

# Two Priorities in 2013

by Ken Miller

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of looking unto Jesus and laying aside every weight that prevents our souls from rising in order to live a significant life.*

**Duration:** 45:10

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:19-21, Matthew 6:24-34, Luke 12:15, Luke 16:13, John 6:66-69, Hebrews 12:1-3

**Topics:** "Priorities"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the focus is on making a choice between serving God or serving wealth. The speaker emphasizes that there is no middle ground and we must make a decision. The sermon then moves on to discuss two concerns: the needs of the natural life and the importance of using our time wisely. The speaker encourages the audience to think seriously about how they spend their time and to live in a way that redeems it, so that at the end of their lives they can say they have lived a significant life.

---

## Transcript

Grace and peace to all of you in the name of Christ, and it is good to be here, and it is wonderful to be one of you, and I want to say that, I'd like to honestly say I love and appreciate every one of you, and I don't know that there's anything between myself and any one of you, but if you think of something that should be cleared up, I would very much like to know about it. I'd like to stay current, and so for something that should be brought to my attention from either side of the house, front or back, top or bottom, let me know, please. Brother Elmer brought an appropriate message last Sunday on time and eternity and how that Jesus is at the center of time.

Somehow my thoughts were drawn a bit in the same direction this morning, yesterday and this morning, and so I want to talk about two priorities for 2013. A couple of priorities for 2013, and the year stretches out in front of us, and it seems like a long way to the end of the year, and it stretches in front of us, and I did a little calculation. If you spend an average of seven hours a night sleeping, which that's probably below what we should be getting, especially young people and children, but let's say there's an average of seven hours of sleep per night for an adult, then you will have in 2013, you will have 6,205 waking hours.

That is 372,300 minutes that you will have to spend in 2013, and if every second is a moment, then you will have more than 22 million moments in 2013. That's a lot of time. A lot of time.

It's our most precious resource, and we all know what it's like to waste time and how easy it is to waste time. If we spend just half an hour a day doing worthless things, just 30 minutes of spinning our wheels and not using time wisely, we will have wasted 1,800 moments, just half an hour. On the other hand, with that much time on our hands, we should think about how much good we can do with all the time that God has given us.

Think of all the opportunities that you have, all the moments that we have every day to do good and to glorify God, and those are the things we want to think about this morning. What should we do with our time? And the real question is, how should we live with our lives in time so that at the end of 2013, we could say we have lived a significant life? We have spent our time in a significant way. How do we do that? Well, have any of you ever set out on a project? Maybe it's you're writing a document on the computer or something, writing a letter, and you're almost finished with the document and the computer crashes and you lose everything you put into it.

Or maybe it's some other project you're working on, you've worked on something a long time and when you're nearly through, everything falls apart and you have to start all over again. How do you feel when that happens? Is that a good feeling? If you're like I am, I don't like that feeling at all, because isn't it true that when we have worked for a long time and we lose everything, there's a sense of loss, isn't there? And we don't like that feeling. So I'm encouraging us to think seriously about these things, because what would it be like if at the end of 2013, we'd look back and we'd have to say, well, I've kind of wasted this year.

We don't want to do that, would we? Well, what would it be like, and unfortunately, the tragedy is multitudes of people in the world come to the end of their lives and they look back and they have to say, what have I done with my life? It's a waste. What a tragedy that would be. Let's not waste our lives.

And so what are these priorities? Can we live in a way that redeems the time? If so, I'm sure we can. We agree that we can. So what are the priorities? Well, I thought of two great priorities and someone else talking about this could probably come up with a different way of saying it, and that's fine.

But I want to turn to Hebrews chapter 12 verses 1 to 3 to pick out this first priority. Let's read Hebrews chapter 12, 1 through 3, and then I'd like to see if someone could suggest what's on my mind as the first great priority. Hebrews 12, 1 to 3. Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. Who would want to take the risk of suggesting what I have in mind? Looking unto Jesus. Thank you, brother.

Looking unto Jesus. I truly believe that if we miss him, we've missed it all and our lives are wasted. We remember in John chapter six, Jesus had just finished talking to the multitudes and some of the things that he said were very difficult for the multitude to accept.

And it says very sadly there that at the end of that discourse, many of his disciples went back and they walked with him no more. And then that penetrating question that came from Jesus to his disciples, he said, Do you also want to go away? And then we remember Peter's response that still rings down through

the centuries. He said, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

There was no place else for Peter to turn to. And the question for us today is, where else should we go? Who else should we look to? Where else do we get hope? Where else do we get mercy? Where else can we find love? Where else can we find complete and total acceptance? Where can the sinner go for help? Where do we find rest? Is there another place? It's not. There is no other place.

