**SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Matthew 6:1-34

Key Verse: 6:33

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

**Introduction**

 Jesus prayed for his disciples before his crucifixion. “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.” (Jn 17:15-16) Although we Christians do not belong to this world, we are in the world. We are vulnerable to anxiety about our lives and the lives of our children. This makes us powerless and ineffective. We may try to solve it by storing up treasures on earth and worry a lot about it. However, Jesus teaches us to store up treasures in heaven. Jesus urges us to seek first God’s kingdom and his righteousness. Then we can find true security and live victoriously.

* This chapter can be divided into three parts.

\*Three acts of righteousness (1-18)

\*Three checklist (treasure, eye, and heart) (19-24)

\*Do not worry but seek first His kingdom and His righteousness (25-34)

1. **Read verses 1-18. What are the acts of righteousness which Jesus mentions here? How can we avoid self-righteousness and seek God’s righteousness? How should we pray? Think about each petition in Jesus’ prayer. (Ro 1:16-17; 5:1) (Mt 6:1, 9-15)**

1-1, Read verses 1-18.

### Giving to the Needy

“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. **2** “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. **3** But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, **4** so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

### Prayer

**5** “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. **6** But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. **7** And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. **8** Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. **9** “This, then, is how you should pray: “‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, **10** your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. **11** Give us today our daily bread. **12** And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’ **14** For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.**15** But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

### Fasting

**16** “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. **17** But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, **18** so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

1-2, What are the acts of righteousness which Jesus mentions here?

* Giving to the needy, prayer, fasting
* Verses 1-18 become a good background to support the latter part of this passage in that God who is unseen sees our heart and rewards us surely.

1-3, How can we avoid self-righteousness and seek God’s righteousness?

* We should do these acts in secret to seek God’s righteousness instead of promoting our self righteousness.
* We find that Jesus repeated three times the phrase, "...your Father, who sees what is done in secret will reward you." (4, 6, 18)
* Here we may think about two things.
* **First, we should do acts of righteousness before God.** God sees everything that is done in secret. Nothing is hidden from him. People look at the outward appearance. But God sees the heart (1 Sa 16:7). God sees not only our hidden deeds, but also our thoughts and motives in our conscious/unconscious world.
* We can deceive men, but not God. God cannot be mocked (Gal 6:7). Before God's eyes, everything is laid bare (Heb 4:13).
* King David said in Psalm 139:1-4, "You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely."
* When we truly know God, we do everything before His eyes.
* **Second, we must seek God's reward.** God is the God who rewards. God said to Abraham, "I am your very great reward." (Gen 15:1)
* Hebrews 11:6 says, "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."
* People seek a reward. Jesus did not tell us not to seek a reward; there is a reward--either from men, or from God. Seeking man's recognition we will make us miserable hypocrites.
* Jesus wants to cleanse our hearts by his blood and to restore pure faith in us to live before God alone.
* Then we can seek God's reward in everything we do and find true satisfaction, peace and joy. We can grow in the image of God.

1-4, How should we pray?

‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’

* Jesus teaches two things: how to pray in terms of attitude (verses 5-8) and how to pray in terms of its content (9-15)

1-5, Think about each petition in Jesus’ prayer. (Ro 1:16-17; 5:1) (Mt 6:1, 9-15)

**\*Our Father in heaven** - It is very important to know who we are praying to. Our heavenly Father is different from our earthly fathers who have many character flaws and weaknesses. It is a privileged relationship when we call God as our Father. It was unusual for Jews to call God “Father”. When we say “in heaven”, we remember God’s holiness and glory. Most importantly, our heavenly Father loves us so much that he sacrificed his one and only Son Jesus for us.

* There are a couple of parts in this so called Lord’s prayer that Jesus teaches us.
* **the first part** is concerning God’s will and His heart’s desire (His name, His kingdom, His will) and **the second part** is about humans’ needs (daily bread, forgiveness, temptation).
* However first is first! God’s desire first. When we pray according to His desire, our needs will be met. So our prayer is to be God centered as our top and foremost priority!

