

Seek Ye First 1 of 2

#0192

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—December 8, 1978

There are various ways to study the Bible. Starting with Genesis 1 and reading on through to the last page of Revelation is a wonderful way. Topical study, taking up different subjects, but one of the methods that is recommended by inspiration is to take one verse and concentrate the mind on ascertaining the thought that God has put into that verse for you.

We're told that one verse thus studied may bless us more than the mere reading of many chapters. This evening I would like to study this verse with you—Matthew 6:33. We will bring to bear upon it other scriptures, for this is the inspired method of understanding and appreciating any scripture—letting other scriptures bear their witness. But our subject this evening is all in this one verse, Matthew 6:33. Will you read it with me?

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

The emphasis, of course, is on the word ‘first.’ He has mentioned the concern that most people have with the things of this life. He mentions the clothing. He mentions food. And he says, Your Father knows that you need these things, but the people of this world spend their time in thinking of these material goals, but you, He says, “My people, My children, My disciples, you seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these other things will be added to you.”

First, of all in our study of this verse, let us notice why this object is ever of such importance—because the One who is speaking is the One who is first:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and Word was God” John 1:1.

This is speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, for in the 14th verse it says:

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...”
John 1:14.

“He is before all things... that in all things He might have the preeminence” Colossians 1:17–18.

One of the other translations puts it:

“So that He Himself might come to have first place in everything” Colossians 1:18 (unknown translation).

It is not merely historically, chronologically that He's first. From the days of eternity, He was one with the Father. There never was a time when He was not there. But He is first in the attention that His Father designs shall be given.

God's purpose, His eternal purpose, has been to bring honor to His Son; and even now He has said to Him, "Sit at My right hand until I make all your enemies your footstool." God has set His heart on having the entire universe honor the Son. There came a controversy in Heaven 6,000 years ago over this matter, and Lucifer launched out in a rebellion refusing to acknowledge Christ in His position. That's nearly settled now dear friends.

When you and I make up our minds, we'll be in harmony, I trust, with the universe and God can settle it for all eternity as we join in that grand coronation when Jesus is crowned King of kings and Lord of lords.

"...that in all things He might have the preeminence"
Colossians 1:18.

You remember that the First Commandment of the Decalogue deals with this great principle. Will you say that First Commandment with me?

"Thou shall have no other gods before me" Exodus 20:3.

This is another way of saying, "that in all things He might have the preeminence." He is first, none before Him. He is first, there is none beside Him. He is first, there is none except Him. He is the One who says:

"I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no Saviour" Isaiah 43:11.

All of these are mighty reasons for His statement:

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness..." Matthew 6:33.

The only way we can enter into the kingdom of God, the only way we can know His righteousness is to know *Him*. And so it is written:

"And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent"
John 17:3.

Do you know Him? Is He your friend? Does He have the first place in your heart, in your activities? We have some wonderful promises to those who thus seek Him with the whole heart. Jeremiah 24:7, will you turn to that, please? This matter of seeking God and His righteousness first refers to the importance of the object we seek, the urgency with which we present our claims.

"And I will give them an heart to know Me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be My people, and I will be their

God: for they shall return unto Me with their whole heart”
Jeremiah 24:7.

Oh, it’s a wonderful thing to be in focus, to have all the rays of light concentrated in a certain direction, to have the thoughts of our minds gathered up, drawn in, and brought to bear upon a given goal. And what is the goal?

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

Seek Him with the whole heart.

“I know the thoughts that I think toward you

[Another translation puts it, “I know the plans I have for you.” Does God have a plan for you? Oh yes. He says He knows what it is.

“...thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart” Jeremiah 29:11–13.

That woman that found that she had lost a piece of silver stopped everything else she was doing; I don’t know what she was doing, but whatever she was doing, she quit it. She got the broom, lit the lamp and got busy doing what? Hunting for that piece of silver. So my dear friends, God wants you and me to hunt, search, with all our hearts to know Him and His righteousness. If we’ve never done it, now is the time to begin. If we have done it, there is more and more and more for us. This is the great object of life.

