

Seek First The Kingdom of God

by Tim Conway

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, prioritizing spiritual matters over material concerns. It challenges listeners to be intentional, creative, and proactive in living out their faith, impacting others through good works and ministry. The message encourages believers to truly live for the kingdom, leaving a wake of good works behind them, and to trust God to provide and bless as they seek His kingdom first.

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 18:29, Ephesians 5:8, Titus 3:8, Hebrews 10:24, Acts 20:35, James 2:14, 1 Timothy 5:8, Proverbs 3:9, 1 Peter 4:10

Topics: "Seeking God's Kingdom", "Living Out Faith"

Description

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Transcript

We'll pick up reading in verse 25. Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air.

They neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to his span of life? Why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you, even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.

But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear? For the Gentiles seek after these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself.

Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Last week we dealt with anxiety, not being anxious. After the Lord, in verses 19-24, tells us not to lay up treasure on earth, lay it up in heaven.

After he told us that we can't serve God and money. He then says, you don't have to be anxious about the thought of giving your money to God. Because your heavenly Father knows what you need and is going to care for you.

And when I say give money away, I mean truly laying up treasure in heaven. Giving in the ways that actually accomplishes that. And there's no question, you can't get around this, caring for the needy.

That is so stressed in scripture. So here we are. Today I want to look specifically at verses 31-34.

And I want you to notice right off, let's just look at these verses, 31, 32, 33, 34. We've got four verses here. Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, what shall we eat? What shall we drink? What shall we wear? Now, I just want to point out right there, eating, drinking, wearing.

They go to the very basics. I know we have houses, we have cars, we have furniture, we have other things. Jesus is going to the basic elements of survival.

And he says at the most basic level, you do not have to be anxious if you basically give your money so as to lay up treasure in heaven. You see the three things, eat, drink, wear. For the Gentiles.

Okay, now, hold your finger right here, because I do want you to see this. Hold your finger right here in Matthew 6, and just very quickly look over at 1 Thessalonians 4. 1 Thessalonians 4. You basically have Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4. And if you look very carefully here, it says, verse 3, this is the will of God, your sanctification. What sort of sanctification does he specifically have in mind that you abstain from sexual immorality? That each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor.

Now watch this, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God. Now lay that down right there. When scripture, there are times, we could go to Ephesians chapter 2, and I could show you where people like us are called Gentiles according to the flesh.

Listen, we have to distinguish. Sometimes in the New Testament, Gentile is used concerning our native birth. Were we born a Jew, or were we born not a Jew? And if not a Jew, we are physically Gentiles.

However, the New Testament also speaks in spiritual terms. Do you know we are spiritually Jews if we are Christians? We are true Jews. True Jews is one inwardly.

But there is also a spiritual Gentile. Let me tell you this, to be called a Gentile, this was basically the idea that was held. Do you know why the Jews held Gentiles in such derision? It's because basically that is what characterized the Gentiles.

They were people that did not know their God. The whole Old Testament was like that. But that's here in the New Testament.

You see the Apostle Paul is basically boiling this down to this reality. Spiritually speaking, a Gentile is somebody who does not know God. Now back to the Sermon on the Mount.

Back to Matthew chapter 6. This is important. So in Matthew 6, when we get this, verse 32, for the Gentiles seek after all these things. You can just plug it in right there.

What he is saying is this. You want to know how the non-Christian, that's what a Gentile is. Somebody that doesn't know God is somebody in the simplest form that is not a Christian.

They may talk about God. They may have ideas about God. They may read their Bible.

But if somebody is not a Christian, they don't know God. And if they don't know God, they are a Gentile. That's what Gentiles are.

People that don't know God. What Jesus is basically saying right here is you want to know how non-Christians live? He says in one simple stroke of the brush, Jesus paints a picture of every single non-Christian. Everyone in the world.

Every color, every tribe, every tongue, every nationality. There they are. The entirety of this world's spiritual Gentiles who don't know God.

You know what they do? They spend their whole time in their life seeking this stuff. The stuff of this life. Now, I want you to see this.

The word seek. Because that's our word today. That's where we are really going with the message today.

Seek. You see it two times here. Verse 32, the Gentiles seek.

Verse 33, but seek first. Well, obviously the first one deals with Gentiles. The second one deals with Christians.

What Jesus is doing is He's using the same word twice. Now, the first time it's used, look at it there. Verse 32.

Indicative mood. In the Greek, you basically take your verbs. Verbs have tenses.

Verbs also have mood. The mood of this verb is indicative. That means it indicates.