And 2013 is not a sprint. It's not like we get through this in a few moments. It's a marathon and our lives are like a marathon.

We're in for the long race. I've never run a marathon, but I've run shorter races. That's been a pretty long time ago, actually.

And what's what keeps up marathon runner going for 26 miles? What keeps him going in spite of the pain and the searing lungs and sometimes the just the physical agony that it takes to finish a 26 mile marathon? What keeps him going? Is it the scenery along the way or maybe the socializing that he does with people along the way? Well, I think we know what it is. What keeps a marathon runner going is the reference point out ahead, the finish line and the reward, whatever reward there will be, whether it's a personal reward or reward that's given to him. That's what keeps him going.

The finish line. And, you know, I think that for the believer, what keeps the believer going is this. Jesus is at the finish line, isn't he? And he's calling us to faithfulness.

And it seems this is the view that the Hebrew writer is taking about of Jesus at this point. We look unto Jesus as we're in the race, who is the author and finisher of our faith, who himself, for the joy that was set in front of him, endured the cross, despising the shame and has now made it in and he's at the right hand of the throne of God. Now, in chapter six, maybe we should go there in verse 20.

There's a wonderful description of the Savior Hebrews, chapter six, verse 20. It says, I'm breaking in here. Let's start at verse 19, Hebrews 6, 19.

This hope we have as an anchor for this of the soul, both sure and steadfast and which enters the presence behind the veil where the forerunner has entered for us. Even Jesus, having become high priest forever, according to the order of McKissick. Here, Jesus is described as the forerunner.

He was a forerunner, was a scout, an advanced man, the point man, the one who goes ahead of the rest. That was the forerunner. And Jesus is that for us? He has gone the way ahead of us, has run the race ahead of us.

Another thing that I thought about this description I heard of the forerunner. It's the idea of. I understand that this term was used.

It was a nautical term, I understand, used back in ancient Greek Mariner terms, I guess. It used to be that if you're sailing up a narrow river with a sailing vessel, obviously, as the river got narrower and perhaps there are bluffs on either side, you don't have the wind to navigate. And so how are you going to navigate in through a treacherous harbor with no wind to properly guide the boat? So I understand that they had a small boat, which they lowered off the main boat, and it was the forerunner.

And that boat would row in on into the harbor with a rope attached to the main ship. And as it reached the main harbor where the ship was to dock, it either lowered the anchor into the water there or else it tied up to the shore. And there then the men were able to winch the main ship in after the forerunner.

And I really like that because it speaks of an anchor for the soul, both sure and steadfast, which enters the presence behind the veil. That was Jesus. He went out ahead and we have an anchor there to, by faith, so to speak, reach the harbor ourselves one day.

And so whatever you want, whatever picture you want here, the picture of a runner or the picture of a sailboat going into the harbor ahead of us, Jesus has gone the way ahead. And by faith, we look to him and he calls us. He is our high priest now and he's seated at the right hand of the father.

It says so in Hebrews 12 again in verse two, he's the forerunner and he went the way ahead of us, despising the shame, despising endured the cross. And he's now sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. He is the go between between us and the father.

And that is the present reality. That's where he is right now. And many of us, I suppose, we've come into 2013 with burdens on our hearts, wounds and scars from the past.

We're all like that because life is hard. And there's many struggles and many hardships and much pain that we carry. Some of us might be some of us might have so much pain inside that at times we just twist up on the inside.

We hurt so much. There is real pain, tremendous pain from the tremendous losses in this fallen world that we carry. And there's problems in our lives, problems that some of them were our own creation.

Some of the problems that we have aren't our fault, but there's many problems that we face and we get tired, don't we? Sometimes we get depressed and sometimes we get so discouraged that we hardly know which way to turn, don't we? That's the reality of this life. And we remember that life is a marathon and marathons are difficult. And sometimes a marathon runner feels like giving up.

That's just how it is. But my dear friends, in the midst of the present struggle, in the midst of the pain and the suffering and the hardship and the discouragement and the weariness that we face sometimes. In spite of the sin that besets us.

Jesus is at the right hand of the father and he is our advocate. He is our high priest. He is our go between.

And he is the author and finisher of our faith. And he is the forerunner who has gone the way ahead. He's finished the race.

