

Practical Issues of Kingdom Living - Part 1

by Stephen Kaung

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding our position in the kingdom of God and living out its principles through daily communion with God and practical righteousness.

Duration: 1:19:15

Scripture: Isaiah 64:6, Matthew 6:1-33, John 3:16, Acts 6:1-7, Hebrews 13:15

Topics: "Kingdom Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the difference in attitude towards eating, drinking, and dressing between believers and the world. The two keywords highlighted are 'serve' and 'seek.' The preacher emphasizes that believers cannot serve both God and mammon, and encourages them to prioritize serving God. He also mentions the importance of seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness first, and assures believers that if they do so, all their needs will be provided for. The preacher acknowledges that believers still need to work and make a living in this world, but advises them to be wise with their earnings, save, and give generously.

Transcript

Into Matthew chapter six, we'll just read a few verses from that chapter. Matthew chapter six, verse one, take heed not to do your arms before men to be seen of men, otherwise ye have your reward with your Father who is in the heavens. Now the better manuscript, the word arms should be righteousness.

So let's read it again. Take heed not to do your righteousness before men to be seen of them, otherwise ye have no reward with your Father who is in the heavens. Verse twenty-four, no one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one or will love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other.

Ye cannot serve God and mammoths. Verse thirty-three, but seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Shall we pray? Lord, our hearts do rejoice in Thy presence.

We do thank Thee for what Thou hast done among the children. We do thank Thee for giving us a spirit of praise because Thou art worthy. And we thank Thee for gathering us together tonight to look into Thy Word.

Lord, we do ask that Thy Holy Spirit will breathe upon Thy Word and quicken Thy Word to our hearts, that we may not just hear with our outward ear, but we may really hear it with our inward ear. Lord, we do look to Thee to make Thy Word real, living, active, practical to our daily lives, that Thou mayst be glorified. So we just commit Thy Word back into Thy hand and ask Thee to break it to us in the name of our Lord Jesus.

We were together last night, and we mentioned that the burden for these two evenings is how to live in the kingdom of God today. We realize that when the Lord saves us, He has delivered us out of the authority of darkness. And has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of God's love.

In other words, when we believe in the Lord Jesus, it was more than just a matter of having our sins forgiven, which is great. More than a matter of having the assurance that one day we will be in heaven, and that is great. But, when we believe in the Lord Jesus, He has done something even greater.

And that is, He has delivered us out of the authority of darkness. In other words, before we believe in the Lord Jesus, we belong to the kingdom of this world. And the ruler of this world is Satan, the adversary, the enemy of God.

And he used darkness to rule over this world. And we are under that authority. We are under that rule.

But thank God, when we believe in the Lord Jesus, He has delivered us out of the authority of darkness. So we are no longer of this world. We are no longer under the authority of darkness.

And He has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. Now that is something already done. Do not think that it is something to be done in the future.

Just like some people think that eternal life is something for the future and not for today. But we must remember, it has said that He has delivered us. It is something that is already done.

And He has translated us out and into a new kingdom. The kingdom of God's Son. The kingdom of the beloved Son of God.

So brothers and sisters, we need to understand where we are today. We are today no longer in the kingdom of darkness. Even though we still live in this world.

But we are not of this world. We today belong to the kingdom of God. To the kingdom of God's Son.

The kingdom of love. That's where we belong. And that's where we are today.

So I think first of all we need to underline it. We need to reinforce it. We need to make it so sure and firm in our conviction.

That this is something that God has already done. In Christ Jesus. We are today in the kingdom of God.

In the kingdom of the heavens. That's where we are today. This is our position.

And if we are clear on this. Then our question will be. Since He has translated us into the kingdom of His own.

And that's where we are. Now we need to learn how to live in that kingdom. To be in the kingdom is one thing.

To live in that kingdom is another thing. We can be in the kingdom and yet we really are not of the kingdom. Why? Because we do not live there.

Our life seems to be still living in that old kingdom. Instead of really living in this new kingdom that we are in today. So that is our burden for this time.

How to live in the kingdom of God today? Now we know that one day. The kingdom of God shall be publicly manifested upon this earth. And we are all looking forward to that day.

But before that day comes. So far as we are concerned. The kingdom has already come.

And we are already in that kingdom. So we shouldn't wait until in the future days. To learn how to live in that kingdom.

We need to learn right now. Today. How to live in that kingdom? We mentioned last night.

That this kingdom of the heavens is so different. From the kingdom of this world. It is heavenly.

It is spiritual. And it manifests the character of God. It expresses the very character of our Lord Jesus.

And for us to live in that kingdom. We need to have that character built up. And developed.

