

# Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God

by Stephen Kaung

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*Seeking the kingdom of God first is the priority of believers, and it leads to transformation and a life of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 59:19

**Scripture:** Matthew 4:17, Matthew 6:10, Matthew 6:19-21, Matthew 6:33, Luke 24:44, Acts 2:36, Acts 28:31

**Topics:** "Kingdom Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of prioritizing the kingdom of God in our lives. He uses the example of the children of Israel in Egypt, who were kept busy with hard labor to prevent them from focusing on spiritual matters. The speaker argues that this strategy of the enemy is still prevalent today, as many Christians prioritize worldly concerns over seeking the kingdom of God. He highlights that while it is necessary to take care of our physical needs, we should not let them become our priority, but rather seek God's kingdom first.

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## Transcript

Will you please turn to Matthew chapter 6. Matthew chapter 6, just one verse. Verse 33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Let's have a little prayer. Dear Lord, as we gather together this morning in Thy presence, our hearts do bow before Thee and say, Lord, speak to us.

Do not allow us to come to Thy presence and fail to hear Thy voice. In spite of all our weaknesses, Lord, we pray that Thou will come to us and give Thy word to us, and by Thy word give us strength that we may follow Thee. Our heart's desire is, Lord, that Thou mayst really have us for Thyself, because Thou art worthy.

We commit this time into Thy hands and trust Thy Holy Spirit to take charge and to do Thy work. In Thy precious name we pray. Amen.

Now this morning I would like to do something different. This morning you are here not to hear me speak, but I want you to join with me in meditation. I want every one of you to participate in this meditation.

We are going to meditate on this Word of God and allow the Spirit of God to really speak to our hearts. You know, oftentimes we gather together to hear a message. And after we heard it, we forgot it.

Meditation is very important. If we hear the Word of God and do not meditate, we lose it. Before you leave this place, it's gone.

The Bible tells us we need to meditate, to think over, to pray over, to really open our hearts to His Word and let His Word sink deep into our hearts and transform us. I think this is something that this modern world has lost. This modern age has lost the art of meditation.

And because of that, you find that the spiritual life of God's people are shallow, superficial, unreal. Meditation deepens our spiritual life. So I would like you to join with me to meditate.

About a week ago, the Lord drew my heart to this one verse. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. This is the Word spoken by our Lord Himself.

This is not only an exhortation. This is a command. He commands us to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness first.

And all these things shall be added unto us. What are all these things? If you read the preceding verses, all these things are related to the themes of this life, our biological life. All these things are the themes of this world.

What shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we be clothed with? Eating, drinking, clothing are the necessities of this life. We live in this world. We need to eat.

We need to drink. We need to be clothed with in order to live. But unfortunately, these things can become our priority.

In other words, we seek these things first. And if we have time, if we have energy, then we will seek the kingdom of God. We reverse the priority that our Lord Jesus has set for us.

Now to the people of this world, this is normal. They do not have the Heavenly Father. They have to help themselves.

They have to take care of their lives. And in order to live, they worry, they seek, they are careful about these things. Because nobody will take care of them.

They have to take care of themselves. What they should eat, what they should drink, what they should be clothed with. This is their life.

This is what they live for. This is the purpose of living. Nothing else.

They are concerned about it. They are anxious about it. They seek for it.

They give their life to it. And that is what is right for the nations. Our Lord Jesus himself said, these are the things that the nations seek for.

But dear brothers and sisters, who are we? We who believe in the Lord Jesus, we who have been born from above, God has translated us from the kingdom of this world into the kingdom of the Son of His love. In other words, our citizenship is in heaven. We are heavenly people, but we live on this earth.

In other words, we live, as it were, in two kingdoms. On the one hand, we live in the kingdom of God. How do we know? Because you remember our Lord Jesus, in His conversation with Nicodemus, the Lord said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, unless you are born of the water and of the Spirit, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

He that is born of the Spirit is spirit. So, brothers and sisters, we have been born of the Spirit. We have been transferred from earth to heaven.

