“31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:31-34).

PUTTING FIRST THINGS FIRST

Introduction

Loved ones, after a person has obeyed the gospel, our text says, he is then called upon by Jesus to put first things first, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (v. 33).

Every Christian needs to memorize this passage and seek to understand it. Read the context of this passage and realize that Christians have no need to worry if they will put first things first (Matthew 6:25-34).

Let's study and see if we can learn just what it means to PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST.

Discussion

1. One First Gives Himself To The Lord.

When you obey the gospel, you are no longer your own. “19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; cf. Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

Remember that you were purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

The Corinthian's were told how the churches of Macedonia put first things first. "And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God" (2 Corinthians 8:5).

These Christians went beyond what Paul had hoped for. They realized the importance of first giving their own selves to the Lord. Other things will come easier, if we will, first of all, give ourselves to the Lord.

2. A Willing Mind Is Required.

"For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Corinthians 8:12).

God has always required that His people have a willing mind. Look what God required of His people when He wanted them to give for the building of the tabernacle in the Old Testament.

“5 Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord; gold, and silver, and brass… 9” (Exodus 35:5-9).

As David charged his son, Solomon, in regards to the building of the temple, he said:

“And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever” (1 Chronicles 28:9).

Whatever we do in serving God, God wants us to do it with a willing mind! You simply want to please God, not man.

3. Cleanse First The Inside.

In obeying the gospel, one purifies his soul (1 Peter 1:22). Thus, the inside is cleansed, but must be kept clean.

Paul told Timothy, "keep thyself pure" (1 Timothy 5:22), and he told the Philippians to think on “pure” things (Philippians 4:8).

In rebuking the Pharisees, Jesus said, “Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also” (Matthew 23:26).

Read the context of this passage and you can understand what the Pharisees were doing.

4. First Cast The Beam Out Of Thine Own Eye.

Many see everyone's faults but their own!

Therefore, Jesus said, "3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matthew 7:3-5).

What is a mote? It is a small dry body — often a splinter of wood. In today's English, "mote" is usually a speck of dust floating in the air. In this passage, it represents a small fault or imperfection in a person's life.

What is a beam? The “beam” is a long, thick piece of timber – a plank. In this passage it symbolizes a much larger fault or sin in one’s own life.

The terms moat and beam are used as metaphors to illustrate the inconsistency of a hypocrite. Both of these men were effected in the same manner – the EYE – only one less than the other.

Two wrongs do not make one right. Neither must a man profess to be as “pure as an angel” before he has the right to condemn sin in others.

The point is that people often focus on small problems in others while ignoring serious problems in themselves.

The illustration pictures a man with a serious obstruction in his eye and wanting to operate on the eye of another who is much less afflicted.

It would be like a man condemning another for getting drunk every Saturday night when he was himself drinking every day.

What did Jesus say to do first and why? "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (v. 5).

Trying to correct someone else's minor fault while ignoring your own major fault is hypocritical and ineffective.

The teaching is not to forbid all correction, but to address your own faults first. Only when you remove the "beam" from your own life can you see clearly and help others remove the "mote" from theirs.

This is a call to self-examination, humility, and genuine love rather than self-righteous judgment.

5. First Be Reconciled To Thy Brother.

From time to time brethren disagree. Each of us must strive, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18).

In Matthew 5:23-24, you can see what must first be done when your brother has something against you:

"23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24 leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

God will not accept our worship when we are at odds with our brother. ARE YOU LISTENING?

6. That First Of All Prayers Be Made For All Men.

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Perhaps, if more prayers were offered for those in high places, and less criticism, this would be a better place to live.

7. He First Findeth His Own Brother.

After learning the truth of the gospel, we need to find others and share the truth with them. We are saved to save.

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2).

“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Timothy 4:16).

Each of us needs to be an Andrew. After Andrew heard of Jesus and followed Him, what was the first thing that he did?

“40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. 42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone” (John 1:40-42).

8. Seeking First The Kingdom Of God And His Righteousness.

What is the kingdom? The kingdom is where God rules. He rules in the church that Jesus built (Matthew 16:18-19).

Christians have been added or translated into the kingdom (Acts 2:47; Colossians 1:13).

What is God's righteousness: All of God's "commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172)? Jesus is the personification of God's righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30).

What Does It Means To Seek First The Kingdom?

1. The Lord expects His people to attend the services of the church faithfully. We are commanded to not forsake the assemblies (Hebrews 10:25).

The wise committed Christian will work things out so he can attend every service.

2. God demands that His people give cheerfully, liberally, and with purpose and as one is prospered (2 Corinthians 9:6-7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Acts 20:35; Luke 6:38).

3. We must study and do the word of God. God expects us to know His will and to know requires study (2 Peter 3:18; 2 Timothy 2:15; Acts 17:11; Revelation 1:3).

4. We should be zealous in church work. Jesus gave Himself to purchase a people "zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

The First Century Christians were steadfast and zealous (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 15:58; 2 Corinthians 9:2).

5. We need to take time for God. It takes time to be holy. The psalmist wrote, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).

"16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:16-17).

It is easy to let time slip away—even an entire life — doing things which do not contribute to our spiritual welfare.

Conclusion

There is no finer time to begin putting first things first than when you first obey the gospel.

By putting first things first, one will grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord (2 Peter 3:18).

Invitation

Jesus is the only safe way to the Father (John 14:6).

Jesus is the foundation of the church, and every man must take heed how he builds on that foundation (1 Corinthians 3:10-11).

Only the truth should be spoken, and it must be spoken in love.

In truth there is only one safe way, for "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Psalm 19:7).

Christians follow no creed but the Bible. The Holy Spirit inspired word of God thoroughly furnishes the believer for all good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

God's Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

All believers can have unity by the word. Man-made creeds, disciplines, and manuals are inspired by the devil and only result in division. Failure to abide by the Lord's words will condemn the soul.

Jesus Christ is the only name wherein one is saved; therefore, Christian is the only name to wear (Acts 11:26).

Like the human creeds, human names (Catholics, Baptist, Mormons, Methods, etc.) are divisive. Wearing only the name of Jesus is important because Christ was the one crucified for us, and penitent believers are baptized into His name. Only in His name can God be glorified.

The safe way teaches that Christ Jesus built but one church – His church – the body or church of Christ (Matt. 16:18).

With His blood He purchased only one church, which is His body. He therefore saves only His one body – the church of Christ/God. The church is the pillar and ground of truth, and thus, the church must make known truth.

The true worshipper worships the Father in spirit (sincere whole-hearted) and in truth (as truth directs – John 4:24).

New Testament worship is seen in five acts: 1. Teaching. 2. Giving. 3. Lord's Supper. 4. Singing. 5. Prayer.

One must be born again to be saved (John 3:3-7).

This happens when one hears the truth; believes the truth; confesses the truth; repents of sin; and is baptized, that is, immersed in water for the remission (forgiveness) of sins by the blood of Jesus. Then you must live a faithful holy life, and when the Lord returns you will receive the crown of eternal life.