And manifested in our daily lives. But this in a sense. Is impossible with man.

So when you read the Sermon on the Mount. Now if we are honest. When we read it.

Probably our first reaction will be. Well I will try. I will do it.

But. Maybe the second thought. Or maybe after you have tried for some time.

You discover that. The requirement of that kingdom is so high. The standard is so high.

That it is impossible with man. Not only it is impossible with you. But it is impossible to all men.

No matter who he is. And you begin to realize. The only one that can live such a life.

Of the kingdom. And the only one that has manifested. Is our Lord Jesus.

When he was on earth. He lived in that kingdom. And he was that kingdom.

The character of God was fully manifested in him. And he lived in absolute obedience. To the Father.

So now we come to see the secret. Of living in the kingdom of God today. And the secret is.

Not I. If we try to live in that kingdom. By our own life. You find it is impossible.

No man can do that. But if we realize. That it is the life.

Of Christ. That is in us. And he is going to relive as it were.

His life. In each one of us. And if we allow him to live in us.

The result is. We are living in the kingdom now. So.

We will not be able to go back. And cover the whole ground. But that is what we cover last night.

Now this evening we would like to. Go a step further. And that is.

We have known the secret now. It is the kingdom life. That enables us to live in that kingdom.

And we must allow that life to live through us. Now the way of allowing that life to live out through us. Is through the cross.

We have to learn to deny ourselves. To take up the cross. And follow the Lord.

And learn of him. And that is where his character is built. Up within us.

Now this evening we would like to say. Now we know we have that kingdom life in us. Now how are we going.

To have that kingdom living. Because. Even though the Lord has delivered us out of this world.

And last night we mentioned that. We are in a colony. A heavenly colony upon this earth.

And in that colony. The rule is heavenly rule. And everything in that colony is heavenly.

Now if we want to use another term. We can say that. That is what the church is.

What is the church? The church is the heavenly colonies upon this earth. Here and there you will find those who are called out of this world. Gathered together unto the name of our Lord Jesus.

That is under the authority of God's son. Now here you will find a colony. A heavenly colony upon this dirty earth.

So that is what the church is. And in the church you will find. The rule is not the rule of this earth.

It is heaven that rules upon. And our lifestyle is not following the fashion of this world. But our lifestyle is according to heaven.

So in the church you will find that. Everything is according to the kingdom of the heavens. That is what the church is.

But the church is upon this earth. So in the church. Probably you can say.

Well in the church we learn to love one another. In the church we try to do everything according to God. But physically we are still in this world.

Our environment hasn't changed. This world is as corrupt as it ever be. And probably it is more corrupted.

And you will find the pressure upon us even is greater than probably in the first century. Now thank God one day even our circumstances, our environment will change. That is when our Lord Jesus shall come back.

And he shall establish his kingdom publicly upon this earth. Now when that day comes you will find that even our environment is completely changed. Because when you read the phrase Isaiah.

You will find that in that time you will find that the lion will eat grass as the ox. And you will find that children can play as the whole of the serpent. And nothing in the holy mountain hurt anybody.

You know because the knowledge of the Lord fills the earth as waters fills the sea. And at that time everything is changed. But today our environment, what surrounds us hasn't changed.

We are in the kingdom. But this kingdom is upon this earth. So in other words here you will find we need to live the kingdom living today in this environment.

Now the word of God is not only spiritual it is practical. It is not theological or theoretical. It is real and practical even today.

So when you turn to Matthew chapter 6. You will find that whole chapter deals with our practical daily living. How do we live our kingdom life in our common day living? Now in a sense you will find that our life upon this earth is composed of two different areas. One is what we will call the devotional aspect of our life.

Maybe we say well that's the spiritual side. And the other side is the mundane everyday secular what we call the secular aspect of our life. Now as a matter of fact you know with a believer there is nothing spiritual or secular.

There is no such difference. And you will find that these two sides actually affect each other. And they are just part of one whole.

But anyway for the sake of convenience you will find that when we live as believers as people in the kingdom of God. We really have these two areas two aspects of life. One is devotional we call it our spiritual life.

And the other is mundane the secular side of our living. Now that's what you find in chapter 6 of Matthew. Matthew from chapter 1 I mean from chapter 6 verse 1 to verse 18 deals with our devotional side.

And from 19 to the end that is 34 it deals with the mundane the secular side of our life. But before we enter into these two sides I think there is an overall governing principle that we have to understand first. And that is in order to live kingdom living today we have to live in the presence of God our father.

We say that we live that life we live because we have that kingdom life in us. Thank God for that it already there. But for that kingdom life to really in a practical sense to live out today you really need to be in the presence of God our father.

