

SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD

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Matthew 6:31. "Therefore take not thought saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." In the seeking of the kingdom of God, it tells us that there are certain things that must become secondary to us. Now the kingdom of God is not a place necessarily, but it is a person. It is love, it is righteousness, it is peace, it is joy in the Holy Spirit. So it is that place in God where there is total peace, complete righteousness, and the fulness of joy; and it is in Christ that we find this.

Now, in making the Kingdom of God our priority, it takes our attention and our affection away from other things. We are people that have very full lives, and sometimes I wonder if they are not too full! We have certain things we think we need to do, certain things that we ought to do, and certain things that we never do. And so, we have a lot of things cluttering our thoughts and our attention.

It says that our thoughts, our heart, our emotions, our affections should be set upon heavenly things, on the "things that are above," and it says that the mind that is stayed on Him has "perfect peace." And yet we live so much in the lower realm and so many things are so important to us. We are much concerned about our food, our clothing, our children, our family. A lot of things, you might even say legitimate things, are seemingly very important to us and take up our thoughts, and yet, the Lord is saying here that we should not take thought about what we should eat or drink, or what we should be clothed with, for all these things are the things that the Gentiles seek after. So there is a searching after God that we should have that supersedes all of our searching after the natural things in life.

Seeking the Kingdom of God first (before our own will, our own desires, our own lives) puts us in the situation where we are losing our life. We talk on it, we preach on losing your life, but how many have found out that it is not so easy to lose your life, or to lay it down? Our problem is that we can lay it

down but we are forever picking it up. I know from myself, there are many times when we have made promises and vows and commitments to God, especially when we are in that kind of meeting when it seems like the Holy Spirit is dealing with us to make a new commitment or covenant with God. It seems when we are basking under the sunshine of His love we are just willing to go anywhere, do anything, and say anything that He tells us; but, by and by, these other things that we think on (what we call our own lives) seem to get in the way. I do not believe that God asks us to do anything that we are not qualified or capable of doing with the help of His grace. So the seeking first of the Kingdom is the seeking out of God's will first of all. Jesus said, "I did not come to do My will, but the will of Him that sent me." Jesus said that the words He spoke and the works that He did were not His own. He never claimed that what He said or what He did was His own, because His whole life was given over and committed to the Father's will.

You know, to be completely and totally submitted to the will of God brings us to a place where we have to give up certain things. The trouble has been that we want to do God's will, and at the same time we still want to do our own will. It just does not work, does it? We have to choose whom we will serve, and each day that choice is presented to us. It is not making some commitment at some altar, but daily committing ourselves to Him and saying, "Thy will be done, Thy Kingdom come." Beloved, God is bringing us to that place isn't He? And it is sometimes hard for some of us to give way and to submit.

I believe we are living not only in the last days, but in a very dangerous time. Some years ago the Lord showed us that the economy was going to be shattered, and I still believe that word. I was talking to my mother on the telephone not long ago, and you know, sometimes I think we really need to listen to people who have gone through and have experienced certain things. My mother is 85 years old this year. I still listen to her and I listen with both ears, and I still obey her. She said that the signs that we are seeing today are very similar to those that came with the 1929 stock market crash. She said that prior to the market crash the stock market was just going crazy. Wasn't it just this last week that the stock market went over 9000 for the first time in history? That is absolutely crazy, when you see what is going on in the rest of the world. You know, there are banks in Asia going defunct. In fact, in parts of Asia they closed their banks to regroup and reorganize. Japan has felt this wave, and some of the European countries have felt this wave, and I think good old America is going to feel it pretty soon.

She said that prior to the crashing of the stock market everybody was investing. She said widows were going and investing their money, cab drivers were investing their money... just about everybody and anybody; and without any warning (there was no sign whatsoever given to them), they

woke up one day, and that day was a very dark day, for the market crashed.

Now, they tell us that that would never happen again, but I would not put much trust in that, though. These Wall Street financiers, they are slick talkers, you know? How do you think they got where they are and the money that they have?

So, I am well aware that we are living in that kind of day and atmosphere, and I believe, at the same time, that the Spirit of God is dealing with us, trying to arouse us and awaken us to true righteousness, that we will no longer go on our own way with just business as usual.

If you have your Bible, turn with me now and we will get into the word. Let us read in 1 Kings 17, beginning with the 8th verse. "And the word of the Lord came unto him saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath.

And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering up sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in the cruse and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as though hast said: but make for thee and thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he had spake by Elijah."

