

Seek Ye First 2 of 2

#0193

Study given by W.D. Frazee - December 15, 1978

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” Matthew 6:33.

Last week the emphasis was on seeking first. First in importance, God is the first that in all things He might have the preeminence. First in life, those that seek Him early shall find Him, and first in the day, morning by morning making God first.

This evening I would like to study with you that expression “the kingdom of God.” “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things,” the temporal things, the material things needed, “will be added unto you.”

Why should it be necessary to seek the kingdom of God. Isn't God omnipotent? Oh yes. The psalmist says:

“The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all” Psalm 103:19.

But His reign is the reign of love. It's no ordinary kingdom. It's not a dictatorship, but He's the king, but He has set His heart, watch this, He has set His heart on having a government that has the full, intelligent support of 100% of the citizens. Now you never saw a government like that in this world, did you? No.

A ruler is happy if he can get 51% of the people for long enough to put him in office. But God, I repeat, has set his heart on having the full intelligent support of 100% of His citizens. Not merely to get Him on the throne (He's there of course), but to choose through eternity that He shall reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. He has set His heart on that. It's quite an objective isn't it? To enter into that relationship ourselves, and to get others to do it, is to seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.

In other words, the government of God: its goals are our goals, its objectives are our objectives, its success is our mission to help God achieve that wonderful goal of a kingdom which rules in the hearts of men free and voluntary the allegiance given by its citizens.

Now, another name for this kingdom of God is the church. You remember Jesus, in Matthew 25, the first verse, says:

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom” Matthew 25:1.

We understand, of course, that these women represent God's church, especially in the closing hours. My point is, Christ says that this is a representation of the kingdom of heaven. God has one government in this universe, not two, or half a dozen – He has one. Its headquarters are in the temple of the New Jerusalem in heaven. But the church on earth is inseparably connected with that temple, and so it is called the temple of God – the church, the temple of God.

It's called the government of God, the kingdom of God. And so, if we pray intelligently, we pray "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We are praying for the blessed time when the church shall fill this earth and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed from one end of this world to the other. That's what we're praying for.

But that prayer will not be answered by the church entering the political arena, and seeking to dominate the legislative process. It will not be achieved by church and state in this world uniting in one theocracy. No. "The government shall be upon His shoulders," the Lord Jesus Christ, and soon in heaven the voices will resound and echo out through the universe, "The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever."

Is the church on earth really the kingdom of God? Is it friend? Oh yes. The church is the kingdom of God, and He intends that no authority shall be recognized in His kingdom but His own. He is the head of the body, the church, that in all things He might have the preeminence. Sometimes I feel we human beings who fill some little position in the church forget that we're not the head, we're not the rulers, we're not the inventors. No, no.

If God has given us any responsibility to teach a Sabbath school class, to the elders, or deacons, or pastors, or administrators, He has given us the responsibility as under shepherds of leading the flock under the Great Chief Shepherd. He has given us the responsibility of exercising the authority in love as He has set us an example.

And I repeat, we have not been ordained to legislate the laws of God over again. There's a man half way around the world that thinks that he has the power to change or tamper with the law of God, but he has no such power. You and I don't believe that, do we? Well if we deny him the power, why should we try it?

Why, I ask friends, in all seriousness, should we seek to tamper with the word of God, the law of God? For He has said:

"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you,
neither shall ye diminish ought from it" Deuteronomy 4:2.

The work of the church on earth is not to keep changing God's laws, but rather to carry them through remembering that Jesus, the King, is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Now there can be changes in different policies as long as we keep the principles. I can remember the time when Sabbath school used to be at 10:00, but now most everywhere that I go, I see that Sabbath school is 9:30. Is that all right?

Did God send a revelation from heaven on that? Neither one of them, did He? He left that for human beings to work out in harmony with His principles of order.

But keep in mind that the great laws of God, the great commandments revealing His will, the church must never tamper with. The church must never lower the standards of God. The church is the kingdom of God on earth, and He intends that no authority shall be recognized but His own.

