

## THE CHRISTIAN'S PRIORITY

Mt. 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness

On this *first* day of a new year the following words of our Lord Jesus are particularly appropriate, Mk. 6:33 seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. ... In his book *All of Grace*, Spurgeon wrote, "Begin as you mean to go on, and go on as you began, and let the Lord be all in all to you". ... In doctrinal terms this is known as *the perseverance of the saints*, putting your hand to the plough, and not looking back (Lk. 9:62) ... and if you *do* fall, you don't give up, but you *get* up! ... Often, we come to God and ask Him to do something for *us*, but here *He* is requiring us, seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.

Jesus began this chapter by dealing with prayer. He taught His disciples not to mimic the Pharisees who love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men (v.5). ... Instead, He showed His disciples how to pray ... firstly in relation to our Father Who is in Heaven, - for after all, He is the One we are addressing, - and secondly concerning us here on earth ... for we need His help. Concerning the Father, Jesus emphasised, ... Hallowed be thy name (v.9) ... <sup>10</sup> Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done ... and in relation to our reliance upon Him ... <sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread. <sup>12</sup> ... forgive us our debts ... <sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Prayer is a Heavenly privilege God grants to those who belong to Him. We speak to Him because He is our Heavenly Father, and we are His adopted children. We are in His family, - we are blessed, and we are also *bound*, - pledged, - in our commitment to Him. He is our Master, and we are His subjects and servants. We are not His slaves for He has set us free, and therefore, we serve Him willingly and joyfully. ... We are under His authority. Jesus is our Saviour, our Redeemer, our Lord, our Master ... and, along with countless numbers throughout the millennia and across the world, we belong to His Redeemed. And consequently, it is His will for us to receive the best He has for us and, - in turn, - this requires our obedience to His Word and to His will.

To put it simply, ... **It is our PRIORITY** to seek ... first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. ... It is not an option, or a choice. ... Grammatically, 'seek' is a verb, a 'doing word'. It illustrates how we must be *seeking* in order to *find*! It is an imperative which means it is what we as believers are *converted* to do. In the Greek, it is also a present active which means *seeking* is what we are continually to be doing. It is the *proof* we are saved and looking to be more like the Lord Jesus. If there is no desire to be like Him, there is something seriously wrong!

And we are told what we are to seek is the highest aspiration and ambition for any human being. When God created Adam and Eve, He blessed them ... After each of the six days when He had completed the daily work of creation, He surveyed it and judged it as *good* (Gen. 1:4,12,18,21,25). However, only after He had created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. ... God *blessed* them (Gen. 1:27,28). ... At the end of the sixth day, He surveyed everything He had made, - especially the man, - and declared it was *very good* (v.31).

The man and the woman were the ‘crowning glory’ of His creation, distinct and superior to everything else, and He *blessed* them by establishing a unique relationship, - a special bond of fellowship, - with them from the beginning. ... We have not evolved, - or any such nonsense, - but God made us for Himself, in His image ... and that is how He is our Father ... and that is why it is **our priority** to bring Him our praise and glory. We are privileged to say with the choir in Heaven, **Rev. 4:11** Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for *thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created*. ... Therefore, we have no higher calling on earth than to seek ... first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. ... **That is our priority**, and that is why God placed us here, to seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, to His glory.

He also taught His disciples to pray, **10** Thy *kingdom* come. In one sense, the Kingdom of God is already here for *our God reigns* (Is. 52:7), - present tense. While we cannot yet see His reign in all its glory, nevertheless, the writer to the Hebrews affirms, **Heb. 2:8** Thou hast put all things in subjection under his *[Christ's]* feet. For in that he *[the Father]* put all in subjection under him *[Christ]*, he left nothing that is not put under him. But *now* we see *not yet* all things put under him. **9** But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour. ... As believers and members of God's family, we see by the eye of faith Jesus ‘now’ crowned with glory and, we recognise presently Him by faith as our Saviour, our Redeemer, our Lord, and our King. At this moment He is in Heaven, the risen, exalted, crowned Son of God., - “Enthroned is Jesus *now*, upon His Heavenly seat; the Kingly crown is on His brow, the saints are at His feet” ... *now*, - ... He is already King, but His Kingdom is *not yet* of this world (Jn. 18:36) ... *not yet*, but it will be!