The Lord spoke to Elijah to go to a woman who was destitute and in great need, for this was in a time of great famine. The crops had failed. It had become like a dust bowl and there was a great need for it to rain.

In the beginning of this chapter the Lord sends the prophet down to the brook, Cherith. The Bible says that while he was there the Lord fed him through the ravens, and he drank of the brook, but the brook dried up and the food ceased, and the Lord had now made another provision. In the time of famine, when there was great shortage of food and when everyone else was scratching for something to eat, the Lord speaks to this prophet of God and He tells him to go down to a certain place, and that He

has prepared a widow there to feed him. Now, this took a lot of faith on the part of this prophet. And you know, another thing I got to thinking about, is that though he is the very one who prophesied the famine, he was not immune from it. I think, sometimes, we get so caught up in the Spirit... the anointing is flowing through us and we get so carried away... that we bring a word to the people and we do not realize that that word is going to affect us too. So the very thing that he was prophesying was going to cause a shortage, a hardship, and a discomfort in his own life. But he still obeyed the Lord didn't he?

And the Lord told him to go and that a widow would feed him. Well, I suppose that after he saw the ravens come he could believe anything. Boy, after we see a miracle we can believe God for anything, can't we? However, it is before we see the miracle that our faith is tried. And so, he went down to this woman. He did not go down with a message of death, but the Lord sent him down to this woman who was in a very precarious situation. She had come to a place in her life of complete despair. Her main thinking was for her family and herself and she even expressed it to the prophet. She said, "After I have baked this last cake I am going to die, for this is the last food that we have!" But, as the prophet Elijah begins to talk to her, he draws her out of herself, and her own concern about her own well being and her family, and he began to get her mind interested in doing something for someone else.

You know, saints, there is no doubt about it: a lot of our lives, our thinking, has been around ourselves. We have had a desire to overcome and to be delivered from the bondage of our flesh; and there has been struggling, and there has been a seeking out God and we have had much thinking that has resolved around ourselves. We have had much thinking concerning our family and our children, and our children are really just an extension of our lives. It is amazing how much more time we spend thinking about our lives than we do thinking about God.

Sometimes we miss out on some blessing because our mind is so cluttered with our own life and how we have to "overcome." We have to stay in victory; we have to destroy the devil; we have to walk in a manner that is pleasing to God; and in doing all of this, it takes up a lot of our energy and our thinking, so then we forget a very important part of our being here: and what do you think that is? There are a lot of people that come to me and say, "Brother Campbell, pray for me that I might know the will of God." You know, we all know the will of God! The Bible says that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should have everlasting life (John 3:16, 2 Peter 3:9). That is the will of God, and I think that God is still concerned about humanity around us.

We are still waiting for some super thing to happen. We are waiting for the heavens to open some day and a scroll to come down or something, so that we have power, that we might raise the dead, and we might bring people into Christ. But, in seeking first the Kingdom of God, the first thing is to minister to God, and the second thing is to minister to others. When we do this and seek after God, our minds and our attention are not on ourselves, and this is what always opens up the soul to the abundant blessings of God.

The doors to the foreign-fields are open, but I believe they are soon going to close. I do not mean that they might close so that we will never get in, but they are going to close as far as us having liberty to walk in like we have in the past.

Russia has almost closed. They have passed a law and you cannot go in as a missionary without the approval of the state church, which is the Russian Orthodox Church. I talked with Tanya from the Ukraine some time ago. She told me that there is a movement on right now in the Ukraine to discredit all of the Protestant movements. The media in Russia has picked it up: the radio, the television, the newspapers; they are telling the people that these men are "stealing bread from your mouth," because they are teaching to give by offerings and tithes to the Lord. She said that there is a real movement on now to discredit any minister of the Gospel. So that door is closing, and I believe that there will be other doors that will close. Yeltsin is not in very good physical condition. The ones that standing in the background right now are from the old Communist line and are just ready to take over.

So things are not shaping up so good in the world, and I think that the Spirit of God is speaking expressly to us as a people, and trying to get us to shake ourselves and arise out of the dust of our earth, and begin to search after God. In the seeking after God, we will get our minds and our thoughts off of ourselves and begin to minister to humanity.

The church that we know, it has failed in it's commission. It has become an entertainment place. It has become a place of socializing and a place of number counting, and of how can we get bigger and what church can have the biggest congregation. They are missing the whole call of God.

