"Heart: Who has first place?"

Seek First - exploring what it means to put God's Kingdom above our own.

Over the next several weeks, we will be discussing stewardship, contentment and generosity as practices that help us keep the Lord first in our lives.

Jesus gives us three commands in Matthew 6 that help point us towards living God centered lives.

- In Matthew 6:33, Jesus gives an overarching command to prioritize Him above all else.

Matthew 6:33 (NIV) "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

- If we seek God's Kingdom first, *we accept the Kingdom reality* of not trying to get rich and amass treasures on earth, but rather to store up treasures in heaven.

Matthew 6:19–21 (NIV) "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. [20] But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. [21] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

- The result of seeking Him first is to be delivered from the bondage of worry and anxiety of this world.

Matthew 6:34 (NLT) "So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today."

- Three imperatives from Matthew 6:19-24

Matthew 6:19-24 (NIV) "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. [20] But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. [21] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. [22] "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. [23] But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! [24] "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

1. The passing nature of our earthly possessions.

Jesus says the things that we accrue on this earth can be destroyed. They can be taken from us through fire, decay, thieves, war, vermin, natural disasters etc...

- *Store up* - to accumulate, collect for reserves, lay aside, save.
- *Treasures* - things we value, prioritize and invest in. Stored up wealth kept in a safe place.
- Nothing wrong with having possessions, but when they become our security, identity or idols, they pull us away from keeping Him first. What is 1st place in your heart?

2. You cannot put God's Kingdom first if something else already owns your heart.

Matthew 6:22-24 (NIV) "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. [23] But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness![24] "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

- A healthy eye provides the body with light. Light allows a person to see and operate in this world according to Kingdom truths and values. This person is characterized by being generous and caring.
- An unhealthy eye clouds our ability to keep His Kingdom first, the darkness represents this world and it's traps. This person becomes stingy seeing more value in the world than His Kingdom.

Matthew 6:21 (NLT) " Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be."

We live in a time where our cultural creed is "Follow your heart". It represents a belief that our heart is our compass in life that will lead us to true happiness. What this really means is "pursue what you desire."

- Is what you desire always a good thing or even best for you?

Jeremiah 17:9 (NASB) "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"

- The heart is the core of who we are. With it we love and hate, treasure or despise, feel and act.

Proverbs 4:23 (NLT) "Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life."

3. Direct your heart towards the things of the Kingdom.

Proverbs 23:19 (NASB95) "Listen, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way."

Ephesians 4:22-24 (NIV) "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; [23] to be made new in the attitude of your minds; [24] and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

When Jesus is first in our hearts, He is our treasure and we will commit our resources—our money, our time, our talents—to His work in this world.

Jesus tells us to store up a different kind of treasure that is eternal in nature. This requires us to direct our hearts towards the things God loves.

- We store up treasures by hungering and thirsting for righteousness. (Matthew 5:6)
- By using our *money*, *gifts* and *talents* to serve the body of Christ. (1 Timothy 6:17-19)
- By being generous with what we have. (Hebrews 13;16)
- By *giving* to the needy with the right motives. (Acts 2:44-45)
- By treating your enemies kindly. (Matthew 5:43-44)
- By the way you handle trouble and persecution. (Matthew 5:10-12)
- By being generous with mercy over judgment. (James 2:13)
- Treasures in Heaven can be both material and spiritual in nature.

Matthew 6:33 (NIV) "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

As disciples, this is who Jesus wants us to be:

- People who seek His Kingdom with their hearts, His perfect and pleasing will. Learning to love what He loves.
- People who resist the currents of this world to accumulate wealth and possessions for ourselves. To live for eternity, not for the temporal.
- People set free from the bondage of worry and anxiety to become generous with all we have. When we are free, we accurately represent our Lord and Savior.

Small Group Discussion Questions:

1. What scripture from the sermon helps us find God's perspective on true riches?
2. Why is keeping the Lord first in your heart so difficult?
3. What competes for your heart?
4. What changes in your life can you make to keep you focused on His Kingdom and eternal riches?

Serve Info

Overtime Podcast

Group Questions

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