He has made it and he's given us his example. And he's right now at the right hand of the father. And it is his job to make in us complete in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight.

That's his job to do that, to make us complete in every good work, to do his will. Our job is to look to him. Our job is, as verse three says, to consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

Let's be honest about it. Sometimes we do get discouraged, don't we? And we get weary. And we have all these questions and hurts that happen to us because of life and the sinful world in which we live.

But why do we get discouraged? I don't know about you, but I think I get discouraged many times because verse three gets fulfilled in my life. It says, for consider him, Hebrews 12, 3, who endured such hostility. This is New King James, by the way, from sinners against himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

I become weary and discouraged sometimes because I have not considered him who endured such hostility of sinners against himself. And the beauty of communion is when we come together and we break the bread and we share the cup, it helps us remember what it helps us consider what Jesus has done. And that's sometimes why I wish we'd have it more often, because it helps us remember.

It helps us contemplate the work of Christ for us. Do you realize why Jesus had to become like us? Let's go to Hebrews chapter two now. We're talking about Jesus being our forerunner, our high priest now, the one who advocates for us.

He intercedes for us at the right hand of the power of the universe. He is right there by the father's right hand interceding for us. But first, in Hebrews chapter two, let's read 17 and 18.

Part of his ministry of being our high priest meant that he had to become like us. And here's why. Therefore, in all things, he had to be made like his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

For in that, he himself has suffered being tempted. He is able to aid those who are tempted. Do you realize why Jesus had to become one of us? He had to become human like us in order to be a faithful and merciful high priest.

He became one of us in order to be able to minister to us from the right hand of the father. He went through the very life that we are in right now. He suffered the same things that we do only to an infinitely greater degree.

He understands the hurt that we have. He understands the stress and the pressure and the realities of this life. Can we really grasp that there is here is a person.

And I believe that when Jesus went back to heaven, he did not lose his humanity. He is still a God man. And he's a God man, I believe, with scars in his hands and whose eyes are on us.

That's him because he came and he understood that he went through this life with all its suffering. So here in 2013, the present reality is that up in heaven, wherever heaven, heaven's reality is, we have a savior who is our advocate and he is human as we are glorified. I should say not as we are.

He is a glorified human being. But God also, obviously, he is the God man interceding for us at the father's right hand. And we need to take every advantage of this because he promises here in Hebrews chapter two, verse 18, that he himself has suffered because he has suffered himself because of the temptation.

He is able to aid those who are tempted. That's the present reality because he went through this life 2000 years ago. He understands today in 2013 what we are going through.

And I'm sure that it would have been possible for him to somehow understand without having to come into this world. God could have somehow given him that understanding. But perhaps it's for our sakes so that we can know that he understands he came as a historical person and he bore this life and went through it.

And now he is at the right hand of the one who runs the universe and he is able to help us if we look to him. He promised that all who are weary and heavy laden could come to him for rest. He invites us to depend on him more instead of becoming discouraged and weary with life.

And we need to take every advantage of that. And why are we sometimes so slow to take advantage of his intercessory work? I don't know. Probably my own life.

It's just a lack of faith and slothfulness and a low vision. But this is our Christ. This is our Savior presently for us today.

And Paul said in Philippians, he said, and my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. That promise is very definite because it says shall supply. It is all encompassing because Paul said he shall he shall supply all your need.

And this promise has infinite resources behind it because Paul said it's according to his riches in glory. And not only that, but the promise is mediated by our Savior because it's by Jesus Christ. My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

So there's no lack of resources for whatever needs that we face, whatever they are, whatever the hurt is, whatever the problem we face, whatever the struggle we're in, whatever situation we face, whatever stress we're in. There's no shortage of resources is determined only by the shortage of the riches of the glory in Christ Jesus. Think about that.

But we limit ourselves because of our lack of faith. You know what Jesus himself said in John chapter six. I'm sorry, it's in John chapter 14.

I don't think we'll turn there. I'll just try to say what he said. He said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, he who believes in me, the works that I do shall he do also.

What else did he say? Greater works shall he do. I've often tried to understand that. I'm not sure if I still understand what he means by the fact greater works shall he do.

How can anybody do greater works than Jesus? Do you know what the next phrase says? Greater works shall he do because why? Because I go to my father. This is where he is right now. So there's something that he's doing while he is by the father's side.

Do you know what that passage goes on to say? It says, I go to my father. And what's the next verse? It is. And whatsoever you ask in my name, that will I do that the father may be glorified in the son.

