

## "Putting God First"

Scripture Lesson:- Matthew 4: 17-24.

Text:- Matthew 4: 17. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand".

Introduction:- Putting first things first is one of the secrets of success in any line of endeavor which we undertake. The man who is going to succeed in any field must learn how to major in the first and most important things. Many have failed in life because they have majored in secondary things. They have neglected the first and primal things. The man who is to be a doctor, a lawyer, a teacher, a skilled mechanic, a machinist, must give attention to the major things in his profession. If he neglects these he will fail, or occupy a very mediocre position in the field in which he labors.

### I.

Jesus has spoken upon the important subject as to what is the first thing to which we should give our lives. He has not left us to grope in doubt. He said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you".

Jesus did not discount the things of this world. He did not say, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and ye shall have none of these things." None of what things? The things of the world. He did not say, "Cut yourself loose from all things the things of this world". He recognized the essentiality of the things of this world. These things are very necessary to us while we dwell in the body.

The body is made up of flesh and bone. The body is made of material things. We cannot live in the body without "things". Take all things away from us and we die. We cannot live without food, water, light and air. We cannot live without shelter and clothing. Take away from us shelter, clothing, ~~and~~

and protection from the elements of nature, and we die. Even the thing we call "money" is necessary for our material life. We cannot get along without money. We must have it in some form or other. It takes money to buy the necessities of life, the things that are essential to this natural life and existence. Jesus did not say, "Cut yourself loose from all the things of the world." There is every evidence that it is in perfect accordance with the will of Christ, that men should have and possess a comfortable amount of "things". This is evidenced by the vast provision that the Lord has made for man. He has provided an abundance of material resources in the world. The great natural resources of the earth have only been touched. There are inexhaustible supplies of precious metal in the earth. There are vast supplies of oil that the Lord has stored in the earth for the use of man. There are unlimited resources of material and energy and power in the ocean, and in the sunlight. God has provided an abundance. If God had given only a limited supply of physical resources, then we might conclude that God intended man to just barely eke out an existence upon a very low plane of material existence.

## II.

But the abundance of the supply stands as evidence of the fact that God intended for every human being to live in comfort. Then why the discomfort? Why so much suffering? Why so much poverty and distress in the world. Greed and selfishness within the sinful hearts of men are the things that have made so much of poverty in the world.

We are to seek first the kingdom of God in all the kingdom's aspects. First, there is the individual aspect of the kingdom of God. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace; and joy in the Holy Spirit". The kingdom of God is more than proper housing, food and wages. These things are incidental to the kingdom, but are not the kingdom.

We may have these things without the kingdom of God. The kingdom in its individual aspect brings the ruling of the king to the individual life. That king in none other than Jesus Christ. For him to rule as king means that he is placed upon the throne, and we submit completely to his will. There are many people who have taken Christ into their lives as Savior, but have not put him first in their lives as Lord. When you put Christ first in your life in everything, he becomes Lord in your life.

1. Time
2. Money

### III.

There is a social, a national and a world-wide aspect to the kingdom of God. The social, national and world-wide aspect has two phases in the coming of the kingdom of God into this world. We should be vitally related to the first phase at the present time in doing everything that we can to put righteousness, equity, and justice into the social order of mankind.

We should wage a relentless warfare against every wicked and evil thing. We should lift our voices, and throw the influence of our lives and of our money against every monster of social iniquity. Jesus Christ never intended for his people to isolate themselves, and live in a more-holy-than-thou sanctuary, and take the attitude that nothing can be done about the wicked world until the Lord comes back to earth. The Lord is coming back, but until he comes we are to "occupy". Occupying means that we do everything possible to carry out the will of the master in the affairs of the world. We must do this. We must pray for our leaders, pray that the will of God will be done in every national and international way. Pray that Communism shall not continue her sway of the world. We ought to pray for the people of Germany and all of the satellite countries that Russia has dragged under her influence. We should keep in line with apostle Paul's injunction to Timothy, "I exhort therefore first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men, for kings, and for all that

are in authority; that ye may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; ~~and~~ who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of ~~the~~ the truth".

There ~~is~~ another phase of the coming of the kingdom of God to this world which is clearly set forth in the Scriptures. This has reference to the coming of the king~~dom~~ to rule in person over kingdoms, principalities and powers; then every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord of all. In that day he shall rule over all the earth, and nations shall know war no more. This is the glorious age foretold by the ancient prophets, who said said that swords shall be beaten into plowshares, and spears into pruning hooks, and that the lion and the lamb should lie down together, and the child should play upon the hole of the asp without danger. We live in anticipation of this coming of the kingdom, while now seeking first the advancement of this kingdom, until the day of glorious realization of this future kingdom.