

Seek First

by Don McClure

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's kingdom first to alleviate anxiety and trust in His provision for our needs.

Duration: 46:14

Scripture: Matthew 6:25

Topics: "Gods Provision", "Anxiety Freedom"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not worrying or being anxious about our lives. He compares our Heavenly Father's provision for us to a commander in chief providing for his soldiers in war. Just as the soldiers are given all the tools and provisions they need, God promises to take care of our needs. The preacher also highlights the contrast between believers and those who do not have a relationship with God, emphasizing that we have a Heavenly Father who cares for us.

Transcript

Why don't you grab your Bible, turn to Matthew chapter 6, if you would, and back up just a little bit because there are a few things here as we close out chapter 6 tonight that I feel I didn't, I know you may feel, what could he have possibly missed as much time as he takes on these things, but there actually is a comma that I never got to mention there that I want to comment on. But just to get the flow of it, I'm going to begin reading it, verse 25. Therefore I say unto you, be not anxious for your life, for what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or yet for your body, what ye shall put on.

Is the life not more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold, the fowls of the air, they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to a stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Or are you once again anxious for your raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I tell you, I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore take no thought, or don't be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathen seek.

For your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore, or

don't be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow shall take thought for the things of itself.

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Let's pray. Father, we thank you and we praise you for who you are and what you mean to us and what we so wonderfully seem to mean to you.

And Lord, that if you came and died for us, shed your blood for us to forgive us, to redeem us, to make us your children, to intercede for us day after day, to present us faultless, to do all of the things that you have done that have caused you so much pain, so much suffering. Lord, how much more, your word says, shall you not give us all things if you spare not your own Son for us? And Father, we pray that we would come into a greater understanding of your sufficiency in our life in the daily aspects of it. The way, Lord, you want to carry us through every day, every issue, every need.

And Lord, that you would be the one that is sufficient for us in all things. And so Lord, as we close off this chapter tonight, we ask that the things that you wanted to bring home to our hearts so much that tonight your Holy Spirit would just take your word and make it alive to us. For Jesus, it's in your glorious, loving, saving name that we ask it.

Amen. Here are a few points here that sometimes you get so close to the trees you need to back off a little bit and see the forest a little bit. And I feel that as I was finishing out this chapter, a couple points that I believe are tremendously important to the Lord that we understand and that I really didn't spend much time in is, one is the issue of worry or anxiety or fear.

This is a tremendous part of life, it seems, for much of the world. And particularly after, as Jesus calls here, the Gentile, or as he says, after all of these things, the Gentile, he's concerned. And literally there is the heathen, those that don't have a heavenly father, they have to sweat out all of the issues of life.

Those that really don't have anybody that take care of them, somebody that loves them, somebody that watches over them every moment of every day. You know, somebody outside of Christ, outside of his love, outside of his redemptive power, outside of a fellowship and a daily relationship with him, they've got all the responsibility of their own life upon their shoulder. They've got to worry about all of these things.

They've got to sweat them out. They've got to be concerned about them. But one of the most wonderful things that I believe the Lord wants us all to truly know is how that when we come to him, he takes his office, his role, his responsibility, his call extremely seriously.

Just as seriously as he took the cross with as much intensity, as much concern to do a job that when he said it is finished, it was absolutely finished as far as sin. Well, I believe there a day doesn't go by that also the Lord in his power to take care of us, to watch over us, to protect us, to provide for us. The work is just as finished.

It is just as complete. It is just as sufficient as the crosses in itself. And for us to learn to trust the Lord that way and to have that dependence upon him, the result of it is wonderful in somebody's life.

The relief that it brings to our heart in the area of worry or of anxiety is tremendous. And here is, as Jesus is wanting, you know, to say, as he says in verse 30 and 32, but he goes, he says, he's selling not much more clothed you. Oh, you of little faith, your heavenly father knows that you have need of these things.

Jesus said, as Jesus, as he is looking there, he's saying, don't you know that your heavenly father knows all the things that you have need of and you don't need to worry. That's what he's saying here in a sense

do. And he says, take no thought.

It isn't just a mental concept of thinking about something, but there is a, there's a fine line, I suppose, between where I'm just aware of the world and aware of the issues and aware of circumstances. And then when you shift over that line to where now the burden of, of the world now falls on me. And now that brings me into worry.