Because this life is nourished and is supported, sustained, maintained, encouraged, strengthened only in the presence of our father. Or to put it in another way unless we are in daily communion with God our father we will not be able to maintain a kingdom living today. In spite of the fact that we already have that kingdom life in us.

You know so in order to live that kind of living brothers and sisters there is a fundamental principle which is basic but is something that sometimes we forget because it is too elementary it is too basic. And that is daily we have to maintain an uninterrupted communion with God our father. Look at our Lord Jesus when he was on earth how did he live that kingdom living? You find that in the life of our Lord Jesus there is an uninterrupted communication, communion between him and the father.

There was not a moment you find that communication was cut. You find that his whole life on earth was governed by one principle and that is the pleasure of his father. His life was very simple he lived for the will of God.

Lord I come to do thy will and all he asked is does it please the father and that is kingdom living. He did not think of himself he did not think of what the world would think of him but all that he was thinking was does it please the father. If it pleases the father for him to go to the cross there he will go.

If it pleases the father to drink that bitter cup he will drink it. He will drink it not because it is a bitter cup but because it is the will of the father. It pleases the father.

So here you will find the whole life of our Lord Jesus is in uninterrupted communion with his father. That communing was broken only for a short time on the cross. And in a sense you know that hurt him most.

Because when he was crucified on the cross from the nine o'clock to twelve o'clock that three hours. To us it was a most difficult time. Why because there he was crucified rejected by man.

He was mocked by the people. And the kingdom of darkness was surrounding him and trying to devour him. And he suffered physically he suffered mentally.

And he suffered to such a degree but you find during that three hours he was able to pray. Father forgive them for they know not what they do. He was able to commit his mother to John.

He was able to tell that robber that he will be with him today in paradise. He was not thinking of himself. I mean the suffering was tremendous but there was strength.

Why because his communion with the father was uninterrupted during that three hours. But when he came to twelve o'clock and then you find the sun was darkened. It was a sign that during that time starting from that point until his death.

For that three hours he was separated from the father. So his cry was not father but say my God my God why has thou forsaken me. In other words during that three hours he was made the sin offering of this world.

He who knew no sin was made sin for us. And because he was made sin for us therefore God being the righteous God. He had to turn away from his beloved son.

In a sense in Isaiah 53 you find it was God the father who crushed him. It was the father's hand not man's hand not Satan's hand. But it was the hand of the father that crushed him.

Why because he offered himself to be the sin offering. That was the taste of eternal death. So in a sense our Lord Jesus tasted eternal death for every one of us.

Separation from God is eternal death. But thank God when the work was done he said it is finished. Then he commit his spirit to his father.

The communion was restored. So you find that during the life of our Lord Jesus how is it that he was able to live that kingdom living. In whatever circumstances he may be in.

Under whatever condition he might be in. You find he was able to live the kingdom living. It is because not only he was the son of God.

But also there was that uninterrupted communion. So brothers and sisters we have to come back to the basics. You know sometimes we think well we believe in the Lord Jesus.

And even some people began to see the co-crucifixion with Christ. That we were crucified with Christ. And we thought well now everything is alright.

We are able to live that kingdom living from now. But brothers and sisters unless we abide in him. We make our home in him.

Continually be in him. And he abide in us. We have no strength.

We cannot bear fruit. So the important principle here is we have to be always in the presence of God. Never for a moment go away from that presence.

Now it is true. Sometimes so far as our feeling is concerned we may not sense the presence of the Lord. And that is where we need to exercise faith.

Because we live by faith not by sight. But on the other hand you will find that sometimes there are things that come into our lives. That interrupt that communion.

And we know it. And we need to immediately confess. And let the blood of the Lord Jesus cleanse us.

That our communion fellowship with the Father may be restored. And I think that is most basic. It is a daily thing.

And we cannot afford to be forgetful of that. Now having said that. Then we can come into this practical kingdom living upon this earth.

You know chapter 6 verse 1 actually is an introduction. It is an introduction word to what follows. Up to verse 18.

The Lord said now take heed not to do your righteousness before man. To be seen of them. Otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in the heavens.

So you find that the Father. The consciousness of being in the presence of God the Father is always there. Now if it is there.

Then you find you will not try to live before man. But you live before God. So he said now take heed not to do your righteousness.

Now the righteousness here is not Christ our righteousness. You know we had no righteousness of our own. And our righteousness were as filthy rags.

You know just like the leaves. The thick leaves that Adam and Eve put upon them. You know they thought they were covered.

But you find the weather changed. And there was a cold wind coming. And when it blows you know it does not cover at all.