**\*Hallowed be your name -** ‘hallow’ means honor as holy - to render glory to the name of God rather than our own name.

**\*Your kingdom come -** God’s kingdom in comparison to our own kingdom is to be our priority

**\*Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven -** Also God’s will is to be ahead of my/our will.

**\*Give us today our daily bread -** daily bread could be physical food as well as spiritual food, God who is the creator, knows what we need from the beginning. Genesis 1:28-30 read, “God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” **29** Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. **30** And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.” - So an order is clear here. When we live according to God’s promise, we will daily experience his provision. God provides food for both us and animals. So we pray “our”.

**\*And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors -** Forgiveness is not optional but it is required as sin-forgiven sinners for verses 14 and 15 read, “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.**15** But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” Forgiving and being forgiven are closely related each other!

**\*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one -** help us not into temptation, we do not know know what will happen today and tomorrow.

**16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. **17** For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—***a righteousness that is by faith from first to last,*** just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” - Romans 1:16-17

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, - Romans 5:1

“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. - Matthew 6:1

**\* The Lord’s Prayer ends with, “...for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”** - according to footnote

* The Lord’s Prayer starts “hallowed be your [God’s] name,” and ends by declaring

God’s glory. The Lord’s Prayer teaches us to pray and live with a deep desire to glorify God. It teaches us to pray and live according to God’s will. As we practice the Lord’s Prayer genuinely, we can grow in God’s image. This is the ultimate purpose of His creation. It reminds us of Genesis 1:31, “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.”

1. **Read verses 19-21. What is the advantage of storing up treasures in heaven rather than on earth? How do people store up treasures on earth? What is God’s great concern? (21)**

2-1, Read verses 19-21.

**19** “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.

2-2, What is the advantage of storing up treasures in heaven rather than on earth?

* Moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.
* 1 Peter 1:4 reads, “and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you.”
* Revelation 21:4b reads, “There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”
* In contrast, earthly treasures are vulnerable due to moths and vermin and thieves.
* Proverbs 23:4-5 read, “Do not wear yourself out to get rich; do not trust your own

 cleverness. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely

 sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.”

* James 3:13-17 read, “Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.
* Thus, life is an investment. It is important to know where we invest our time, money, youth, energy, and all our treasures properly. If we invest our treasures in something that eventually disappears, in the end we have labored in vain.
* However, if we invest our lives in eternity, we find absolute meaning and we will be joyful and thankful. God rewards us. This is the great advantage in investing in eternity.

2-3, How do people store up treasures on earth?

* It can be through FDIC insured saving accounts in the Bank, buying stocks/mutual funds, buying real estate, social position or career, pursuing children’s higher education, retirement funds, social security benefits, etc.
* “Treasures” may be anything that we love and value.
* People store up treasures on earth rather than in heaven due to the fact that these are quick to be accessible.
* However we have access to treasures in heaven according to Jesus’ word of promise.
* John 15:7-8 read, “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”
* Colossian 2:2-3 read, “My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ,in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

2-4, What is God’s great concern? (21)

* For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
* Jesus concluded that you can only have your treasure (and your heart) in one place; we can’t lay up treasure on earth and on heaven at the same time. It is impossible!
* Where our treasure is, there our heart will be - either on earth or in heaven. When our heart is on earth, we gradually lose interest in spiritual things; serving God becomes a burden, and our hearts drift far from God.
* Hebrew 2:1 reads, “We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.”
* 1 Timothy 6:17-19 read, “Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”
* Our purpose of life, hope, and value system are closely related in our hearts. That is, if our purpose and hope are on the earth, we ended up storing up treasures in this world, while our purpose and hope are in God, we ended up storing up treasures in heaven.
1. **Read verses 22-24. What does it mean that the eye is the lamp of the body? How do healthy eyes help us store up treasures in heaven? Read verse 24 again. How does this verse fit the flow of the previous verses? Who are the two masters between whom we must choose? Why can’t we serve two masters?**

3-1, Read verses 22-24.