Now that brings me into anxiety. And that's what the word means here. When he says, take no thought, it's don't be anxious.

Don't let a fear come over you. Don't let a worry or a concern for these things, you know, come. I mean, here is he is sharing.

And of course, in the context, you realize the people that are there, you know, that the Lord is looking at it. We're of course, with his own disciples there as he's ministering to them, but then is so soon he is going to be sending them out. And then there's going to be the 70.

And then there's going to be many that he is training. He's teaching there to send out where he's not even going to give them anything. Don't even take any provision.

You're going to go out two by two. Don't worry about how your next meal, you don't even don't worry about packing your bags. Don't worry about how many lunches you got to prepare for the journey or any of that.

You just go out and you serve God. You do what he has for your life and he's going to take care of every day ahead of you. His sufficiency will be there and he's wanting to teach them there as he is about to send them literally into a lifestyle of where they aren't having to worry about all the things that they've always had to worry about.

You follow me, you trust me, and I am going to take care of you. And I suppose one of the things that is so tragic that so often that even Christians that we struggle with, I understand the world struggling with it, but a Christian shouldn't. And that's struggling with anxiety, fear, worry.

I mean, here at one of the most wonderful things that the Lord, he looks at us as our Lord, as our savior, as our master, as our protector, as our provider, as our father, as our God. He looks there and he says to us, you follow me. I will take care of everything else in all of life.

And here the Lord, he just wants us to come to a place to where the how it is going to be done is going to be up to him. My business is to follow him. And the wonderful thing is when we learn this, it makes life an exciting adventure of learning not to look at how it's going to be fulfilled, but who is the one that promised to fulfill it.

And that is what so much of the Sermon on the Mount is about. I read a little story about a fellow who was a famous English preacher, but Dr. Lionel Fletcher. And one time he was preaching a series of meetings down in Cape Town in South Africa, and he had huge crowds came out.

But one night he felt impressed that he wanted to speak to the women. And he had a huge meeting just for women only. I don't know why this was, but that's how it was.

And he'd said that that night he was going to be speaking on women's greatest sin. And, uh, that night they had an absolutely packed audience. Everybody wondered, what is he going to be addressing? What

is he going to be speaking about? And there was speculation.

Well, even when he got up, he said, now I know you're all wondering what it is that I'm going to be speaking about that is a woman's greatest sin. Maybe some of you think I'm going to speak about some, you know, uh, sexual misconduct or I'm going to be, uh, you know, speculating on some other behavior or some other, uh, gross, you know, sin that could happen. But he said, what I want to speak to you about is he says, I believe that a woman's greatest sin is worry.

And then he went on, I didn't read the sermon, but it was supposed to be quite a splendid sermon on worry. And he was of the opinion that women worry more than men. Now that's just his, I, I, I personally, well, it's not the day and age where you speculate that way any longer, but it's something to where, uh, but it is something to where I think, I suppose we all, let's just say we all worry and leave it at that.

But anyway, the, uh, but, uh, I suppose there are many women that are perpetual worriers. So often we can worry about everything from our husband or to our men is to our wives. And we worry about our children.

We worry about the home and we worry about one thing after another. We worry about where our children are going every day, what they're doing, what is happening, what's going on in the world all around us. And, uh, it's, it seems to be a great occupation and many people wouldn't think this is a great sin.

Many people wouldn't look at this and say, well, this is something that is, uh, uh, really that gross or that great when you compare it with other sins. And yet the more I think about it as I, this afternoon pondering it, I suppose that one of the greatest thieves that there's ever been in history, one of the greatest robbers, something that has stolen more time and more service and more ministry and more blessing out of more people's lives probably than maybe than any other thing might well be worry. It might be anxiety, the anxieties of life.

And here the Lord is wanting to tell his disciples there. He wanted to literally banish the concept from their life. He's wanting to so reveal himself to them, himself to them in such a way as that there would be a presence, there would be a power, there would be a glory about him that would so overtake their lives that they, that they would be banished from the concept of ever worrying again.

