

The Sermon on the Mount Part 17: Wealth and Worry Matthew 6:25-34

Thesis: We are a people who follow Jesus, who listen to the voice of God, and who get in action around what the Lord is saying through the power of his Holy Spirit.

Text: Matthew 5 – 7

The Sermon on the Mount is one of the most famous passages in the Bible. People refer to it and quote from this teaching of Jesus all the time.

These words of Jesus are revolutionary, radical, and relational (righteousness). I wonder if the words of Jesus have lost their cutting edge in our lives because of familiarity.

God is showing me wonderful things from his Word. And, the Lord is using The Sermon on the Mount to transform me.

So, I am asking the Lord to encourage you by his Holy Spirit and to speak to us as we spend time on Matthew 5 – 7 over the next months.

What we have considered so far in our time looking at The Sermon on the Mount.

In a message 11'10'24, we worked on **an overview** of The Sermon on the Mount.

Then, we looked at Matthew 5:3-5: **The Poor in Spirit, The Grievers, and The Unimportant** on 11'17'24.

In a message on 11'24'24, we looked at Matthew 5:6-8: **The Hungry, The Merciful, and The Pure in Heart.**

In a message on 7'13'25, we considered Matthew 5:9-12: **The Peacemakers, The Persecuted, and the Misunderstood.**

In a message on 7'20'25, **we finished looking at our kingdom identity from Matthew 5:9-16: The Peacemakers, The Persecuted, and the Misunderstood.** We also sought to understand three illustrations of the way we show up in this world as a part of our kingdom identity: as salt, light, and a city on a hill.

In a message on 7'27'25, we looked at Matthew 5:17-20. **Jesus came to fulfill the Torah.** Jesus' teaching on righteousness brings the Torah to its completion.

In a message on 11'16'25, we looked at Matthew 5:21-26 which dealt with **murder and angry contempt.** True righteousness means treating every human as an image of God who is to be loved and respected.

In a message on 11'30'25, we looked at Matthew 5:27-30 which dealt with adultery and lust. The Old Testament law about adultery reveals God's wisdom about how we reduce people to objects of desire. **Jesus invites us to view every human being as an image of God who is to be honored in our actions and imaginations.**

In a message on 2'22'26, we looked at Matthew 5:31-32 which dealt with divorce and remarriage. Jesus sides with the interpreters teaching that a man may not divorce his wife for just any reason he chooses. **The Lord calls out the harm that is done to women in this scenario by identifying them as the victims of adultery.**

In a message on 3'15'26, we looked at Matthew 5:33-37, which dealt with oaths and telling the truth. Instead of seeking to embellish our words and to trying to manipulate others by making religious sounding oaths, **Jesus calls us to embrace honesty, telling the truth, and integrity.**

In a message on 3'22'26, we looked at Matthew 5:38-48, which dealt with retaliation (revenge) and enemy love. **Regarding retaliation, Jesus raises the bar when he says to respond to revenge and retaliation with creative nonviolence.** Jesus is not telling us to do nothing. Rather, Jesus raises the bar in his kingdom for creative and nonviolent responses that open the door for real peace. **Regarding enemy love, Jesus commands us to love our enemies.** It may sound crazy, but Jesus is saying that bold generosity can subvert the power games of our world and even turn enemies into friends.

In a message on 4'15'26, we looked at Matthew 6:1-18, which dealt with warnings about religious practices. Jesus focuses on doing right by God as he describes three common religious practices—giving, praying, and fasting. Jesus warns us about engaging in spiritual practices in a hypocritical, performative way to be seen by others. Instead, **Jesus encourages true devotion born out of a desire for intimacy with God and alignment with his will.**

In a message on 4'26'26, we looked at Matthew 6:9-15, in which Jesus gives us The Lord's Prayer. Praying the Lord's Prayer is one way to make Jesus' story our own story. **Over time, the prayer forms us into people who trust God daily, love and forgive others, and participate in the good work that unites Heaven and Earth.**

In a message on 5'17'26, we continued our look at Matthew 5:9-15 on The Lord's Prayer. Jesus taught his disciples to pray. **The Model Prayer (The Lord's Prayer) is a way to pray according to the will of God.** You don't always have to pray through every part of the Lord's Prayer. Sometimes, you will simply pray the model prayer itself. Sometimes, you will use each part of the model prayer as a launching pad for prayer. Sometimes, you will focus on one part or another.

