolution to this is found in verse six: "But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

Jesus doesn't say **when** we should pray, or **how long** we should pray, or **how often** we should pray. Once again, He expects that we will pray: "**When** you pray." We should pray in times of uncertainty. We should pray in times of temptation. We should pray in times when the Spirit of God leads us to pray. We should pray in times of thankfulness. We should pray without ceasing as Paul tells the followers of Christ in Thessalonica in the fifth chapter of his first letter to them, verse seventeen. Whenever you pray, it should be done privately, with the focus between you and God.

But, like with letting your good works be seen by men, it's not the act itself that is to be avoided in public, but the theatrical, artificial, pretentious, and showy attitude that's to be avoided. Jesus doesn't intend to prohibit public prayer or joining with a few others in prayer, but only warns against the pride, hypocrisy, and vanity that was all too often seen in the prayers of that day. As with all forms of worship, in prayer, we have an audience of One, and He should be our one and only focus. And, as with giving, "pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

There's a second aspect to a disciplined life of righteousness in our prayers, this time regarding the content of our prayers--verse seven: "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words." The single word in Greek we have translated as "do not use vain repetitions" may have come from the

name of a king of Cyrene who stammered or a poet whose rhymes were filled with repetitions, duplications, reiterations, and redundancies. On the other hand, the word could have just been onomatopoetic--a word that imitates the sound it represents, like "buzz" or "babble."

Such were the superstitious prayers of the Baal worshipers of First Kings, chapter eighteen who "called upon the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, 'O Baal, answer us!' But there was no voice, and no one answered. ... And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention." Superstitious Gentiles believed that they could wear down or bully their idols into granting their requests through countless words and endless repetitions. Because these pagan customs would have been familiar to those in the audience when Jesus spoke these words, He used them as an example of what not to do.

Unfortunately, there are phrases that we still hear today in public prayers that could fall into this category of "empty phrases" and "vain repetitions." God has promised never to abandon us, so why would we pray, "God, be with us?" Perhaps what we mean to say is something like, "Lord, may we be aware of and respond to Your presence among us." "Forgive us all our great and many sins" is another. Unconfessed sin is unforgiven sin as we'll see in a moment. And there are other vain repetitions that are devoid of the incredible power of prayer if we would only remember who we are and to Whom we are praying.

Once again, the Lord is not prohibiting prayers repeated out of a sense of urgency, earnestness, or perseverance, for He commends the widow and her persistent prayers of Luke, chapter eighteen, and, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus Himself prayed three times that He would not have to drink the cup that was set before Him. It's not the repetition of prayers, but the superstitious, vain repetition of prayers--empty of heart, devoid of devotion--that He rebukes--not much prayer, but much speaking--the foolishness of

supposing that a mere repetition of prayer-like words as if they had some sort of magical quality apart from the devotion and dependance that are at the core of genuine prayer, would actually move the heart of God.

And why are these prayers unnecessary?--verse eight: "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him." David tells us in Psalm 139 that the Lord is the One Who knew all his thoughts, actions, and intentions, better than he knew them himself. There is nothing--nothing at all--that lies hidden or concealed about you or me--our thoughts, our intentions, our past--everything about us is laid open before God. "Your Father knows" He knows it all--and He loves us with an everlasting, unfailing, unconditional love just the same. And He knows what you need today. He heard it before you said it the first time. He knows, but He longs to hear us declare our trust in Him as we pray, even as we continue to pray--not in an attempt to wear Him out so He'll give in to us, but so that He will see and we will know the depth of our dependance and trust in Him.

With those warnings and instructions in place, the Lord gives us a model to follow as we pray in verses nine through thirteen. We all know the Lord's Prayer. I'm sure all of you could recite it by heart. But reciting it by heart / without heart / is what Jesus just told us not to do: "when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases." Jesus didn't say, "Pray these words," He said, "Pray in this manner," or "Pray like this." He provides us with a pattern for prayer that we are to use as a guide to put into words the desires of our own hearts that are in conformity with His desires for our hearts.

Yes, you can use these exact words, but they mean nothing if they're just rattled off without thinking about what you're saying. The Lord Jesus gave us this prayer so that, when we pray, we might think to ourselves, "Now there are certain things I should always take into consideration when I pray. I should never rush into prayer. I should never start speaking without thinking about what I am doing, to Whom I'm speaking, why I'm petitioning the LORD our

God, King of the universe, and why I should expect Him to answer. Here in this prayer is the outline we should follow for every prayer.

So--ever so feebly and all-too briefly, given the time we have--let me share with you some reflections on the path of this prayer. By way of overview, you'll see that there are three divine petitions and three human petitions. The three things said about God concern His Name, His Nature, and His Kingdom. The three requests that follow concern our daily provision of the things we need for life, the need for forgiveness, and the need to be delivered from the power of Satan.