You recognize that. What Jesus is doing is He's indicating what's true. The Gentiles seek after all these things.

What things? The basic necessities of life. That's what they occupy themselves. Jesus isn't commanding Gentiles, in verse 32, to spend their lives seeking food, and clothing, and houses, and vacations, and gardens, and TVs, and cars, and furniture, and all that stuff.

He's simply indicating that's what they do. And that's what you did. I mean, when you were lost, that's basically what you did.

He's giving us a picture here. Indicating, thus the indicative verb. But, when our Lord turns His attention in verse 33 to the Christian, Christians seek too.

But Jesus is no longer indicating, now it's an imperative. That's the mood here. Imperative.

Behind the first seek, you have Jesus' wisdom, His observation of how things are. Behind the second seek, you have Jesus' authority. And He's looking at us, and He's demanding something of His followers.

That's what's happening here. So, you know what? Jesus tells us one of the most fundamental realities about man, in these verses. Man's a seeker.

You know what? We were down on the streets, in city center yesterday evangelizing. I can tell you this, you look around at that crowd, there were a lot of people. I've never seen that many people down there, as I saw yesterday.

But I can tell you this about every single person in that crowd, they're seeking something. They're after something. There's a longing for something.

And you know what typically happens? It's somewhat of what we heard in the testimonies. What happens is in that longing, God produces an emptiness in people. And suddenly, all the things that they used to seek, they don't satisfy anymore, and they start looking somewhere else.

That's typically how God draws people to Christ. But man is a seeker. And we're all searching for something.

Man is searching. Man has an ache, and a void. He is searching.

And we Christians, you know what's being said here? We Christians should not be found seeking first what the Gentiles seek first. That's the point. Why? Because, notice the reasoning here.

If we occupy ourselves seeking what the Lord directs us to seek, what's going to happen? The promise here is that our heavenly Father is going to give us what the Gentiles seek without having to seek it. They're seeking it, but we don't have to seek it, because if we seek what He wants us to seek, He's going to give all those things to us. That's what it says.

And it's a promise. It's a conditional promise. You know what a conditional promise is.

If you seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, then, it's an if-then. That's the kind of conditional promise. If you do this, then God does this.

That's what we have. Then God will give you all those things the Gentiles suspend themselves pursuing. That's the gist.

So the question of the hour really is this. What does it mean to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness? And perhaps I think, rather than just trying to explain it, you know the Bible tells us, it gives us examples of these things. And so I want to look at a couple examples.

You know this. You know the New Testament tells us that all those accounts in the Old Testament were given to us and preserved for us for our instruction. And we want to be instructed by it.

Here's the first one I want you to turn to. Haggai. You probably don't turn there very often.

Haggai chapter 1. And just so I'll tell you this, it's in the Minor Prophets. And you don't have to go that far back into your Old Testament to get to it. Haggai is one of two prophets along with Zechariah, who God was speaking to after Israel had returned out of Babylon back to Jerusalem in the days when the temple

was being reconstructed.

Now, look at this. Haggai 1 and verse 2. Now, this has everything to do with what we're talking about. Notice this.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, these people say, the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord. And you remember what happened when the Babylonians came and they destroyed Solomon's temple. And so what's happening here is the temple is being restored.

Zerubbabel verse 3, then the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet. Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies in ruins? So you see, they're living in their own houses, but they're not taking care of God's house. Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, consider your ways.

Now, you're going to get this three, you're going to get these three words twice. Consider your ways. This is for our instruction.

This is why this has been preserved for us. You and I can learn from this. You have sown much and harvested little.

Now here's what I would have you notice right at this point. The exact three things that Jesus says that the Gentiles seek after, He's now going to list. The exact three things.

You eat, but you never have enough. You drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is worn.

You see the three things that He said the Gentiles seek? That's what they're seeking. And they're not seeking what He wants them to seek, namely, the reconstruction of the temple. They're giving themselves to their own things.

They're not giving themselves to God's things. That's the point here. He who earns wages does so to put them in a bag with holes.

Now, you have to recognize what's being said here. Back in Matthew. Don't turn back to Matthew.

Stay right here. Listen to me. The promise is this.

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and God will add all those things unto you. You see what can happen as Christians if we simply think, well, it's going to happen either way. I mean, I'm one of God's children.

He's going to take care of me. That's to miss the promise that Jesus is giving. Jesus is not saying that whether you seek the kingdom first or not is irrelevant.

That's not the promise. That would be to totally miss. The opposite is true.

