

“First” in Importance

by Wayne Goff

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).

When Jesus taught us to put His kingdom first in time, first in importance, and first before all other things, He meant it! Unfortunately, too many Christians give lip service to the passage, and then go about putting other things first in their lives — their jobs, their family, their health, etc. Dear brother or sister in Christ, do you really put the Kingdom of God first in your life? Only you can truly answer that question.

One would be disciple said that he needed to “*first*” go and bury his father (Matt. 8:21). Jesus told him to let the dead (spiritually) bury the dead (physically)! This man needed to follow Jesus first!

Blind Pharisees wanted to make a show of their professed righteousness “*first*” (Matt. 23:26). But again Jesus told them to cleanse the “*inside*” of the cup and dish “*first*”! The profession of religion is worthless if it is not put to practice! “*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves*” (James 1:22).

Another important “*first*” is the need to “*count the cost*” of discipleship to see if you have enough to finish the commitment! “*For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it*” (Luke 14:28). One is wasting his valuable time on earth if he **begins** to serve the Lord and does not **finish** the task! Are you committed totally to serving Jesus Christ from start to finish?

The Jews were blessed to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ preached to them “*first*” (Acts 13:46). The majority of them rejected the message, and judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life! The Gentiles were then blessed to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ *second*, and they received it and put it **first** in their lives! Romans 2:9

The Macedonian Christians were willing to give to the Lord financially and sacrificially because “*they first gave themselves to the Lord and then to us (apostles, WG) by the will of God*” (2 Cor. 8:5)! It’s amazing how much good can be done by those who put God first in their lives!

Why “First”?

Perhaps it would be better to consider for a moment why Jesus asks us to put His kingdom first in our lives in importance. Let’s make a quick list:

1. **Eternity is forever** — being a part of Christ’s kingdom is essential to be saved in eternity.
2. **Sin is damning** — the wages of sin is eternal death (Romans 6:23). Jesus Christ is the only avenue of sin-forgiveness. “*Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins*” (Jn. 8:24).
3. **Your soul is most important** — “*For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*” (Matt. 16:26). Satan’s job is to keep you busy with temporary, less important things so that you won’t put the kingdom of Christ first. He doesn’t need you to reject Jesus and His kingdom, he just needs you to ignore it.
4. **The Father knows best** — If God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to save you and me in eternity (John 3:16), then we must learn to trust Him and obey!
5. **Hell is eternal torment** — Jesus described hell as outer darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth, where the worm does not die, and where the condemned will be in eternal misery, Matt. 25:30, Mark 9:44, Mark 3:29.
6. **Forever is a long time to regret** — The rich man of Luke 16:19-31 regretted not putting God and eternal life first. He found himself in “*torment*” immediately after death, with no recourse!

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