We can see the working of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in this prayer. As Father, He provides; as Son, He forgives; as Holy Spirit, He directs our paths into holiness. For us as individuals, our Lord leads us to pray for what we need in the present--daily food; for what we need / to deal with things in the past--forgiveness; and for what we will need in the future--deliverance from evil. In all, the model prayer of our Lord deals with every aspect of our lives.

Following our Lord's instructions, our prayers should begin with a recognition of the One to Whom we're addressing our prayer. Every prayer in the Bible begins with worship--with recognizing Who God is and who we are in relation to God. No matter how greatly David was threatened, no matter how frustrated Jeremiah was, no matter how desperate Isaiah was, they all began their prayers with worship. Even Jesus Himself in the great prayer of John chapter seventeen begins with "Father."

When the prodigal son returned home, hoping against hope that his father would just let him join the hired hands, he began his prayer with, "Father." Oh, what an amazing thing it is to be able to call upon God as our Father. That alone should be enough for us to pour out our hearts in praise and thanksgiving that, although we had cast off our inheritance, just as the prodigal son had, our heavenly Father welcomed us back home, adopted us as His

children and gave us a robe of righteousness--the very righteousness of Jesus Christ His Son Who bore our sin in our place and was raised as the firstborn from the dead, the One--Revelation, chapter one, verse five--“who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

I hope there have been times in your prayer life when that's as far as you've gotten when you celebrate just a little of what “our Father” entails. Beginning your prayer with an acknowledgment of the One to Whom you're addressing your prayer and your relationship to Him sets the tone for everything else that follows.

“Our Father in heaven.” Heaven--the place where we should be storing treasures that moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves can't break in and steal--the place where your imperishable, undefiled, and unfading inheritance is being kept just for you. Heaven--the place where Jesus, our great high priest, is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, interceding for us. Heaven--the vantage point from which God sees, knows, and hears everything, and so we can pray like David in Psalm 139, verse 23: “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!” Heaven--the place where Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us so that where He is we might be right there with Him.

“May Your Name be forever honored as holy.” “And the angels cry, “Holy,” all creation cries, “Holy.” You will always be holy, holy forever” is a song we sing. Isaiah beheld the six-winged seraphim as with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew, and, as they flew, one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!’”

The Name of God is not the label we use to refer to God, whatever that might be. The **Name** of God is the totality of Who He is often revealed in

what He does. In Genesis chapter two, He's "the Lord God; in chapter fourteen, He's "the Most High God;" in chapter seventeen, He's "the Almighty God;" in chapter 21, He's "the everlasting God;" in Deuteronomy, chapter 33, He's "the eternal God;" in Joshua, chapter three, He's "the living God;" in the eightieth Psalm, He's "the God of Hosts;" in Isaiah, chapter 43, He's "the Holy One of Israel;" in the first chapter of Jonah, He's "the God of the heavens;" here in Matthew, chapter six, He's "the heavenly Father;" in the first chapter of First Timothy, He's "the King eternal;" and that's just a small sample of how He is known. So when we pray, "Hallowed be thy Name," we're praying that God might be honored in each and every aspect in which He has revealed Himself to us.

For God's Name to be "hallowed," it must be treated as "holy." "Holy" is one of those words that has been used in so many different ways that we often forget what it means. It means to be separate, to be set apart for a special purpose. Using the name of God flippantly or irreverently as is all too common today is not treating His Name as holy--set apart--reserved to speak of the One Who alone deserves to bear that Name.

We need to revisit the call of David in Psalm 34 when he implores, "Magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together." We hallow God's Name when we think rightly about Who He is, and we hallow His Name when we live rightly. Because He's our Father, our own lifestyle should be one that reflects the glory of God--we should live our lives so that others might see God the Father in us. So when we pray as Jesus taught His disciples to pray saying, "Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Your Name," we're asking that God's Name--everything about His person--God Himself--might have its rightful place of honor throughout the whole world, beginning in our own lives.

One particular way that His Name would be regarded as holy will be revealed when His Kingdom comes and His will is done on earth just as it's being done in heaven--the next part of the Lord's model prayer.

In Luke, chapter seventeen, the Lord answered a Pharisee's question about the Kingdom of God by saying, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." It's not so much a visible kingdom as it is the realm God exercises His Kingship.

Some Christians believe it's a future reality, while others say the Kingdom has already come. I think it's safest to say that we have seen a preview of what it will be and we even now enjoy some of the benefits of being in the Kingdom of God, but there yet remains an even greater experience of that Kingdom, a fullness that will be realized in time, and for **this** time we are to live like citizens of that Kingdom while praying expectantly for it to be fully established soon, just as we read in the second-to-the-last verse of the Bible where the Lord Jesus says, "Surely I am coming soon." To which John replies, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"

Next in this model prayer are the three requests for daily bread, forgiveness of sins, and deliverance from temptation and the source of evil. In praying for God's provision for the physical necessities of life, we celebrate the fact that He "will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus"--Philippians, chapter four, verse nineteen.

