

Ivan Jones Matthew 6:25-33

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Preacher: Ivan Jones

- [0 : 0 0] If you are able, please stand with me. We're going to look at Matthew, the sixth chapter, verses 25 to 33. It's the Sermon on the Mount. I'm sure you're very familiar with the content, but I think it's worthy of us to look at it again.
- Starting in Matthew 6, 25. For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink, nor for your body as to what you will put on.
- Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air that they do not sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.
- Are you not more worthy than they? And who of you being worried can add a single hour to his life? And why are you worried about clothing?
- Observe how the lilies of the field grow. They do not toil, nor do they spin. Yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these.
- [1 : 0 9] But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will he not much more clothe you? You of little faith.
- For the Gentiles... I'm sorry. Do not worry then what we will eat or what we will drink or what we will wear for clothing. For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things.
- For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
- Before we talk about him, let's pray to him. Heavenly Father, we thank you and praise you for this moment. For Father, gathered in your presence and opening your word and reading it is a sacred moment.
- We invite the Holy Spirit to be among us, to move upon our hearts. We know, Lord Jesus Christ, that you are the one who truly teaches. We ask you now to teach us, because you are, again, the King of kings and the Lord of lords.
- [2 : 1 7] We ask all these things in Christ's name. Amen. I'm sure most of you are familiar with the Sermon on Mount. You know, when I read about the Sermon on Mount, which is quite long, I always try to picture myself as a Jew at the time that he was saying this for the very first time.
- I mean, it had to be absolutely radical teaching and amazing. They had to be in complete shock of everything he said there. And particularly these particular scriptures.
- What? Not worry? Come on. There's a lot of things to be worried about. And so I think as they were listening to him all through the sermon, their mouths had to be dropping lower and lower and lower and saying, what?
- And particularly you saw in verse 32, he even said to the Jews, hey, you guys are thinking like the Gentiles. You talk about an insult.
- They had to be absolutely amazed. So the question I had also to think about is, if Jesus was saying this today in 2024, what would he say to us?
- [3 : 3 3] Because I think for most of us, I know many people truly do struggle, we really don't worry too much about what we will eat or what we will wear.

I mean, when we think about eating, we're more worried about the calories and the sugar content and the cost of the food. And what we will wear, well, we got to have that brand.

I like, since I've retired, like to play golf. And not too long ago, I realized I'm a golf snob. I mean, I want to play with Callaway golf balls. Even when I hit one in the woods and I find a nitro or a top flight, I won't touch it.

I mean, we really are sad people, are we not? So what would he say? I don't know. I thought about it. Let's try this. Therefore, I tell you not to worry about your life.

Don't worry about the war in Ukraine. Don't worry about what's happening in Israel. What the price of gas is. Who the next president will be. What will the stock market do in the next six months.

[4 : 36] What is the next virus. Is there really global warming. And obviously, who's going to win the Super Bowl. We're pretty fickle, are we not? What you have to see again this morning is.

What Jesus was saying to the people at that time. Is just as true and applicable today in you and my life. So I want to spend a few moments with you.

And talk about what he said. But also share basically four truths from these scriptures. So here's truth number one. Jesus desires you and I to focus on what really matters.

Do we do that? Last May, my wife and I had the pleasure of going to Lakewood, Colorado. To see our oldest grandson's graduation. And of course, going to Denver is a three-hour trip from now.

And on that particular day, that was one of the stormiest days that we've had in a long time. And I'm telling you, that was a rough ride. Turbulence was terrible.

[5 : 42] It was so bad that we didn't even get snacks or drinks. So disappointed not to get that cranberry juice and those crackers. Come on. And particularly when you're on a three-hour flight and you just had a big breakfast and coffee in the morning.

Being told, please don't go to the restroom. That makes it hard on people, okay? I'm just telling you, all right? I'm just telling you, all right? But we got there safely, thank God. And we found out that our grandson's graduation was not going to be at Lakewood, Colorado at the high school.

But it was going to be at Colorado University in Boulder, Colorado, which is 45 minutes away from their house. Now, folks, 45 miles doesn't sound like much.

But you're talking about Denver. And Denver traffic is absolutely worse than Nashville's. It took three hours to get there. When we finally got there, we had to park in a parking garage about two miles away from the gymnasium where it was being held.

So we had to walk there. And then when we finally got and saw the gymnasium, we realized we had to climb up literally a mountain of steps to get there. We got in and we looked at the platform.

[6 : 49] And we're talking about 400 graduating students. And when you saw the platform, you saw that people, I'm telling you, you knew you were in trouble. You knew it was going to be long and it was going to be tedious and it was not going to be a great deal of fun.