So it falls upon a remnant people, and it falls upon a people that are not great in number. But I believe that God is going to use that remnant, and they will be a testimony of God's power and His grace and His glory, here in this earth! They will be a people who have lost their life and have laid it down; a people that are not so concerned about "What I should eat? What I should wear? What I should drink?"

They will not be so concerned about their children. It is amazing how much

time and money and energy some of us spend on our children. If we would show the same love to our brethren and spent as much time with one another as we do with our children and grand children, I think we would really be getting somewhere. We would be a whole lot further than we are!

So, here is Elijah, a man of God, in obedience to the voice of God, doing the will of God under very harsh and very difficult circumstances, yet bringing a word to this women. The word that he brought was not a word of death: instead of death and despair he brought life to her. She did not die. She lived! Why? Because she obeyed! She had faith and she obeyed the word of the Lord that came through this prophet. In 2 Chronicles 20:20, it says, "Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God. So shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper."

So the word of the Lord came to her through Elijah, and it brought her out of her poverty and brought prosperity to her. It saved her life! It brought joy to her. It brought peace to her, and instead of her thinking death and despair, the Lord brought new hope to her. It says that the cruse of oil did not fail and the meal barrel did not fail; but she had to first minister to the prophet of God, and that is what that means when it says, "Give, and it shall be given unto you..." It does not mean our substance, but the giving of our hearts, our will, our selves, to Him first; and then it shall be given to us.

I think sometimes we hold back a certain part of our lives. I believe we are living in a time when nothing shall be hidden, and all the garbage down inside of us that has been stinking so long is going to come out, and I believe that it is the Spirit of God that is going to bring it to the surface. We are going to really know one another by the Spirit, and not how we have known one another after the flesh in the past. I do not think God ever intended us to know one another after the flesh, but to know one another after the Spirit. Alleluiah! It is only in the Spirit that there can be a judging righteously: it cannot be done in the flesh.

And so the Lord is bringing us to the end of ourselves, and to the end of our own lives. We are going to put the presence of God first. The will of God will take priority about all these things.

I believe it is in 2 Kings 4 where a certain widow of one of the prophets came to the man of God and said, "Thy servant, my husband, has served the Lord faithfully, and now I have nothing. I have lost everything I have in the material realm and substance. I have no money. My two sons have been taken into bondage, and the debtors have come, and I cannot pay the debtors." And the prophet of God asked her a strange question. He said, "What do you have in your house?" She said, "I do not have anything left in

my house. The furniture is gone. The antiques are gone...."

....You know, I laugh at that. Do you know there are some of God's people who actually have houses full of antiques. They keep that old, smelly, musty stuff. You know, they probably could sell it: it is probably worth a lot of money; but they wouldn't do that!

My wife had something. It wasn't an antique, but it was some kind of shelving that you put little tiny miniatures in... a knick knack... and I never did like it! I never did like it from the day she had it. I told her I did not like it. She told me not to pray against it, because I had prayed about her plants and they ended up dying! They got like a jungle, you know. I did not call them plants anymore, I called them jungles. So, one day we are sitting in the front room, and we have a big crash. And this shelving fell off the wall, and all the King's men and all the King's horses will never put it together again!

We have been setting our affection on things that are down below, on things that are so important to us but that are not important at all to the Kingdom. On things that we waste our time and money over. I think that some poor soul in some impoverished country could eat pretty well with the money that was spent on that funny little thing. So, now, when I come to your house, don't hide it, you know! Don't be afraid that I am going to curse it or something; but you ought to get rid of it anyway!

So this widow had nothing left in her house, save one thing, and that was a pot of oil. Now, he did not say to her, "That's all you need. You just take that oil and it will keep multiplying in the one vessel." He said, "Get out of your house! Go to all of your neighbors and get empty vessels, because the Lord wants to fill them with oil!" Glory to God!! "Get all of the empty vessels you can find in the neighborhood!"

Let your ministry begin at Jerusalem, then Judea, and then Samaria, and then the uttermost parts of the earth. If we are not working here in our local body and if we are not evangelizing, so as to speak, or doing missionary work here, then we are not a candidate for Samaria or Judea. I believe it has to work first with the local body. We need to prove ourselves, our faithfulness, right here in the local body. I mean, faithfulness in our coming and our giving, in supporting one another and upholding one another.