**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.

3-2, What does it mean that the eye is the lamp of the body?

* **Eyes** are the [organs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organ_%28anatomy%29) of vision. They detect [light](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Light) and convert it into electro-chemical impulses in [neurons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neurons). The simplest photoreceptor cells in conscious vision connect light to movement. In higher organisms the eye is a complex optical system which collects light from the surrounding environment, regulates its intensity through a diaphragm, [focuses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Focus_%28optics%29) it through an adjustable assembly of [lenses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lens_%28anatomy%29) to form an image, converts this image into a set of electrical signals, and transmits these signals to the [brain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brain) through complex neural pathways that connect the eye via the [optic nerve](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Optic_nerve) to the visual cortex and other areas of the brain. - Wikiperdia
* In Jewish literature, the eye could symbolize the heart. As the eye is the lamp of the body, so the heart is a lamp of the soul that reveals one's inner life. A healthy eye suggests loyal devotion to God, while an unhealthy eye connotes moral corruption. Storing up treasures is related to our heart. If we have a healthy heart we can have a right decision to store up treasures in heaven. Our heart is related to our value system. If we have a sound value system, we have spiritual discernment and can make right moral judgments.
* Moses set a good example. (Hebrews 11:24-26) “By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.”

3-3, How do healthy eyes help us store up treasures in heaven?

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!

* According to the context, the idea behind having a good eye is either being generous or being single minded. Both principles apply to the disciple’s attitude towards material things.
* **Being generous brings light to our lives.** We are happier and more content when we have God’s heart of generosity. But if we are not generous, it is as if your whole body will be full of darkness. Our selfish ways cast darkness over everything that we think or do.
* **Being single minded brings light to our lives,** and we are also happier and more content when we focus on the kingdom of God and His righteousness, knowing that all the material things will be added to us.
* When we are double-minded, our whole body will be full of darkness and a dark shadow will be over everything in our life.
* James 1:8 reads, “Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.”

3-4, Read verse 24 again.

**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.

* Jesus has the master and slave relationship in view, and no slave could serve two masters.
* Jesus states that serving two masters is simply impossible. If you think that you are successfully serving two masters, you are deceived. It can’t be done.
* As ancient Israel struggled with idolatry, they thought that they could worship the Lord God and Baal. God constantly reminded them that to worship Baal was to forsake the Lord God. To be loyal to the one is to despise the other.
* 1 King 18:21 reads, ““Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him." But the people said nothing.””
* Colossians 3:5 says, “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.”

3-5, How does this verse fit the flow of the previous verses?

* Spiritual blindness(darkness) has to do with inability to choose the right master.
* So they pursue money first, planning to use it to serve God later. Why does this not work? Money refers to Mammon, the god of materialism. Mammon is an idol that requires full devotion. At the same time, the one true God requires full devotion. So no one can serve both. Therefore we must decide which one we are going to serve.

3-6, Who are the two masters between whom we must choose?

* Jesus > Money(Mammon)
* Let us read Micah 4:5, “All the nations may walk in the name of their gods, but we will **walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever**.”

3-7, Why can’t we serve two masters?

* Our heart is one although our eyes or ears are two.
* Mammon is an idol that requires full devotion. At the same time, the one true God requires full devotion. So no one can serve both. We must decide which one we are going to serve.
* These days many young people study hard in order to get a good job. We need to study hard. However, that cannot be our idol which requires full devotion. Money itself is not bad. But the problem is that money has a kind of magic power; after getting money, people change.
* We must be clear about this: God is our Master, not money. We are stewards of money for God's glory and purpose. We should use money to serve God.
1. **Read verses 25-30. What are the most common things people worry about? How does God show his faithfulness to provide for those who depend only on him? (28-30) What can be accomplished by worrying? What is the difference in what is temporal and what is eternal? Why do people worry? (30b)**

4-1, Read verses 25-30.