John wrote in his epistle, **I Jn. 3:2** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God ... Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God, and it doth *not yet* appear *what we shall be* but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. ... John wrote in the

Book of Revelation, how we have been made unto our God kings and priests; and *we shall reign on the earth* (Rev. 5:10). ... And *that* will be when He returns to take us unto Himself. As for the present, **I Cor. 13:12** *now* we see through a glass, darkly; but *then* face to face: *now* I know in part; *but then* shall I know even as also I am known. ... He is King *now*, - *already*, - ... even though the present reality does *not yet* match the future certainty. One day, however, it will. ... In the meantime, for as long as the Lord has us here on this earth, the proof of our salvation is that we keep on seeking His glorious Kingdom in the knowledge its reality awaits us.

In seeking His future Kingdom, we are being prepared to be ready, and we are to work at making ourselves ready. We are not to erect any obstacles to hinder our progress. We know we cannot do it on our own, but with the help of the Holy Spirit Who came to replace Jesus on earth, we *will* and, as believers, we *are* seeking the righteousness of God, **Rom. 8:14** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. **15** For ... ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. **16** The Spirit *[Himself]* beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: **17** And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. ... That is completely different to how the unsaved search for righteousness. They search for it in religion, but the best any of us can muster on our own from religion is as filthy rags (Is. 64:6), **Titus 3:5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; **6** Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Every day is bringing us closer to Christ's return ... and every day it is the Father's will for His people to be increasingly conformed to His image (Rom. 8:29), for His glory.

Earlier in the chapter, Jesus had been teaching *His disciples* (Mt. 5:1,2) not to fall into the world's trap of 'laying up treasures upon earth' (v.19) ... And among those disciples sitting listening to Him were Matthew the former tax-collector who had previously been ruled by his greed ... and John, James, Andrew and Peter who had their lucrative business as fishermen ... and Simon the Zealot with his nationalist aspirations ... and Judas Iscariot ... You cannot take it with you, so instead, lay up spiritual riches which are gifted by God to His children to make us more like Him. ... "Take the world, but give me Jesus", Fanny Crosby wrote.

And it is not an option for the 'super spiritual', rather **it is our PRIORITY** as born-again children of our Heavenly Father to seek ... first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. ... The world does not understand for it has no concept as to why God should be its priority. Their life's goal is to gather up treasures upon

earth (Mt. 6:19), for that is their only hope ... but that is what Jesus commands *us* not to do ... <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (v. 21).

Instead of filling ourselves up with the things of this world, Jesus said, <sup>33</sup> seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. ... How often have you proved it, even when it seems you are looking out into the darkness? Again, the hymn writer describes, “Though shadows deepen, and my heart bleeds, I will not question the way He leads ... I’ll trust His leading, He’ll never fail, through darkest tunnels or misty vales. Obey His bidding and faithful be, Though only one step ahead I see”. ... Another hymn, “Where He may lead me, I will go for I have learned to trust Him so.”

Entering a new year, you dare not proceed ahead without Him for we need Him more than ever personally, and we also need Him more than ever as a church fellowship. He is so good to us, - because of His grace, He keeps us.

Later in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus told His disciples about how a great spiritual decline would precede His return, <sup>Mt. 24:9</sup> Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. ... <sup>11</sup> And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. ... There will be a great apostasy, a great falling away of many whose professions will be proven to be shallow and trivial ... who no longer will hold God and His Word precious, and they will abandon His ways. They will go back to the former paths they claimed to have left, and they will trample carelessly and defiantly upon the faith they once professed to espouse. Iniquity will increasingly abound. The love of many who once claimed Christ ‘shall wax cold’ (Mt. 24:12). To prevail in these perilous times, the Saviour graciously and lovingly extends to us His loving instruction, <sup>Mt. 6:33</sup> seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness

“Hold the fort, for I am coming”, Jesus answers still;  
Wave the answer back to Heaven, “By Thy grace we will”.