We have a new life. We are under a new rule. On the one hand, we belong to the kingdom of God.

That's where our citizenship is. Our loyalty is. Yet, on the other hand, we are still on this earth.

Now, how should we live, as sons of the kingdom of heaven upon this earth? I think this is a very practical problem. Every one of us here is involved in this. And we have to find a way how to live as heavenly people on this earth.

What should be our priority? How should we live? Should we live as the people of this world, seeking all these things, eating, drinking, clothing, security for this life, laying treasures upon this earth, in order to be sure that we have enough? You remember our Lord Jesus uses a parable. A rich man, he has so much. He didn't know what to do with his plenty.

And he said, well, I know what to do. I will tear down my barn and build a bigger one and put all my corns into it. And then I will say to my soul, soul, don't need to worry anymore.

You have plenty to eat. And our Lord Jesus said, the Lord said, tonight I want your soul. What happened to all that you have hoarded up? Vanity of vanity.

All is vanity. Brothers and sisters, things of this world are temporary. Our Lord Jesus said, what are the things of this world? Love not the world, nor the things of this world, the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life.

And these are the things that are passing away. And if we seek these things, if we put our time, our life, our energy, our all, in seeking these things, remember, these are like pursuing after wings, trying to catch your shadow. They will soon pass away.

That's why the wisest of men, Solomon, said, vanity of vanity. All is vanity. But you see, we have to live.

If we do not seek these things, these will not be dropped from heaven. Who will take care of us? We have to think of our security. We have to give our time to the world, not knowing that this is the strategy of the enemy.

You remember the children of Israel? They were in Egypt, under hard labor. They cried to the Lord, and the Lord sent Moses to deliver them. But when Moses faced Pharaoh and said, God said, let my people go, that they may serve me.

Pharaoh said, these people have too much time to think about spiritual things, religious things. Increase their hard labor. Work them to death, that they have no time to think about spiritual things.

Their all time will be occupied of their stomach. Their stomach will become their God and nothing else. And this strategy of the enemy hasn't changed.

Look at God's people today. Where are they? How do they use their time? Where goes their energy? Their thinking? What occupies their whole life? Especially when we are approaching the end of days. The pressure from the enemy will increase.

And brothers and sisters, how should we live under such conditions? Are we satisfied with our Christian life? Where goes all our time? We have no time for the things of God. Our priority is wrong. Our Lord Jesus said, we who are the citizens of the kingdom of God, we should seek first the kingdom of God.

And then all these things shall be added unto us. Do you believe it? Is it true? The nations must take care of all these things. But our Lord Jesus said, your heavenly Father knows.

Look at the birds of the air. Look at the lilies of the valley. How much more precious you are in the sight of God.

Will He not take care of you if you first seek His kingdom and His righteousness? What is the result if we seek these things of the world first? And then if we have time and energy, then we will seek the kingdom of God. If we live as the people of this world, all these things will never satisfy us. People seek all these things.

Eating, drinking, clothing. The more you seek, the more you want. You will never be satisfied.

In a sense, you will not be contented with the things that you have. And at the same time, you lose the kingdom. Is it worthwhile? Is it not time that we wake up, brothers and sisters, what is our priority? The kingdom of God or the things of this world? Many times, we are occupied with the things of this world.

We consider them as important. We consider them as must. We must do them.

This is something we have to do. We, the things of God, you can put aside. It's not that urgent.

It is not that real. The things of this world are real. But brothers and sisters, what is real? Where are we? We are so occupied with the things of this world.

We know much about the things of this world. But dear brothers and sisters, how much do we know the kingdom of God? We are in the world, yes, but we are not of the world. Think of Abraham.

God called him out of this world. By faith, he lived in the land of promise, but he lived in tent all his life. He is a stranger and a sojourner in this world.