And then.... get some empty vessels. I still say that the greatest joy to every one of us is seeing someone born into the Kingdom of God. I still rejoice in that. I rejoice when I see someone delivered, and when I see miracles and healing happen, but there is something in me that rises up in joy and the Spirit of God when I see an empty vessel filled with the very life and presence of God! Alleluiah! Alleluiah! If we are a remnant people, and we are

a light to this generation; and we are a trumpet and a sounding, then let it sound a certain sound! Let that sound penetrate and go throughout the land and begin to reach the hearts and lives of people...before the door closes, and none shall enter into the ark!

We have a responsibility, my friend! We have a commission. The sooner the better it will be, when we can get out of our own lives, and forget about what this one does and what that one does, and quit criticizing one another and picking apart one another. When we begin to join our hearts and spirits together, and say "Lord, we be that people! We will stand in the gap! We will be a light!" Amen! But, God, we can see, as the dawn rises, a rising in our own midst! And those who will rise with us! Alleluiah! Even in the time of His death, Jesus never ceased preaching the Kingdom of God. You know, how do we separate these things, and make different things out of different things? Paul says, "I preach Christ, and Him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2). The Kingdom of God is Christ. I do not have two messages. I do not have four messages. If we are preaching Christ and His entirety and His fullness (His death, burial, and resurrection), I believe we are preaching the kingdom! Because I think that that will cover it all! It will bring death to the natural man. It will bring a change to the natural man.

He said to the widow woman, "Listen, you go out, and get the empty vessels; and bring them into the house." You know, we are so busy trying to get everyone and his brother in that we do not ever get in our own loved ones! We are not getting in our mothers and dads, and grandfathers and grandmothers, aunts and uncles, cousins, and what have you. Oh, but we will go to Timbuktu alright! (By the way, there is a Timbuktu. Did you know that? It is in Africa, I think.) But we are so busy doing things in our own life and life revolves around ourselves. That has been the central focal point, but God is wanting to get our eyes and attention off of one another, and on to Him.

Jesus preached the kingdom of God and even on the cross, in almost His last breath, he said this to the one crucified alongside Him, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." When He saw the multitudes He was moved with compassion. He was not trying to put some feather in His hat to say how many souls He had saved or how many people He had healed, but He was moved with compassion. We need the compassion of Christ, and that only comes about with our seeking Him first and dwelling within the secret place. Not as a visitor or a guest, but entering in and then abiding, and He abiding in us and His word abiding in us. It is there and then that we do not worry about the plagues. We do not worry about whether the stock market goes up or down, or whether it doesn't go at all. That is the place when we rest and do not worry about those things. Not are we worried whether our young people or our children are going to be

alright. We have to give them to the Lord. We have to put them on the altar, and leave them there; and go on and do the thing that God has called us to do!

In John, the 4th chapter, when Jesus was moved by the Spirit to go through Samaria, He was brought to Jacob's well, when He sat while His disciples went into the city to buy meat. A woman came to fill her water pots with water, and as she began to fill her water pots, Jesus stopped her and He said, "Minister to me. Give me to drink." The woman was astounded! She was really amazed. A man who was a Jew speaking to her? The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. There was a prejudice among the Jews against the Samaritans. In fact, there was a hatred, and they called the Samaritans "dogs." So what Jesus was doing here was completely nontraditional, but do you know something? Jesus broke all of man's traditions. He kept all the Law of the Father and He did the will of the Father, but he broke the traditions of men. And the woman was absolutely flabbergasted! She did not know how to respond at first, and she said, "How be it, that you are a Jew, and you are talking to me, a Samaritan woman?" He said, "Woman, you have come to fill your water pots. If you fill them with Jacob's well water you are going to thirst again, but if you drink of the waters I give you, you won't be thirsting; but these waters will become a well in you, perpetually springing up. You won't have to be thirsty like this anymore." She said, "Sir, the well is deep and you have nothing to draw with! Are you greater than our father Jacob?" And she went on to say, "We worship here, because we have done this for hundreds of years." And then Jesus said "Yes, but you worship you know not what. It is neither at Jerusalem, nor here, but the Father seeketh those who will worship Him in Spirit and in truth!"

Well, the woman momentarily forgot about her own need, and she was captivated by Him, and her attention and her affection was all on Him. So finally she says, "You know, when the Messiah comes He is going to tell us all these things," And Jesus said, "I am He." Then He said a strange thing to her. He said, "Go, call you husband." She said, "I have no husband!" And He said, "Thou hast answered well. You have had five husbands and the man you are living with now is not your husband."

Now she perceived and said, "Thou are a prophet!" Her heart was changed. She accepted Him now, that this was the Messiah, the Christ. She forgot about her own life. She forgot about satisfying her own desires. She ran back to the city and she began to tell all the men in the city, "This man that I met, He has told me everything I have ever done! Surely this is the Messiah!"