So when the Lord came into the garden Adam said we were naked. And that is true. We had no righteousness of our own.

We thought we were righteous but our righteousness were as filthy rags. But when we come to the Lord Jesus. God put upon us the best robe.

When the prodigal returned. That rags were taken off. And he was put on the best robe.

Now what is that best robe? That best robe is Christ our righteousness. God clothes us with Christ. And because of that when God look at us.

He sees Christ and not us. And that is the reason why we are justified before him. As if we have never sinned.

But the righteousness here is not that. Because he said do your righteousness. Now we already mentioned we cannot be righteous.

We cannot do anything right before God. But here you finally said do your righteousness. Now after we are saved.

After we have Christ as our righteousness. Then the Lord said you need to do your righteousness. In other words the righteousness here is practical righteousness.

How are we to do righteously before God every day? And do you know that? To do that kind of righteousness. Is to put on our wedding garment. You know we have to wear a lot of garments.

Christ our righteousness is the first garment. You know. But if you read Psalm 45 you will find that.

The Queen is dressed with a golden garment. But over it is an embroidery. That's the wedding garment.

The golden garment speaks of Christ our righteousness. It's all gold. But over above it there is an embroidered garment.

And embroidered garment speaks of how the Holy Spirit. Who is so patient like an embroiderer. He is using stitches after stitches to build into us the character of Christ.

It's a tedious work. But He is so patient. And because the life is already there.

Now without a life He has no ground to work upon. But with the life of Christ in us. Now the Holy Spirit comes and begins to stitch Christ into our life.

You know. And this is to do right. Outwardly we are doing righteousness.

But actually it is the Holy Spirit who is building out the character of Christ within us. So it is really Christ Himself and not us. But we cooperate.

We allow Him to do it. We allow that life to be manifested in righteousness. And this kind of righteousness is character building.

And that is the wedding garment of the bride. That you find in Revelation chapter 19. The bride has made herself ready.

And He was given that bright, shiny, white robe. Linen. Made of linen.

Which is the righteousness of the saints. It is considered as the righteousness of the saints. But of course we know.

It is Christ being formed in us. So this is what it means here. And that is the righteousness that you find in 1 John.

It says, you know, God is righteous. Therefore we have to be righteous. You know.

It is practical righteousness. Now how are we going to have that kind of righteousness? And again you find that. The Pharisees and the scribes, they have their righteousness.

But our righteousness must surpass the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees. So the scribes and the Pharisees, they have their devotional life. They do.

And their devotional lives are threefold. Number one is almsgiving. They give.

They give alms. That is part of their devotional life. And number two is prayer.

They practice prayer. And number three, they fast. Now these three things are the devotional life of the scribes and the Pharisees.

But how do they practice this righteousness? They give alms. But they give alms to be seen. So the Bible says, now do not blow a trumpet, you know, when you give alms.

Now some people actually try to interpret in a little way and say that is what they did in the old days. When a scribe or Pharisee is going to give alms, they blow the trumpet so the poor will come, you know, and then the alms will be given. So everybody will see.

And everybody knows who is doing this good work. And you receive all the praises from man. So the Lord said, now, don't do it that way.

Because if you don't do it that way, you receive reward from man. You know, devotional life is between you and the Lord. Devotional life is not to be seen by people, purposely, in order to be praised by man.

Devotional life is your secret life with the Lord. It is the hidden life with the Lord. And it is for the Lord to know.

It is for the Lord to see. And when He sees it, He will reward you. Now see, doing righteousness will be rewarded.

And the reward, of course, we know, is the kingdom. In the Millennium Kingdom, you will rule and reign with Christ for a thousand years. That's the reward.

And other people say, well, this is symbolic. It is really not literally blow the trumpet. And there is another interpretation saying that blow the trumpet actually was the offering box in the tabernacle, in the temple, in the chamber of the woman, actually has the shape like a trumpet.

So when they drop their offering in, they make such a noise, you know. So everybody knows that who is giving and how much is being given. You remember our Lord was watching there, you know, and probably

they will leave it very high so the drop will be, make a bit of noise, you know, to be seen by men.

And the Lord said, well, the poor widow, she came in and sinfully, because she had nothing to give and just two pennies, and she probably stealing and drop it very quietly. And the Lord said, well, she gave more than everybody else. So the Lord said that when you give, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

Now, to be literal, I think it's impossible. How can you do something with your right hand and your left hand doesn't know about it? Well, if it is possible, thank God for that. But it doesn't seem so possible.

So probably, it is a spiritual meaning. In other words, when you are going to give now, do not deliberate so long and struggle over it so long. And after a long time, you know, you reluctantly and unwillingly just give.

