



Sermon – December 23, 2018
Wes Wilkinson

Verses Covered

Matthew 6:25 – 33

2 Thessalonians 3:7 - 10

Man, it is such a joy and honor to be able to open God's word with you today. Every time that Chris is out and he asks me to fill in, just church family it is such an honor to be able to spend the time with you going through God's word. And while it is the holidays and I hope we're close enough to Christmas that for many of you, you're getting to actually begin to rest and enjoy being with family. And this is a holiday Sunday. Our God does not take holidays. He's not asleep. He's not resting. He's not saying, "Aw, it's Christmas. Let Me celebrate that time. I sent my Son to earth." No. God is on the move and He is at work. And so I hope you've come to this place today relaxed, rested, or maybe you've come in a little bit anxious. Maybe things have been stressful. However you've come in, I hope you've come in today expectant that as we open God's word, God is going to speak. Because even if I were to read you the passage today, just read it and not expound anything on it, that would be God speaking because it is His word and He has written it. It is His word that pierces our hearts. It is His word that gives life. It is His word. So we're going to dive right in.

If you've got your Bibles, I invite you to turn to Matthew chapter 6. Matthew chapter 6, verse 25. Matthew 6:25. And as you're turning there, I'll give you just a little bit of the context of where we find ourselves in Matthew. We find ourselves right in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount. And if you and I would have been there for this, what would have been taking place is we would be in the Galilea area. This beautiful area on the slopes of the mountains leading down into the Sea of Galilea. A lake just big enough that you can barely make out on a clear day, the mountains on the other side. Blue. Pristine. Gorgeous, green mountains surrounding it. And we would have been hearing of this person named Jesus who has come in, it says at the end of Matthew chapter 4, He's come in and He's begun to do all of these miracles. And He has begun to teach and there has been a massive following in a day with no social media. The buzz is stretching beyond, far beyond just His local town. People from all over Israel. People from as far as Syria are coming in droves to see Jesus. To ask Him to perform a miracle. To hear His teaching. And it says at the beginning of 5 that in the midst of this craziness, He pulls His disciples and there they sit. You can imagine sitting with Him on the side of this mountain and He begins to teach them. And He begins and He gives statements that are more authoritative than anything they have ever heard. He

begins to take the law of the Old Testament and expound it in its full way. He begins to talk about their personal life, their inner life. He moves through chapter 6 in the beginning part and He deals with the hypocrisy of the religious. And then as He moves to the second half, He begins to deal with the materialism of the world. And so He makes this statement in verse 24; a very clear direct statement. He says, “No one can serve two masters.” Either he will hate the one and love the other or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Mammon: a term meaning wealth, things, products. You cannot serve both God and man. He makes this statement. It’s clear. In our lives, you can only serve one master. There is only place for one Lord in each of our lives. You can work for two employers and like both of those employers. But you can only have one master. You can’t have two. And if the Lord is your master, if God is your master, then you cannot have any allegiance to the things of this world. And it’s in light of this statement, now we come to verse 25. Here’s what Christ says.

²⁵“Because of this, because of this truth that you can only have one master, 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?
²⁶Look, pay attention, look at the birds of the air. They do not sow, nor do they reap, nor do they gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? ²⁷And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? Or a single cubit to his height (your translation may say)? ²⁸And why are you so worried about clothing? Observe the lilies of the field; they do not toil nor do they spin,
²⁹yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all of his glory clothed himself like one of these.
³⁰But 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! ³¹Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ ³²For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things, but your heavenly Father knows you need all these things.

Jesus wastes no time right off the bat in this passage. He does not enter into a building up of the command. He does not give a long, flowery introduction. He’s in the middle of teaching His disciples and He comes to this point and He makes very clearly in light of the fact that you can only have one master in your life, do not worry. Do not be anxious. Do not be frenzied with thoughts of things beyond your control that you think you can control. He says, “Do not worry.” He leaves no, it’s not a suggestion. He leaves no room. This is not a self-help; “Hey, it’d be really good if you want to have a good and healthy life, don’t be worried about stuff. Hakuna Matata.” Which if you don’t know, is an actual real phrase. I had a friend from Kenya and that is a real thing that they say. It’s a real thing. But he’s not advocating simply Hakuna Matata. He is commanding, a sovereign God, do not worry. So what does it mean to worry? What is worry? Because if you were to look up the definition, it says to think anxiously about something. Or to be inordinately or to an unwarranted degree concerned with something. And it’s possible that we hear do not worry and we think, “Oh, well that means that I can’t be fore-thinking. It means I shouldn’t be concerned about the future. I shouldn’t work hard.” Well, this would be false. Don’t turn there. I’ll just read you briefly. But in 2 Thessalonians, here’s what Paul says about work.