If you ask anything in my name, I will do it. That's where he is at the father's right hand. And I believe it's because we are supposed to be his agents in this world.

And Christ is our high priest in heaven mediating for us. And he somehow gives us the resources that we need to carry out his work on Earth today. Christ is Lord of heaven and Earth and his bride.

The church is supposed to be carrying out the work he gave her to do. We have all the resources that we need. And the church spread across the world is doing greater works, I believe, than Christ was able to do while he was limited geographically to the land of Israel in his day of ministry.

And so this is the God that we serve. This is the savior that we serve. What are we waiting on? Our advocate is at the right hand of the father, the one who runs the universe.

And what are we looking at is the question, I guess. In 2013, what are we looking at? Our lives are like a mirror. Our inner lives are like a mirror.

If I am looking at the problems and the stresses and the failures in my life, the sin in my life, and I know we have to give these things attention, their due attention. But if that is the focus of my life, what do you if my life is like a mirror? What do you think is going to be reflected? But now, if we focus our eyes on Christ and his work for us, guess what will be reflected in our lives? But there are some conditions we remember in Hebrews chapter 12. Let's just mention them quickly.

There are some conditions and it talks about laying aside every weight, anything in our lives that prevents our souls from rising. You know, these hot air balloons, when they fill up that balloon and they're ready to take off, they have to cast off ballast. They have to cast off the weight in order for that balloon to rise.

I know I'm mixing metaphors here. This is talking about a race and a runner needs to do the same thing. He needs to throw off any unnecessary weight that slows him down.

And it may not be necessarily anything that's wrong, but the Hebrew writer is telling us if there's anything that that keeps our souls from rising, we should cast it off. And I challenge you to think of one thing in your life right now that is not necessarily wrong, but it doesn't help you to be obedient to God. If you cast that off for the sake of focusing on right priorities, if you cast that thing off, I guarantee it will make a right.

It'll make a difference, a good difference in your life. Of course, we we talk about laying aside the sin which so easily ensnares us. And here it talks.

We have to decisively deal with things like the love of money, covetousness, self-righteous attitudes, gluttony, pride, anger. And of course, impurity, fornication, adultery, slander, all of these things we have to be willing to let go. And but the good news is our savior is looking at us, willing to help us if we only come to him.

And then also another condition is to run with endurance the race that is set before us. And by God's grace, we will make up our minds to run the race with faithfulness in 2013. Another priority.

Let's go to Matthew chapter six in verse thirty three. Matthew chapter six in verse thirty three. The second great priority that I want to mention this morning is in Matthew chapter six in verse thirty three.

It says there many of us could quote this by heart, but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. Jesus here is right in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount and the kingdom is his central theme. Constantly, Jesus is talking about the kingdom and the kingdom of God, we believe simply is the reign of God.

It's the will of God, the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven, as it's often called, is simply the will of God being carried out the Lord's prayer. I will be done on Earth as it is in heaven. That's a good description of the kingdom, the will of God being done on Earth.

It's the reign of God. And we know that man originally was created to administer the kingdom of God. Yeah, I think you could say that because in Genesis, it says, let us, God said, let us make man in our

image, according to our likeness, let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, fowl the air and over the cattle over all the Earth and every creeping thing that creeps upon the Earth.

That was the reign, the realm of God and man was supposed to carry out, was supposed to administrate the kingdom of God as his representative. We, of course, know that sin entered the world and that kingdom got corrupted. But there is a wonderful verse in Exodus chapter 19 after God chose a nation, the nation of Israel to represent his kingdom and to administer his kingdom.

Here is what he said in Exodus 19 about his people. He said about them and you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. He calls his people a kingdom of priests.

And I think that makes it clear that the kingdom of God or man's role in the kingdom of God is to be a mediatory role. God didn't intend to rule the world himself to rule it directly. He wants to rule the world through man, the kingdom of priests.

And of course, man failed. But Jesus, as the God man brought back the kingdom and by giving us the example of his own perfect life. And he gave us the example of perfectly fulfilling the will of God on Earth.

He lived out the kingdom right here among us. And then by his sacrifice on the cross, we know that Jesus overcame the kingdoms of this world. And because he overcame it, so can we.

And we can be set free from the power of darkness and we can be translated into the kingdom of his dear son, as Colossians 1 tells us. And so we're no longer bound by any of the kingdoms of this world. And when Jesus declared, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, that really was the emancipation proclamation for the whole world.

