

TELOS

Telos (Greek): def.: striving for a goal, completing your purpose . It means achieving maturity, and undivided wholeness in a person's behavior. For the Christian it means becoming like Jesus.

"We proclaim Christ, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ"

Col. 1:28

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Trailview Alliance Church

Pursuing One Thing

In the movie *City Slickers* (which, by the way, I haven't seen, so this doesn't come as an endorsement) Billy Crystal plays a confused, dissatisfied thirty-something character with a vague sense that life is passing him by. Jack Palance – ancient, leathery, wise to the ways of the world ("a saddlebag with eyes") – asks Crystal if he would like to know the secret of life.

"It's this," Palance says, holding up a single finger.

"The secret of life is your finger?" asks Crystal.

"It's one thing," Palance replies. "The secret of life is pursuing one thing."

Somehow this resonates deeply with Billy Crystal's character. His life is scattered. He is torn between his obligation to his family and his desire for career advancement; between his need for security and his appetite for excitement. He is divided somehow. His life is about many things, and so, he senses, it is about nothing.

So what is that one thing? Jack Palance can't tell Billy Crystal. "You have to find it for yourself." (as told in [The Life You've Always Wanted](#) by John Ortberg p.175)

The chapter we will be reading in Matthew this week is about pursuing that one thing that gives life meaning; that allows us to live an undivided life. So many of us live lives like Billy Crystal in this movie – we are scattered in so many directions; we have so many conflicting priorities that we often feel like forces beyond our control are pulling us in opposite directions. When we are divided like this the result can often be a deep sense of anxiety. Jesus points us to the pursuit of one thing. He tells us that it is not the attention, affirmation or praises of people that many of us crave; nor is it the accumulation of wealth or power; anyone who chases after these things receives the rewards that come with them – trouble and worry. No. The secret of life is pursuing one thing – *"seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."* (Matt.6:33)

FOLLOW ME

Experience the Loving Leadership of Jesus

Suggested resources:

**Follow Me* by Jan David Hettinga

**The Divine Conspiracy* by Dallas Willard

**The Life You've Always Wanted* by John Ortberg

**The Spirit of the Disciplines* by Dallas Willard

* in the church library

DIGGING DEEPER: *"The aim of the sermon (on the Mount) – forcefully indicated by its concluding verses – is to help people come to hopeful and realistic terms with their lives here on earth by clarifying, in concrete terms, the nature of the kingdom into which they are now invited by Jesus' call: "Repent, for life in the kingdom of the heavens is now one of your options." The separate parts of the discourse are to be interpreted in the light of this single purpose. They are not to be read as one disconnected statement after another. One must discern the overall plan of life within which the separate parts of the discourse make sense. So far from being additional laws to crush us and show us we can't make it on our own (of course we can't!) the separate parts are distinct perspectives on the sweet life of love and power, of truth and grace, that those who count on Jesus can even now lead in His kingdom. "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus the Anointed" (John 1:17). His teachings illustrate how those alive in the kingdom can live, through the days and the hours of their ordinary existence, on their way to the full world of God." Dallas Willard The Divine Conspiracy p.133-4*

May I suggest that you take some time in the next few weeks to read through the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) in one sitting. Do this several times, and as you do, remember the advice of the "Jogging Monk" (Follow Me Vol. 6 Num. 2): "open your Bible, read it slowly, listen to it, and reflect on it." "...be open to receive whatever God has for you. Don't manipulate God; just receive."

Kingdom Principle:

Jesus is the safest of all leaders. He invites me to trust and follow Him.

Memory Verse:

"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." Matthew 6:33-34

DAILY BIBLE STUDY

Monday

Giving and Prayer

Passage Preview

Jesus teaches on maintaining a heart attitude that is free from pride and religious self-righteousness.

Key Words

- Synagogue: Jewish community gathering place. Primarily used for teaching, it was where the scrolls of the Law were kept.

“Having shown us true well-being and the goodness of the kingdom heart, Jesus now in Matthew 6, alerts us to the two main things that will block or hinder a life constantly interactive with God and healthy growth in the kingdom. These are the desire to have the approval of others, especially for being devout, and the desire to secure ourselves by means of material wealth. If we allow them to, these two will pull us out of the sway of the kingdom – “the range of God’s effective will” as we have described it – and back into the barren “righteousness” of the scribe and Pharisee. But as we keep these two things in their proper place, through a constant, disciplined, and clear-eyed reliance on God, we will grow rapidly in kingdom substance. We will progressively incorporate all aspects of our life into the kingdom, including of course, the social and the financial.” (*The Divine Conspiracy* by Dallas Willard p.188)

“The kind of people who have been so transformed by their daily walk with God that good deeds naturally flow from their character are precisely the kind of people whose left hand would not notice what their right hand is doing – as, for example, when driving one’s own car or speaking one’s native language. What they do they do naturally, often automatically, simply because of what they *are* pervasively and internally. These are people who do not have to invest a lot of reflection in doing good for others. Their deeds are “in secret” no matter who is watching, for they are absorbed in love of God and of those around them. They hardly notice their own deed, and rarely remember it.” (*The Divine Conspiracy* by Dallas Willard p.192)

Read Matthew 6:1-6

¹ “Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, 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 men. I tell you the truth, 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. 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 men. I tell you the truth, 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.

1. What thought stood out to you? Why?

2. From verses 2-3, list at least two principles that Jesus gives for how we should conduct the giving of our money or resources to those in need.

3. From verses 1 and 4, what promises does God give us if we do or do not follow these principles?

4. **Kingdom Question:** Explain how a safe covenant group of like-minded followers of Christ can be a significant factor in helping each other keep the principles presented in today’s passage.