“We must turn away from a thousand topics that invite attention. There are matters that consume time and arouse inquiry, but end in nothing. The highest interests demand the close attention and energy that are so often given to comparatively insignificant things” *Ministry of Healing*, page 456.

I don’t know how you’ll find it, but I find that even the volume of communications that come in the mail to me are more than I can compass and do what I am studying with you tonight. I can’t keep up with all the papers people send me that they think it would be good for me to read. I can’t digest all the compilations that well-meaning people send me hoping that I’ll be edified, or that I can tell them what’s what.

My dear friends, I must for my soul’s sake, I must zero in on the main thing, the real thing, the *first* thing, and if some other things don’t get attention, very well, I must not miss the first thing in the endeavor to look after comparatively little things, insignificant things. Don’t misunderstand me; this will not lead us to be careless with our daily responsibilities. I’m talking about trying to keep up with everything that is

going on in this world. It's impossible. Nobody does it, but some are getting frantic in the endeavor to do it.

Some are missing the real things as their minds are exercised to just keep up with what's happening. Turn away from a thousand topics in order to *seek first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Job 23:12 has a very interesting expression:

“Neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips; I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food” Job 23:12.

Is food necessary? Oh yes. We all have to have some. But Job says, “There's something that I count more important, more urgent, more vital, than my necessary food.” What is it? The words of His mouth.

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

Now this evening, let us meditate a bit further on this expression “seek ye first.” If this goal is first in importance, it should be first in life. This is the most important thing for the child to understand. Religion is not to be thought of as something for old folks alone, for it is written:

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth...” Ecclesiastes 12:1.

In fact, we're told by inspiration that it makes Christ especially happy when children seek Him and let Him do for them what He's longing to do. A beautiful passage on this point is found in *Desire of Ages*:

“As the Holy Spirit moves upon the hearts of the children, cooperate with His work. Teach them that the Saviour is calling them, that nothing can give Him greater joy than for them to give themselves to Him in the bloom and freshness of their years” *Desire of Ages*, page 517.

Isn't that nice? Boys and girls, any of you that are old enough to understand what I've just read, think how happy you can make Jesus just by giving your heart to Him.

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

First in importance; first in life. Little Samuel did, there in the tabernacle at Shiloh, and as he sought the Lord from day to day, the Lord began to use him to speak to others. Joseph, only a teenager, snatched away from his father, carried a captive into Egypt, was making God first, and he made Him first down there in Egypt. Didn't He? And at the right time, God made Joseph first too. For it is written:

“...them that honour me I will honour...”1 Samuel 2:30.

We think of the boy Jesus at only 12 years of age, discovering from the studies of the prophecies and by the illumination of the Holy Spirit as He observed the sacrificial service, the mystery of His mission, and responding:

“...I must be about My Father’s business” Luke 2:49.

Oh, dear parents, let us never, never have the thought that by and by someday will be the time for our children to seek God.

“...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” 2 Corinthians 6:2.

And if it is difficult, all the more need for prayer, for them, with them, with them, for them, prayer, praying, never letting go. And dear children, you must seek God for yourselves. No amount of religious atmosphere around you in the home, in the Sabbath school, in the day school, no amount of opportunities and helps will take the place of your seeking the Lord for yourselves.

But dear boys and girls, and dear young people, Jesus wants you to make Him first. Will you do it? Not after you have done this, that, and the other thing that you have in mind to do. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God.” He knows better than you do what can make you happy. He knows better than you do what you were born for, and how you tick, what can satisfy your soul.

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

And then, not only first in importance, first in life, but every one of us, boys and girls, young people, older ones, the grey-haired and the white-haired, first in the day. Let’s turn to Psalm 5:3. This is the verse from which Isaac Watts got that grand hymn that we love to sing:

Lord in the morning Thou shall hear
My voice ascending high;
To Thee will I direct my prayer,
To Thee lift up mine eyes.

Here we have it in Psalm 5:3:

“My voice shall thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up”
Psalm 5:3.

We’re told concerning Jesus as a boy, as a youth, that with the voice of singing, He welcomed the morning light. Every morning the Father awakened Him, and He arose to seek His Heavenly Father’s face. This was written down in one of the messianic prophecies, Isaiah 50:4, one of the most beautiful texts in all the Bible on

communion with our Lord. And it suggests the morning hour as the time especially for seeking the Lord, for listening while He speaks, and speaking while He listens.