And when you are doing that, everybody knows you are giving. In other words, when you give, give it secretly, willingly, before the Lord. Why? Because this is what God is.

Our God is the greatest divine. He gave to such a degree that He gave His only begotten Son. He gave His best, He gave His all.

And He gave willingly, voluntarily and generously. And He gave without asking, demanding for something. He gave out of His love for us.

Now, that is the kingdom character. And that is the character of our Lord Jesus. He came willingly to this earth.

No man can take away His life. He laid down Himself for our sake. And He gave His all for us.

That is what He is. So, we who are the Lord's, He wants us to be like Him. And giving is part of our devotional life.

And He wants us to give willingly, liberally and voluntarily. You know, in the early church, giving is part of their devotion. You remember in the church in Jerusalem? That there are many widows there? And how they took care of these widows? And you remember that when Paul and Barnabas came to Jerusalem? And the pillars of the church in Jerusalem, John, James and Peter? You know, they had the right hand of fellowship.

And said, now you go to the uncircumcised and we go to the circumcised. You know, but one thing we want to remember, that is remember the poor. And Paul said, that's what we have been doing.

And you'll find how the Gentile churches? They gathered money to help the poor in Jerusalem and in Judea when there was a famine there. So in other words, you'll find in the early church, giving is part of their devotional life. And if you read Hebrews chapter 13, you'll find that in Hebrews chapter 13, in verse 15 it said, By Him that is by our Lord, therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is the fruit of the lips confessing His name.

And we have been doing that, the sacrifice of praise. You know, but immediately following it, it said there is another sacrifice. But of doing good and communicating of your substance, be not forgetful.

So a sacrifice that pleases the Lord. So, giving in the scripture, you'll find that it is part of our devotional life. Freely given and freely give.

That is the principle of the kingdom. We cannot be receiving all the time and keeping everything and not to give. That is not the kingdom character.

So if you read 2nd Corinthians chapter 8 and chapter 9, you'll find such giving is grace. It is called grace. Because it is by the grace of God that we are able to give.

Humanly we want to receive but not to give. And it is also called a blessing. It is a blessing.

So brothers and sisters, part of our devotional life is in this area of giving. We give what the Lord has given to us. And we give quietly, secretly.

This is part of our hidden life with the Lord. We want the Lord to know that's all. We are not trying to let everybody know.

Now, the righteousness of the Pharisees is giving. But that giving is for people to see. And our righteousness has to surpass the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees.

That is one part of our devotional life. Now the second part of our devotional life, of course, is prayer. And I think we all recognize that.

That is part of our devotional life, to pray. But how do we pray? The Lord said, now do not pray as the hypocrites. Because they pray to be heard of men.

Now we are told that probably it was true in the time of our Lord Jesus. You know the Pharisees, they wanted to show how pious, how religious, how godly they were. They not only wear in their body boxes with the scriptures in it upon their forehead and tie them upon their arms.

But they go to the temple to pray. And we were told that some people, they were so anxious to show how pious they were. So on their way, before they arrived at the temple, they stopped at the street corner and started to pray.

To show how pious they were. And actually that kind of prayer is to be seen by men. And you remember our Lord Jesus used a parable in Luke chapter 18.

He said, a Pharisee came to the temple to pray. And he probably would march straight into the temple as far as he could go. And there he would lift up his head and said, now God, look at such a wonderful person.

You know, I gave one camp and I fasted twice a week. I was not like that publicans, you know. And it was not a prayer, it was a report.

And God never accepted such kind of report. This is report. And people heard about it and said, oh look, how pious, how godly that man lived.

That's hypocrisy. The Lord said, don't do that. Don't do that.

Now do not pray as the nations, as the Gentiles. Yes, the Gentiles do pray. You know, when they are in tight situations and they need help, they know that they have to pray.

But they pray to their gods and their gods are very reluctant and very cruel. So they have to repeat and use long words and try to persuade their gods to listen to them. A short prayer wouldn't do.

You have to do lots of reasonings to convince your god to listen to your prayer. The Lord said, now don't do that. Don't do that.

Because before you pray, your heavenly father knows what you need. Don't use vain repetitions. Your prayer is not praying for man to see, to hear.

You are praying to your heavenly father. Now if you are praying to your heavenly father, you do not need to reason with him. He knows, even before you pray, what you need.

But what is really prayer? Prayer is not just making our needs known to God. Prayer actually is to stand with God and pray that His needs will be met first. That's prayer.

Real prayer is, we know the mind of heaven and we pray that will our heaven be done upon this earth as it is in heaven. And God is so pleased that there are His children who are in one heart and one mind with Him. And God said, well, I'll do it.