You remember that the apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesian church, said:

“Christ ... loved the church, and gave Himself for it”
Ephesians 5:25

I want to have you look at that please, just now. What’s Christ’s attitude toward the church? He loved it. How much did he love it? He loved it so much that He gave Himself for it. If Jesus loved the church so much that He loved it better than His own life, what does He want you and me to do? Is the church that precious to you, my friend – worth more to you than your own life? If it is, you’re following the command of our text, “Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.”

Now what about the problem of sin in the church? There are some, I’m sorry to say, who equate love for the church with a spirit of compromise. They are perfectly willing to let Aaron build a golden calf as long as he calls all the people to come and worship as a feast to Jehovah. Did Aaron do that? That’s exactly what Aaron did, friends. He built a calf in answer to the clamor of the people, and then said, “Tomorrow is a feast to Jehovah.” Exodus 32:5. They danced around that idol and had their gluttonous feast in the name of the Lord God of Israel. And there stood the golden calf all the time.

That is not love for the church, my friends. And those who today are perpetrating such compromises do not really love the church. Not so. Notice your text there now in Ephesians 5. What did Christ’s love for the church lead Him to do? To give Himself for it that He might what? Compromise with sin in the church? That He might what? Sanctify and cleanse it

That’s His purpose in loving the church. And those who seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness will never have the idea that the way to love the church is to exercise a spirit of tolerance toward open sin and rebellion, disloyalty, vice, and crime. Sin is not better because it’s in the church, it’s worse! So true love will remember the statement of Jesus to the Laodiceans:

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” Revelation 3:19.

May I deal with a few illustrations of how love for God’s kingdom will lead us in very practical ways to manifest our concern for the church? Turn to 1 Corinthians 6. Look through those first seven verses and tell me what subject is Paul dealing with? Lawsuits. Have you ever heard of them? U.S. News came out a few weeks ago with a big headline, “Everybody is suing everybody.”

But my dear friends, there are some people that are not suing everybody. The saints are not suing the church of God, and the saints are not suing their brethren in the church either.

“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world...” 1 Corinthians 6:1-2.

When is that going to happen? During the millennium – the 1,000 years.

“And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” Ibid., verses 2-3.

But somebody says, “I tried to get the church to do something and they wouldn’t get that other fellow to give me my right.”

Listen, the 7th verse:

“Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?” Ibid., verse 7.

It’s a wonderful thing, friends, to seek first the kingdom of God, and to be more interested in the good name, the honor of the church than I am in my personal rights or problems. The Word of God is clear here, isn’t it, friends? That it’s better to be defrauded than it is to bring dishonor on the church.

This is simply a matter of seeking first the kingdom of God. Do you see? That’s all there is to it, seeking first the kingdom of God. And God wouldn’t have put this in the Bible unless He knew that it would be needed sometime. It was needed right then in Corinth, but it’s been preserved nearly 2,000 years to guide the remnant church and each member in this closing conflict.

Sometimes we’re tempted to feel our rights our invaded. Sometimes we’re tempted to feel that other people are doing us wrong. If we follow out the instruction in Matthew 18 and try to help the brother who is wronged us as we feel that he’s wrong and he won’t listen, then do what? Take one or two more, Jesus says. And if won’t listen to them, then what? Tell it to the church.

But never, my friends; never are we to expose the members of the church to the ridicule and scorn of this world. God wants His church to be a family with a golden circle of love around it.

Ah, but somebody says, “You don’t know, Brother Frazee, what they did to me.” No I don’t and I hope you don’t tell me. Tell Jesus, and if Jesus allows you to thus suffer, He’ll have a glorious recompense for you either in this life or in the life to

come, but He is testing you my friend to see whether you seek first the kingdom of God, or whether you seek your own interest.

Is this a practical application of this text? Yea, verily.

Here's another one:

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God...” Romans 14:19-20.

Have you ever heard of churches getting divided over the question of food? Have you ever heard of great agitations over the food question? Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.

Notice what the 17th verse says:

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” Romans 14:17.

Somebody says, “Brother Frazee, don't you think diet and food have something to do with religion?” Indeed. Indeed. But seek *first* the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.