I think I don't even remember how many speakers. I lost count. It was long and tedious to say the least. But, you know, even after that, going back to the car and getting in the car, it took three hours to go back to Lakewood.

I could have ridden a tricycle and gotten back to Lakewood faster than that. But then God, as he usually does, kind of said something.

Because what really mattered was that my grandson, Tyler, graduated. What an honor to see this little boy that we remember at his birth walking across the stage.

Because graduation is a big deal. I'm an educator. I've been in education all my life. And you realize in the United States only 75% of students graduate from high school.

[8 : 03] And education is so very important for success in life. But he graduated. That's what truly mattered at that moment. None of the other things that went on.

And thank God, God is directing his steps. And he's enrolled this fall in Colorado Christian University. So what I'm saying to you is we've got to focus on things that matter.

And there's an old cliché. What matters most matters most. Yeah. So the question is how do we know what truly matters?

And I think that's our problem. You and I spend a lot of time and energy on what doesn't truly matter. And it's so easy for us to miss what does.

Now the secular world likes the help. It tells you what really matters. Just watch TV. Every commercial. You need that. You need to go here. You need to do that.

[9 : 03] You need to do this, this, this, and this, and this. Because that really matters. The secular world tells us it's about wealth. It's about power. It's about beauty.

And it's about success. Sermon on the Mount. Jesus says something important about what really matters and what doesn't.

Jesus is trying to tell us we really shouldn't be anxious about what we should wear or eat or even how long we live. Because God the Father knows that.

He knows the needs in our life and what he will give us. You're probably familiar with the serenity prayer. It was written by Reinhold Niebuhr who actually in the prayers used in Alcoholics Anonymous.

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change. Courage to change the things I can. Wisdom to know the difference. That's good.

[10 : 02] But I have a Christian author that I like to read. And he added another line. He added and grant me the wisdom to recognize what matters and what doesn't. And the ability to focus on what does really matter.

I like that. And actually in verse 33 it tells us what truly matters. But first seek the kingdom and his righteousness.

So truth number one. Jesus wants us to focus on what really matters. Truth number two. We have to learn to trust God completely.

See I think that our problem is our faith is small. When it comes to truly relying on God the Father. And even Jesus said that in the sermon back in the scripture where he said.

Ye of little faith. And even Jesus had to tell the man who asked him to heal his son. The man said.

[11 : 12] I believe. Help my unbelief. We're so fearful and concerned about what's going to happen tomorrow. That essentially when we do that. We're essentially saying to God.

I don't really trust you. And to worry that God can't be trusted. And we don't believe. Is that we're saying to him. God you're not really big enough.

You're not really trustworthy enough. You're not even loving enough. To meet the needs of my life. And to know what the needs of my life. Which is simply not true.

God is not primarily concerned about our comfort and our well-being. He cares about those things. But he is more concerned about our heart and our souls.

And what is the condition of each. And not to trust God is to question his sovereignty. That he knows what is best for us. We are not trusting his character.

[12 : 16] And God's character is perfect. We're not trusting that he knows and will carry out his purpose in our lives. You've probably been in churches where it's a common saying.

And people respond when someone says God is good. Yeah. We know that don't we. But do we believe it? Okay.

Truth three. I believe what God says matters most. And as Christ followers we should know that. Because it all starts with God.

It is the recognition that God tells us in his word what truly matters most. And not only in the Sermon on the Mount.

But from Genesis to Revelation. God has truly communicated to each one of us. What is important. See what God says in his word.

[13 : 18] God breathed. God inspired. Every word of it. Is not irrelevant. It is not unimportant. It is not shallow. It is not out of date.

Even though we have the Old Testament. And actually the New Testament. Think about it. It is an Old Testament now. But it's not out of date. It is as real and refreshing and helpful as today.

And if we're honest. We spend more time and more attention on the internet. The TV. And social media.

Than we do on God's word. The creator of all there is. The sovereign God of the universe. Is the only one who tells us what is important.

And what is not. And he says very clearly. Seeking his kingdom. And his righteousness. Is what God says is important. I don't know about you.

[14 : 23] But words are powerful. And what I want to do now. Is really focus on. Verse 33. And look at each word. And what it means.

First one is. But. Usually when you hear the word but. Something negative. Follows. Does it not? I will help you.

But. I would give you some money. But. I would like to be your friend. But. I would like to go with you. But. I love you.

But. Usually you don't expect much good after that. But here in God's word. This word is good. It follows something.

Very very special. And important. Because the next word is. Seek. Seek. I like that. You know.

[15 : 20] As a kid. That was one of my favorite games. Hide and seek. Now. I never really wanted to be the seeker. I'd rather be the hider. Because seeking meant a lot of work. And really. When you seek something.

It is hard work. And the question of course is. What are you seeking? Because the definition of seek. Seek is. It is the conscious.

