

The Commands of Christ

Sermon # 12

“Look ...Observe... and Make God A Priority”

Matthew 6:25-33

In our last study on “The Commands of Christ,” we looked in Matthew 6:19-21, there we found two commands: one negative and one positive. The negative command is found first in verse nineteen where it says, “do not treasure up” literally it is “stop treasuring up treasure here on earth.” The second imperative command, the positive one, is found in verse twenty “but treasure up for yourselves treasure in heaven,” but “start treasuring for your selves treasure in heaven.” Jesus challenges us with the question, “Where is your treasure?” He helps us find the answer with a series of four questions.

“How Long Will It Last?” (vv. 19-20)

“Where are you investing your time and money?” (v. 21)

“Where Is Your Focus?” (vv. 22-23)

“Whom Do You Serve?” (v. 24).

Tonight we move on Matthew 6 beginning in verse twenty-five, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? (26) Look (emblemsate – imperative) at the birds for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? (27) Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? (28) So why do you worry about clothing? Consider (katamathete – imperative) the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; (29) and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (30) Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith. (31) Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ (32) For after all these things the Gentile seek. For your heavenly Father know that you need all these things. (33) But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (34) Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

Here again we will find two imperatives one in verse twenty-six and the other in verse twenty-eight.

Psychologists tell us that there are three major perceived “needs” in life. First, we “need” comfort, food, shelter and clothing. Secondly, we “need” to be accepted by our peers, to be respected for who and what we are. The third “need” for significance, a need to find meaning and purpose in life, to understand what life is all about and what part we have play in it. It has taken generations of self-study to come up with those three brilliant deductions. Yet Jesus told us the exact same thing over 2,000 years ago.

In verse twenty-five Jesus addressed those concerns for the comforts of life; what they will eat and drink, when he said, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? (26) Look (emblemsate – imperative) at the birds for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”

He said, “I know that you are concerned about security, about a home, food and clothing but my advice is not to worry about those things.”

“Taking care of the body has always been a common obsession with men. Even when we are not starving or thirsty or naked, we still give an inordinate amount of attention to our bodies. We pamper the body, decorate it, slender it down, drape it with jewelry, keep it warm or keep it cool, train it to work and to play, help it get to sleep, and a hundred other things to serve and satisfy our bodies.” [John McArthur Jr. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary - Matthew 1-7 (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985) p. 421]

Our worries today are seldom for necessary clothing. If Jesus told those who had but one simple garment not to worry about their clothing what would he say to us?

The first command found in these verses is to “look” (v.26) at the birds and understand the goodness and faithfulness of the Creator. If the Heavenly Father cares for the birds of the air, He will surely provide for his children.

In verse twenty-seven, Jesus addressed those concerns our “need” to be accepted by our peers when he says, “Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? (28) So why do you worry about clothing? Consider (katamathete – imperative) the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; (29) and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. (30) Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith.”

Most commentaries believe that the word “cubit” in verse twenty-seven refers to the length of life rather than a person’s height. He said in effect, “I know that you are concerned about how you will come across to other people, whether they will accept you or not. I just want to tell you that all the worry in the world will not make you taller or more beautiful or anything else.”

The second command in these verses is found in verse twenty-eight where we are told to “consider” the lilies of the field. The flowers that are being described here are probably the wild flowers of the woods and hillsides. If God clothes these temporary wildflowers with such beauty and splendor that it surpasses all the finery of King Solomon, how much more will He care for his children.

In verse thirty-one, Jesus addressed our concern for significance when he says, “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ (32) For after all these things the Gentile seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.”

Jesus says that it is only natural for those who have no faith, no belief in God, to seek whatever satisfaction and pleasures this world offers while they can. Their philosophy is still with us today, grab all the gusto you get. It is the old, “let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die” philosophy (1 Corinthians 15:32). He says, “You are concerned about the things of this life, as if that is all there is, but there is more.” Our significance is found in our relationship to God.

Verse thirty-three says that we are to “*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.*”

The things of God and eternity are to occupy a place of priority in our thoughts and desires. We are not to neglect our duties and responsibilities here and now, but we are not to let them have first place in our lives.

So what does it mean to say that we must seek first the kingdom of God? I think that what we must understand here is that the king can not be separated from the kingdom. We seek the kingdom by making a commitment to the king. In the kingdom the king is number one. Let me ask you, “*Is God first in your life?*” I’m not asking you if He is present in your life, but is He preeminent in your life. I’m not asking if He has a piece of your life, if God has a place in your life, if God has a part in your life; I am asking does He have the priority in your life?

Most Christians would agree with the statement that there is nothing more important than the Lord. But while we believe that in theory, we often do not live it out, as we pursue everything but the Lord.

In Colossians 3:1-2, Paul advises the believer. “*If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God (2) Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*”

How Do I Make God A Priority in My Life?

Can I offer some simple suggestions?

First, Make God a Priority in your Life By Giving Him the first Thought of each Day (Psalm 5:3) *"My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; In the morning I will direct it to You; And I will look up."*

We can begin to make God a priority in my life by surrendering our day at it beginning to the control and guidance of the Lord. Then when the alarm clock goes off instead of saying *"Good, Lord, its morning,"* we can say, *"Good Morning, Lord."*

Secondly, Make God a Priority in your Life By Giving Him the first Day of each Week (Acts 20:7) *"Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread...."* There is something I don't understand in life, well really there a lot of things I don't understand but this one of them, Christians who get up on Sunday morning and decide whether or not they are going to church. What is there to decide? If you're a Christian and its Sunday, and you are not ill, you should be in church. If God is a priority in your life then the least you can offer him is the first day of your week.

Third, Make God a Priority in your Life By Giving Him the first Fruit of our increase (Proverbs 3:9) *"Honor the Lord with your possessions, And with the first fruits of your increase."*

Although we already talked at length about what we owe to God concerning our finances this morning, I still need to mention that when we prosper, God should be the first one that comes to our minds. Why is it when we get a financial blessing often the last thing we think about is being thankful to God?

Fourth, Make God a Priority in your Life By Giving Him the first Consideration in every Decision (2 Corinthians 8:5)

"... but they first gave themselves to the Lord."

Let me ask you if this scenario sounds familiar? I need a job, yet I have not asked God for his help nor his direction. I begin to fill out applications, but I have not asked for his guidance. I begin to interview for positions, but God still hasn't heard from me. I begin to receive offers, yet I have not asked for God's intervention. I accept a job without knowing the demands of the job and ultimately, I find that I am being pulled away from church. Finally after all of this has happened, and I realize I have made a mistake, then I begin to call out to the Lord to get me out of this mess."

Let me close with the admonition of Henry Drummond, a scientist at the turn of the century, who when speaking to a group of college students said: *"Gentlemen, I beseech you to seek the kingdom of God first, or not at all. I promise you a miserable time if you seek it second."* [Source unknown - <http://www.bible.org/illus/nt/nt-39>]