In a message on 6'14'26, we looked at Matthew 6:19-21, in which **Jesus urges his followers to focus on loving God and others instead of wealth.** Our possessions can master us, demand our attention, and distract us. But trusting God and focusing on what he values will allow us to be free and generous. Jesus discourages his followers from storing up things that can easily wear out, get eaten by pests, or be stolen by thieves. Earthly wealth can make us feel safe, but Jesus says it is an illusion that won't last. Instead, Jesus urges to store up treasures in heaven by prioritizing the well-being and care of others, serving in the name of Jesus, and loving our neighbor.

In a message on 6'21'26, we looked at Matthew 22-24, in which **Jesus gives two parables. The first parable deals with Two Eyes.** The good eye represents a person who imitates God's generosity. The bad eye symbolized a self-consumed person who neglects the needs of others. Jesus tells us that the good life is found not in greed for possessions but in neighborly love. **The second parable deals with Two Masters: God and Mammon.** The word "mammon" refers to possessions, like money or property. Jesus describes it as a burdensome ruler which offers false promises of security and happiness. And, Jesus also believes that possessions (money or property) can be used to care for others and build relationships, which is true wealth. Mammon or money can become a focus of concern and greed that competes for our loyalty with God himself. **The principle of materialism is in conflict with the kingship of God. Whom will you serve: God or Mammon?**

As we make this journey, here is an important perspective to keep in mind:

As we look at The Sermon on the Mount, I will share with you what I am learning and processing, some of which is new to me. But please understand: The Lord can speak to you through his Word without all this teaching I am doing and without all the research we are processing. **What we are doing together is to help us enter into the context of this Word, and to let the Lord speak to us in our current context.** The Lord can do that through the Holy Spirit whenever you open God's word and read it devotionally or study it thoroughly. **Getting into God's Word and listening for The Voice is one of the most important spiritual practices the Lord has given us for growing in our relationships with God and others.** **I pray that our time in The Sermon on the Mount will stir in you a greater love for God, for God's word, and for the leadership of Jesus in your life.**

Consider While Reading:

The first hearers of these words were mostly low-status, powerless Israelites on the fringes of mainstream society ([The Bible Project](#), Weekly Playlist, January 1-7). They were the impoverished, the infirmed, the unimportant, the oppressed, and the ignored.

Overview:

“The introduction (5:3-16) announces the surprising and counterintuitive identity of those who are a part of God’s Kingdom. Then comes the main body of teachings (5:17-7:12), where Jesus explains further what he means when he calls his followers to be ‘righteous.’ Finally, Jesus concludes the sermon (7:13-27) by calling people to make a choice about how they’re going to respond” ([The Bible Project](#), Weekly Playlist, January 1-7).

The Sermon on the Mount is carefully designed and organized.

1. **There are 3 main parts to The Sermon on the Mount.**
 - a. The middle part is divided into 3 parts.
 - b. Each of the parts of the middle part is divided into 3 parts.
 - c. Right at the center of the center of The Sermon on the Mount is the Lord’s Prayer.
2. **The Bible tells us what it means for God’s Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.**
 - a. The kingdom of God coming to earth is the one of the main themes of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.
3. **From the beginning, humans rebelled and started to build their own kingdom by their own wisdom.**
4. **So, God chose one family, Israel, to join him in his mission.**
 - a. And, God offered them his wisdom.
 - b. That wisdom was called the Torah—the teaching.
 - c. Beginning on with Moses on Mt. Sinai, God entered into a covenant with Isreal.
 - d. The goal was for Israel, one nation, to be transformed by God’s wisdom, so that they could represent God’s Kingdom before all the nations and to lead the nations back to God.
5. **In Jesus’ day, the kingdom of God was nowhere to be seen.**