Fixing. Or. Focusing. Of our mind's attention. On God. Let me say that again. Conscious. Fixing.

Or. Focusing. On our mind's attention. And our heart's affection. On God. My wife said. Get water. You need it. You probably heard of.

St. Augustine. Of Hippo. In 400 AD. He wrote a beautiful prayer. That I try to say every morning. When I remember. Listen to what he says. He says. Father.

[16 : 22] As you awaken us. To your praise. Grant that we may know you. Call on you. And praise you. For you have made us.

For yourself. And our souls. Are restless. Until they find. Their rest. In thee. And that's good. But you can't beat scripture.

Can you? In the Bible. There are probably. 40 strong verses. About seeking God. Let me share you. Just a few. Real quickly. Jeremiah 29.

13. Listen. If you seek him. He will be found. By you. 1st. Chronicles 16. 11. Look to the Lord. In his strength. Seek his face.

Always. Psalm 63. 1. You God. Are my God. Earnestly. I seek you. Isaiah 55. 6. Seek the Lord. While he may be found.

[17 : 16] Call on him. While he is near. Amos 5. 4. This is what the Lord. Says to Israel. Seek me. And live. Psalm. 50. 34.

10. The lions. May grow weak. And hungry. But those. Who seek the Lord. Lack no good thing. And I love. What David wrote. In Psalm. 27.

8. When he said. To me. Seek my face. My heart. Said to you. Your face. O Lord. I shall seek.

And probably. The best example. Of one. Who sought the Lord. Is you read about. Daniel. In captivity. Been told. Not to pray. But he goes.

And prays. Three times. A day. And. Daniel. 9. 3. Says. So I. Gave my attention. To the Lord. To seek him. By prayer.

[18 : 09] And supplication. Folks. Are you seeking. The Lord. But more important. He said. But. Seek.

First. I don't have to define. First. Do I? What is first? It's number one. It's a priority. It is that. Which is most important.

It's before everything else. And let's be honest. We love to be first. Do we not? First in line. We want our teams to be first. God is emphasizing.

This is first. And folks. You don't get first things. If you try to do. Second things. To get to the first things. You got to do. First things. Then he says.

But first. But seek first. His kingdom. Now that's interesting. Because he's implying what? Well. There is. His kingdom.

[19 : 09] But there's a whole lot of other kingdoms out there. There's obviously the kingdom of earth. There's a kingdom of the world. And what do you see when you seek the kingdom of the earth?

I don't know. But I see evil. I see suffering. I see death. I see loneliness. I see sadness.

And I see fear. See. Why don't we seek God first? Why do we not seek his kingdom first?

I think we have a. Still have a problem. We still have the sinful nature. There's still sin. In our hearts. That basically means our hearts are fickle. We still want what we want.

We want our own way. We want to forget about God's glory. And we want to write our own rules. And live our own life. We typically love our own little kingdoms.

[20 : 07] We've established as people. More than we love his. We don't like it when we don't get what we think we deserve. And we still question God's goodness.

When we don't get our own way. So what is God's kingdom? Well let me tell you. God's kingdom is not a place. It is not a castle.

It is not streets of gold. What is his kingdom about? First love. What kind of love? Unconditional.

It is about peace. What peace? Peace that goes on beyond understanding. It is about joy. What joy? Joy unspeakable.

It is about fellowship. Fellowship with the living God. And fellowship with his followers. It is about justice.

[21 : 06] Where God makes everything right. Out of everything wrong. God's kingdom. God's kingdom. Is about relationship.

Not only though with him. But it is with one another. It is about people. We are a people. Who have a king. Who is not elected.

And no one can. Remove. And he tells us. That it is about people. And because people are. Important. His second great commandment.

Love thy neighbor as thyself. People are important. Because they were created. In the image of God. Just like you and I. That means every person. Is important.

Even though they drive you nuts. Even though sometimes. They are a little bit. Off. Sometimes they are deeply in sin.

[22 : 08] There are even. People who are important. Who are Democrats and Republicans. Every person. Because I think sometimes. We forget what. God so loved.

The world. So we have to place people. In front. And be important. People are the kingdom. Of God. People are our priority.

People are more important. Than programs. Schedules. Rules. Activities. So how does that play out? What does that mean.

If we put people first? Well basically it means. Our children. Are more important. Than our jobs. Broken hearts.

Are more important. Than broken computers. My neighbor. My neighbor. Is more important. Than keeping my lawn mowed. Sometimes a hug.

[23 : 08] Is more important. Than a sermon. God is good. God. Has a kingdom. That is eternal. And it is more important.

Than anything here on earth. That is temporal. And people are important. I am a history teacher. And I love reading about former presidents.