And indeed, after Pentecost, they were there for the most part seemed to be freed from this. They worried before, uh, and they had their trials before and they've had a lot of anxieties and things, but they seem to really be ended when they realized the risen Lord and one of his great commitments to say, I have a responsibility for these things. I assume it, I'm taking it.

I want it. Don't be anxious. You've got to, you know, come to that place that I believe is what he's wanting to teach them.

He realizes that anxiety is going to cripple their capacity to serve him. His anxiety can manipulate him down and reduce them to ashes. It can completely thwart their life.

It can cause them to go in entirely different places and in different ways. And as far as the Lord's concerned, he's wanting to took it there to look at their lives and give them the tremendous task of serving the kingdom of heaven. Give them the tremendous task and office of, of Christian missionary, of Christian servant and send them out with a great and glorious eternal task to do.

And he doesn't want to be worried about how it's going to happen, how things are going to be taken care of. I suppose just as much as when recently our president called our country into war, there's something, there was a task that he called the country into, but as much as he was putting out the task, the tools to do the task were all there. They were all sent ahead.

No soldier had to pack his lunches for a, you know, we might be there a long time, take a lot of salami, you know, or something there and pack it in your bags. And you have to worry about, well, you know, where are we going to sleep tomorrow night? How are we going to be fed? What is going to happen? That is something there that a commander in chief of an army, he's got to sit there and say, listen, your job is to do your job. And I want you to focus on that every day.

And don't worry. I don't want you to be out there in the battlefield. I don't want you to be out there doing the issues of life.

And at the same time, while you're trying to deal with the enemy that you're sitting there thinking, man, where are we going to eat lunch? You know, or something about where you're looking. I don't know, you know, where were you eating? I don't know. I haven't seen a burger King and 50 miles, you know, or where you're worrying about that.

It's something there that just as much as our human soldiers went over there with virtually nothing, but you know, not in a meal ahead, not a meal ticket ahead, didn't have a checkbook, didn't have a, you know, with them, a credit card. They, they knew the moment they left that there was somebody that not only gave them a task, but he would provide every tool and not one of them to was worried to do was to worry about how they have their next meal. And, uh, and the same thing to me, as far as the Lord, when he looks at you and I, and he calls us into the task of being his servants, whether he calls you to be a husband or he calls you to be a wife or as a parent or as a servant of his or whatever it is that he has for you, he wants our focus of our life to be on that.

He says, I'll take care of the grub. I'll take care of what we need when we need it. I want you to seek the kingdom.

I want you to be relieved of all these things that everybody else without a father, without a God has got to worry about every day. They've got to look at each other all day long in the middle of the battle. They're trying to fight and look at that.

Where are we going to eat? They don't have anybody that's ahead of them planning these things out, but you do. Your heavenly father knows you have need of these things. And the tragic thing that happens when people allow worry to take over their life, when they fear what may happen tomorrow, and uh, it, but how much it is that we just need to come to that place.

You're Jesus saying, that's my job. Don't ever worry about it. Don't ever be anxious about it again.

And I suppose one of the other great tragedies that happens when anxiety gets in, when I'm not really seeing the sufficiency, the all sufficiency of my, my Lord and my savior, who, when he said it is finished, it's finished. And uh, and somebody that the work of redemption, the work of salvation, the work of intercession, the work of all of the work is done now for the rest is just to serve and to, and to, to care and intercede and to do this wonderful service and ministry. But there, as he looks at us to say, just trust me to do these things.

We know all about it. And I suppose one of the great tragedies that when worry does get in, service goes out, joy goes out, communion goes out. Seems most everything.

That's why I say, I think, as I was thinking about it today, I think anxiety is a, such a thief. It immediately, it saps the heart of its joy. It just rings it out and then this peace begins to go.

The, as soon as this, I have to take responsibility for my, from my own life. Trust goes, hope goes, peace goes, communion with God goes. Now it sets us up, you know, for, for essentially walking away from what is best, what God's plan is, what his call is upon our life.

And it sets us off in another direction. And the simple mechanism that seems to sometimes divert a whole life away is worry. It's a powerful anxiety is a terrible thing.

And look at somebody like David, this wonderful man that, I mean, God raised him up and he seems like the man had, he was fearless. He could look at Goliath and not even flinch. He could look at, you know, this, this warrior from David's youth, this vintage warrior, this huge man there who had, who knows how many men's hearts he had brought to failure.