Brothers and sisters, are we strangers in this world? If we are strangers, then we will be sojourners. Look at Lot. He lived in the world just like Abraham, but how differently he lived.

He became a dweller of this world. He moved his tent towards Sodom and then lived in Sodom. Even though his righteous soul guarded him, and yet he remained in Sodom.

Even when the angels came to deliver him, he hesitated and his wife looked back and became a pillow of salt. The Bible says remember the life wife. Do we remember? How should we live on this earth? This is a practical question, brothers and sisters.

I believe it affects every one of us. We need to live. We need to eat.

We need to drink. We need to be close with. We need to take care of our family.

But what is the first thing to us? Let us answer this question before God. Think about it. Who is first? What is first? Is God first in our life? Is the kingdom of God first in our seeking? Is it true? If this is the case, then our Lord said, all these things shall be added unto you.

You know, when our Lord Jesus was on earth, what was His message? Repent, for the kingdom of God has drawn nigh. Even after He was resurrected, during those 40 days, He appeared to His disciples, and what did He teach about? He taught them about the things of the kingdom of God. What did the apostles proclaim? The apostles proclaimed the message of the kingdom of God.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter stood up and said, This man, Jesus, whom He crucified, God has made Him Lord and Christ. The kingdom. Paul, during his two years' imprisonment in Rome, at the end of the book of Acts, we are told, there he preached the kingdom of God and taught the things concerning our Lord Jesus.

This is the message of the Church. But today this message is lost. Today the best you can hear is the gospel of grace.

Everything is grace. Forgiveness of our sins. Going to heaven.

It is all grace, grace, grace. We do not even hear about the kingdom. That there is a kingdom of God.

That we are in that kingdom. And how shall we live in that kingdom? What are the things of that kingdom? When the kingdom of God shall come upon this earth, where will we be? Brothers and sisters, it is a lost message. And that's the reason why God's people today are so weak spiritually.

You are in the kingdom of God because you are born from above. But do you live in that kingdom? Now what is kingdom? The very word kingdom in Greek, first of all, it is an abstract noun. It means sovereign, rule, dominion, kingship.

And then, secondly, it is a concrete noun. It means people, population, territory over which the king rules. According to the scriptural concept, kingdom is basically kingship.

That is, the kingdom of God is nothing but God's own expression. The kingdom of God expresses God Himself. What a God He is.

His own character characterizes His kingdom. Or to put it another way, everyone who is in that kingdom, everyone who is under His rule, everyone who obeys Him will be transformed and will take up the character of God the King Himself. That is kingdom.

That is the kingdom of God. All who are in the kingdom of God should be under the rulership of God. And if you are under the rulership of God, what will happen? You will be changed.

You will be transformed and take up the character of your King, thus proving that you are a true son of the kingdom. You know, oftentimes we are afraid of the word authority. But you know, the Bible tells us, as Paul said, authority is for building up, not for tearing down.

The real purpose of God's authority is to build us up, because only when we submit ourselves under the authority, the kingship, the kingdom, the rule of God, then His authority will do the work of transforming us and conforming us to the character of God. That is the only way. But brothers and sisters, in the most general sense, the kingdom of God is from eternity to eternity.

Because from eternity to eternity He is God. So everything is under His rule. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.

But unfortunately, there were rebellions, not only in the heavenly host, but also upon man on earth. In other words, God's kingdom extends over all. It's the kingdom of all ages.

His dominion is over all. Everything is under Him. That is the general meaning of the kingdom of God.

Even Satan, even rebellious man, they are not out of His control. Because His kingdom extends over all. But, strictly speaking, the kingdom of God speaks of those who put themselves under His rulership, who obey Him, who allow Him to work out the kingdom character into their lives.

And these people are really the sons of the kingdom of God. Now, are we there? But in order to be, living in the kingdom in reality, I think we need to understand what is the kingdom of God. Oftentimes, we think of the kingdom of God in terms of history.