And I love the story of Calvin Coolidge. Who really did not do much as a president. But he did one thing important. He has written at one time. That he was going to a very important meeting. With his advisors.

And he stopped and talked to a little boy. And his advisors of course said. What are you doing? You got this important meeting. Why do you talk to this little boy? And he looked at him. He says. Because you do not know.

What that boy. Might become. I like that. People have such value. That we need to give them esteem. All right. But.

[24 : 09] Seek first. His kingdom. He doesn't stop there. Does he? He says. And. His. Righteousness. His righteousness.

By the way. Not ours. Because the Bible says. What about our righteousness? They're like filthy rags. And Psalm 16. 2. Says it very well.

As he says. You are my Lord. Apart from you. I have no good thing. So what do we mean by righteousness? Righteousness. Is not just.

About. Doing. Right. Righteousness. Is about. Being. Right. You see. There are many people. Who are. Good people. I mean.

They really do. The right things. But inside their hearts. They don't have a relationship. With God. They are not.

[25 : 06] Denying themselves. Each day. They are not. Picking up. The cross. They are not. Relying. On. And believing.

In Jesus Christ. For everything. Jesus. Did not die.

To make you and I comfortable. Jesus died. To make us. Holy. Holy. And to be holy.

Is simply. To seek first. The kingdom of God. And his righteousness. To be holy. Is to want. To be. Like. Jesus Christ.

So we are called. To be different. From the world. To hunger. And thirst. After. His righteousness. And finally. Verse. Or truth for. God.

[26 : 04] Will be faithful. To his promise. Look what it says. Finally. Seek. But. Seek first.

The kingdom of God. And his righteousness. And what. All. Will be added. To you. And what does all mean folks. All means.

All. Nothing left out. He's going to take care of you. Thomas Watson. Was a 16th century. Puritan minister. And I saw. A quote by him.

In the devotional. I'm reading. He said. If God. Will give his people. A kingdom. When they die. He will not deny. Them daily bread. While they live.

Folks. Bible is full. Of God's promises. They're all true. He never breaks them. He never fails them. God's promises. Are more important.

[27 : 03] Than anybody else's lies. So there you have it folks. We're challenged. We're challenged to. Focus on what really matters.

We're challenged to learn. To trust God completely. We're challenged to. Listen and do what God. And pay attention to. What God says. Is most important. And to trust God.

Because every one of his. promises. Are faithful. Truthfully. Most of the things. You and I worry about. And think about. Are straw.

And first Corinthians three. Tells you. What would happen. If you build a foundation. Of your life on straw. It's going to be. Burned up. I read a book years ago.

By a doctor. Who had. Spent much of his life. Particularly. About his experiences. But he. Noted a great chapter. About what people were like. When they faced death.

[28 : 00] I found it interesting. What he said. He said. You know. It's interesting. When people die. They don't talk about. Their. Jobs. Or what they accomplished. Or how much money they had.

They don't talk about. Their fancy homes. They don't talk about. Their fancy cars. They don't talk about. Their great vacation. When people are dying. They typically talk about. Two things. One.

Those people. Who loved them. And those. People. They loved. I think he caught on. What God was trying to say. Was most important.

So here's a quote. From. A former pastor. In the 19th century. His name's James Smith. Listen to his words. What God. What. I'm sorry. What day.

Will God bless you. The day you begin. To seek the Lord. The day you decide. To be on the Lord's side. The day you publicly. And honestly.

[28 : 55] Profess him. The day you hardly. Engage in. His work. The day you return. From backsliding. And repent of your sin. Before.

Him. That's what God says. Is important. And let me close. With a quote. From Habakkuk. 317. 18. Because I really think.

That captures. This whole. Theme. Of the sermon. It goes this way. Although the fig tree. Does not blossom.

The vine. Bears no fruit. The olive crop. Fails. The orchard. Yields no food. The fold. Is bereft. Of its flock.

There are no cattle. In the stalls. Yet. I will exalt. In the Lord. I will rejoice. In the God. Of my deliverance.

[29 : 50] Who strengthens me. He makes my feet. As nimble. As the hinds. And. Causes me. To range the heights. That's our prayer. God.

Make our feet. As nimble. As the hinds. And help us. To range the heights. Amen. Amen.
Let's pray. Heavenly Father. We thank you again. For this time. In your word.

We thank you, Heavenly Father. For the truth. That we have heard. From you. Because you wrote it. We pray now, Father. As we come to a time. Of invitation. That you again.

Would speak to our hearts. You know us. You know who we are. You know. All the things. There's nothing hidden. From your sight. So Father. As we sing.

And as we close. We ask God. That you would bless. Each one here. And continue to help us. Father. To seek your kingdom.

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