

THE FIRST 15

Thursday, October 24, 2024

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Today is Thursday, October 24 and as we continue our focus on Christ the Cornerstone, we will study how God wants to move us from a posture of scarcity to a posture of abundance.

OPENING PRAYER

Holy and loving God, I worship You in the stillness of a new day with a joyful heart. Help me hear the message You have for me. Speak to me through the power of Your Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus Christ my Lord. Wherever I find myself lacking or in short supply, show me the secret stores of abundant living You promise. Help me recognize Your presence in all today's circumstances and the goodness of Your bountiful supply. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

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? 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? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 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? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:25-31,33

REFLECTION

Take a look at all you possess. What do you hold in your hands? Take stock of what you have to give to the world - your time, money, knowledge, resources, gifts, talents and abilities. These are given to you by God for a reason. Kingdom reasons. We each are to invest in the lives of others and the work of the church. This is how we participate every day in God's goodness manifesting on this earth.

There are many things to seek in life and we must decide what we are going to seek first. There is a window of opportunity and we must ensure our priorities are in the right order. God wants us to use our time wisely, understand what is of true value, seek His kingdom first and generously invest in the lives of others. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." The Greek word translated in English as "seek" is *zeteo*. It means to strive after, aim for, try to obtain, crave or even demand to have.

I consider what I am striving after. What am I aiming for? What am I trying to obtain? Have I set my mind on God and the things of God or have I set my mind on the things of this world? Jesus

tells me to put God and the things of God as my first and foremost priority. Jesus promises that if I do this, everything else will follow. That is an extraordinary promise.

When I put Jesus Christ first in my life, I move from a posture of scarcity to a posture of abundance. I trust God to provide for me and supply my needs without concern over the future. I rest confidently in God's loving care for me. When I am about God's business and operating out of God's vision for me, I have no room for worry. I have placed myself in God's hands and I am assured that God will not abandon me, leave me without resources or withdraw support. I begin to see God as an intimate, caring parent. Like a beloved child, I can trust him completely. He is my help in times of trouble, my comfort and strength, my shield and defense, my provider, protector, deliverer and uplifter. First in my life and first in my heart.

Ask: Am I seeking the kingdom of God first in my life? When am I worrying about worldly things and when am I trusting God to provide? What part of my life feels empty and where do I find abundance?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Forgive me, Lord, for worrying about my life. I spend too much of my time thinking about the time I will spend, the food I will eat, the drinks I will drink and the clothes I will wear. Teach me what it means to seek Your kingdom first, strive after righteousness, aim for holiness, and run after goodness. Help me learn to trust in Your provision and rest in Your abundant love. Come and shine Your light upon my soul. Reveal my places of scarcity. Where there is fear, increase my faith. Where there is anxiety, bring peace. Where there is uncertainty, give me assurance. Where there is apprehension, bring confidence. Where there is weariness, bring strength. Where there is emptiness, sow abundance. I put You first in my life and seek Your kingdom before anything else. Amen.