In other words, one day, the kingdom of God will come upon this earth. As in the book of Revelation, we find that one day, the kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Thank God for that.

It is coming. But, brothers and sisters, it is more than historical. The kingdom of God is spiritual.

In other words, it has already come. It is now here. And it will come.

Only when we are really in the kingdom of God today, when the kingdom of God shall appear upon this earth, we will be shut out of that kingdom. As the Bible says, we will be gnashing our teeth in darkness, repenting that we have lost our opportunity. It doesn't mean we lose our salvation.

In eternity, yes, we will be there. But during the kingdom age, you are not there. And it all depends upon today whether we live in the kingdom of God today as an obedient citizen of the kingdom.

We know much about this world, but how much do we know about the kingdom of God? What are the characteristics of the kingdom of God? First, the kingdom of God is everlasting, eternal. In Psalm 145, verse 13, it says, His kingdom is everlasting through all the ages. In 2 Peter 1, verse 11, that we may enter abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of God.

Everything on this earth is temporary. No matter how precious they are, they will pass away. Only the kingdom of God is everlasting.

So, brothers and sisters, seek not the things that pass away. Seek the things that will remain forever. Everything that you possess in this world will pass away.

You are not able to carry them. Even when people are buried, they try to bury it with their treasures, but they cannot enjoy them. It's gone.

Naked we come, and naked we go. But that which is of the kingdom of God remains forever. Are we working for things temporarily? Or are we really seeking for things eternal? The kingdom of God is spiritual.

It is different from this world. Everything in this world is physical, earthly. But the kingdom of God is spiritual.

In Romans chapter 14, verse 17, it says, the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking. It is different from the kingdom of this world. That is the mark of the kingdom of this world, eating and drinking.

Because they have nothing more. That's all you have. But the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking.

It is righteousness, peace, and joy of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the kingdom of God is spiritual. Righteousness.

What is right in the sight of God? Peace. What is peace? This world does not have peace. Because the God of this world today is a murderer.

There is no peace. Peace only comes from God. Our Lord Jesus said, I give my peace to you.

I leave my peace with you. Joy of the Holy Spirit. You look at this world, you find people maybe laughing, but that's pretense.

Not true. Joy is of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit of God in you is joyful, you are happy.

You are joyful. That is the joy in the Holy Spirit. Now, do you have joy in the Holy Spirit? In other words, does the Holy Spirit rejoice in you because you listen to Him, you obey Him, you cooperate with Him? And when you do that, that is joy unspeakable.

That is real joy. Then you are in the kingdom of God. Brothers and sisters, our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees and the scribes.

They have righteousness, but it is external. In letter, ours is within, is of the Spirit. Do we have that? The kingdom of God is spiritual.

And because it is spiritual, it is always here. It is not limited by time or space. Today, we must live in the kingdom of God by being righteous, at peace, and filled with the Spirit of joy.

The kingdom of God is internal. It is not something outward. You remember our Lord Jesus? One day, people said, Where is the kingdom of God? Our Lord Jesus in Luke, chapter 17, verse 20 and 21, He says, The kingdom of God does not come by observation.

Do not say the kingdom is here or is there. Our Lord says, The kingdom is in the midst of you. Now you know that in translation, there are two different translations.

One says, The kingdom of God is in the midst of you. Why? Because Christ is in their midst. He is the kingdom of God.

If you have Christ, if you take up the character of Christ, you have the kingdom. Another translation is, The kingdom of God is within you. It is not something external.

It is something within you. In your spirit. Today, the kingdom of God cannot be observed by naked eyes.

But it doesn't mean it is not there. It is there. Wherever Christ is, there is the kingdom of God.

And the Christ in you and the Christ in me is the kingdom of God. It is internal. And then the kingdom of God is not in words but in power.

First Corinthians, chapter 4, verse 20. The kingdom of God is not in words but in power. In other words, not what you say, but what you experience.

The power of God in your life. You may know a lot about the teaching about the kingdom of God. But that is not the kingdom of God.