Of course, you know how the men came out; but I am sure she went into

her house, and she told the man she was living with to get out. That is what she said, "Get out!" "Come out and hear this man." "Come, sit at His feet, and listen. Truly this is the Messiah!"

Oh, I see something here. Jesus was saying, "Get that man out of your house!" We have lived with this man Adam: with his appetite, his desires, his stubbornness, his wrath, his malice, his jealousy, his criticism, his greed! We have lived with him! Now, some of us have broken... we are not married to him, but he is still in the house! And God is saying, "Get him out of the house!" Amen! "Bring him to Christ! Bring him to the altar. Lay his life down! Present it as a living sacrifice, and let him die, so that there would be nothing left of him but ashes! So that he will no longer control you! He will no longer control your emotions, your desires: speaking out of turn, and speaking words of death and hurt and criticism! Get him out of the house! Get him out! Loose yourself! Be free of that man, and drink of the living waters. Let them become in you a loving fountain, that you are not a fountain that issues bitter waters, but you are like a stream that is crystal clear! That wherever that river flows in you, it brings life to the hearers and life to the people around you!"

I believe that the Spirit is saying, "Come out! Get him out of the house! He does not belong there!" Let the Lord deliver us from him. Lay him on the altar. Get him out of the house! He has caused us so much grief, sorrow, and bitterness; unbelief; broken homes, broken fellowships! Get him out!! Alleluiah! Alleluiah! Judgment begins at this house. Here! This house! Alleluiah! That not longer will we be married to that man! We won't live with him! We will make sure that when he gets out that he takes all of his stuff with him. Just as it was when they got rid of Tobiah and got him out of the temple, and out of the place where in times before they had stored the oil, the tithe of the corn, the wine and the oil. Nehemiah said, "Get him out, and all of his stuff with him!" All of his tricks and his religiousness! Oh my God! May God deliver us from our religiousness! Our thought of us being better than others! Holier than thou!

I believe God's will is going to be done! Whether it is done in us or not, it will still be done! God will have Himself a people, whether we are that people or not! Do not ever get the idea that the whole program of God is going to fail without you! It will not fail! I do not care if you believe it or not, it is not going to fail! The program of God is going to succeed! Whether we get it done or not, it will be done! He never begins anything He does not finish, and this salvation is going to be finished! Oh, glory to God! Alleluiah! Alleluiah!

Oh, we get so caught up in our own importance! "The whole program of God is going to be wrecked if it isn't for us." My God, my Lord, get us out of that attitude, to where we begin to see that whatsoever the Lord doeth, it will be

done; and if we do not do it, it will still be done! Do not tell me it won't be done! It will be done!

Seek first the Kingdom and His righteousness, and God will take care of all the other things. He will take care of our children. You are worried about your married children. They just had their first baby and you are just so happy about it. If they cough a little, you have to go over and pray for them. If they vomit a little bit, or their diaper is a little dirty or something, "There's something wrong with them! Get them to the doctor! Get them to the hospital! Pray for them. Lay hands on them and pour oil on them!" We worry so much about nothing! Set those things aside, and God will take care of them.

I have a son who is rebellious. I had a daughter who was rebellious, but Oh, the Lord got a hold of that daughter and He is getting a hold of my son! I had gotten so concerned about him because of some of the things he was getting into. It was consuming my time, my thoughts. I wrestled with that and I lost sleep over it. I got cranky with my wife (I know none of you get cranky with your wife!), and everything, and then the Lord said, "What are you so upset about?" "Well, I am upset about this son!" He said, "Well, now you know how it feels, don't you?" He said, "Because, I have gotten upset about you a lot of times!"

.... I was so concerned about this, and it was monopolizing my thinking, my waking and my sleeping house. And then the Lord reminded me of something. He said, "Do you remember you gave him to Me?" and this was something that I had done. I did not do this with Sarah, her dedication was a little different, but when I was all alone one day and Tony was just a little baby, I lifted him up, physically, with my hands, and I said, "Here Lord. He is Your's." And the Lord said to me, "Whatever is mine I will take care of!" He said, "Go about, and do My business and I will take care of your business!" Amen!

So what am I saying, and what is the Spirit of God telling us this afternoon? He is saying let us avail ourselves of the time that has been allotted to us, and let us finish this course with faith. Let us begin to fill the empty vessels and let us bring them into the house of the Lord.