Who knows how many he had reduced to nothing by his very sight of him. Who knows how many had been brought and crippled in fear because of him. An entire army, all of the children of Israel, one man, Goliath walks out at all of them are afraid for 40 days.

David comes right into it. He goes God's plan, God's will, God's servant. And he ends up, he goes out and when he's in and he's trusting and he's depending and nothing, nobody, anything could stand before him any day.

He went out and he didn't care where he went. Whether it was the, you know, the Amalekites, the Hittites, Jebusites, Jesurites, Moabites, Edomites, termites. He wasn't afraid of anything.

He just went and he could look at a nation. Moab is my washpot, over Edom I cast out my shoe. Somebody there who just fearlessly went and just had victory after victory until even they came back and they're singing about him.

Saul has killed his thousands and David has tens of thousands. But one day he's out and he's been, Saul has been chasing after him. And it tells us there in Samuel, it says, you know, one day David thinks, he says, you know, now one day I will perish at the hand of Saul.

There are nothing better for me than I leave the land of Israel. I'm going to go down to the land of the Philistines and then Saul will cease from chasing after me. Anxiety got to him.

He worried. He said, you know, sooner or later, he takes his eyes off of God, off of the community. And the next thing, a worry happens and communion is gone.

Power is gone. Peace is gone. Sufficiency is gone.

He's left all of a sudden to himself. And he looks around as if to say, who do I think I am? I don't stand a chance. Sooner or later, he's going to get me.

And anxiety cripples him to the degree that for almost a year and a half, he ends up going down to the land of the Philistines. And sure enough, Saul did cease from chasing after him. But he gets down there

out of God's will, starts running his own life, doing his own thing, going out here, you know, lying, you know, joining up, identifying with the Philistines.

And then finally one day the Philistines are literally coming to go to battle against Israel. And well, he's been down there with the Philistines for such a long time. He's so identified with them that then when he comes to join the battle, literally now it appears we'll never know what the plan, what he was really going to do.

But he's joining up with the Philistines to come fight against Israel, his own people, his own nation. He's about to join the fight. And then the Philistines, the princes of the Philistines, they look and they said, wait a minute, isn't that guy David? You know, that can't be David.

I mean, that's the guy that they sing of him in his thousands and his great victory. And he said, yeah, but, but the, you know, King Achish speaks up for him and he says, yes, but let me tell you, this guy's so backslidden, he's one of us. Believe me, he's, he's no good for God nor man.

And he's part of us now. And they said, we don't trust him. Get him out of here.

And here, literally all of a sudden, David, now the Philistines reject him. Were he brought his life to the place where he was no good for God nor man, nobody, he had been reduced to absolute nothing. And then by the time he goes back to Zigglag, they get back there and the Amalekites had come while David is now over here, lining up with his men.

They came, took all their wives, their children, and, and, and all their goods and destroyed the city and burned it with fire. And it says the men came and then they looked around the city. Now with the smoke coming up, everything they ever had in life is absolutely gone.

And it says they wept until they had no more power to weep. If you ever wept like that, you ever wept until the only reason you stopped was you just couldn't cry anymore. Well, they wept until they had no more power to, to, to weep.

And then it says that they spoke of stoning David. They looked at David, this once master of life, this man is presence and dominance of fearlessness. And yet now he's reduced to, to, to ashes there and there.

Now they're looking at him and say, look what's happened. It all happened because worry took over his life. Goes on wonderfully to tell us that David encouraged himself in the Lord.

And he asked the Lord, you know, will you forgive me? And, and will you restore me? And he said, not only that, he says, you go after the Amalekites, you'll restore everything. And they did. But yet for a year and a half of his life, it was completely mid redirected by worry, anxiety.

What a terrible thing. How many people they look at a situation, don't know how they're going to make it through tomorrow. They're, you know, they're, they're anxious for, you know, what they're going to eat or what they're going to wear with all they'll be clothed or whatever it is that's going on.

Where are we going to get a roof over our head? And they'll do the most ridiculous things. Worry. Abraham, God calls him in.