In asking for forgiveness, it's never a blanket request, for unconfessed sin is unforgiven sin: "**If** we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"--First John, chapter one, verse nine. "If we say we have no sin"--if we gloss over our sin, or make light of our sin, or refuse to acknowledge our sin--"we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"--verse eight. "Forgive us our debts" is not a plea bargain for all sins known and unknown, but a prompt for us to examine our lives in the light of God's holiness, then admit that God's assessment of our individual, particular, specific sin is correct and ask for targeted forgiveness.

And, of course, we then forgive others just as we have been forgiven because, if we don't extend to others the same forgiveness God offers when we confess our sin, we really haven't fully acknowledged all our sin to God--in this case, the sin of our unwillingness to forgive someone else, and--First John, chapter one, verse eight--"we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." The Lord adds this warning in verses fourteen and fifteen.

Last in this prayer is the request not to be led into temptation but to be delivered from evil or, as some understand it, "the evil one," meaning Satan himself. This is also a prompt to entrust to God specific areas of your life that are prone to fall to temptation, just as Paul suggests in Romans, chapter six, verse thirteen: "Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness."

This part of the prayer is a petition of dependence: relying on God for protection. I can't protect myself from evil in my own strength. This prayer is a statement of confidence in God. Since God has forgiven me, I know that He will not lead me to a place where I might be harmed again. God will lead you out of temptation and protect you from evil if you want to be led out of evil and protected, but you have to trust Him to do this and not rely on your own strength.

The model prayer ends with a song of praise to God--our acknowledgement that the reign, the power, the honor, and the glory of God will be revealed to the world and magnified as the Lord answers according to His perfect plan and timing. His glory is the principal thing we're to seek when we come before Him, from first to last--from the beginning of our prayer to the end.

Well, there's so much more we could say about this compact, model prayer of our Lord, but we must move on.

The third aspect of a disciplined life of righteousness is found in our fasting. If prayer is the most common discipline of a life of righteousness, fasting is probably the least commonly practiced and least understood. Fasting involves abstaining from something--typically food--for a certain period of time in order to refocus time, energy, and interest on spiritual objectives in terms of, for example, repentance, sorrow, grief, preparation, or intercession.

Because this is a spiritual exercise between an individual and God, there's no reason whatsoever to make a public show of it, but that's exactly what some were doing. According to Jewish custom, faithful Jews were to fast four times a year. It was also customary for the Pharisees to fast twice a week, and, to show that they were fasting, they would put ashes on their heads, smearing them on their faces with their tears to make others see how serious they were about their fasting.

But Jesus told them, "Anoint your head and wash your face"--don't make it look like you're fasting--"that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you." Don't make a show of it to attract attention. Let it be between you and God alone, and He will approve of and accept your humility and sincerity.

The fourth aspect of a disciplined life of righteousness that the Lord Jesus touches on here is that of our spiritual priority, beginning in verse nineteen: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

We were made for something far more than what life here on earth has to offer. Nowhere does scripture prohibit the ownership of private property, nor does it prohibit the practice of such things as saving, investing, or buying insurance. God has given us overseership of everything in creation to enjoy it responsibly.

What our Lord does warn against is the selfish accumulation of things. Many times, He condemned luxurious living and the hard-heartedness that turned a blind eye to the hunger, nakedness, and loneliness of those less fortunate. What we sometimes fail to understand is what Job himself recognized: “Naked I came into the world and naked shall I return.” Those things of temporal value don’t deserve our highest loyalty, because their existence is limited to this present world which is even now passing away. Instead, we are to make eternal investments. Believers are citizens of the kingdom of heaven that Jesus has been talking about, so His word to us is to stop wasting what the Lord has entrusted to us in things that pass away but, instead, “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.”

The driving principle behind this is found in verse 21: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” What you treasure / reveals the condition of your heart. If your heart’s not set on that incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading inheritance that’s reserved in heaven for you that Peter speaks of in the opening verses of his first letter, you’re squandering what God has entrusted to you.

Jesus furthers His explanation in the next verse: “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” A healthy eye allows us to see to walk, to move about, and to avoid obstacles so that the heart--as the decision-making organ in our bodies--can see to make good, safe, and healthy choices. If the eye is bad, the heart can’t get the information it needs to make a good choice, and we are in darkness.