⁷For you, yourselves ought to know how to follow our example. For we did not act in an undisciplined manner, ⁸nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with labor

and hardship we kept working night and day so we would not be a burden of you; ⁹not that we had a right to do this, but in order to set an example for you, ¹⁰for if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat either.

So worry is not the same thing as hard work in light of some future need. Worry is not the same thing. God's word is clear. Saving is good. Working hard is good. Being responsible is right. Elsewhere in Timothy, Paul will say, if a man is not willing to take responsibility and provide for his family, he is to be considered as worse than someone who is without Christ. So that's not what worry is. Worry is not necessarily nervousness. Nervousness can be a lot of things. Some people who are introverts are nervous to stand up in front of other people. Some people who are extroverts are nervous to have a quiet house on their hands. My grandfather asked his grandfather who were both pastors and said, "Well when do you stop getting nervous when you preach?" And my great, great grandfather said, "The moment you stop being nervous when you preach is the moment you should step away because there is a healthy nervousness when you stand up and declare the word of God to His people." It's a nervousness that results from understanding the magnitude of something. So not all nervousness is worry. What worry is, is a state of mind. Where I am concerned with things to an unwarranted degree. It is often accompanied with the feeling of fear. My lack of control due to the uncertainty of the future in my circumstances. It is my frenzied attempt to control what is outside of my power due to an over-infatuation with people or things beyond what is healthy and what is right. You should be concerned to work so you have food to eat. But you should not be so preoccupied and so focused on having food to eat and what am I going to do to get it and look at all the uncertainties that all the grocery stores could shut down tomorrow and there'd be no way to get food and there'd be and all of a sudden. That is worry. And Jesus says expressly, "Do not worry." Why? We see in scripture, He's just said, you can only have one God, therefore, do not worry. We see all throughout scripture worry is the pathway to idolatry. Don't believe me? Go back to Exodus chapter 32. Moses is up on the mountain meeting with God, receiving for 40 days from God all of the law to give to Israel to enact this covenant with the people of Israel. And meanwhile, the people of Israel is they are hearing the sounds as God is moving and His presence is on the mountain, they are now worried Moses is never coming down. They're not concerned. They're worried. He's not coming down. If he doesn't come down, we're not going to have anyone to lead us. Because God won't take care of us; this and that. So what does their worry lead them to do? To create an idol, a golden calf, because they feel as if worshiping that calf, they can have some level of control and safety. Jesus gives this command because you and I are prone to worry. There is a lot of uncertainty in our lives. There is actually very little you and I have the power to control. There's a lot of things. We don't know what's coming next. We don't know what will happen when we walk out of these doors in a few minutes. We don't know what happens tomorrow. There's few things we do know. We assume, unless the Lord comes back, gravity's going to work. We trust the sun's going to come up tomorrow. But there is much that is beyond our control and we can take and make anything, whether it is worrying over wealth or even taking godly things. Worry over well am I godly enough? Have I sought the Lord enough? Am I praying enough? Am I doing this enough? Worries can come from all places. It's the pathway towards an idolatry: an idolatry of things, an idolatry of self. But notice the nature of the command here when He says do not worry. Just pick apart little things. I'm not a grammarian, but sometimes it's important to understand the grammar. The command is a present tense command. Which means this is to be the habitual state of my life. I am to moment by moment, day by day, stand against the pull to worry. It's in the active voice.

Meaning that I have to make the choice not to worry. You and I are not magically going to arrive someday at this point where, “You know, I just don’t think I’ll worry anymore.” It’s a choice we have to make and we have to make it. If we wait for our circumstances to change to not make us worry. It will not take place. If we wait for someone else to make it for us, it will not take place. You and I have to make the choice not to worry. And I mentioned it already, it’s an imperative. This is not Jesus’ suggestion. If you would like to have a good and healthy life, just don’t worry. This is a command from the sovereign God of the universe. Do not engage in this behavior. It is a good command. It’s a good command because it protects us from things that would damage us spiritually. It’s also a good command because studies show worrying and anxiety will wreck your health. So there is a health, there is a physical goodness to this command. Let me just remind us, it is a possible command. Jesus does not give any command to His children that, by His grace through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are not actually able to do. So you may find yourself today, you may be like me, the great sin of my life that I always wrestle with, I have always been a worrier. My grandmother would see me, and I don’t know what this comes from, so if someone knows, I apologize. My grandmother, when I was little, she could see me getting worried and she’d go, “Uncle Bill, he’s getting nervous.” I am a worrier. But here’s the reality. When I hear that command, that command is not meant to be burdensome. Instead, if I hear and I understand it correctly in who I am in Christ, I am able to make the choice to not worry. Because ultimately look at what the text says.