Abraham goes out in this wonderful step of faith, leaves her of Chaldees, takes his wife, his nephew lot, all of his servants come down into this land, not knowing whether he went trusting God by faith. He gets him

down there to a Canaan, takes him out. And he says, Abraham, look at this.

He says, because you follow me and because you trust me, he says, I'll tell you, I'm going to bless you. Like no one's ever been blessed. You're going to, your descendants are going to be like the stars of the sky, like the sands of the sea.

You look to the north, south, east, and west. It's all yours. And then I've given them to you and your seat after the, after you and whoever blesses you, I'll bless them.

Whoever curses you, I'll curse them. I'm your God. And I'm going to take care of you.

Abraham looks around the next verse. It says, if he explains it, there's a famine in the land and Abraham, just the word famine. He goes down to Egypt.

Thank you very much. Great idea. God, I'll be back for this later.

This is a wonderful thing you've got. I don't want to miss this, but obviously it's not looking too good for tomorrow. I don't know.

I'm going to eat down to Egypt. He goes, worry, worry. And then of course worry breeds more worry.

He, on his way down to Egypt, he looks over at his wife, Sarah, and who's 65 years old, but she must've been one good looking lady because he says, you know something, honey, you know, Pharaoh, these Pharaohs, they got this way. They, they, they like pretty women and you're pretty, pretty. And so here's the deal.

If, if we go down there and I'm your husband, he'll probably kill me if he wants you. So I'll tell you what, sweetie, darling, honey, lubberkins, here's the deal. When we get down there, if he does take a liking to you, how about just saying that I'm your brother? And, uh, Sarah probably looked over.

Hello. You know, I mean, look where it is. Who's in there, you know, or something.

And, but they get down there. I mean, now he's really worried. Worry breeds more worry.

He gets down there and sure enough, Pharaoh looks and he says, you got a pretty woman. He asked my sister. Oh, really? Well, I'd like her.

Well, really? Yeah. And he said, Oh yeah. I'll give you all sorts of oxen and camel and sheep, men's servants, maidservants, all sorts of stuff.

Nice dowry for Abraham takes it. Can you imagine him here? Sarah sitting over there and you know, watching, you know, well, sis, you know, uh, have a nice life, you know, or whatever, as he's going off, he leaves, he walks out with all of this stuff. That's what worry, I mean, gets you in and then, and then, and then God intervenes wonderfully and he plagues Pharaoh and, uh, and tells him, don't you dare touch that.

That's that man's wife. He says, you said my sister. He says, yeah, he's got a little lying problem, you know, comes out of worrying too much, you know, and he's running his own thing and he's in trouble, but don't you touch.

And then Abraham probably really worried when now I hear, I don't know what he said to Sarah. It isn't written, but anyway, when they, they probably had quite a little conversation, but the thing is, is worry, anxiety. How am I going to get through the famine through the tough time in all of a sudden, huge, huge things happen in people's lives because we just don't trust God in the daily simple issues of life to realize his sufficiency.

It's astounding with how people, as soon as anxiety, it can reduce a man to a crust. You look at somebody like Elijah. I mean, you're this guy so bold before God, he'd go before 450 prophets of Baal and then another other 400 prophets of Jezebel's 850 prophets.

He chooses them all off to a contest. Let's see whose God's the greatest God. And here's, you know, Elijah, 850 prophets.

And he's, and he takes them all on, you know, the story there in first Kings so wonderfully wipes them all out, mocks them to death, literally just my, I don't know if I'd get out there and just want to mock. And he did, he laughed at him, mocked their God, made him said that most terrible things about him and that she wouldn't really make any self-respecting idolatry, a little upset, but he was fearless. He didn't care.

I mean, if 850 of them stood there in this one man, just spoke boldly in a knit to him and said, and brought him out as what weak and cowards they were in their God was non-existent and reduces them to ashes speaks to the nation. He says, if the Lord be God, follow him. If Baal be God, follow him.

Is that what you want? But he does awesome revelation of God's presence and sufficiency and power and majesty. And then one woman, Jezebel, when she finds out her 850 prophets are dead because Elijah, she's really upset. And she says, I'm going to get you.

And he runs. He forgot, finds him hiding back in the cave on the other side of the country. I, what are you doing here? If you would have been there, you would have run to God.