Now that's real prayer. So the Lord said, when you pray, go into the closet. Shut yourself in.

Now it may not be literal, but surely it is spiritual. In other words, just between you and God. In the closet.

You cannot put too many people in that closet. So just you and your heavenly father. And you shut off the world outside of you.

Not to be seen by man, but it is between you and God. That is your devotional life. Between you and God.

And when you pray, you pray for God's needs first. And then your need. Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Your name is sanctified in heaven, but your name today is being despised, blasphemed on earth. And may your name be sanctified. May your name be sanctified in my life, as it is in heaven.

May your kingdom come. Your kingdom is in heaven. It is coming.

And may your kingdom come first to me today and one day upon this earth. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In me.

And one day in the whole earth. In other words, you find that is what prayer really is. You are one with your heavenly father.

And of course, the Lord said then you pray. Give us this day our daily bread. Our physical need.

Forgive our sins as we forgive the sins of others. This is for our psychological need. Soulical need.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Our spiritual need on earth. You know, this is the way that we should maintain our devotional life with the Lord.

And this is kingdom living. And we have to live every day. You know, prayer, prayer life is a daily life.

And this is part of our devotional life that we have to maintain every day. And the third thing is fasting. Now, fasting in the inward sense means denying.

You know, fasting is more than just abstaining from food and drink. Now, abstaining from food and drink is fasting. But fasting is deeper than that.

It is actually abstaining from yourself. You know, in the Old Testament, you find that the children of Israel were commanded to fast only once a year. Only on the Day of Atonement.

They were commanded to fast. In Leviticus chapter 23 verse 27, 29, you find afflict your soul. That is fasting.

So on that day, they literally fasted. I mean, they afflict their soul by abstaining from food and drink. And that is the only command you find in the Old Testament time.

When you come to the time of our Lord Jesus, you find the Pharisees, they legalized fasting. And make it twice a week. Every week, two times, they fasted.

And you remember that story? The disciples of John came to the Lord Jesus. I think it is in Luke 12. It said, the Pharisees fasted.

And we fast. Now, why is it your disciples do not fast? Now, the Lord said, when the bridegroom is there with the chamber people, you know, people, his companions, they do not fast. But when the bridegroom is taken away, and in the original Greek, that taken away is violently taken away.

Then, they will fast. So in one sense, you find that in the New Testament, there is no command for us to fast. But the Lord does tell us that there will be a time and occasion that we should fast.

To afflict our soul. To deny ourselves. Now, the children of Israel, in a time of national crisis, they fasted.

You know, so there will be occasions in our life, individually or as a church, that we have to fast. You know, for instance, you find in the book of Acts, you know, they were fasting. Paul, after he met the Lord on Damascus road, he was in Damascus three days without eating and drinking.

He was fasting and praying. And then you find in chapter 13, you find the five prophets and teachers, you know, they minister unto the Lord and fasting. And after the Holy Spirit said, separate unto me Paul and Barnabas, and they fasted, and laid their hands on them, and they sent them out on that mission.

So, you do find that there were occasions of fasting in the scripture. But we need to remember that fasting actually is part of our devotional life. Whether you do it physically or not, it should be a continuous fasting, spiritually speaking.

In other words, if we do not deny ourselves, where is our devotional life? We need to deny ourselves constantly before the Lord, in order to maintain a life with the Lord. And there will be occasions, probably, we have to abstain even from legitimate food and drink, to afflict our souls, to humble ourselves before the Lord, to seek His face and His mind, in order to overcome a certain situation. Now, there will be occasions for that.

But anyway, you will find that fasting is also part of our devotional life. And that is how to live Kingdom Living. Kingdom Living is in giving, in the way that is according to the character, the nature of the Kingdom.

Is to pray the Kingdom Prayer, not just pray our own prayer, but to Kingdom Prayer, that is, pray for the Kingdom first. And then we need to fast, to deny ourselves, so the will of God may get through. You know, this is our devotional.

And then, from verse 19 to 34, you will find it is the secular part. Now, we are still living in this world. Of course, we live in the presence of God.

And there is a devotional, hidden life with the Lord, that we have to continually maintain. But, there is also a public and open life before man. We are in this world.

And we touch the world every day. We touch mammon every day. It will be nice if we don't need to touch it.

But unfortunately, we are in this world and we have to touch it. And we have to live. We have to eat, we have to drink, we have to be dressed, just like the rest of the people in this world.

So you find that because our circumstance, environment, this earth has not changed. Therefore, we who live upon this earth, we still have to live our normal life, as everybody else does. We have to touch mammon.

We have to maintain our living by making a living, eating, drinking, and to be dressed, and all these things. We have to do that. Like the rest of the people.

