

## *Seek First the Kingdom of God*

### **Matthew 6:25-33**

**25 “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious 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 at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**

In verses 25-32 Jesus encourages his disciples to not be anxious. He advances a number of logical reasons why it is unwise to worry about the things in life. No matter how on target these comparisons might be, avoiding worry cannot be accomplished by our own strength. There needs to be a positive activity that will move us in the opposite direction of anxiousness. That antidote is seeking the reign of God and his righteousness. It is God’s righteousness, his salvation which he has won for us.

The word first means foremost. It could easily be translated only. Serving only one master and seeking only one kingdom means that God permeates every aspect of life. Jesus, who calls us into His kingdom by His righteousness, also promises to supply all our needs on a daily basis. Therefore, we need not worry tomorrow.

What might this mean in practical terms today, this invitation to “first seek indeed the reign [of God] and his righteousness?” It means to go to the places where Jesus is reigning with his gracious presence, to receive his gifts of forgiveness and righteousness, to learn his truth, and to respond to his call. Jesus’ invitation is holistic. To seek the reign of God is to seek the Gospel, which comes to us in the Scriptures and the Sacraments. In seeking that Gospel, we will also experience the sustaining community of fellow disciples, who are our brothers and sisters. With them we are joined to Christ in Holy Baptism, and with them we gather to hear God’s Word and receive our Lord’s Supper. In those places God’s saving righteousness is found; there God is at work forgiving and making things right. That is what life is for; here is the purpose and goal of the body. Jesus is drawing, wooing, and inviting his disciples thus to orient their lives and so to be free from worry over life’s other needs. The Father will supply those needs as well (6:33b). (Gibbs)

Jesus does not promise us a life without troubles and consequences of sin. They keep us mindful of our sinfulness and unworthiness and of our daily need for God’s gracious forgiveness for Jesus’ sake. They also help us to keep our attention on the goal of our faith and to look forward to the trouble-free life in heaven that will never end. He who has provided this glorious inheritance for us is the one who tells us not to worry about the things of this life, for He will surely bring us to that goal.

Prayer: Good Shepherd, because You laid down Your life for me, grant that I may trust You to provide my daily needs. Amen. (TLNB)