That is only His teaching. The real kingdom of God is power. The power that transforms you.

The power that delivers you from this world. Overcomes this world. That is the kingdom of God.

And finally, the kingdom of God is love. Colossians, chapter 1, verse 13. God has translated us.

Transferred us. Out of the kingdom of darkness. Power of darkness.

Into the kingdom of the Son of His love. If we really are constrained by the love of Christ, you are in the kingdom. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

And all these things shall be added unto you. What should be our attitude? Our response to the kingdom of God? Do you say, well, it is too spiritual to be real. To me, it is not real.

Because you live with your outward man. What you can see, what you can hear, what you can feel, what you can touch, the things of the world are real to you. The things of God are unreal.

But brothers and sisters, if we live by the life in us, the Christ life in us, there is nothing more real than the kingdom of God. Seek first the kingdom of God. What is seeking? Seeking is not a casual word.

Seeking involves purpose, determination, energy. You set your heart upon it. That's seeking.

Dear brothers and sisters, ask yourself, do you really seek the kingdom of God? Have you ever sought the kingdom of God? Is that the purpose of your life? Are you determined to find it? Willing to pay any cost to get it? You will not stop until you find it. Is deliberate? Is with effort? Do you make it your priority? Or your priority is the things of this world? What about me? What about my family? What about this and that? Do you ever ask, what about the kingdom of God? Seek first the kingdom of God. If we really seek the kingdom of God, we will apply ourselves.

We will make it our first priority. We are willing to sacrifice other things because this is more important to us. This is the word of our Lord.

His advice to us. He said, you are living in this world. All these things are necessary, but you should not live like nations.

You should live like my children. Seek first the kingdom of God. If you do that, the Lord said, I'll take care of you.

Thank God He never fails. By the grace of God, I have served Him over 70 years. I can testify His word is true.

Seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And all these things shall be added to you. The reason why we are so worried about all these things is because we put a wrong emphasis on life.

Godliness with contentment is great gain. The Lord may not promise us luxuries, but He promises us our necessities. Isn't it wise if we seek the kingdom of God first? That should revolutionize our lives.

The Bible tells us we should pray for the kingdom of God. In the so-called Lord's Prayer, He teaches us, Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come.

What is prayer? Prayer expresses our heart's desire. Do we really desire the kingdom so much as to pray for it that it may come? Come into your life and come into this world? Have I ever prayed Thy kingdom come? What is our prayer? Give me this. Give me that.

Hurry. If it's so slow, murmur. If it doesn't come, offend it.

Brothers and sisters, do we pray Thy kingdom come? Prayer should change our life. You know, we think that prayer changes things. No.

Prayer changes you. If you pray, you will be changed. Do you ever pray a kingdom prayer? Evan Roberts, the vessel used by God in the wealth revival, 1904 and 5, for a number of years after the revival, he hid himself.

And when people asked him, what were you doing? He said, I'm praying kingdom prayer. Proclaim the kingdom of God. Matthew 24, verse 14.

The great tidings of the kingdom of heaven must be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony. And then the end will come. The kingdom message, the gospel of the kingdom must be preached throughout the nations to prepare the way.

And then the end will come. And the Bible said be worthy of the kingdom of God. 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 verse 3 verse 5. Be worthy of the kingdom.

We need to ask ourselves in everything we do, the way we spend our time, the way we put our priority, the way we live, the thing we occupy with. We need to ask ourselves, am I worthy of the kingdom of God? Is this the way that the sons of the kingdom shall live? Brothers and sisters, let's meditate on this word of God. Shall we pray? Dear Lord, Thou has spoken to us.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And all these things shall be added unto you. We believe you.

We believe your word. And now, Lord, may Thy Spirit bring us into practicing Thy word. That Thou may prove to us how faithful Thou art.

O deliver us from the things of this world. Enable us to live under Thy kingship. We honor Thee.

In Thy precious name we pray. Amen.

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