



MATTHEW

The Savior-King and His Kingdom

Kingdom Principles – Part 3

Matthew 6:1-18

Message #18 of 80 – S1048

Sermon given on June 4, 2023



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Kingdom Principles – Part 3

Matthew 6:1-18

Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Matthew 6**
- Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Matthew – **The Savior-King and His Kingdom**
- We are in the section of the gospel of Matthew referred to as the Sermon on the Mount.
- In this sermon, Jesus gives us a series short statements describing the principles that those who are a part of His kingdom should seek to practice.
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to give us ears to hear. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **Kingdom Principles – Part 3**
- As non-liturgical evangelicals we define our faith as a relationship rather than a religion.
- That doesn't mean we don't do religious things.
- Chapter six begins with three religious duties that should not be neglected by Christ-followers.
- But Christ's words are not about how we do those things, but the motives that are behind our doing those things. **Ivor Powell**
Religion can be a highway to the heart of God, a road along which the faithful travel, or it can be a stage upon which insincere worshipers display their virtue.

- Even sincere Christ-followers might be lulled into a state of complacency in these things. It is worthwhile checking ourselves.
- **Kingdom Principle #8 – Be Charitable.**
- **Matthew 6:1**
- The key to understanding this and the following principles is the phrase '...before men, to be seen by them.'
- This is a warning against doing your charitable deeds to draw the attention of people, rather than the attention of God.
- '...charitable deeds...' was also referred to as alms, or giving alms, or alms-giving.

- Jesus had previously exhorted us to ‘let our light shine’ and here He seems to be saying the opposite **Matthew 5:16**.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

- When we are tempted to hide our light because of opposition, we must remember Matthew 5:16, when we are tempted to promote ourselves through religious activities, we must remember Matthew 6:1.
- Jesus then tells us what not to do.
- **Matthew 6:2-4**
- Israel didn’t have a government system that pays millions of people not to work like our government does.
- Jewish culture provided for the poor through the voluntary giving of alms. It was a part of their culture. It was a good work.
- The hypocrites took advantage of this good work to make themselves look good and draw the attention and praise of men.
- ‘they have their reward.’ – If we seek praise and glory from people, then we should expect nothing from God.
- But, if we seek only God and His reward, He will reward us and may give us the praise and glory of people also.
- Jesus is telling us that we get to choose where our reward comes from.
- We can choose to be rewarded by fickle people or we can choose to be rewarded by Creator God.
- Whatever God’s reward turns out to be we can rest assured that it will be infinitely greater than anything humankind could give us.
- We should also note that verse 3 says, ‘...when you do...’
- Christ-followers should be generous when it comes to those in need.
- **Kingdom Principle #9 – Be Prayerful.**
- **Matthew 6:5-7**
- Prayer is not optional for a true Christ-follower.
- Christ expects His disciples to pray.
- Prayer, in its simplest form, is talking to God.
- It is God’s people bringing their needs and needs of others to the infinite sufficiency of God.
- It is said that prayer can be described by the acronym:

ACTS – Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication

- But just like anything else, those with the wrong motivations turn something precious and beautiful into something wicked and ugly.
- The warning here is that praying like the hypocrites do is a way to make sure God doesn't answer your prayers.
- **Matthew 6:8**
- If God knows what we need before we pray, then why do we need to pray.
- Because prayer is not just about getting what you need.
- Prayer is an act of humility before God.
- We pray because we need Him to act on behalf and praying is our confession of that truth.
- Prayer also influences our heart – it moves it to be more like God's, especially as we combine prayer with God's Word.
- Jesus then gives us a model prayer.
- **Matthew 6:9-13**
- Jesus never intended for this to be a prayer to be memorized and then prayed as some sort of magical incantation.
- These five verses are thick with doctrine and theology.
- **Matthew 6:9**
- 'Our Father in heaven...' – This tells us who we are to pray to.
- We are not to pray to angels or saints, no matter how holy we might think they are.
- We are to address our prayers to our Father, Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth.
- Through faith in Christ, we are adopted into God's family **Romans 8:15.**

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

- Our claim to be children of God is one of the highest privileges we can have.
- 'hallowed be Your name' - This is a request that God's name be made known and glorified.
- Jesus balanced the intimacy of calling God Father with a declaration that His name is holy.