“The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned,
that I should know how to speak a word in season to him
that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He
wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned” Isaiah 50:4.

Who woke you up this morning? Ah, somebody says, “I heard somebody in the next room and that woke me up.” Or “I had the alarm clock set, and that woke me up.” Or “I just woke up.”

My dear friends, there are several people that went to bed last night that didn’t wake up this morning. It takes more than the sound in the next room, or the noise of an alarm clock. Did you know that just as somebody other than you keeps your heart beating, somebody other than you keeps your lungs breathing, so Somebody wakes you? Somebody wakes you. And if that Somebody didn’t wake you, you would sleep on.

Waking up is not automatic, not a bit of it. It’s a wonderful thing to go to bed at night and commit the keeping of our souls to Him knowing that He will waken us in His own time. How appropriate it is then, when He *does* wake us, to say thank you. What do you say? To say, “Thank you!” And to say also what Samuel said:

“...Speak Lord, for Thy servant hears...” 1 Samuel 3:9.

For this verse which we have just read, tells us what God’s purpose is in waking us. It isn’t just so that we can run to breakfast, or run to the office, or run to school. Oh, no. That comes in its own time. But God has something else before breakfast, before the office, before the school. What is it? Oh, He wants us to listen. Isn’t that what we read here?

“The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned,
that I should know how to speak a word in season to him
that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He
wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned” Isaiah 50:4.

Wouldn’t it be a wonderful thing for somebody, here tonight that never knew this before, to get hold of the fact that God is in the business of waking people in the morning for a certain purpose? Wouldn’t that be wonderful? Some of you already know it, don’t you? And the ones that know it best are enjoying most this verse as we read it. Am I right? Yes. You’ve experienced it.

But you, who have not yet experienced it, take the Word of God for it and seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness. Make it the rule of your life that your awakening thought shall be centered on Him, that the first thing you listen for is the impressions of His Spirit, the word of His counsel. This says that if we do that, we’ll have the right word to say at the right time—a word in season.

We won't be trying to serve watermelons in February; we'll have the watermelons when it is time for them. We won't be saying the right word at the wrong time, as some people seem to be gifted with. No, we'll have the right word at the right time if we will enter this school that Jesus is conducting every morning for those who are willing to attend the school. It's on a private tutor basis. The Teacher has some things to communicate to you differently from anybody else because you're different from other people.

A moment in the morning, ere the cares of day begin,
Ere the heart's wide door is open for the world to enter in,
Ah then alone with Jesus, in the silence of the morn,
In heavenly sweet communion let your duty day be born.

In the quietude that blesses with a prelude of repose,
Let your soul be soothed and softened as the dew revives the rose,

A moment in the morning take your Bible in your hand,
And catch a glimpse of glory from the peaceful Promised Land.
It will linger still before you when you seek the busy mark,
And like flowers of hope will blossom into beauty in your heart.

The precious words like jewels will glisten all the day,
With a rare effulgent glory that will brighten all the way.
A moment in the morning, a moment if no more, it is better
Than an hour when the trying day is o'er.
'Tis the gentle dew from heaven, the manna for the day,
If you fail to gather early, alas, it melts away.

So in the blush of morning, take the offered hand of love,
And walk in heaven's pathway and the peacefulness thereof.

Oh yes, my dear friends, let's seek Him first. What do you say? First in importance, first in our priority to seek Him, first in life.

Ah, somebody says, "Brother Frazee, I'm already grown up, and I didn't seek God when I was a boy, a girl."

Listen, you can begin now. The first opportunity you have after all you've lost is this one tonight.

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

Don't miss this glorious opportunity, and then morning by morning we have a fresh opportunity as God wakens us, and we enter into the blessing with Him.

In one of the other translations on this verse says:

"Each morning He wakes me to hear, to listen like a disciple"
Isaiah 50:4.

Are you Jesus' disciple? Listen morning by morning.

Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word.
Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,
Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.

[Testimony service]

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