You know, I don't know what he, but fear, anxiety, it absolutely cripples the soul. And when it hits, it's devastates a life. It brought literally Elijah to the place where then he lied to you.

God tells you, Elijah, he said, Elijah, you get back into the call. We got work to do. Elijah out of his fear, his anxieties, his worry.

He's waiting at God. Hold on. I'm not ready to go yet.

And God wonderfully does miraculous things to reveal himself to him. He still won't go. He says, listen, he says, I'm all you got God.

So you wait until I'm ready. Yeah. It says, well, I happen to have a few thousand that haven't bowed the knee to bail.

Elijah, you're through. We're leaving here and I'm going to show you who's taking your place. You're done.

Worry. It absolutely destroys. It's a powerful thing.

Once it gets in place, the things that it can do to the human heart, the way it can reduce it, it takes our eyes off God, off of his, of his strength, of his sufficiency, of his power. What it seems to be doing these days, you know, do the world, worry, anxiety. You go to an airport.

All you see is anxiety everywhere. You fear all this security, everything. But what's motivated all of this stuff? Anxiety.

Why anybody wanted to fly anywhere? Fear. Why isn't anybody going on vacations to Europe? Fear. You know, the anxieties, you know, of life.

We're afraid of SARS. We're afraid of all sorts of stuff. Everywhere we go, fear.

It's such a powerful, powerful thing. And we listen constantly. You know, the terrorist alert goes up, you know, and the fear begins to heighten.

And we're afraid of everything. Afraid to fly. Afraid of public places.

Afraid of high buildings. Afraid of travel. Afraid of all sorts of things.

And then we're afraid for our children. We're afraid for this anxiety. You hear Jesus, he wants to look and you say, forget it.

I mean, it shouldn't be. Just this morning, well, we were back in Maryland for a pastor's conference back there. A few hours ago, we got on an airplane, a French airplane.

Got into it. It had French mustard and French Avon water. And then the pilot says that he didn't sleep well because of pollen.

Hoped he didn't fall asleep. But you know, we got on the plane and came home fine. We're all alive.

I mean, all the different fears that you can have. Nobody shot the French plane out of the sky, you know, or something. And also, I think one of the reasons I got on, it was free.

But the, a few other things I won't go into as well. But anyway, that I was actually afraid of, but anyway, but had nothing to do with flying. But how so often we're afraid.

And I think one of the most wonderful things that Jesus wants to deal with us in our lives is where to look at every one of us and say, why are you anxious? What are you worried about? You know, I know you. I loved you. I've died for you.

I've carried your sins as far as the East is from the West. I've buried them in the depths of the sea. I've hidden them behind my back.

I've said, behold, I'll remember them no more. I ever lived to make intercession for you. I'll present you fall as I'm coming again for you to conform you into my image, to share heaven with you forever and ever.

I can take care of today just fine. And you know, the, the, the tragic thing is, is that I suppose the greatest aspect though, of, of it that's important in this section to me is that it comes down to verse 33, when they're Jesus, after he says, all right, you've got anxieties, you shouldn't. People are anxious about what they're going to eat and drink and wherewithal they'll be closed in there.

And they're worried about this. You shouldn't, you've got a father, those that don't have to, but you don't. But as he looks at it here, but he turns down and he says in verse 33, he says the alternative to anxiety, the alternative to worry, seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

All these things will be added unto you. I suppose the greatest issue of all here and that I want to close with tonight is the thing is that, that not, not only the Lord is looking there and realizing you got to understand, worry and what it does and how it takes away your joy and your peace takes you away from your task and your service. It'll cripple you as a husband, cripple you as a wife, cripple you as a parent and being able to look at your children and just focus on loving and caring and ministering, leading and guiding.

If behind the scenes you're worried and you're anxious about a whole list of stuff that changes day in and day out that comes and go, but the concept, what are we going to do tomorrow? And all of this, he says, if you're worried, you're going to lose focus. You lose your life, lose your joy, lose your service. And something there that I suppose that, that here is Jesus ultimately in verse 33, when he says, seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

All these things will be added unto you. And you know, to me is Jesus looks there and he says where God really is in your life is the determining factor of this. What do you seek the most in all the world? And I'm convinced, I think that ultimately what you and I think about God is the most determining aspect of our life.