- a. Instead, Israel was under the rule of the Roman Empire and Roman oppressors.
6. **So, why wasn't God's Kingdom coming?**
 - a. Some religious leaders-- the **Pharisees**-- believed Israel was not being faithful enough to the Torah.
 - b. Other religious leaders—the **Sadducees**—said it would be best if Israel found a way to cooperate with Rome. They were the power brokers in Jesus' day.
 - c. Some people ran to the hills to become freedom fighters against Rome. They were known as the **Zealots**.
 - d. Others **withdrew to the desert**, waiting for God to use them to start the new Israel.
7. **But walk around the country of Israel, like Jesus did in his day, and here is what you would find.**
 - a. You would find mostly normal people.
 - b. They were trying to figure out how to live their lives as best they can.
 - c. Most people were living in poverty and were carving out a subsistence living.
 - d. There were lots of poor and sick people.
 - e. They were oppressed by high taxes.
 - f. Rome had taken their land away from them.
 - g. Most people were struggling to pay the heavy taxes imposed on them by their Roman occupiers.
 - h. In essence, the people of Jesus' day were powerless and hopeless.
8. **Jesus went to these people** healing the sick, setting free the demonized, mending broken hearts, and bringing salvation.
 - a. Jesus came with good news.
 - b. And, Jesus told these people that the kingdom of God was arriving.
 - c. People came from all over to hear his teaching and to get healing, deliverance, and encouragement.
9. **One day, Jesus went up to a tall hill or small mountain and said, "The arrival of kingdom of God is starting here and now with you."**
 - a. The kingdom of God was starting with the powerless, the weak, and the nobodies.
 - b. Where can you go to see God's presence and blessing?
 - i. You see God's presence and blessing among the poor in spirit, the crushed, and the defeated.
 - ii. The kingdom of God was not coming first among the wealthy and the powerful.
 - iii. The kingdom of God was coming to the people standing right before Jesus.

The structure of The Sermon on the Mount:

There are **3 main sections** to The Sermon on the Mount.

1. **Main Section 1:** Matthew 5:3 – 16. This is the introduction. Jesus tells us about the **kingdom identity** of his followers. Jesus gives 9 sayings about who is experiencing the good life of God's kingdom.
 - a. Matthew 5:3 – 12. The Good Life.
 - i. The Poor in Spirit (3).
 - ii. The Grievors (4).
 - iii. The Unimportant (5).
 - iv. The Hungry (6).
 - v. The Merciful (7).
 - vi. The Pure in Heart (8).
 - vii. The Peacemakers (9).
 - viii. The Persecuted (10).
 - ix. The Misunderstood (11-12).
 - b. Matthew 5:13. Salt of the Earth.
 - i. "In the Hebrew Scriptures, salt is a symbol of God's long-lasting covenant relationship with Israel. So Jesus is claiming that he and his followers are carrying Israel's covenant relationship to its fulfillment" ([The Bible Project](#), Weekly Playlist, January 1-7).
 - ii. Salt is an important preservative.
 - iii. Salt is a seasoning. We are to bring out the God-flavors in this world (MSG).
 - iv. A little salt goes a long way. Christians are supposed to influence rather than be influenced by the ways of this world.
 - c. Matthew 5:14 – 16. The Light of the World and a city on a hill.
 - i. According to Isaiah, one day the inhabitants of Jerusalem will reflect God's light, peace, and blessing out to all the world.
 - ii. Jerusalem is the image of the city on a hill that shines for all the world to see. We are a part of that family, heritage, and kingdom.
 - iii. Light shines in the darkness and overcomes darkness. Christians have influence way beyond themselves.
 - iv. We are to bring out the God-colors in this world (MSG).
 - v. When Jesus calls his followers "the light of the world" and "a city on a hill," he is referencing images from the prophet Isaiah. The shining city on the hill portrays God's wisdom and heavenly presence emanating from Jerusalem and filling the whole Earth.

By using these images, Jesus is applying Isaiah's prophecies to himself and his followers ([The Bible Project](#)).