If you seek the wrong things, you know what God has the ability to do? God is very much in the business of destroying our idols. Do you know one of the promises of the New Covenant? He's going to cleanse us from our idols. And you begin to give yourself too much to things, He knows how to send cancer to your idol.

A canker, a worm to eat that thing. He knows how to do it. And see, these are His people right here.

And notice He says, verse 7, Thus says the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways, there it is again, Consider your ways. Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified. You want to notice that.

You see what He's saying here? My people, I want you involved with the things that bring me pleasure and bring me glory. He says, verse 9, You looked for much, behold it came to little. When you brought it home, it blew away.

Why? declares the Lord of Hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins. While each of you busies himself with his own house, therefore the heavens above you have withheld the due the earth has withheld its produce and I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, and what the ground brings forth, on man and beast and on all their labors.

What were God's people seeking first here? What are they seeking? They're seeking their own stuff, their own comfort, their own houses, their own food, their own drink, their own clothing. And what are they not seeking? First, obviously, they're not seeking God's kingdom. They're not seeking what pleases God.

They're concerning themselves with rebuilding their own houses, but not rebuilding God's house. And God's house, by the way, is his temple. They weren't concerned with God's kingdom and what's important to God, with promoting his worship, with promoting his glory.

That's what the temple was about in the Old Testament. It was about, that was the place of his worship. They were living their lives all about their own thing.

Listen, this is exactly the kind of thing that Jesus is talking about. He is saying that if you are going to follow him, you need to totally come off that old Gentile way of life. And that's what he's... Listen, there's a promise that if you will give yourself to the things that he wants you to give yourself to, he is promising, your heavenly father has you covered.

He's watching you. He knows your needs and he'll take care of you. And what he's saying there is if you get off track here, and we can see it by this kind of example, we can wonder, well, why doesn't that work? Or why does it feel like God's blessing isn't on this? Well, you see, the thing they sought, there was never enough, never filled, never worn, bags with holes, heaven and earth withhold their abundance, drought.

Notice carefully what the Lord said there. Again, in verse eight, go up to the hills, bring wood and build the house that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord. I would just say this, seeking the kingdom of God first is nothing other than seeking the very things that God takes pleasure in and is glorified in.

That's the reality. He's pleased and glorified when we give ourselves to the temple. And listen, when you come to the New Testament, is there still a temple? Yes.

Who's the temple? Where's the temple? The church is the temple. Listen to this, in Haggai, before you leave this little prophet, he says this. He says, the latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former.

You know what's very interesting? Solomon's temple was glorious. It's destroyed. Zerubbabel's temple is not so glorious.

You remember the old timers that saw the first one? God himself said, it says nothing in your eyes. But he says this, the latter glory is gonna be greater. And I tell you, the true significance of the temple is that God's dwelling place is with man.

God's dwelling place is in the church. Listen to this. So then you're no longer strangers and aliens.

He's saying this to Gentiles, physical Gentiles, like us. Not the spiritual ones like Jesus. But listen to this.

So then you're no longer strangers and aliens. Your fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Let me tell you something. Do you know what he wants us to give ourselves to today? He wants us to give ourselves to the true temple.

He wants us to give ourselves to building that temple that is to be built in this time. Brethren, you know what our commission is. Our commission is to make disciples.

But you've got to go to do it. You go and make disciples of all the nations. This is how his church is built in this day.

And taking care of that temple, taking care of the church, taking care of the people of God. Jesus says in the end, I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty.

I was naked, you clothed me. As much as you did it unto one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me. You see what the issue is.

Brethren, seek first the kingdom. Seek first the thing. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.

We want to see his kingdom spread. What is the kingdom about? It is about a king. The king of kings.

We have a king and the dominion, king dominion, kingdom. His dominion going forth in the world. How do people come under the dominion of Christ? Because they're confronted.

We're ambassadors of the king. We go to people, we tell them, our king tells you to lay down your weapons of warfare. Stop fighting against him.

He sent us to tell you he will have mercy. Surrender to his mercy. That is the message.

That is what we must tell the world. That is what we have to go to the nations and say. That is our obligation.

We go to them and we tell them, we're only ambassadors. We don't create the gospel. We don't create this message that's coming to you.

He has told you he is going to destroy you if you continue to fight against him. But right now and immediately, he offers you terms of peace. But the terms, full surrender.

Submit to his mercy. You see, this is, when we seek first the kingdom, this is what we're seeking. We're seeking his kingdom.

We're seeking the well-being of that kingdom. We're seeking for his kingdom to come. We're seeking for those things that please him, those things that he would have us to be involved with.

