

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Int.

1. Aim: To show how we can get our priorities in order.
2. Matt. 6:33 NKJV "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."
 - a. During the sermon on the mount Jesus told His listeners that they are not to worry about where and if they would get their next meal or where they will find clothing, shelter, or essential things.
 - b. But He told them to Seek First The Kingdom of God and God's righteousness and all these things would be added unto them.
3. What does it mean to seek first the kingdom of God?
4. Song # 555

Discussion

I. SEEK

- A. Matt. 6:33
- B. Seek - word found 214 times in Bible. It means....
 1. "To look for, to search after, to pursue, or to endeavor to obtain" [Arndt & Gingrich P. 339]
 2. Here in the verse it is used in such a way as to mean "keep on seeking" -- keep on searching, striving for
- C. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." Matt. 7:7-8

II. FIRST

A. Meaning

1. "Priority"
 - a. Prior to other things - Before all others
 - b. Before another in time, space or importance
 - c. In preference to something else - Superiority in rank, position, or privilege
2. Prioritize - to arrange in order of priority - importance

B. Illustrations of putting first things first

1. Getting dressed - put on socks, then shoes
2. Cooking a birthday cake - mix ingredients, bake, put on icing, decorate, and then the candles.
3. Bird nest - build nest, lay eggs, sit on them, hatch, baby birds fly away

C. Eccl. 3:1 NKJV "To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:"

1. Season - an appointed occasion, a time
2. This indicates that there is a proper order
3. Everything has its time, and every purpose under the heavens has its hour
4. Every matter has a time appropriate or suitable for it.
 - a. A time to be born and a time to die
 - b. A time to plant and a time to harvest
 - c. A time to weep and a time to laugh
 - d. A time to keep silence, and a time to speak

D. God should be First

1. This implies that there are other things we could put first - or before that which should be first.
2. Every person has some one thing which is most important in his life
3. If a person does not put God first in his life, then he puts some "god" first.
4. Exod. 20:3 NKJV "You shall have no other gods before Me."
 - a. To recognize no other gods at all
 - b. "In addition to me"
 - c. The worship of false gods and the true God is not acceptable
 - d. God would not tolerate any other God that men worshiped.

E. Matt. 10:37 NKJV " He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

1. We are to love God and we are to love our parents or our children
2. But love of God must come before any other.
3. Must put "First Things First". That means God comes before family.
4. Luke 14:26 NKJV "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."
 - a. The word hate does not mean to despise or be mean to them
 - b. It means to "Love Less" - we love them less than we love God

III. KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

A. "Kingdom of God"

1. Church and kingdom are the same
2. Mark 1:14-15 - "kingdom of God is at hand" Message of John the Baptist
3. Mark 9:1 NKJV "And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."
4. Matthew 16:18, 19 "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - a. I will build my church
 - b. Keys of the Kingdom of heaven
5. Col. 1:13 "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"

B. "and his Righteousness"

1. Right Doing - or doing God's Will
2. In the church we are to live as Children of God - not like sinners.
3. We have given up our old man - been born again - raised to walk in newness of life.

IV. "AND ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED UNTO YOU."

- A. All these things - Necessities such as food, clothing, shelter
- B. Added
 - 1. God will make sure you have these essentials for life.
 - 2. Taken from a phrase which meant that the seller gave a little extra - like our baker's dozen. This is an extra amount or overplus.
- C. In addition to the blessings which will come for seeking first his Kingdom and Righteousness we will also be given these material necessities.

V. HOW DO WE PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST

- A. Christ put the church first in that he died for her.
 - 1. Acts 20:28 "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 - 2. Ephesians 5:23 "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body."
- B. Where do we put the church in our decisions?
 - 1. Do we remember her when it comes time to assemble with the saints?
Hebrews 10:25
 - 2. Do we remember her when it comes time to give as we have been prospered?
1 Corinthians 16:1,2
 - 3. Do we remember the church in our prayers?

4. Do we look to the church as a place for us to serve or as a place for us to be served? Phil. 2:3-5 "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"
5. Seeking the kingdom first means exalting the church that Jesus built. Ephesians 3:20, 21 "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

C. GOD'S KINGDOM AND RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE MATERIAL THINGS

1. Our interest in the church should be first.
2. Jesus died for it, he gave his life for it, it is his bride.
3. Col. 3:1-2 "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."
4. Money and material goods will perish
5. I Tim. 6:6-10 v. 10 "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

D. OBEY ALL OF TEACHINGS OF JESUS

1. One who seeks first the kingdom of God does not choose and pick which commands he wants to obey.
2. Dedication to God means we do all that he says, because he says it.
3. Obedience to God is not like going through a cafeteria line.
4. Matt. 7:21-23
5. Luke 6:46 ""But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?"
6. One cannot seek first the kingdom unless he willingly keeps all the teachings of God.
7. The commands of God are not optional they are requirements.

E. MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICES

1. When a Christian is confronted with a choice of following Jesus or the world, he will follow Jesus.
2. Matt. 10:34-37 v. 37 " "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."
3. This may be a hard decision
 - a. It was painful for Abraham to follow God's will in sacrificing Isaac. Gen.22
 - b. The early Christians had to suffer persecution and death in keeping first the kingdom of God.
4. The rewards of making the right decisions will be the eternal glory and happiness
- Rev. 2:10 I Pet. 1:3-5

F. FOLLOWING CHRIST BEFORE ANY OTHER

1. Luke 9:57-62
 - a. These two men reversed the divine order
 - b. The emphasis was misplaced
 - c. They made the mistake of placing the good before the best.
 - d. The good is often the worst enemy of the best.
2. This is a common sin
 - a. It is misplacing the emphasis
 - b. These make secondary things primary and primary things secondary
3. Let us not
 - a. Major in minors and
 - b. Minor in Majors.
4. But let us:
 - a. Minor in minors and
 - b. Major in majors.
5. Have you counted the cost ? Luke 14:28

CONCLUSION

1. Matt. 6:33 NKJV "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."
2. Do we know this verse?
 - (1) Principle -- Seek
 - (2) People -- Ye
 - (3) Priority -- First
 - (4) Place -- Kingdom of God
 - (5) Pattern -- His righteousness.
 - (6) Promise -- All things added.
3. Seek God first in life
 - a. Not second or third or on down the line
 - b. He deserves our BEST
4. What we put first in life becomes our God
5. Seek first things first - then put the other things of life in their proper order.
6. We must decide to decide to put first things - The church - in first place.