It's the most identifying aspect of who we really are. When I look there and I determine who God is really, who, you know, what he is all about, what does he do? And what I think truly about God has unbelievable ramifications in my life. If God is just somebody up there that just kind of, you know, is, has done a work, died on a cross, got massive, you know, like you and I do maybe massive stuff on our, you know, desk to do, orders to fill, you know, and stuff to do, you know, all this to-do list and responsibilities.

And God is just a, a huge finite or infinite one of us. As weak and as pathetic and as forgetful and as careless as we can be as human beings. And if that's our concept of God, then we're in trouble.

And a lot of people, I think, think that. John Paul Sartre often quoted a philosopher, thought highly of a lot of people. He actually grew up in a church.

And one time he wrote and he said, when he explaining why he left the church, he said, I did not recognize in the fashionable God who was taught me, him who was waiting for my soul, I needed a creator. I was given a big businessman. That was the concept of God that he picked up in church.

He said, I needed a creator. I needed somebody who was almighty. I went to church and I got some glorified chairman of the board who dealt in souls, you know, and, and ran this and did that and had all his projects.

But here the thing is, what do you and I really think about God when I'm seeking him? Is he, is he somebody there that he's just a glorified businessman? Is he an angry judge of sinners that looking to catch up with him? Is he somebody there that's got to be appeased with my deeds and my beads and my prayers and my other things? Or is God somebody that is absolutely in love and absorbed with you? Is he somebody looks at you and he says, I'll die for you and I'll rise for you and I'll live every moment for you for time and eternity. I love you. And I, I care for you deeply.

And when I wake you in, when he's realized there, there's absolute magnificence. When we realize his absolute glory, when we find ourselves being caught up in it. And when we learn there in our concept of God as he is the most glorious, magnificent, magnificent, loving, caring, redeeming, powerful, intelligent, heart, just feel in the words in a sense there, but realize who is God to you? Who is he to me? And here,

Jesus, on one hand, is he just saying, if you will seek him first, if you will seek the kingdom of God first, you'll never be anxious.

You'll never worry. You'll never fear. You'll never have these things to deal with day by day.

And when somebody's concept of God is, we see him in his majesty and we see him in his glory. We see him in his love. We look at the evidence.

You know, as David, Oh Lord, our Lord, how excellent as I am in all the earth, who has set thy glory above the heavens. He says, when I consider the heavens and the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained. When he just looks at all of this and he realizes, God, you are supreme and glorious above and behind and beyond all of creation, beyond even all the cherubs and the seraphim and all the angelic powers of heaven and earth.

You're God and you're loving and you're powerful and you're caring and you're wonderful. And when somebody begins to seek him first, changes our life, changes our life. But the tragic thing is, is that if we, when we do seek him, things are fine.

Abraham, when he would seek him, he was fine. When David sought him, when Elijah sought him, as soon as anybody would get him back in the right place, they were back on track, back on track. But unfortunately, I suppose one of the great tragedies of life to me is in a sense of where, unfortunately, the Lord seems to look at us and he's constantly competing with all of these other things to be first.

He looks at us and I suppose to me, it's like we are sometimes with our own little children. You know, a little child is born. They don't know us.

They don't seem to care much. All they know is mama, food, change me, burp me, walk me, you know, figure out what's wrong with me and fix it, you know, or whatever. And we keep doing it and doing it and doing, hoping one day they open up their eyes, they look straight into our eyes and they realize there's a being that loves them.

But so often we just use all of those things. So we do feed him and burp him and change him and do all these things and do them and do them for one day, hoping that though they keep coming to us and we realize they come to us because why? They need food. They need clothes.

They need, you know, all these things and so they keep coming. But how we hope that someday as a parent they just say, you know, I'd love it if you just love me as a person. All in and of myself.

Sometimes it can take a lifetime, but it's a wonderful thing when finally that child looks and realizes, you know something? You are wonderful. Thanks for all the stuff that you did for all that time, just waiting to be appreciated and to be put first. And amazingly, the Lord looks at us and he feeds us and he closes and he listens to our complaints and he burps us and we, God, where are you? And God, you know, please God, I thought you loved me.