The church, the welfare of the church, the expansion of the church, going and making disciples of the nations and his righteousness. Brethren, righteousness is what's right. And we're going to continue in this.

But brethren, I want you to look at another example. This one is Elijah and the widow. First Kings 17.

First Kings 17. Now, this is interesting as well. Old Testament story.

You can kind of read across this and feel like, well, this is neat. But it's another example. Now, you know what? As you're turning to First Kings, I just want you to think.

Think with me. What God told Zerubbabel and Jeshua that high priest, what he said is, if you'll give yourself to this, then I'll stop putting holes in the bags. You see, that was the issue.

Seek first and I'll take care of my blessing on all these things. Okay, we go to Elijah and the widow. First Kings 17 verse 10.

First Kings 17. Elijah arose and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the city, a widow was there gathering sticks.

He calls to her, bring me a little water. As she was going, he called to her, bring me a morsel of bread. She said, as the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar, little oil in a jug, now I'm gathering a couple of sticks that I may go and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die.

Elijah said to her, do not fear, go and do as you have said, but first. You see there, first means priority. Seek first.

First. Again, what we have is a story where you have a woman that was concerning herself about these things, food for herself and her son. He says, seek first.

Do something first. Okay, what? Make me. Don't concern yourself first with yourself, concern yourself first with the prophet of God.

Make me a little cake, bring it to me, afterward, make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, the jar of flour shall not be spent, the jug of oil shall not be empty until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth. And she went and did as Elijah said.

And she and he and her household ate for many days. The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah. Again, this woman gave herself to the kingdom of God first and she took care of God's prophet first and God had added all these things unto her.

I can remember just months before we started the church in San Antonio, Paul Washer came to San Antonio. He said, I have never seen a church that supports foreign missions abandoned by God. I'll tell

you this, you give yourself first to taking care of God's servants, especially those that are out on the foreign mission field.

And I believe Paul is altogether right. I did not need to be convinced of that, but I heard him say it, I've never forgotten that. I'm absolutely convinced it's true.

Brethren, we wanna seek first. And you know what happens when we're seeking first, the kingdom of God? It's not just you're considering about how to take care of the guy who fills the pulpit here, it's you're looking out there and you're taking care of those men who are out there in hard places, seeking to spread the gospel into dark places around the face of this earth. And I'll tell you what, I have seen two decades worth of the church in San Antonio doing that and God has never failed us, not once, brethren.

And I expect that that'll be the pattern here. That'll be the testimony of this church as well. God is faithful to these things.

He will take care of us. We need to give ourselves first. Brethren, first, there has to be priority.

There has to be. Now, turn to Leviticus chapter 25. Leviticus 25, 18.

Now, I'm taking you here for one reason, because something is said here by God himself that I want you to read it with your own eyes. Leviticus 25, verse 18. Therefore, you shall do my statutes and keep my rules and perform them.

And then you will dwell in the land securely. Now, you know what? One of the things God wanted in the commands that he gave to Old Testament Israel is he wanted them to leave their land, lie dormant every seven years. Basically a Sabbath for the land.

I didn't quote to you expressly the Scripture that deals with that, but you'll see it's here. The land will yield its fruit, verse 19, and you will eat your fill and dwell in it securely. If you say, what shall we eat in the seventh year if we may not sow or gather? See, it's being supposed there that God had commanded that.

And God recognizes that the people are going to wonder, hey, if I don't devote myself to sowing, to planting, to reaping, to the usual harvest, if I don't give myself to that in the seventh year, isn't my family gonna go hungry? And see, we can have the same kinds of questions, right? If I don't seek first food and drink and clothing, what's gonna happen to my family? Oh, but I love these words. Notice what he says. Verse 21, I will command my blessing on you in the sixth year so that it will produce a crop sufficient for three years.

Now, the only reason I had us go there is for this reason. Does anybody else like those words, I will command my blessing on you? Do you recognize that is exactly what Jesus is saying in Matthew 6? He is saying you don't have to seek first what the Gentiles seek first because if you seek first the kingdom, God will command his blessing on you and provide every single thing that the Gentiles spend all their time seeking after. You don't have to do it.

That's what's being taught. Brethren, again, it's all conditional. Do you see that? God is saying to them, do this and I will command my blessing on you.

That's what Jesus is saying. Seek first, do that, and God will command his blessing on you. Brethren, do you not see this all over the scriptures? I just think of the different psalms that are very conditional.

Fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack. Seek that. Seek first the fear of God.