2. **Main Section 2:** Matthew 5:17 – 7:12. This is the main body of teaching. In this section, Jesus tells us what he means **for his followers to be righteous**. Righteousness is living in right relationship with God and others. It is a character trait that creates justice and peace in the world.
 - a. **Section 1 of the Middle Section:** Matthew 5:17 – 48. In this section, Jesus tells us how this righteousness relates to the **Torah**.
 - i. Matthew 5:17 – 20. Jesus fulfills the Torah.
 1. Jesus' teaching on righteousness brings the Torah to its completion.
 - ii. Matthew 5:21 – 47. Jesus gives six case studies on how the righteousness of Jesus fulfills the Torah.
 1. Anger, lust, divorce, telling the truth, revenge, and enemy love.
 - iii. Matthew 5:48. Summary: be complete or whole. The purpose of the Torah is teaching people God's wisdom so that they can become mature, whole people who spread God's blessing to the world.
 1. Being complete or whole links back to what Jesus says: living by Jesus' teachings will fulfill the Torah and Prophets.
 - b. **Section 2 of the Middle Section:** Matthew 6:1 – 18. In this section, Jesus tells us how this righteousness relates to **religious practices**.
 - i. Matthew 6:1. Living in right relationship with God and other results in a reward.
 1. But be careful: If you are doing your righteousness to get public praise, you will miss out on the real reward God has in store.
 - ii. Matthew 6:2 – 18. Three examples of how religious devotion can go astray.
 1. Generosity to the poor.
 2. Prayer.
 3. Fasting.
 - iii. Matthew 6:19 – 21. True wealth: the real reward.
 1. The real reward links back to Matthew 6:1. The reward is knowing and being love by God.
 - c. **Section 3 of the Middle Section.** Matthew 6:19 – 7:12. In this section, Jesus tells us how **this righteousness is expressed in right relationships with God and with neighbor**. Doing righteousness affects our relationship with God and neighbor.
 - i. Matthew 6:19 – 34. God and money.

1. Our stuff tends to claim our allegiance and causes us to worry.
 2. Our relationship to our stuff can be one of the biggest obstacles to healthy relationships with God and others.
 3. Store up treasure in heaven.
 4. **Parable 1: Two eyes.** You can have a healthy, generous eye, or an evil, stingy eye.
 5. **Parable 2: Two masters you can serve—God or money.**
 6. Teaching on worry. We are invited to trust the generous God of creation who cares about us.
 - ii. Matthew 7:1 – 11. God and neighbor.
 1. Teaching on not judging others.
 2. Parable 1: Speck and log.
 3. Parable 2: Holy pearls—using discernment when we try to help and correct others.
 4. Ask God for the wisdom you need: ask, seek, and knock.
 - iii. Matthew 7:12. The Golden Rule.
3. **Main Section 3:** Matthew 7:13 – 27. In his conclusion, **Jesus calls people to make a choice as to how they are going to respond.**
- a. The choice for how we will live our lives.
 - i. Matthew 7:13 – 14. Two paths with two different gates. One leads to life; the other leads to ruin.
 - ii. Matthew 7:15 – 23. Two trees. Discerning between two kinds of leaders who claim to represent God. One tree is good; one is not.
 - iii. Matthew 7:24 – 27. Two types of houses you can build. You can ignore Jesus and build your house by your own wisdom. Or, you can listen to Jesus and build your house on the rock.
4. **Finally, every one of these parts has 3 parts.**
- a. There is a lot of design in the structure of The Sermon on the Mount.
5. **Review of The Sermon on the Mount:**
- a. **Kingdom Identity:** the sermon begins with a surprise announcement about how the good life of the kingdom of God has come to the least likely people.
 - b. **A Greater Righteousness:** in the main body, Jesus teaches how to do right by God and others.
 - c. **The Choice:** the conclusion calls for a decision. In light of what Jesus has said, what choice will you make?

Here is what Jesus is saying through The Sermon on the Mount.

1. God's Kingdom comes to Earth through Jesus.
2. In God's Kingdom, love, justice, and peace prevail.
3. This Kingdom is arriving first to ordinary people—the poor, the powerless, and the outsider ([The Bible Project](#), Weekly Playlist, January 1-7).

Prayer:

1. Lord, I pray that you speak to us, encounter us, and grant to us your Spirit of wisdom and revelation that we might know you better.
2. Bless our time in your word together corporately.
3. Bless our time in your word individually as a part of our spiritual practices.
4. Help us to hear your voice, God, by the power of your Holy Spirit.
5. Help us to fall more and more in love with you, and help us to join Jesus on his mission together with others in our spheres of influence.
6. May we be a people who follow Jesus, who listen to the voice of God, and who get in action around what the Lord is saying through the power of his Holy Spirit.