Because Jesus is saying, you can change your life because the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The kingdom of heaven has come to liberate us from the chains of the tyranny that has captured this world. That's what the kingdom of heaven does.

And we can change our lives because the kingdom has come. And Jesus life and teaching give us a very clear picture of what the kingdom is like. And it pretty much runs exactly opposite to the kingdom of this world.

We know it's been called the upside down kingdom, but we know that it's really right side up. Now, if we look back to Matthew chapter six in verse thirty three, if we look at Jesus exhortation to us. Command really the king commands us to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

If we do that and if we continually look to Jesus and make his kingdom our first concern in 2013, I can guarantee that we will not waste our time. If we seek the kingdom and if we look to Jesus, we will not waste our time, even if I'm working at the most menial job, make a minimum wage. If in that job and in that vocation, I'm looking to Jesus and I'm seeking his kingdom.

My life is not wasted. My life is has found its purpose. Well, but there are certain conditions here, too, in seeking the kingdom.

As I studied this passage a little bit and I don't intend to spend a lot of time here, but as I started the passage, I realized that it's in a it's in a context. Obviously, this verse, and if we if we want to seek the kingdom, we have to make certain choices. If you go back to verse 19, there's two verses, three verses 19

through 21.

Jesus is giving a teaching on money and possessions, and I don't intend to give a long discourse on money and possessions here, but it's the context of verse 33. There's essentially four groupings of verses here, four themes in verses 19 to 21. He talks about two treasures.

There's the treasure of earth and the treasure of heaven, and he's telling his disciples, don't lay up treasure on earth, but rather lay it up in heaven. He's not telling us we shouldn't lay up treasure. He's just saying, don't lay it up on earth, lay it up in heaven, he says.

OK, so there's an earthly treasure and a heavenly treasure and we have to make a decision which one we want to invest in. In 22 and 23, there are two visions. One vision is bad, another is good.

And he says, if the vision is bad, if the eye, if the lamp of the body is the eye, if your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if it's bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. I think he's essentially saying that if your vision is good, your life will be good.

If your vision is bad, your life will be bad. And it's in the context of money and possessions. And so if we're looking primarily at money and possessions as the fulfillment of all life, as the focus of our life, our vision will be bad.

But instead, our vision is on the kingdom, laying up treasure in heaven, our vision will be good. And so we have a decision to make there to which sort of vision are we going to pursue? What is our focus? And in verse 24, there are two masters and he says, you're going to have to make your choice. Either you serve God or you're going to serve wealth.

There are no there is no middle ground. He makes it very clear. Either you're going to hate the one and love the other.

Are you going to be loyal to the one and despise the other? No middle ground. So you got to make your choice. Is it going to be God or is it going to be wealth? And then we come in verses 25 to 34, what I've called two concerns.

And we have to make a decision on these matters as well. There are the needs of the natural life that people are worried about. And this read, let's just read twenty five to thirty four.

These natural needs are, therefore, I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body. What you'll put on is not life more than food in the body, more than clothing. Look at the birds of the air for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns.

Yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not more of more value than they? Which of you, by worrying, can add one cubit to stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin.

And yet I say to you that even Solomon and all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now, if God so close the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more close you? Oh, you little faith. Therefore, do not worry saying what should we eat or what should we drink or what should we wear for after all these things the Gentiles seek for your heavenly father knows that you need all these things.

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow. We'll worry about its own things sufficient for the day is its own trouble to concerns which concern is going to be your focus.

The people of the world, those whose minds are set on this earth, their concerns are toward their worries are toward what is it food, drink and what they're going to wear, you know, essentially, I think Jesus is relating to the culture of the day. Essentially, those those people didn't have what we do. They were, you know, they were fortunate to have maybe three, four articles of clothing and one some time ago, I counted articles of clothing in my closet, all the shoes and jackets and everything, socks.

I counted each one. Well, there were well over I don't know, was it 60, 80 pieces? And I don't know how much I have now. It's been some time ago, but these people were very fortunate to have several articles of clothing.

And of course, they didn't have access to cheap clothing. Whatever they had was handmade and it was difficult and they had to take care of it. And obviously, they put a lot of thought about what they're wearing.

And same thing with, I suppose, drinking water, depending where you lived in Israel, being a dry country, you have to be very careful to store up water. And sometimes the water got bad and they didn't know it back then, but people could get sick from drinking bad water. And so what you had to drink was a real concern.