Fear! I mean, you've got to seek first the kingdom of God. Seek to fear the God of that kingdom and you'll have no lack. Psalm 34.10, the young lions suffer want and hunger.

Those who seek the Lord lack no good thing. You can't seek the kingdom of God without seeking the Lord. I mean, that's where it starts.

That means this, when you wake up Monday morning, this isn't about going to work, getting money so that you can fill the refrigerator. If you're going to seek first the kingdom of God, you've got to seek first the Lord. You rise up Monday morning, first thoughts in your head should be, even as you go off to sleep at night on Sunday night, I'm going to wake up early enough so that I can seek the Lord first.

Because I need Him first. I need His help first. I need to be in His Word first.

I need to be cleansed. How can somebody think they're seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness if they're not seeking Him in prayer, seeking Him in the Word first? That needs to be a priority in life. People get up and they're so ready to run off to work and to do their thing.

Why? So they can earn money. Why? Can I tell you, brother or sister, if you're doing that and you just run right past your Bible, you run past the time of getting with the Lord, and you just run out there to make money so that you can take care of yourself and your family, you're acting just like a Gentile. That's what he's saying.

Now listen. Look at Matthew 6 again, verse 34. Matthew 6.34, back to our passage.

Notice this, Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day. What day? Well, obviously today.

Today. That's this day. That's the day.

Sufficient for the day. Any given day. We only live today.

Nobody lives tomorrow. We live today. Sufficient for this day, today, is its own trouble.

That's what he... Certainly, Jesus isn't saying it's okay to be anxious today. Just don't be anxious about tomorrow. He's already told us we don't need to be anxious today or tomorrow about all the things that the Gentiles are anxious about.

Jesus' point is this. So many people run around and they're so worried about tomorrow. You know what He's saying? Live life today.

Be concerned about today. That's the idea here. He coupled this with the last verse, verse 33, to think about what He's really saying.

Seek first the kingdom of God. That's verse 33. And do it today.

Concern yourself with it today. That's verse 34. Concern yourself about this day.

Why? Because tomorrow hasn't come. Tomorrow never comes. For as soon as it does, it's today.

I mean, brethren, I would just encourage you this. Seek first the kingdom. Seek first the righteousness.

And do it today. Don't... Christians who procrastinate are Christians that end up getting to the end of their life and they've done very little. The Christian who is always going to... They're always going to give more next week.

They're always going to do something. They've got these plans, but they never come to fruition because it's always tomorrow. Brethren, live today.

I mean, really live today. You know what Jesus said? We must work the works of Him who sent me while it's day. Night is coming when no one can work.

You remember when Nehemiah was rebuilding the wall at Jerusalem? His enemies tried to hinder him. Sanballat and Geshem sent to me... This is Nehemiah. Come, let us meet together at Hakafirm in the plain of Ono.

But they intended to do me harm. I sent messengers to them saying, I'm doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave and come down to you? Brethren, I love that.

I'm doing a great work. I cannot come down. Brethren, when food... You know what happens? The more stuff you buy, the more clothes you buy, the more shoes you buy.

You ever notice you buy a new pair of shoes? I can't speak for women on how this goes. I've never seen women shining their shoes. I guess you just get rid of them, right? Buy new ones.

Or is that not right? I've never seen you shine your shoes. Men shine their shoes. But here's the thing.

You buy more things and they're constantly calling to you. I need your attention. Come.

If a guy has six pairs of shoes, you look at it and it's got scuffs on it. Well, you need to shine me. The more stuff you have, the more it calls to you.

I need to be fixed. I need to be cleaned. I need your time.

You need to learn how to use me. You put that new thing on your computer. Everything is calling out.

Brethren, you get food, clothing, houses, stuff, and it's all calling to you. It's barking out its orders, its threats pitifully. Come.

Give me your attention. And you know what? You can just say, I'm doing a great work and I can't come down. Brethren, I'm serious here.

There's a time when you have to say, the kingdom of God is what matters. And it's spread and His kingdom coming is what matters. And you look over at that thing and yeah, it's over there and it's broken.

It's not. But there's a time to go or just get rid of it. Then it has no claim on you at all.

And in fact, Jesus said that. Go sell your possessions. You have money bags in heaven.

He said that kind of thing. Brethren, we need to live a day at a time. Don't be anxious for tomorrow.

And we need to really live while we live. Brethren, the Lord Jesus Christ is telling us to seek something first and to seek it today. This means priorities.

You know, if you prioritize something in life, you're intentional. You actually do things deliberately. You think.

You strategize. You actually evaluate your life. You make decisions.