**25** “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? **26** Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? **27** Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? **28** “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. **29** Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. **30** If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

4-2, What are the most common things people worry about?

I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

Birds of the air do not worry but diligently work(fly) instead to find their foods for God already provided them. Likewise we better not worry, but work diligently by trusting in our Father in heaven.

Early bird gets(catches) the worm!

4-3, How does God show his faithfulness to provide for those who depend only on him? (28-30)

“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. **29** Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. **30** If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

* The old NIV translates “flowers” as “lilies.”
* Lilies are wildflowers but very beautiful. They are more splendid than Solomon on his best day. God’s creation is perfect and wonderful. God clothes even the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire. Then why would he not clothe his own children? God is our Father who loves us and takes care of us.



4-4, What can be accomplished by worrying?

* Worry accomplishes nothing; we can add nothing to our lives by worrying.
* “Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”
* “Can add” means add to life.
* Instead of adding to our life, we can actually harm ourselves and shorten our life span through worry.
* When we worry, we do not exercise and degrade our health. Mood becomes down too.
* Panic attack causes headache, sweating, increased pulse, irritable bowel syndrome, and pain from muscle tension...
* Stress produces hormones(thyroid hormone, epinephrine, steroid) causing diseases: hypertension, heart disease, stroke, diabetes mellitus, and so on.

4-5, What is the difference in what is temporal and what is eternal?

* What is temporal is body, flower, physical food, while what is eternal is life.
* When we do not trust God, worry comes very naturally, even though we know that it is useless. People worry about what is temporary: their body health, their employment, marriage, children's education, houses, retirement plan, and even their burial site.
* They constantly and diligently manufacture or even imagine worries; their head is a factory of worries.

4-6, Why do people worry? (30b)

* Little faith
* When children trust their parents, they do not worry. Likewise, when we trust our heavenly Father, we do not need to worry at all, about anything.
* It could be another reason why Jesus teaches his disciples who were probably worrying about their future to call God as “our Father in Heaven”. (9)
* In the same way, we need to realize that our national root problem is lack of faith in God. Our nation was founded by ***Puritans*** who sought God’s kingdom and righteousness first. They came here with nothing in their hands, but sought freedom to worship and serve God. For this, they were willing to suffer much. God blessed their faith and made America the richest nation in history to serve Him only.
1. **Read verses 31-34. What are some basic things that both pagans–the unbelieving world–and Christians need? How do the pagans seek? How must Christians seek? What are all of these things that God gives? What do you think is most important?**

5-1, Read verses 31-34.

 **31** So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ **32** For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. **33** But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. **34** Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

5-2, What are some basic things that both pagans–the unbelieving world–and Christians need?

* ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’

5-3, How do the pagans seek?

* For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

5-4, How must Christians seek?

* We must seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

5-5, What are all of these things that God gives?

* All is all
* God knows what we need in detail more than we can possibly imagine.

5-6, What do you think is most important?

1. **Read verses 33-34 again. What does it mean to you and me to seek God’s kingdom first? To seek his righteousness? (Ro 3:20-25; Gen 22:18; Ro 4:20-25) Why should we not worry about tomorrow? Have you ever claimed this verse and experienced God’s faithfulness to keep his promises?**

6-1, Read verses 33-34.

**33** But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. **34** Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

6-2, What does it mean to you and me to seek God’s kingdom first?