And yet we are different. Now, how can we be different? The difference is not in that we don't need to touch mammon. But in the way we touch it.

The difference is not in that we don't need to eat or drink or to be clothed. The difference is our attitude towards eating, drinking, and dressing. That's the difference.

So you find in this section, there are two key words. One key word is, we read them, one key word is verse 24. No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one or will love the other, or he will hold on to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and mammon. In other words, the key word is serve. Whom do you serve? God or mammon? And the second key word is seek, in verse 34.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Now brothers and sisters, we are still living in this world. We have to make a living.

We have to touch mammon. And as a matter of fact, you know, as real children of God, our problem is not lacking of mammon, it's too much of it. Are you surprised at that? You know, people in this world, when they earn, they spend so carelessly and spend in sins and in pleasures.

But after you believe in the Lord Jesus, you are different. When you earn, you do not spend, waste money in lots of ungodly things, in pleasures, in sins. So invariably, you begin to accumulate.

So you remember John Wesley is very wise. His advice to the Methodist is, now he knows, being Methodist, they will work diligently, and because they work diligently, they will earn a lot. So he said, now earn all you can.

Now that's good advice. And the second is, save all you can. That's a good advice.

And the third is, give all you can. You know, that's the advice. Even with the French, the Quakers, they had the same problem.

You know, George Fox, the founder and the leaders, they know that the Quakers, they will accumulate a lot. Because being honest, and they don't drink, not even coffee, and they don't smoke, and certainly, certainly they will accumulate. So their problem with mammon is too much of it, not too little of it.

So the Lord said, now lay not up treasure for yourselves upon this earth. Now if you don't have anything, how can you lay up? It's you that you are accumulating, right? Now there's nothing wrong with laying up, that is saving, nothing wrong with that. The problem is, where do you lay it? And for whom you are laying it for? Now that is the problem.

The Lord said, lay not treasure upon this earth for yourselves. Why? Because on this earth you have rust, and decay, and thieves, and moth, and all these things, you know. In other words, what you have accumulated will automatically, in a sense, dwindle.

And if you accumulate for yourselves, thinking that you can depend upon them, you will discover they are not dependable. Now does it mean to say we cannot save for a rainy day? Or we cannot save for our old age? I don't think so. I don't think so.

I think what the Lord is trying to tell us is this. If you think you are the possessors of your wealth, then you are in trouble. You think because these are yours, and you want to lay them aside for yourself, just for yourself.

And you remember the story our Lord told of that rich man. He had gathered so much, such a good harvest. And he said, well, my granary is too small to put all these things.

So I will carry it off and build a bigger one, and put all my harvest into it. And then say to my soul, be in rest, because you have enough for your whole life. And the Lord said he doesn't know that that night the Lord would take his life away.

And all that you have laid aside for yourself, now who will have them? That's foolishness, folly. So in other words, we need to remember that we are not possessors of wealth that the Lord has given to us. But we are stewards.

We are stewards. If the Lord give us anything, we are stewards. And we need to be good stewards of the Lord.

We need to use mammon, or wealth, wisely. And we need to use it for the Lord. Not just for ourselves.

I remember one sister. She was a millionaire, and a title lady, an English woman. Her physician was the Queen's physician.

And when I met her, I went to her home in India. I was a refugee there. And that's another story.

But anyway, I was a refugee fleeing from Singapore during the Second World War with my wife. And we landed in India, knowing nobody, in a sense, you know. But I know of a sister, my fellow worker, an English lady, who stayed with this lady in India in a resort place or something.

I don't even know that place. I mean, I only know the name. So I sent that sister a cable and said, I am here in Madras, in a hotel, and I want to see you.

I was thinking, if I can see that sister, then after that I will fly back to China via Burma, you know. But when I was waiting for her return cable, that lady cabled me back. I never knew him.

I heard of him, her, but never knew her. And that cable said, my home is yours. Come immediately.

And you know, that touched me very deeply. We were refugees at that time. So we went there.

And I thought, well, being a wealthy lady and a title lady, of course, you know. So when I arrived there, I saw an elderly lady, very plainly dressed, standing at the door. I said, that must be one of the maids.

Because she has lots of maids and servants, you know, and that's for her. And I spent two and a half months with her. And she told me, she said, all that I had belonged to the Lord.

I am a steward. I have to be very faithful and wise. She will not spend, I mean, wantonly or carelessly.

Because she considers herself as a steward. And that's the way we should live, you know. Not lay up on earth for ourselves.

But if we lay up anything on earth, remember, we are stewards. And if we take that kind of attitude, then we will not serve mammon. We serve God.

