

July 16th, 2023

Seek First the Kingdom

Review:

- The disciples of Jesus are changing—exchanging worldviews is a process.
- Jesus reveals the truths—the desert exists—struggles exist—the tempter exists.
- Who is the “I” in “**But I Say...**”?
- Jesus’ worldview: God’s Word is truth—a Biblical Worldview.
- Jesus calls His disciples and begins to teach.

Flipping the world upside down: **Matthew 5:3-11 (NIV)**

Jesus versus the American dream:

The Declaration of Independence:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_men_are_created_equal)

One version of the American the Dream: *“The belief that anyone, regardless of where they were born or what class they were born into, can attain their own version of success in a society in which upward mobility is possible for everyone.”* The American dream is believed to be achieved through sacrifice, risk-taking, and hard work, rather than by chance.

What we are: **SALT** and **LIGHT** (**Matthew 5:13-16**).

- Our purpose: a *preservative* rather than an *accelerant*.

These rules are “**FROM**” and “**FOR**” the heart.

- No murder—but I say no hate.
- No adultery—but I say no lust.
- Divorce is acceptable—but I say “**no**” unless adultery.
- Oaths—but I say just be honest with your word and you won’t need to make an oath.
- Eye for an eye—but I say be kind to your enemies (**Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV)**).

Living with the Kingdom first looks like:

A. Choosing the praises of God over people.

- Giving, prayer, fasting, etc.
- “*Virtue*” signaling.
- **Matthew 6:1 (NIV)** *“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.”*

B. Choosing eternity over temporary.

- But I say don’t live for financial, physical wealth (*physical things can rule your life*) **Matthew 6:19-24 (NIV)**.

C. Seeking first the “**Kingdom**”—choosing faith—trusting the King and His promises.

- This is putting the Lord first in everything—the first commandment—the law had to do with every part of life. Jesus is saying “**Kingdom**” is a part of everything.
- Remembering the cost to get you into the Kingdom was great.
- Expanding the Kingdom through sharing about the King and our eternal future.
- Helping other believers as they struggle with the world and its values.
 - Pagans prioritize the physical world—they set the tone.

- We trust the Lord to give us what is best.
- We don't allow worry to control our lives (**Matthew 6:32-34 NIV**).

D. When we choose the “**Kingdom**,” we walk by faith, and we can put worry aside.

- The promises of God for those who seek Him first.
- He will supply what you need for the life He wants you to have.
- He will be with you no matter what you have.
- He will bring us to Himself for eternity.
- Remember the enemy comes against those who are committed to the Kingdom, but we can remember God's promises.
- **Proverbs 30:8-9 (NIV)**.

TO DISCUSS IN LIFE GROUP OR WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS:

Opening Question: What stood out to you the most from the sermon this week?

Main Point: When our priorities line up with God's, we are able to focus on the things He cares about rather than the worries of the world.

Read/Tell the Story: **Matthew 6:25-34 (NIV)**.

1. From the passage, what were all the different things God cared for?
2. Do you believe God cares about all the things in your life, big or small? Why?
3. When do you struggle to go to God to provide for your needs?
4. What do you tend to worry about?
5. What is the difference between worrying and planning ahead?
6. What does seeking the kingdom first look like practically for you in this season?

Supporting Scripture:

- **Proverbs 12:25 (NIV)**
- **Philippians 4:4-7 (NIV)**