Today, we continue looking at Section 3 of the Middle Section of the Sermon on Mount. Matthew 6:19 – 7:12. In this section, Jesus tells us how this righteousness is expressed in right relationships with God and with neighbor. Doing righteousness affects our relationship with God and neighbor.

In Matthew 6:19 – 34, Jesus talks about God and money.

1. Our stuff tends to claim our allegiance and causes us to worry.
2. Our relationship to our stuff can be one of the biggest obstacles to healthy relationships with God and others.
3. Jesus calls us to store up treasure in heaven.
4. **Parable 1: Two eyes.** You can have a healthy, generous eye, or an evil, stingy eye.
5. **Parable 2: Two masters you can serve**—God or money.
6. **At the end of Matthew 6, Jesus teaches us about worry. We are invited to trust the generous God of creation who cares about us.**

Wealth and Worry

Matthew 6:25–34 (NIV84) 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 important than food, and the body more important 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 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? 28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies 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, O you of little faith? 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.

[BibleProject Guide: Wealth and Worry](#)

[The teaching and way of life of Jesus of Nazareth] began to reunite God's domain with our domain. He calls this reunion the arrival of the Kingdom of the

skies [heaven]. And Jesus invites people to follow him so that they can enter into that heavenly realm here on Earth in their day-to-day lives.

As humans, we desire divine experiences like love, peace, safety and security, but we face obstacles on the path to these rewards. In fact, Jesus says the biggest obstacle to experiencing God's heavenly life and presence is our stuff! Possessions and wealth may make us feel more stable and secure, but Jesus has a different perspective on material things.

The Big Idea

Jesus urges his followers to love God and others—not wealth. Possessions, like masters, command our attention and distract us. But by trusting our generous creator and focusing on what God values, we can become more free and content.

Key Themes

- The human tendency to trust in wealth and possessions
- How generosity leads to life and greed leads to death
- The inability to live for God and wealth at the same time
- Worrying about money and resources
- Average life versus life in God's Kingdom

Consider the Birds and Flowers

At the end of the day, we all do need stuff to survive. We need food, clothing, and shelter. This section closes with another teaching about physical resources, bringing all of these ideas together.

Matthew 6:25 (NASB) "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 life not more than food, and the body more than clothing?"

What does Jesus mean here? The word Jesus uses for "worry" here is the Greek word "*merimnao*," which means to have concern for something. Sometimes concern is good, like showing concern for a friend. But often, our tendency to be concerned can get out of hand—choosing to focus on *potential* problems or dwelling on disasters that *might* happen.

When we obsess over things beyond our control, like rain for our crops or what's going to happen tomorrow, we may experience a gnawing ache in our gut. And that ache won't help us live longer or bring us peace or security. Rather it steals the joy out of the present moment. **Jesus wants to free us from that ache of worry by redirecting our attention to God's trustworthy character.**

Matthew 6:26-28 (NASB) 26 Look at the birds of the sky, that they do not sow, nor reap, nor gather crops into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more important than they? 27 And which of you by worrying can add a single day to his life's span? 28 And why are you worried about clothing? Notice how the lilies of the field grow; they do not labor nor do they spin thread for cloth...

With these words, Jesus draws on biblical poems like [Psalm 104](#), which describe how God holds the universe in a delicate balance and lavishly cares for his creation.

Psalms 104:1-35 (NASB)

1 Bless the Lord, my soul! Lord my God, You are very great; You are clothed with splendor and majesty,

2 Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak, stretching out heaven like a tent curtain.

3 He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters; He makes the clouds His chariot; He walks on the wings of the wind;

4 He makes the winds His messengers, flaming fire His ministers.

5 He established the earth upon its foundations, so that it will not totter forever and ever.

6 You covered it with the deep sea as with a garment; the waters were standing above the mountains.

7 They fled from Your rebuke, at the sound of Your thunder they hurried away.

8 The mountains rose; the valleys sank down to the place which You established for them.

9 You set a boundary so that they will not pass over, so that they will not return to cover the earth.

10 He sends forth springs in the valleys; they flow between the mountains;

11 they give drink to every animal of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst.