So the thing is, whom do we serve? In a sense, you know, you have a choice. You either love the one or hate the other. You either hold on to the one or despise the other.

Now, brothers and sisters, mammon is to be despised. We have to handle it. We have to touch it.

But we should despise it. You know, the love of money is the root of all evils. If you love it, you are finished.

It is the root of all evil. You should hate it. It is something you have to touch it, but you hate it.

You despise it. And because of that, you find why you can despise mammon? Because you hold on to God. Why you can hate mammon? Because you love God.

You cannot serve two masters. And we can use the mammon God has put in our hands to serve God. And even in that terrible, that is almost unexplainable, of that wicked steward.

He used the wealth of his master to prepare for his future. And yet, the Lord said he is wise. He used mammon to provide an eternal habitation.

And we should do that. That's the way to treasure up our treasure in heaven. We serve God.

So that's the way we touch the world. That's the way we touch mammon. We touch wealth.

You know? Whatever comes into our hand, we offer it back to God for his service. And then the second thing is eating, drinking, and clothing. Now we have to eat.

We have to drink. We have to be clothed. We are just like other people.

Today, now one day, when we are raptured, we are having a spiritual body, then we don't need to eat. We can eat, but we don't need to eat. You know? And we don't need to be clothed because we are clothed with glory.

You know? But today we are still in this mortal body and still live upon this earth. We have to eat. So you find the other side.

The first part is we have too much. And how are we going to deal with that too much? Now the second part is we are anxious. We are worried.

It seems that we are lacking. What should we eat? What should we drink? What should we be clothed with? Now to the people in this world, that is normal. That is what they should do because there is no one to worry for them.

They have to take care of themselves. But brothers and sisters, we forget we have an Heavenly Father. Knowing we have our Heavenly Father, now even the earthly father would take care of their children.

How much more our Heavenly Father would take care of us? So the Lord said, now don't worry. Don't be careful about these things. As a matter of fact, even if you worry, it worries you to death.

It will not worry you to sufficiency. And the Lord said, now look at the birds. They don't sow, they don't reap, they don't gather.

And your Heavenly Father takes care of them. How much more precious you are to your Father than these birds. Observe the lilies of the valley.

They do not grow, they do not sting. And yet the Heavenly Father clothes them with such beauty that even the glory of Solomon cannot be compared with it. How much more the Heavenly Father will clothe you.

Do not be of little faith, trusting in God. But, what is the secret? We have to eat, we have to drink, we have to be clothed. Where will these come from? Now, of course, there is a difference here.

The birds do not sow, neither reap. The lilies do not grow, nor sting. But we are commanded to work.

You know, after man's sin, the Lord said, you have to sweat to make a living. Even in the Garden of Eden, the God put man to work. So, in other words, it doesn't mean that because we have a Heavenly Father, therefore we don't need to work.

He will provide everything for us. No, He said you have to work. If you do not work, you do not eat.

You know, I came from a big family. Old fashioned Chinese family. Four generations living under one roof.

And my grandfather took care of everything for us. We don't need to work. My grandmother cooked everything.

And we just eat. And we just enjoy. And we go to school.

And grandfather paid all. We get wed. And grandfather pay for the wedding.

You know. But the result was, we do. It does develop some people who become black sheep.

You know, you don't need to work. And where do you spend the time? Gambling. Opium smoking.

You know. So our Heavenly Father knows best. The Father said you work.

But if you work, don't worry. But there is a secret. He said seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

And all these things shall be added. You have to work. But sometimes you work and it doesn't work.

You find that you still are lacking. Now why? It is because you do not seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. If you put God first.

If you seek Him first. His Kingdom. And His righteousness.

The Lord said, all these things will be added to you. Added not without work. Added with work.

But added nevertheless. And brothers and sisters, that promise is true. And that's the way we live.

Our Kingdom living upon this wretched world. And do you know that when people are anxious or worried, usually not for today, but for tomorrow. You borrow tomorrow's evil for today.

And the Lord said, one day's evil is enough for you. Life on this earth is not easy. Every day has its own evil.

And you will find that His grace is sufficient for today's evil. But He does not want you to worry for the evil that will come, may come. Live day by day in the presence.

And brothers and sisters, that is the practical way of living our Kingdom. Dear Heavenly Father, we do thank and praise Thee that Thou has not only put that Kingdom life in us. But Thou has also show us the way to let that life live in this sinful, corrupted, ruined earth.

That we may truly be different. We may be light and salt on this earth. So we just come and again ask Thee that Thou will imprint Thy word upon our hearts.

And by the working of Thy Holy Spirit, make it our living, daily living. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

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