And of course, also what you had to eat, that was a concern, too, especially in times of famine. And it's really hard for us to relate to these things because we really don't have to worry about any of this, do we or do we? You know, I was really thinking about how can I even relate to this? Perhaps we can relate to it if, well, let's let's imagine the Lord's prayer. Give us this day our daily bread.

Does any of us really have to pray that? And I'm wondering the blessing that we're missing, maybe some of us are a little more faithful than I am in actually crying out to God for my daily sustenance. But there's so much plenty on every hand. We hardly have to depend on God.

You see what I'm saying? Unless unless we make ourselves voluntarily poor and we begin to depend on God more, I really don't know what that would be like. But I suppose it would be a good thing to do if we'd have the faith to do it. But now for us, perhaps it is possible for us to be concerned about some of these things, what we are going to eat or what we're going to wear, what we're going to drink.

And perhaps if let's say if Jesus would come to my wardrobe and would open up the doors of my closet and would look in there. Would he say, I am concerned about clothing, what I'm going to wear, or would he say, oh, here's a brother or sister who really is living according to the kingdom? He's not giving concern to things that don't need concern. Or Jesus would come and sit down at my meal table today or yours or sometime he would come and sit there and he'd look at the food that is prepared there.

What would he say about what the kind of what would he say about the food that I eat? Is it is it reflecting this kind of spirit? Those are all questions we can ask ourselves. I'm not intending to condemn anybody with that, but these are these are the things that he taught and he said those things shouldn't be our concerns. We shouldn't worry about those things.

He says your concern, your first priority ought to be the kingdom of God. And then everything will fall into its proper place. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added

unto you.

And I can't say what that means for you. I'm not even sure if I can say what that means for me, but we have to seek him and we have to seek his kingdom. And then Jesus will help us understand what all should be sorted out and he will help us understand.

He will help us to be honest with ourselves. He will help us discern where our priorities really are. Is it on stuff or is it on his kingdom, food, drink and clothing? That's what Jesus promised, if we seek first the kingdom, he didn't promise all this other stuff, he said, if you seek first the kingdom, all these things, what are those things in the previous part of the passage, food, drink, clothing will be taken care of.

Our basic needs will be met if we seek first the king. We might not live a luxurious life, we might not have wealth, but our needs will be provided. That's what he promises.

And that's enough, because those who have the kingdom have it all. Now, I was trying to think of a couple of illustrations that would be pertinent to our day, stories that would reflect. Somebody that has chosen to put the kingdom first.

People that we know, so what I thought of was Pablo Yoder, I just finished his book, *The Price*, if you have a chance to read that book, it's well worth it. I couldn't put it down and in that book, he recounts some of the robber stories and I remember an account where one of the robbers got a hold of a backpack and he stuffed the backpack full of Pablo Yoder's possessions. While the family was laying there on the floor, you know, just in fear, trusting God, I'm sure, but they were under this terrible stress.

And here this man was stuffing his backpack full of their possessions. And before he left, Brother Pablo brought, I think it was a cheese, very precious cheese that they had made themselves and put it on top and sort of tucked it in lovingly and said, Here, this is for you because we love you. And as the robber left, said, God bless you.

And those words kept ringing in that man's mind. He couldn't forget them and he couldn't forget the act of sacrifice that this man had done. That is living out the kingdom.

First of all, they didn't retaliate. They didn't fight back. They didn't defend themselves.

And then toward those that did harm to them, they responded in love. They did good to those who treated them wrong, just like Jesus taught. And so I'm very blessed by that example and many others.

And then there there was something that happened more recently that I thought of this morning. I was very privileged to be part of that person or persons who decided to act according to Jesus' kingdom. Here was a party that had been harmed.

Someone had been harmed, badly harmed by someone else. And the grace of God was at work and that party was eventually led to respond in love by giving a very thoughtful gift to this offender. And I was there soon after that offender had opened the gift and you should have seen the glow in that individual's face.

I believe it was the glow of the kingdom of heaven that had been given in this act of love by people who had decided to put the kingdom first, to put their own hurts in the background. And to respond as Jesus would respond in an act of love. So I'm thankful for these examples that we have to follow and many others that I see all around me.

And so we have a decision to make. Shall we look to Jesus and shall we seek first his kingdom? Let's pray. Let's kneel in prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank you. We came into this world much more being justified by righteousness. Thank you that he's the author and the finisher of our lives and how we should live it through Christ Jesus.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24691.mp3>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ken-miller/two-priorities-in-2013/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**