12 The birds of the sky dwell beside them; they lift up their voices from among the branches.

13 He waters the mountains from His upper chambers; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of His works.

14 He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the labor of mankind, So that they may produce food from the earth,
15 And wine, which makes a human heart cheerful, so that he makes his face gleam with oil, And food, which sustains a human heart.
16 The trees of the Lord drink their fill, the cedars of Lebanon which He planted,
17 Where the birds build their nests, and the stork, whose home is the juniper trees.
18 The high mountains are for the wild goats; the cliffs are a refuge for the rock hyrax.
19 He made the moon for the seasons; the sun knows the place of its setting.
20 You appoint darkness and it becomes night, in which all the animals of the forest prowl about.
21 The young lions roar for their prey and seek their food from God.
22 When the sun rises they withdraw, and they lie down in their dens.
23 A person goes out to his work and to his labor until evening.
24 Lord, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all; the earth is full of Your possessions.
25 There is the sea, great and broad, in which are swarms without number, animals both small and great.
26 The ships move along there, and Leviathan, which You have formed to have fun in it.
27 They all wait for You to give them their food in due season.
28 You give to them, they gather it up; you open Your hand, they are satisfied with good.
29 You hide Your face, they are terrified; you take away their breath, they perish And return to their dust.
30 You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the ground.
31 May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in His works;
32 He looks at the earth, and it trembles; He touches the mountains, and they smoke.
33 I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.
34 May my praise be pleasing to Him; as for me, I shall rejoice in the Lord.
35 May sinners be removed from the earth and may the wicked be no more. Bless the Lord, my soul. Praise the Lord!

Jesus goes on:

Matthew 6:30 (NASB) 30 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!

As humans, we are made in [God's image](#) and filled with his breath—his [Spirit](#). Since God designed our world with plenty of life-giving resources for everyone, we don't need to worry about having enough. **And we don't need to hoard or violently defend our resources.** We can live generously and give without fear, and even become God's means of providing for others.

To clarify, in this teaching, Jesus isn't talking about anxiety that you cannot control—that sense of dread or anxiety that results from trauma, a chemical imbalance, or other mental health issues. It takes discernment to know the difference, and God often provides healing through the wisdom and expertise of others. But if we're wrestling with the choice to worry over scarce resources or potential problems, Jesus invites us to take a deep breath and trust that God's provision is more than enough for everyone. **And there's a lot of evidence for this. Like Jesus says, watch the birds, gaze at the lilies, and see God's generous care for his whole [creation](#).**

Matthew 6:31-34 (NASB) 31 Do not worry then, saying, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear for clothing?' 32 For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you. 34 "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Other comments on our primary concern, the tensions of life, and how God provides.

In Matthew 6:33, Jesus says: But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you.

1. **Jesus calls us to give our primary concern** to seeking the kingdom God and his righteousness.
 - a. Our concern [merimnao] is good when we have concern for the right things and in the right amount.
 - b. In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul says that people who are married are a little more concerned about some of the things of this world. And, that is not negative. We need to have concern for our spouses and families.
 - c. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul tells us to have concern for one another as he talks about the body of Christ. Each part should have concern for the other parts.
 - d. Throughout his letters, Paul tells us about his concern for all the churches.

- e. So, there is something really loving about the way that you care for your spouse, your family, and your congregation.
 - f. And, there is a **negative concern** about earthly things like life, food, drink, shelter, and clothing.
 - g. Or, we have **an unhealthy concern** when we worry about tomorrow, because we can't control the future.
 - h. In Matthew 10, Jesus tells us not to have concern for to speak when we are called to give an account for our faith.
 - i. *Matthew 10:17–20 (NIV84) 17 “Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. 18 On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, 20 for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”*
 - ii. In this naturally anxiety producing situation of being arrested, since we have concern for the things of God, even in that situation God will provide what we need at that time. In this case, God will give us the right words to say.
 - i. In Luke 10:38-42, Jesus is visiting Mary and Martha at their house. Mary is sitting at Jesus' feet. Martha is busy trying to get everything ready. And Jesus says, “Martha you are worried and upset about many things.” Martha's concern is focused on providing for everyone. Whereas, Mary is concerned about Jesus.
 - j. In 1 Peter 5:7, Peter tells us to *cast all your anxiety [concerns, worries] on [God] because he cares for you.*
 - k. So, merimnao [concern] is good when we have concern for the right things in the right amount. It becomes a problem when we have concern for the wrong things in the wrong amount. That concern tips over into worry.
 - l. Jesus tells us to focus on our concern on the things of God, seeking for his kingdom and for doing what is right by God. Then, we can put our earthly concerns into God's hands.
2. **Seek first the kingdom of God.**
- a. So, we are to seek the rule and reign of God in our lives.
 - b. We want to align our lives with the ways of Jesus, and we want to get in action around what God is asking to do and to say.
 - c. **Remember that the kingdom of God is already in our midst, Jesus said** (Luke 17:20-21).
 - i. *Luke 17:20–21 (RSV) 20 Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them, “The kingdom*