You make choices based on that. That's the thing Jesus is telling us. Prioritize.

People who live for tomorrow never do anything well. We must be proactive. We've got to be intentional today.

Work while it's actually day. Listen to scripture. I remind you of this.

I brought these verses up on Wednesday. I said that I would probably rehearse them. But repeatedly in Titus, remind them to be ready for every good work.

Well, I want to remind you. Be ready for every good work. You know what? You can get to where you become so distracted and sidetracked with all sorts of stuff in life.

Are you giving yourselves to good works? I mean, Christian, this is what you've been saved for. This is what he gave himself up for. A people of his own possession who are zealous of good works.

You want to be multiplying good works. And you want to seek that first. And they need to be good works that have everything to do with the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

And you need to be living for that. And that needs to be first. First.

Prioritize. Titus 3.8 I want you to insist on these things so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. Are you careful to devote yourselves? Careful.

That means you give care to it. You're no longer like the Gentiles where all your care is just about where are we going to eat next? What restaurant are we going to go to? How are we going to get those clothing and those shoes and that stuff? And what about our house? And what about this? And what about that? And constantly caring mainly. No.

You need to be careful to devote yourself to good works. That means you need to be strategizing. How can you use the spiritual gifts and whatever God has given to you, the time He's given to you, the resources He's given to you, to actually do and accomplish good in this world at this time.

And do it today. Tomorrow, it'll suffice for itself. You need to work while it's day.

You need to work today. And you need to give priority to this. Titus 3.14 Let our people learn to devote themselves to good works so as to help cases of urgent need and not be unfruitful.

One of the things I was bringing up on Wednesday is this. Brethren, we got into a pattern where when something major came up in the news, I'm talking about back in San Antonio. When something major came up in the news, some kind of catastrophe in the world, some type of storm, some type of earthquake, something happened.

A building blows up in Lebanon or something even like what's happening in Afghanistan. Oftentimes, what the first response was to us is not just to turn a blind eye or whether that's in a far off place, a far away country, we could never do anything. Usually, the first mindset was this.

There's some good we can do there. And we put together a team and we'd send them there. In fact, right now, as I brought up on Wednesday, I'm working right now with the brother that's in the Middle East.

And we're trying to figure out ways that we can possibly help the Afghanis, especially Afghani Christians. And there's actually a man on the ground right now over in the area. And he is seeking in one of the Middle Eastern countries to find Afghan refugee camps.

And he's trying to find out among these camps how they got into the country, what paperwork they were needed to get into the country. We're actually looking at possibilities of smuggling people out. I have made it known that I will go over there if I actually think that I could actually do anything.

It takes manpower to do these things. And one of the things I've learned is this. When you have a God like we have, you never want to say, we won't be able to do anything.

I have found that is absolutely not the case ever. That if you'll go trusting the Lord, we need to ask God for these kinds of open doors. Brethren, I want you to think big.

I want you to be creative in these things. Hebrews 10.24, let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works. You know one of the primary reasons that the author of Hebrews gives us as to why we don't want to forsake assembling together? Stir up each other.

You know, this is one of the things about not being involved in the church. You kind of isolate yourself. You don't get stirred up like people who come around each other.

That's the kind of church you want to be. I want to be in a church where we stir up each other to love and good works. Greater manifestations of love.

Christ loved and He came and He made the ultimate sacrifice. But He came and He poured Himself out. Brethren, this is practical.

Seek first these things. You say, well, I'm a working man. I go off to work each day, labor at what God has called me to do.

Okay, brother. But are you seeking first the kingdom of God when you do that? You see, we need to be intentional. Okay, I've got to say I've got a job.

I go off to this workplace. You full well know that the vast majority of men in this place that don't work at home, that have to go off to an actual workplace. The truth is, you likely are the only Christian in that workplace.

Christians are not a dime a dozen. They don't just pop up everywhere. I know, you can actually work somewhere where there could be two or five Christians.

That can happen. But I'm just telling you this. Typically, when God saves somebody, we walk through life.

We have situations in family. We have situations in the workplace. We have situations where we shop.

We have situations where we go. We have situations in the city in which we live, among our neighbors, where you very well are the only Christian and the only Christian light that the people in your immediate proximity are being exposed to. That is often the case.

You need to be intentional about that. God did not put you in that place for you to be silent, zip your lip, and basically deny Christ by your silence. He did not save you for that.

You need to be seeking first these things. I would say this. If you're going to seek first the kingdom, then you want to be on your knees before you, or however you pray, before you go into that workplace.