5. From verses 5-6, list principles that Jesus gives for how we should approach our times of prayer with our Heavenly Father.

Summary

Jesus cuts to the heart of our motivation. Not only are we to keep our good works for the Lord “undercover” so they do not become mere self-promotion and performance before men, but we are to keep our own ego in check by not evaluating ourselves on the grounds of what we have sacrificed or accomplished. When our service is feeding our own ego (self-actualization, if you will) then the ones that we are serving become objects to be used rather than people to love in Jesus’ name.

Prayer

Take some time today to talk to God about the things that you have been studying and about what He is showing you about yourself. Have you been hung up on how you appear to others? Are you putting on a religious show so that they will be impressed by you? Ask God to search your motivations and confess any sin that He reveals to you. Pray that He will work in your heart so that the deepest motivation of your heart is to please the Father.

Tuesday

Instruction in Prayer

Passage Preview

Jesus teaches His disciples a concise, yet encompassing, pattern for prayer. He makes it very clear that He is not establishing a ritual prayer to be repeated verbatim without giving thought to content. In verse 7, Jesus directs followers not to “keep on babbling like pagans” (NIV) or to “use meaningless repetitions, as the Gentiles do” (NASB). This prayer is an excellent model or framework for establishing and maintaining communication and follower-ship with our heavenly Father.

Key Words

- Hallowed: set apart or consecrated; in reference to God’s name it implies that His name is set apart as one of a kind with none greater.

Read Matthew 6:7-18

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 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 men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

¹⁶ “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their

5. How does Jesus' teaching about fasting support His warnings concerning giving and prayer presented earlier in this chapter?

Summary

There are those who would relegate kingdom passages such as the Lord's Prayer to being relevant only in the future when Christ will rule on the earth (Christ's millennial reign). It is true that the will of God will not be done throughout the entire earth, as it is in heaven, until Christ is here physically to rule the earth. This study of Matthew, however, is based on the fact that Jesus affords us the opportunity to submit ourselves to His kingdom rule today. Our submitted lives, and, in a greater sense, our collective fellowship demonstrates His kingdom in our generation.

Prayer

In prayer take a section of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) each day for the rest of the week and allow it to guide you in your time of prayer. Today's focus: *"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*

Wednesday

Treasures in Heaven

Passage Preview

Jesus places the accumulation of treasures into a kingdom context that links our heart loyalties to the kind of treasures we possess.

Key Words

- Master: Any person, idea, or goal which controls our decisions

Matthew 6:19-24

¹⁹ *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

²² *"The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are bad, 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 he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.*

1. What thought stood out to you? Why?

2. The common error of the Pharisees placed an undue emphasis upon material wealth as evidence of God's approval. How do you determine what is "storing up treasures" and what is maintaining fiscal responsibility?

3. What are the treasures that you can store up in heaven and what does this storing process look like?

4. Read Genesis 3:6. What role did Eve's eyes play in the fall of mankind? Read Genesis 3:1. What did Satan try to get Eve to doubt before her focus was drawn to the desirability of the forbidden fruit?

5. **Kingdom Question:** If the driving focus in your life is to gain power or accumulate wealth, what does that tell you about whose kingdom you are committed to?

Record an area of life or "treasure" that has the potential to distract you from God's kingdom.

6. Review I Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19 and James 4:13-5:6. Why does the New Testament contain such severe warnings about the dangers that surround wealth?

Summary

Jesus said that the eye is the lamp of the body. The eyes are the outward manifestation of where our affections are focused. A blind person has the same principle active in their life although their physical eyes do not function. What your “eyes” are focused upon determines whether the light within you is true light or darkness. If your eyes are set on God’s kingdom, you will be full of light; if they are set on this world (the kingdom of darkness), you will be full of darkness.

Prayer

Today’s Focus: “Give us today our daily bread”

Thursday

Do Not Worry

Passage Preview

Jesus dispels arguments or rationale that would give us excuses for placing our own needs at a higher priority than seeking His kingdom. He follows this up with His direct command to place His kingdom as our number one priority.

Key Words

- Solomon: third king of Israel; his rule is considered the height of the country’s splendor. You can read about Solomon in 2 Samuel 12:24; 1 Kings 1-11; 1 Chronicles 28:5—2 Chronicles 9.

Read Matthew 6:25-34

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.

1. What thought stood out to you? Why?

2. Make a list of things that Jesus tells us not to worry about.

3. Refer back to Matthew 6:11. How does Jesus' guideline for prayer relate to this passage on trusting God for His provision?

4. **Kingdom Question:** (Read Hebrews 11:6) Since faith is essential for coming into right relationship with God, what does today's Matthew passage teach us about faith? If my faith does not place God's kingdom into first place in my life, is it really faith?

5. What evidence does Jesus point to that shows God's care for you?

How have you seen this evidence in your life?

6. If I place my personal survival and physical needs at the top of my priority list, what am I saying about God's leadership in my life?

These TELOS materials have been adapted with permission from the “Follow Me” discipleship Curriculum produced by North Shore Baptist Church in Bothell, WA and based on the book Follow Me by Jan David Hettinga and the gospel of Matthew.

This week’s editor:
Pastor Ken Dryden

Please spend time praying for the Pastor as he prepares to preach this Sunday.

⇒ If you have any comments or questions about TELOS please direct them to Pastor Ken at the church office:
phone: 773-4433 or email: ken.trailview@sasktel.net

The mission of TELOS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices and virtues of a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. TELOS is one component of our strategy at Trailview of living out our call to become a “community of servants who live to fulfill the Great Commission.

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version, Copyright 1973, 1978, International Bible Society.

Kingdom Principle:

Jesus is the safest of all leaders. He invites me to trust and follow Him.

Memory Verse:

“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.” **Matthew 6:33-34**