

MATTHEW SIX, THIRTY-THREE

Intro: Probably one of the first things of importance which we should note about this verse is that these words were spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ. In different MSS the order of the words may vary, but the context and the parallel passage in Luke 12:31 leave little doubt that we have here the very words which were spoken by the Lord.

The most difficult part about the verse is the expression, "the kingdom of God."

Practically everyone who has read the Gospels is aware of the fact that there are two expressions using the word kingdom which are used synonymously as well as in contrast with each other. They are "the kingdom of God" and "the kingdom of heaven."

Further, a careful reading of the Gospels will show us that Matthew is the only one who uses the term, thekingdom of heaven.

Also, it is very easy to see in the NT that some day the Lord Jesus is going to come to set up an earthly kingdom, and that He will be the King. Therefore, it is easy for us to apply this meaning to the word kingdom whenever we come upon it in the Scriptures.

Tonight we are not going to study thekingdom of God as compared with the kingdom of heaven. BUT WE DO NEED TO KNOW WHAT OUR LORD MEANT BY THE KINGDOM OF GOD IF WE ARE GOING TO GET ANY MEANING FROM THIS VERSE: Matt. 6:33.

In arriving at the meaning, the first thing we should do is to see if Matthew uses the term any place else--and he does! Cf.

- 1) Matt. 12:28. The question is whether or not the Lord is doing the work of God, or of Satan. Therefore, the term has to do with the work of God in the world.
- 2) Matthew 19:24. When we read v. 23 with it we can see that there are times when there is no distinction at all between these two terms. V. 25 makes it very clear that the disciples understood that He was talking about salvation.
- 3) Matt. 21:31, 43 add to this emphasis on salvation. Read v. 32.

So, we come to the conclusion that the Lord is talking about salvation.

We can strengthen this if we go back to the beginning of the Gospel to see how the Lord refers to the kingdom before we get to 6:33. We find it used 10x: 3:2; 4:17, 23; 5:3, 10, 19 (2x), 20; 6:10, 13. ALL OF THESE COMBINE TWO IDEAS:

- 1) Salvation.
- 2) The righteousness which is characteristic of one who is truly saved.

If there is any doubt, let us look at some passages in Acts: 1:3 (and cf. v. 6); 8:12 (cf. v. 5); 20:25 (cf. v. 24). (This list is not exhaustive, but conclusive.)

One final verse: John 3:3.

And so it is evident that the Lord here is concerned with salvation and the life of the saved. The context certainly cinches this statement.

The Lord knew that the Jews of His day were confused about these two things:

- 1) What does it take to be in the kingdom of God? Or, to state it another way, How does one become a child of God?
- 2) The fact that the reality of a person's faith will be evident in his life. The purpose of so much of the Word of God is to teach us how a child of God should live, what his interests should be, etc.

Both Matt. 5:1 and Luke 12:22 make it clear that He was speaking to His disciples. He wanted them to see how unique the life of a child of God is, how restful, how sufficient!

I. HE ISSUES A COMMAND.

Sometimes we back away from anything that sounds like a command. There are even some children of God who have reservations about the commandments of our Lord. BUT THERE ARE SOME TIMES WHEN WE NEED TO LISTEN TO THE AUTHORITATIVE WORD OF OUR LORD SO THAT WE WILL REALIZE WHAT WE NEED TO DO.

What do you have in this chapter by way of contrast which led the Lord to make this statement? You have anxiety, worry, care. Cf. Matt. 6:25, 27, 28, 31.

Is it not amazing? We will hold back from doing the will of of God, but hardly ever do we stop to look at those who are not doing His will.

If we are to be delivered from the burden of just daily living, then we are to place the Lord first, place salvation first, and place righteousness in our daily lives first.

Do not say that the Lord is not concerned about what we eat, or what we drink, or what we are to wear. And do not say that a Christian should not work, and plan, and save. BUT THE LORD IS TALKING ABOUT PRIORITIES--THAT WHICH MUST COME FIRST. It must come first in our lives, and then it must first as we think of our relationships with others about us--our families, neighbors, relative, the people we work with, all of our friends, the casual acquaintances. BUT IF IT IS NOT FIRST IN OUR OWN LIVES, IT IS DOUBTFUL IF IT WILL BE

FIRST IN OUR CONCERNS FOR OTHERS.

In this congregation tonight, there is probably not a great reason to stress the importance of knowing the Lord as Savior, but maybe there are some who have not really faced the overwhelming importance of their relationship to God for salvation. Maybe you are too busy with the very things that the Lord was talking about here. There are lots of parents these days who are concerned about their children, but they need to have the same concern for themselves.

Do you know the Lord Jesus as your Savior? If not, then this must come first. Do not think about living until you have life!

But, secondly . . . If you know the Lord, is His righteousness in you the thing which is the most important in your life? Or, do you think that you have a choice, and that you can still come away with the same blessing and peace and joy?

I do not want any answers, but let me ask some questions. When was the last time you read the Word of God by yourself and just for yourself? When was the last time you prayed? How much do you read the Word, and how much do you pray? When you do read the Word, are you concerned to find out what it is that the Lord wants you to do? Is this all causing you to love the Lord more? Is it your habit to think of Him as a Person--a Person who loves you, who cares for you, who is in control of your circumstances, who will meet your need. IF YOU WERE DESCRIBING TO SOMEONE HOW THE LORD SHOULD BE FIRST IN THEIR LIFE, WOULD YOU BE DESCRIBING THE WAY YOU LIVE?

Remember: This is not a choice, or an option, one way out of many. THIS IS A COMMAND, AND WE NEED TO RESPOND TO IT AS WE WOULD TO ANY COMMAND FROM THE LORD. There is no other way to be delivered from the worries and fears of life in this world.

But, look! There is more to this verse. After our Lord gives the command,

II. HE ALSO GIVES A PROMISE.

What is it? "And all these things shall be added unto you."

What "things"? The things we have been so concerned about that we have not had time for Him. If we will do what He wants us to do, then He will see to it that our needs are met. Oh, we may have to work! That is good for us. But He will see to it that we have the work, that we do it accept-

ably, and that what we have will be sufficient for all that we need!

TWICE IN THIS CHAPTER OUR LORD HAS REMINDED US THAT OUR LORD KNOWS WHAT OUR NEEDS ARE: In v. 8, and again in v. 32.

Do you believe this? How wonderful to see the Lord meeting our needs and making us satisfied with what we have.

Concl: After the Lord had washed His disciples feet when they were in the upper room together, He exhorted them to do to each other what He had done to them. And then He stated a principle which applies to every truth in the Word of God: "IF YE KNOW THESE THINGS, HAPPY ARE YE IF YE DO THEM" (John 13:17).

The saddest words you ever hear from a Christian are these: "Yes, I know that is what I should do, BUT . . ." We have our excuses which may or may not seem reasonable to us, but, in the meantime, we go on lacking the peace and joy and blessing which could be, and should be, ours in the Lord.

"Added." This word means that, if the Lord comes first, then I am going to have my needs met--"added" to the joy and peace that I have in the Lord. If other things come first, the Lord may still meet my needs, but they will not be "added" to the other blessings because they are not there. Instead, I worry and fret and am filled with care.

If we realize tonight,

- 1) Either, that we need to trust Christ as Savior,
- 2) Or, that, having trusted Him, we need to give Him the place of priority in our lives,

how much longer are we going to wait before we do what we know we need to do? Let us, by the grace of God, do it now, and begin to experience the blessings of His promise.