You want to wash your mind before you get out into this world. You want to wash yourself in the water of the word. And then you go out there.

You want to be a witness. And I recognize you don't want to be preaching the gospel while you're on the clock. That is stealing your employer's time.

I'm not saying to do that. But pray for opportunities. Pray for open doors.

Pray to get alone with that guy you're working with and be able to share the gospel with him. Look for opportunities. And Scripture says this.

If you're going to walk as a son of light, then you need to expose the deeds of darkness. And you know what? That's what Jesus did. He called out sin.

And I know it's uncomfortable. You got foul-mouthed guys around you at work. Say, you ought not to blaspheme the name of your Creator.

You can say something like that. You say, well, I might not be light. No, you might not be.

But you know one of the things that you're called to do in this world is you're called to expose the darkness. And God uses that. God will use that to save people.

God, yes, people may not like it. People didn't like Jesus doing that. They put Him to death.

And He specifically said they hated Him. And they hated Him because He exposed their sin. He exposed their self-righteousness.

People are very lost and they're very self-righteous. And you start exposing their self-righteousness, you put your finger right on their pride. And they don't like that.

But that's what Jesus did. And that's, listen, we have to be honest with people. You're not good.

The reality is if you die, you're going to perish. That's the most loving thing you can do. You see somebody with cancer, you want to tell them, I see it.

I see all the signs of it on you. There's a remedy over here. Flee to it.

Brethren, this is just being practical. Can I tell you something? Sometimes we're just noticing something like this. Paul said in Ephesians, you remember this, Ephesians chapter 4, where Paul is describing what the new man is like.

He says this, let the thief no longer steal. You know, a lot of people's Christianity stops right there. Well, I don't kill.

I don't steal anymore. I don't do this. I don't do that.

A lot of Christians, it's that negatory kind of Christianity. It's all about what I don't do. Well, I don't go to X-rated movies anymore.

And I don't do this. And I don't do that. And I don't do the other.

But you know what Paul says? He says, let the thief no longer steal. But he doesn't stop there. Let him work with his hands.

Well, that's great. That's good. You can have a lot of Gentiles that simply may not steal.

And they work with their hands. But they're very selfish. You know, there's a lot of hard-working people in the world.

And they can just amass all the more food, and all the more drink, and all the more clothing. You know, it doesn't stop there. It's not just don't be lazy.

It's so that you may have something to share with those that are in need. You see what he's saying? Thief. Okay, yes, that's a given.

You're no longer a thief. Two, it's given you're going to be a hard worker. Three, you're not just a hard worker so that you can concern yourself with your family just like the Gentiles do.

No, it goes into the category of good works. So that you have something to give to those in need. See, you go off to the workplace.

You need to be strategic with the money that you're making. Brethren, we need to really strive as a church. You can give individually, there's no doubt.

But collectively, we need to really be looking for needs in the world. Where can we give? Where can we help? Can you grasp what God saved you for? How can you seek first the kingdom of God unless you seek first the things that please God? The things that He's calling us to. Brethren, you've got to be intentional.

Look, we only have one life to live. And you need to work while it's day. Because the night's coming when you can't work.

And there's certain things that you need to be seeking first in your life. And brethren, men, women, you with children. Look, you ought to be seeking first that in their lives.

The lives of your children. You're told. Fathers, bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

You don't want to first and foremost just let your children play. Let them watch stuff on the internet or watch stuff on TV. You know what? You primarily need to be showing them who Christ is.

You need to be showing them all about this kingdom. I mean, you've been given these children and you have a responsibility clearly. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all

your might.

These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children. You shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, when you rise.

Sometimes seeking first the kingdom of God may mean this. Now listen, this does not set well. With many mindsets concerning seeking first the kingdom.

But listen carefully to this. Luke 18 verse 29, He said to them, Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, listen to this, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time and in the age to come eternal life. Here's the thing.

Oftentimes seeking first the kingdom. This is what Jesus said. Jesus says people leave their house.

I left my house. Back in San Antonio. People will leave their houses.

That's not your primary thing. That is not seeking first. Just a lot of people in this.

Oh, it is very gentilian. Just seek your house, seek your garden, seek to modify it, seek to tweak it, seek to make it heaven on this earth. As though you're going to live there forever.

That's very gentilian. That's very gentile-like. There are people who leave house, leave wife, leave brother, leave parents, leave children, for the sake of the kingdom of God.

Now the thing is, again, God has you covered when you seek first these things. He says, I'm going to command a blessing. And what's going to happen? You'll receive a hundredfold, is what Matthew's account of that says.