It was the food question and the dress question that Jesus was discussing when He gave this command in Matthew 6. He said that the people around you, they are all enthusiastic and all worried, one or the other or both, about what they're going to eat and drink and what they're going to wear. You, My disciples, don't be like that. Be like the birds that sing their songs of praise and know that the heavenly Father will feed them. Be like the flowers that dress in the colors God gave them, and are happy in living for His praise. And “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Let us in all our study of diet and health remember what our goal is, friends. And let us have a sense of the corporate entity of the church. Let us study how to give God's truth in a way that enhances, and preserves that unity and builds, as Paul says, edifies, rather than fragment and tear apart. What do you say?

Here's another example of making God first and His kingdom:

“Those who are controlled by a sense of duty, who daily seek wisdom and help from God, will act intelligently, not from selfish motives, but from the love of Christ and the truth. Such will not hesitate to give themselves unreservedly, soul, body, and spirit, to the work. They will study, work, and pray for its advancement. I repeat, do not enter into a marriage engagement, unless there are good and sufficient reasons for this step – unless the work of God can be better advanced thereby. For Christ's sake deny inclination, lift the

cross, and do the work for which you are educating yourselves” *Selections from the Testimonies for Students and Workers of our Sanitariums*, Page 16-17.

You know friends, in the time in which we live with the urgency of the finishing of the work upon us, God is going to have some people that are more interested in getting a bride for Christ than they are for themselves. Don't misunderstand me, you know that there is a place for marriage, but it's not the first place.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness”
Matthew 6:33.

And whatever is needful or necessary in doing that God will supply. But I am sorry to say to many people the work of God becomes in *excuse* for getting married instead of a reason for getting married. There's quite a difference, my friends; quite a difference. I'm so happy when I see young people whose hearts are in the work 100%, whole sold. If that in God's providence leads to marriage, fine. If it doesn't, fine. The big thing is to get the work done. What do you say?

Now the devil would like to take what I've said and misinterpret it, but I have read it to you from the inspired writings, my friends. It means just what it says. There are some people that are going to be anxious enough to get the work done. They're going to do what Jesus did.

Do you know what He said on this food question?

“...My meat [food] is to do the will of him that sent Me,
and to finish his work” John 4:34.

You remember the setting; Christ was there by the well. He had won a soul for Himself as the Messiah, and in the meanwhile the disciples came having gotten food. They begged Him, “Master eat!” They knew they'd left Him hungry. But He said, “I have food to eat that you don't know about.” Oh, how literal and material and temporal were their thoughts. They said, “I wonder who gave Him something to eat?” Who indeed. And Christ explained it:

“...My meat food is to do the will of him that sent Me,
and to finish his work” Ibid.

He had received actual satisfaction, like a person – a hungry man – gets from a good meal in ministering the word of life to a needy soul. Oh, that that spirit may fill our heart, my friends! Food comes in, it has its place, but it's like a lot of these other things – it's secondary.

“...seek ye first the kingdom of God...” Matthew 6:33.

Get the work of God done. Finish the work of the church on earth. All right, now follow on:

“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and [then] cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit unto life eternal: that both he that sows and he that reaps may rejoice together” John 4:35-36.

Christ, you see, is in the business of enlisting helpers in this work of finishing the mission of the church, to gather in the souls. He likens it to reaping a harvest.

Far and near the fields are teaming,
Lord of harvest send forth reapers!

Now what does Jesus say the man will receive that goes on that mission? He'll receive wages. Oh, I'm interested in that. I wonder what the wage is, I wonder what it is? Well, He says the wages is that he that sows and he that reaps will rejoice together. That's the wages.

“...enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord” Matthew 25:21.

The wages, friends, are not something that we draw in a paycheck. The wages are first of all that Christ purchased our service by the sacrifice of His life. That's our wages. And the wages are in the kingdom of God; we shall reap eternal rewards as we see those for whom we have labored saved.

But I'll tell you what God does guarantee, that is an expense account – an unlimited drawing account on the bank of heaven. Isn't that a wonderful provision? The promise for that is Philippians 4:19 if you want to document it. Some people don't know how to put that in the cash register, so they are not influenced by it. But I have served my Lord for over half a century, friends, and He has never let me down on that drawing account. I can testify, and I mean it, that God has supplied *everything* that I needed to do His work. I know that He's kept His promise. He'll do it for you.