- Our intimacy with God must be balanced with a reverence of His majesty, holiness, and character.
- **Matthew 6:10**
- ‘Your kingdom come.’ – This can be understood in two ways.
- The first way we might pray this is that God’s kingdom would come in our heart and in the hearts of others **Luke 17:20-21**.

Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

- The second way we are to pray this is from the desire that Jesus would come back (Second Coming) and establish God’s kingdom on this earth.
- ‘Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’ – This is a prayer for obedience to God’s will. First, ours, and then others.
- The standard for that obedience is the obedience of those in heaven.
- In heaven, the angels yield to and obey God’s will perfectly.

- **Matthew 6:11**

- ‘daily bread’ refers to the daily needs that all humans have.
- Because of prosperity, most of our needs are always met.
- We must daily remind ourselves of our utter dependence upon God’s gracious provision.
- If you have it or can get something, it is because God provided it.

- **Matthew 6:12**

- Luke’s rendering of this verse makes it clear what Jesus means by ‘debts.’ **Luke 11:4a**

And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

- When we sin, we incur a debt with God and with those we sin against.
- This prayer reminds us that we are still sinners in need to daily washing for the sins we commit that stand between us and an intimate walk with God, our Father in heaven.
- Our daily sins do not disqualify us from heaven, but it hinders our intimacy with God and diminishes His glory reflecting from our lives.
- ‘...as we forgive our debtors.’ – Another way of saying this would be, ‘Forgive me to the same degree or extent that I am willing to forgive others.’

- Jesus will say a little later that unforgiveness is a great sin and negates your prayers for forgiveness for your own sins.
- **Matthew 6:13a**
- This is a confession of our weakness and need for God's constant care and protection from the devil, the world, and our flesh.
- 'deliver' = rescue. – This reminds us that we are helpless against the evil that surrounds us.
- We need God to rescue us every day and in every way.
- Jesus would later pray this for us all **John 17:15**.
- **I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.**
- Jesus ends this model prayer with a statement of praise.
- **Matthew 6:13b**
- This prayer can be recited in a religious way and makes us feel like we are praying.
- Or we can use it as a template for the kinds of things we need to be praying about and as a warning against vain, and pointless prayers.
- Jesus then elaborates on the topic of forgiveness.
- **Matthew 6:14-15**
- If you pray while harboring bitterness and unforgiveness toward another, you may be wasting your time praying.
- Stop, repent, forgive that person, and then pray.
- If you are struggling to forgive, but are willing, ask God to help you.
- **Kingdom Principle #10 – Fast Spiritually.**
- **Matthew 6:16-18**
- Fasting, the abstaining from food, was integral to the Jewish religion.
- There is no direct command in the New Testament for Christ-followers to fast.
- It seems to be left up to the discretion of individual believers.
- Christ's point is that if you are going to do it, do it right.
- Jesus is saying that it is a private thing, you are fasting to God, not to man.
- It is not possible to do all our piety in secret.
- For example, it would be hard to fast so that your spouse was unaware of it.

- The question is, ‘Who is your desired audience?’
- If it is other people, your reward comes from them.
- If it is God and other people, your reward will come from people.
- But, if your desired audience is God alone, He will reward you, even if for the sake of His glory you need to do those things where others can see them.
- All three of these principles look to the motivation of our heart.
- All three are things all Christ-followers should do.
- But we must ask ourselves why we are doing them.
- **Kingdom Principle #8 – Be Charitable.**
- When we are charitable, is it an act of faith to share with others what God has given you, even if they never find out where it came from.
- **Kingdom Principle #9 – Be Prayerful.**
- When you pray – is it to connect with God, to engage with your loving heavenly Father?
- Is it to express your dependence upon Him for everything in your life and for your specific needs and the needs of others?
- Does He hear your heart of love and adoration and thanksgiving in your prayers or just your complaints and wants?
- **Kingdom Principle #10 – Fast Spiritually.**
- Fasting is a powerful spiritual discipline, but it needs to be a spiritual exercise.
- Skipping a few meals because you want to lose weight is not spiritual fasting.
- These Kingdom principles will draw us into a deeper relationship with God and shine the light of Jesus into the darkness of this world.
- We burn the brightest when our light is pure – our motives are right.
- Let’s pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us examine our motives.
- Let’s pray!