* In the flow of the context, it means to pray in accordance with how Jesus taught us. (6:9-15)
* God’s name is honored, God’s will is done, and God’s kingdom comes.
* The word “first” means “priority” rather than “order”.
* Whatever we do, whether eat or drink, study, work, marry, or have children, we should do it for God and his kingdom.
* The real meaning of seeking first God’s kingdom is to trust God fully and let him reign over our lives. In other words, we should find true security in God. God himself is our reward.
* If we please God, God provides everything. When Solomon sought first wisdom and a discerning heart to serve his people, God gave him wealth and glory as well (1 Ki 3:5-13).
* When we seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, all these things will be given to us as well - this is God’s promise. God never disappoints anyone who lives by faith and holds this promise.
* God is able to give us abundantly more than we can ask or imagine.
* Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us - Ephesians 3:20

6-3, To seek his righteousness? (Ro 3:20-25; Gen 22:18; Ro 4:20-25)

* 2 Corinthians 5:21 reads, “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”
* **“Righteousness” means: To be in right-relationship with God.** How can we have right relationship with God?
* Romans 8:12-14 read, **“**Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, **2** because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. **3** For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, **4** in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. **5** Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. **6** The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. **7** The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. **8** Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. **9** You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. **10** But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. **11** And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. **12** Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. **13** For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. **14** For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. **15** The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, *“Abba,* Father.” **16** The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. **17** Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”
* Romans 3:20-25

Therefore **no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight** by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. **21** But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. **22** This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is **no difference** between Jew and Gentile, **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**24** and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. **25** God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—

* Genesis 22:18

“ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

* Romans 4:20-25

 **20** Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, **21** being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. **22** This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” **23** The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, **24** but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. **25** He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

* Righteousness is one of God’s image. God creates us in His own image. So no angelic being share such attribute. What an unique creature we are!
* They say that they are "saved by grace" and any moment they are going to be raptured into Paradise so they can lay around in his mansion and do nothing.
* The righteousness of God is a kind of righteousness that far exceeds the attempts of the human being to act according to the tenderness of his or her own conscience.
* The nations of the earth will not glorify God until we who are Christians begin to practice the righteous works for which God has created us in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.
* Thus we should bring the Gospel to them. This gospel is that we forsake our sinful nature and embrace the righteousness of God Himself through the Lord Jesus Christ.
* You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)
* When we focus on advancing the kingdom of God through business oriented mind, especially among young people on campus, “seek His righteousness” is the often neglected part of emphasis from this verse.
* However both seeking the kingdom of God and the righteousness of Christ is a package deal and equivocally important.
* It is impossible to advance the gospel while living life as a hypocrite as we’d studied.
* Advancing the kingdom might happen through a group Bible study, one on one study, Sunday morning message, or conference. But it also happens in other informal settings such as breakfast table, at work, and at family.
* **God can advance His kingdom through us as He advances His righteousness in us.** Righteousness relates to all the areas of life. So when we love our neighbors, we can bring Jesus’ love and maintain relationship with both God and others.
* Seeking His righteousness gives influence to others as the perfume of our Christ Jesus. We are not supposed to live as our own, rather we are living as the debtors of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice.
* Sometimes we think that only “famous” Christians or certain peculiar leaders really advance the kingdom. But this is not so.
* There are many countless examples of ordinary people advancing the kingdom of God.
* That’s why we ourselves are seeking God’s kingdom through pursuing His righteousness.

6-4, Why should we not worry about tomorrow?

* Worry is suitable for today only.
* People tend to worry the future rather than being concerned about today. They worry what will happen tomorrow, next year, in ten years, or even in twenty years.
* Worry produces all kinds of negative imaginations. Then people become fearful. Yet we do not know what will happen tomorrow.
* Jesus tells us to let tomorrow worry about tomorrow, and be faithful to God today.

6-5, Have you ever claimed this verse and experienced God’s faithfulness to keep his promises?

**In Conclusion**

 Through this passage we have learned from our Lord Jesus Christ about the reasons why better first seek His kingdom and His righteousness. Help us to do our best today as if today is our last day by trusting our Father in heaven. May the Lord help us to apply today’s key verse daily so that we may experience His provision abundantly and live victorious lives.

**One word: Seek First His Kingdom and His Righteousness**