When the eye of the soul--that is, the heart and the seat of our desires--is free from covetousness, and we properly understand the true value of the things in our lives, we choose and act wisely. On the other hand, when unholy desires cloud the eye of our soul, there’s darkness inside us that’s far deeper than the darkness that afflicts a blind person, leading us to mistake the relative

value of things, thereby causing us to choose the worse, neglect the better, or convince ourselves that we can have both. So, in order for us to store up treasures in heaven, the eye of our heart must be kept healthy and clear, not clouded with the cataracts of worldly attractions and distractions.

In order to further illustrate the point, the Lord Jesus takes what was probably a well-known proverb--verse 24: "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other," and applies it this way: "You cannot serve God and money." The meaning is **not**, "you cannot serve God and have riches," but "you cannot be faithful to God and make an idol of wealth." And the application was obvious: you can't wholeheartedly serve the true God while at the same time coveting the things of this world; after all, Paul clearly identifies covetousness as idolatry in Colossians, chapter three, verse five.

"Therefore, I tell you"--verse 25, based on all the Lord has just said about treasures, eyes, light, darkness, and masters--here's the personal application: "do not be anxious 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? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to

you. Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

Giving, praying, fasting, our spiritual priority, and, now, unwavering devotion are the five aspects of a disciplined life that He addresses in His Sermon on the Mount. As all of our life is centered on honoring God in response to His constant, abiding, unfailing provision for us, we have no reason to be anxious about anything.

The Lord Jesus recognizes that we naturally concern ourselves with so many things: what we'll eat, what we'll drink, what we'll put on; but life is so much bigger than these petty things. He invites His hearers to look around at creation and see how God provides food for the birds of the air, makes a pageant of the lilies of the field in their magnificent colors, and even clothes the earth with grass that lasts only a short while, then asks, "Aren't you--who were made in the very image and likeness of God--, so much more valuable than they, and will He not provide for you in accordance with the value He places on you?"

It's not that He's suggesting we neglect these matters; instead, He's telling us we need not be anxious, restless, or distrustful of God's full provision for everything we need. Do you see how many times the Lord uses the word "anxious" in the last ten verses of this chapter? Six times! Is there a message there? Of course! Stop being anxious about whether or not God is going to take care of you. Don't even worry about what's going to happen or not happen tomorrow--God's got this! Our real concern, just like our concern about treasures, should be focused elsewhere--on eternal realities.

Placing a priority on things for the body is both unproductive and unnecessary--it produces no eternal increase, your heavenly Father already knows what you need, and, if you're a child of God, your heavenly Father is going to provide for all of your needs. Not only is the pursuit of worldly comforts unproductive and unnecessary, it's also unworthy of a true child of

God. If physical life were all there was to human existence, then, yes, we would need to be concerned with are those things that keep us protected and fed. But we're more than just physical beings--we're spiritual beings with an eternal soul. If it's the soul that lasts into eternity, shouldn't we be investing what God has entrusted to us in developing the soul?

So, what's the Lord's solution to all this care and concern about food and drink and clothing and even how long we'll live? "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." **First**, before you seek after anything else--setting aside everything else, because everything else is of secondary importance--seek, chase after, hunt down, pursue above everything else "the Kingdom of God and His righteousness."

The Kingdom of God that the Lord Jesus has been proclaiming is at hand. The righteousness of God is what He's been talking about throughout His Sermon on the Mount--the righteousness revealed in the gospel that allows us to enter the Kingdom of God--a righteousness that comes from God and is nothing less than the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Himself that He's made available through His death and resurrection and that He offers to all who will place their trust in Him.

And, once you've placed your trust fully and firmly, unreservedly and unconditionally in the Lord Jesus as your Righteousness, everything else falls into place: "all these things [that others are so anxious about] will be added to you as God provides for you just as He cares for all His creation." Even tomorrow's cares will be met by the loving hand of God. It was this confident trust that allowed the apostle Paul to tell the followers of Christ in Philippi in chapter three, verse eight, "Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him." Nothing else mattered. And because He was storing his treasures in heaven, he was able to tell them in verse 21 of the first chapter, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Such is the

confidence of all those who seek first the Kingdom of God and the righteousness He freely offers.

A disciplined life of giving, praying, fasting, spiritual priority, and, unwavering devotion are the five aspects of a life of righteousness that the Lord Jesus longed for each of His hearers to understand, embrace, and pursue. May it be your greatest desire and single priority as you seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness today and every day as we expectantly await the Lord's return.

Thank you for being a part of our study of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus through Matthew's eyes as he leads us to understand Who Jesus is through His works and His words so that we might be the people of God He's calling us to be for such a time as this. Next week, following Pastor Trey's message from chapter seven of the Sermon on the Mount, we'll turn to chapter eight of Matthew's gospel to learn something of the Lord's healing miracles, His calming of a storm, and His responses to two men who said they wanted to follow Him.

As always, as it's still a good thing to do, keep calm, trust in the Lord, and wash your hands! God bless you!

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