of God is not coming with signs to be observed; 21 nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you."

- ii. Since Jesus the "king" was present, God's reign had already begun. Thus the text should be translated "in your midst" or "in the midst of you," as in the RSV....
1. 17:21 *Here it is.* This can be translated "here it is" or "here he is." Since the immediate context involves God's kingdom rather than the Son of Man's return, it is best to translate it "here it is." Yet the consummation of the kingdom takes place when the Son of Man returns so that in the new context provided by Luke 17:23 (cf. also Mark 13:21) the same expression can be translated "here he is."
 2. Because the kingdom of God [*is among you or in your midst.*] The reason given for not looking for such premonitory signs can be either (1) that the (realized) kingdom had already come into their midst (17:21b) or (2) that the (consummated) kingdom will come suddenly and unexpectedly and when it comes all will know immediately (17:22–37). The first possibility is the correct one, for in 17:20–21 the emphasis is on the already realized dimension of God's kingdom. The expression "within you" (*entos hymōn*) can mean "in your hearts," "in your midst," or "in your reach." The first interpretation ("within you") was much in favor in theological liberalism, which saw God's kingdom as God's rule in the human heart. But nowhere else in the Scriptures is God's kingdom portrayed as an inner condition of the human heart or life. Furthermore the saying is addressed to the Pharisees, who were most unlikely candidates for Jesus' saying that God rules within their hearts. Even if one makes "you" indefinite and not limited to the Pharisees, the first argument is conclusive: "Jesus speaks of men entering the kingdom, not the kingdom entering men." Since Jesus the "king" was present, God's reign had already begun. Thus the text should be translated "in your midst" or "in the midst of you," as in the RSV and not as in the NIV. (Stein, Robert H. *Luke*. Vol. 24. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992.)

3. **Seek first his righteousness.**
 - a. Remember in the Sermon on the Mount, righteousness is about right relationship with God and others.
 - b. We are called to embody the character and nature of God in our spheres of influence, starting with **how we live our lives in right relationship with God** and including **how we live our lives in in doing right by others.**
4. **And all these things will be added to y'all.**
 - a. We tend to take the phrase, "all these things will be added to you" as individual. "God will give me everything I need."
 - b. But in the Greek, "you" is plural. It is directed toward the community of Jesus followers, not primarily individuals.
 - c. So it may be that what Jesus is saying is that when you seek first the kingdom, God will give the community everything that it needs.
 - d. And, Jesus teaches that God's people are expected to care for each other's needs.
5. **Balance: Jesus is not saying that we can stop working hard and just let things happen.**
 - a. We do work diligently. We do give effort.
 - b. And, we trust that God will provide.
 - c. God has a part and we have a part. God won't do our part; and, we can't do God's part (Philippians 2:12-13).
 - i. To have a crop, the farmer must till the soil, sow the seeds, weed the crops, and tend to the work of farming.
 - ii. But the farmer can't make things grow. That is God's part, who has put life in the seed.

Conclusion:

Our identity: **We are a people who follow Jesus, who listen to the voice of God, and who get in action around what the Lord is saying through the power of his Holy Spirit.**

For reflection:

1. What is God saying to you?
2. What is getting stirred up in you?
3. Where do you sense resistance?
4. What questions do you have?
5. What are you feeling or thinking?
6. What is at least one takeaway for you today?