You'll receive many times more in this time and the age to come eternal life. Now listen, obviously seeking the kingdom first and seeking it first today, it means that oftentimes we look past family and past houses. Because we're talking priority.

Do you know what somebody think with me here? What has to be going through somebody's mind for them to walk away from their house or perhaps their children or even a spouse? Hudson Taylor left his wife for a long time. C.T. Studd left his wife for years. Ruby and I, we left our four children back in the U.S. I'll tell you this, if you're going to seek first the kingdom, it is not simply, well, I've got my family, I've got my house, this is all my life.

And it just, everything rotates around that. It's not that. Ladies, you too.

I mean, seek first the kingdom. Children, any children that are professing to know the Lord, what are you seeking first? Just here at the end, I want to encourage this. I'm not saying, listen, a husband needs to love his wife like Christ loves the church.

I'm not saying a husband should just walk away from his wife for the kingdom of God's sake. I would say this, Hudson Taylor did it for a season, but they waited out prayerfully. You know, the brother Andy has said, if you've heard him, that oftentimes he's away from Rebecca for two or three weeks out of a month.

There's a price to pay when we seek first this kingdom. Brethren, I want to encourage creativity. We've got sisters in here with no children, some single, young men.

Seek first the kingdom of God and think outside the box. Be creative. I love Spurgeon had 66 ministries that he was over.

Brethren, I can tell you this. It chafes at me. Now I know I haven't been here that long, but it chafes at me that we have so few ministries in this church, but I recognize this is a rebuilding time.

And we're, we're new here. We're asking the Lord to open doors. And I believe that in the course of time, he will Spurgeon had 66 ministries.

He was over. He had a pastor's school. They had a fund for needy, pregnant women.

They had Sunday schools. They had all, there was all manner of funds for the poor book distribution, track society, mission Bible school. Spurgeon's wife, you may know full well.

She, she raised money to have books, libraries supplying to poor pastors. I would just say this. What can you do? See, God has given you spiritual gifts and God has given you certain resources and God has given you time.

What can you do? How should you be living? Brethren, what we want is this. We want to get to the end of our life. And we want as a church collectively, but each one of us individually, we want to have, we want to leave a wake behind us.

You know, a boat goes through the water leaves that way. We want to wake behind us of good works. Anybody remember Dorcas or Tabitha? Do you remember what happened when she died? What happened? Anybody remember? She, she was, she was missed.

You know why? Because she ministered to people. And those that were dependent on her, those that reaped from her ministry, they were weeping. They were sorrowing.

I just ask you this. To what degree are you impacting people? And the lives of people. So that when you're gone, you would be missed like her.

Brethren, I'll tell you this. That doesn't happen by accident. You've got to be seeking something.

You've got to be seeking first something. You've got to be giving yourself. Brethren, this is a priority question.

You got to seek certain things first and let it be God's kingdom. You remember Jesus, our Lord. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil for God was with Him.

How can we bring healing to our poor, diseased, and distressed, especially our city, Manchester? How can we do that? What can we do? Brethren, I just want, I want, I want us thinking. Because you know what? Nothing will happen unless we first think and strategize and contemplate but I'll tell you this. With the God we have, you never want to say we can't do that.

Don't say that. God can turn the world upside down with just a handful of people. God can take the mountain with the Philistines at the top with one Jonathan and one armor bearer.

Do not underestimate what God can do. Listen, we're weak in ourselves. Utter weakness.

But we're not by ourselves. We have this God with us that Jesus is saying, you're a heavenly Father. Just apply all these things.

And I'll tell you, I've seen crazy people do crazy things and God comes through over and over and over again. So here it is. What can we do? What good can we go about doing? I just say this, brethren, live.

Live well while you have life. Live. Live well while you live.

Really live while you're alive. And seek it first. Seek living well and doing these good things for the kingdom of God and God will command His blessing on you so that you will not lack the things that the Gentiles seek after.

Trust Him with your life. Amen. And so ends Matthew chapter 6. Next, chapter 7. Father, I pray.

Oh Lord, I pray. Please give us open doors. Lord, I'm not asking you right off for 66 ministries like Spurgeon had.

We don't. We're not where they were. Don't have the gifts he had.

But Lord, please, please open doors for us. I pray one after another we would see you open doors for us to be able to to be doers of good, to seek first the kingdom, to seek first the things that are most pleasing to you. Lord, I pray that the brethren would be stirred, that the brethren would strategize, that the brethren would arise to this call of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I pray this in His name. Amen. You are dismissed.

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