Turn over to Matthew 19. Jesus had invited that rich young ruler to join His company, but He told him he would need to sell everything he had first and give it to the poor. Christ was trying to get rid of his selfishness, you remember, but he went away sorrowful. Jesus said to them that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. The disciples were amazed, and Jesus told them that with men it is impossible but not with God.

Then in the 27th verse, Peter spoke up and he said, “Lord, we have left all and followed You.” I don't know how much Peter left; I don't think he was a millionaire. He had a few fishing nets out there in Galilee. But, at any rate, he'd left it all. You know it can be just as hard for a poor man to leave everything as a rich man? That's all he's got.

So Peter said:

“...we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what

shall we have therefore?" Matthew 19:27.

What did Jesus say? Well, He said in the first place, "You're going to have in the kingdom of God, you're going to have positions of responsibility sitting on the thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel." And then getting down to practical things in this life, He said in the 29th verse, and everyone, not just Peter and John, everyone:

"...every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life" Matthew 19:29.

This is a repetition of our text "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these [material] things [that you need] shall be added unto you" Matthew 6:33.

I was testifying to God's glory that God has supplied all my needs. He's done it exactly what He says here, a hundredfold. There're a hundred homes over this continent that I can call up any time and say, "Have you a place for me tonight?"

"Sure."

And they're glad to see me. Now if you hear of any of them that aren't really, you let me know. [Audience laughter.] Why my friends, I have more places to stay than I can get around to see them. Why is that? Well it isn't because they're related to me by the ties of blood. It's simply because those dear people and I are linked together in the seeking God, making His kingdom first.

Some of those dear people are people that I've baptized through the years. They are precious to me. I saw a man just the other day. He said, "I want you and your wife to come down and spend some time with us." A couple that I baptized years ago. They had a part in the starting of this work here at Wildwood.

I mention these practical things, friends, to say this: You cannot out give God. You cannot! You can cheat yourself by trying to take care of yourself so well that you let God come in second, or third, or not at all; but if you'll take God's promise for what He says, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; ... all these things shall be added." Of course you have to remember the One who said that was going around in a plain seamless coat with sandals and dusty feet.

And the men who were following sometimes didn't have a settled place to stay, and they were sometimes hungry. But when Jesus at the close of His time with them, asked them if they had lacked anything during that experience, they said, "No we didn't lack anything." They had found the satisfaction in the work of God and in fellowship with God that only that can bring. And what does money, or the things that money can buy, what does that compare with the satisfaction of having fellowship with Jesus, and partnership with Him in His work? What do you say?

Oh, that God may help us to appreciate the great privilege we have to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, knowing that all these things shall be added.

Now, in *Ministry of Healing*, page 481, we're told that our heavenly Father has how many ways to take care of us that we don't know? A thousand. On that same page I read:

"Those who accept the one principle of making the service of God supreme, will find perplexities vanish and a plain path before their feet" *Ministry of Healing*, page 481.

Many people never get that miracle because they are so interested in taking care of themselves. And friend, if you're determined to make yourself first, God will let you. Remember His kingdom is a kingdom of love. If you love yourself better than you love God's church, God's work, God's kingdom, God will let you look after yourself. You might do a fairly good job of it. Some people seem to be doing so in the world.

But for every one that has what the world calls success, there are a thousand others who are griping because they haven't got it yet. They think somebody's cheating them out of it. So whether you are with the one, or with the thousand, you've really missed something if you are looking after yourself and leaving God out.

"...seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" Matthew 6:33.

If that means you stay poor in this world's goods, I'd rather be that way and with Jesus. What do you say? I saw where someone had put it this way, and I like it. I'll share it with you. "A poor man can be a happy man, but no happy man is a poor man."

I know that is true, friends. I know that is true. Oh, how happy it is to work for Jesus and with Jesus. As a friend of mine says, "I wouldn't work for anybody else." Why? When you can be a government employee in the kingdom of heaven, when you can have an unlimited drawing account on the bank of heaven in doing the work of God.