You let me down and, you know, as if he's supposed to come running into the room and pick us up and burp us and okay, I'm here. Are you all right? And he takes care of us year after year, waiting, I believe, for the day that finally something changes and we seek him first. We realize he is more powerful than all of the other forces that threaten all of the other issues that burden our hearts and lives and where we can just come and say, Lord, you be sufficient.

You be first. And the day that he becomes first in our life, we're relieved. Tonight, as we close, I wonder how many of you are anxious.

And that anxiety has got you to where you're just fit to be tight. You don't, it may be with your husband, it may be with your wife, it may be your children, it may be your health, it may be your job, it may be travel, it may be the war in Iraq, it may be, you know, what about this? What about that? But all, but it's somehow or another, it's totally immobilized you as a Christian. You're out of the task of really being the effective Christian, the effective witness, the effective wife or husband or mother or parent or child or worker or employer or employee that you ought to be.

Somebody that just goes wherever it is and you're there on a mission to represent him and to serve him, to take territory for him. Are you going in worrying and your life is thwarted? And when we can come and say, Lord, be first, forgive me. We spend our life, you know, looking for joy and don't realize until maybe it takes us years to realize David said he is my joy.

You want joy. He is it. He just doesn't, it's not a commodity that he just happens to give.

He is the joy he gives. Paul says in Galatians about, he says, he is our peace. We want peace.

Lord, I need peace. Jesus comes. He says, where are you? Okay, Jesus, give me the peace.

Well, I'm here. He is our peace. He doesn't have peace to give.

Like, oh, just a second. Peace, peace with men. Just what pocket did I add that? Sorry, I can't find it.

He is our peace. God, give me love. Give me love.

I need love. And he comes. God is love.

He doesn't have love to give. He just is it. And when I sit there and realize, God, give me yourself, give me yourself, be first.

And then he looks there in one of his greatest joys as he sits upon that throne and we look around and we open our heart and we see him in his majesty and in his glory, in his greatness, in his supremacy, in his power. Everything has to bow. And the next thing you know is, you know, like David, you can get back into the battle.

Like Abraham, you can get back into Canaan and start learning about the land. But when you and I realize, God, free me from worry, free me from anxiety. I want you to be number one.

It's a byproduct. It's a result of letting him be Lord. Let's pray.

Father, we do want to thank you for your word tonight and your the simple truth, Lord, that you look at us. And as you look at your disciples and you gave them a command, literally, don't worry. Don't worry.

Seek me. And Lord, I pray that tonight, maybe some of us, anxiety is almost a part of our life. It's a regular routine.

We live with such a level of anxiety, we don't even know how anxious we are. The fear is always around, the struggles, the burdens. What do we need today? What do we need tomorrow? All right, we got it for tomorrow.

What about next week? And Lord, you look and say sufficient of the day is the evil thereof, that any more than a soldier in Iraq having to run to the head cook and say, now promise me, promise me that you've got food for next week, next month. If we're going to be here a long time, I want to make sure that all the time I got the tasks to do, there's going to be food. We think what a ridiculous thing.

And yet, Lord, is that not how we are? We have the task of living, the task of serving, the job ahead of us. And yet, Lord, you look at us and say, I'll give you every tool you ever need. I'll feed you.

I'll clothe you. It's nothing. I know you have need of these.

And Lord, maybe if we're a little child and we don't really understand our mother, our father's face when they come into room and we're afraid and the issue is just to learn their face, to learn their love, to seek them first. And then as soon as we would see them and know that love, the anxiety must go. And Lord, I pray that you would help us.

Lord, maybe some tonight are just burdened. I just pray, Lord, that right now they'd just be able to look and say, Jesus, take this. It's making me just a worrywart, an anxious woman, pacing, concerned.

Lord, I pray that you would just set people free to be able to go and just find out, OK, Lord, we're not having to worry about whether the delivery truck is showing up with the food. Now, then what's the job you've got? Send me home to be the husband or the wife or the father or the mother or the friend or the employer or the employee that goes in to do the job of the Kingdom. Loving, serving, taking territory for the Kingdom of Heaven.

Lord, help us to truly seek you, your righteousness in Jesus name. Amen.

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