Ah, somebody says, "Brother Frazee that's nebulous. That's just visionary." Well, it works! It works! That's why Wildwood is here! This is what has been the vision that has nurtured and sustained it for 37 years. And it's the spirit that is causing people to go out from here all over the earth and start new places. It's the very promises that we are studying tonight in this vision of seeking *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness, believing that all things needful shall be added unto you.

I come back to my question, "How much do you love the church?"

Ah, somebody says, "I love Jesus, but if you knew the people in the church where I come from you would wonder if anybody could love them."

Did Jesus love Peter even though Peter denied Him with cursing and swearing? Did He even love Judas, a man that was going to betray Him? Did He do anything for Judas just that night before the betrayal? What did He do? Washed his feet. Whose feet did He wash first of all the twelve? Judas. Judas needed Him more that night than anybody.

I want love for my brethren like the love of Jesus. What do you say?

When we have that love, we will not think about the church as something to support us, we will want to support the church. We will not think of the church as a place to go to have other people pat us on the back and cheer us up, although there is nothing wrong in being cheered up by our brethren. But we will love the brethren whether they cheer us or whether they don't, friends. Love is not mutual admiration. Love is seeking the best good of those that God's brings us in contact with. And we are to love one another as He has loved us.

God's going to have some people down here today that will carry this out to the ultimate. You remember that when Noah built the ark and the flood came, all that he had was invested where? In the ark. And as we come to the closing moments of human history, I thank God that we're not going to need to see all that we have labored for dissipated in ruin, all that we have, brethren, can be invested in the ark, in the building up of the kingdom of God and helping to finish the work of Jesus, and then we'll take with us from this fire-consumed world all that is worth perpetuating for eternity – our own characters and the souls of those for whom we have labored.

Won't that be a glorious eternal reward, friends? A glorious eternal reward. So, what kind of a crown are you going to have? Will it have one star in it? If it does, friends, you'll be happy, because one soul is of more worth to Jesus than a whole world of property and houses, and lands and money.

Suppose you have two stars? Well, then you can hold twice as much happiness, friends. Of course, if your cup is just a little cup and it's full, it's full. And if your heart is a little heart and it's full, it's full. But oh, we've been told to aim for the crown heavy with stars!

I believe there are men and women, yes, and boys and girls, that if they will really seek first the kingdom of God, they can have at least a hundred stars in their crown when Jesus comes. I believe you can have at least a hundred souls between now and when probation closes.

But I'll tell you, you will never have that while you deal with soul-winning like a hobby, like collecting butterflies, or postage stamps. Why not devote the life to seeking first the kingdom of God? This will not make us impractical, friends. Jesus was a carpenter. Paul made tents. James White did practical things that he might earn the money with which to preach the gospel. But none of these people, Jesus, or Paul, or James White, ever forgot what their real mission was. It was to seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness. They trusted God to supply the expenses.

Let us pray. Our precious Lord, we've heard a trumpet call from Thy word tonight. We hear the Man of Nazareth, standing there on the mountainside, saying, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness" and everything needful for this life and the life to come will be added. And our hearts respond!

Oh, Lord, most of us haven't very much to leave, a few fishing nets and boats perhaps, but Lord, the greatest thing all of us have to leave is ourselves – our selfish love of ease, our preference to have our own way about a 101 things. By Thy grace we're laying that down tonight. Whatever has stood between us and this great work of soul-winning, we put it aside tonight.

Help us to be faithful in the carpenter shop, and in the tent-making shop. Help us to be faithful in the home, in the institution, wherever Thy providence places us. Help us to remember what our mission is – to watch for souls as they that must give an account.

Give us a love for Thy church! Oh, give us a love for the unity of the church so that every word we say shall be thought through that we shall not add to unnecessary or needless agitation, but that we shall draw together with Thee and with those who love the peace of Zion.

Purge Thy church from those who would bring the world and Babylon into it. Destroy the golden calf, we pray. Knock it down and break it in pieces. And give Thy people a love for Thy law, a love for righteousness, a love for the Saviour who gave Himself for us. We ask it in His name. Amen.

[Testimony service follows.]

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