[Do not worry about these things. Is your life not more than this? Is your body not more than this?](#)

The life that you and I live in the flesh, in our physical bodies on this world, God has infinitely more that He intends for our lives than to sit anxiously awaiting basic provision.

But what are we going to do in light of this? He gives the command, but how is this going to take place? If worry is like being in a boat on a sea with storm waves crashing in and wind blowing and there being no solid rock for you to stand, we need a solid rock. And so here’s what He is going to do. He’s going to give us the second command. He’s going to say, “Pay attention. Pay attention to what has clearly been revealed.” Look at verse 26. He says, look, look, pay attention to. He says in verse 28, observe, stop and think closely. I was surprised studying through this passage when you come to these, He’s not, the picture is not Jesus and the disciples sitting on the mountain and a bird flies by and Jesus goes, “Oh, hey look, a bird.” That’s not the picture. These are commands. And they are commands in the Greek in the most urgent of sense. What He is saying to us to do, what Jesus is calling you and I to do is in the face of not worrying, take captive our thoughts and look at what is objectively true in the world around us. Romans 1:20 says that the world around us reveals the power and majesty of God. Reveals aspects of His character. So He says, “Pay attention.” What are we paying attention to? Well, look at what it says. Look at the birds of air. They don’t sow. They don’t reap. They don’t gather. The birds of the air don’t give any attention to the process of farming. What the birds of the air do is they wake up and they’re hungry and they do what hungry animals do. They go after food. Different kinds of food depending on what birds you are. But in all of this natural process, notice what it says. Your heavenly Father feeds them. So here’s the first aspect of truth that Jesus calls our attention to. If you’re in Christ, if you have, if God is your heavenly Father, then you need to understand that God is a God who provides. God is a God who provides. He provides food for the birds. Yes, the

birds engage in an active process. They work, they labor, they go about their things. But God is the one who is actually providing their food. You and I, are we called to work? Yes. In fact, we were called to work before sin ever entered the picture. So you and I working, whether that's working in the yard or whether that's working in a vocation. You and I engaging in work is not a product of the fall and therefore something we anxiously do. We labor to do with anxiety so that we can provide and do these things. No. We're not to worry about the provision. Because God is the one who provides. What this frees us to do then is to work just as the birds do to work in the way that God intended. To work as an act of worship rather than as an act of anxiety. Because God is the one who provides. He feeds the birds. It says He clothed the grass with splendor, verse 28 and 29, and apparently the splendor He gives the grass is more glorious than Solomon and all of his wealth. Now I thought about this and just tried to be real simple with it and here's what I came to. If you and I were to drive up to an incredibly wealthy person and we were to see them wearing clothes that add up to several, thousands or tens of thousands of dollars, we might go, "Wow those are some really nice clothes." We might go, "Man that's incredible. Wow, I can't believe he spent that much." Or "she spent that much." But none of us would describe that experience as breathtaking. And yet when you go into nature and you take that hike and all of a sudden you come out and you overlook that valley where the grass is in full bloom and wildflowers are there, it is breath-taking. Jesus says, the grass, God clothes them in that glory. What makes that breathtaking is what God has given, how God has clothed nature. Nature, which that grass which today is here and tomorrow is gone. We learned this well at our house this year. We planted a bunch of flowers and then when the first freeze came, we called my parents and said, "What do we do to keep the flowers alive?" And they said, "Nothing. You just let them die because that's what happens when it freezes." Oh. OK. Great. They sure were pretty while they lasted. And now they're not. But that's the point. God provides. God provides glory for the flowers. God is God who provides. We see throughout scripture. We see His provision through natural means. All of these have just described natural means. The bird gets up. The bird hunts. But God is the one who feeds it. Hebrews 1:3 says that God upholds all things by the word of His power. Meaning that the reason everything operates the way it operates is because Jesus Christ, on His throne, speaks the words to maintain its operation. What I mean by that is why does gravity still pull you down? It's not because God created gravity and wound up that law and set it on a shelf and He's let it go. It's because Jesus is constantly speaking gravity to continue to do what He created it to do. God provides through natural means. If you want to eat, don't just sit on the couch and pray, "God feed me." Go get up and go to the refrigerator. There's a process; a natural process. But in that God is the one who provides through that natural process. We see that God provides. His provision comes through volitional means. Here's what I mean by that. It comes through the actions of people. Specifically, inside of a church body, it comes through the action of His people, the people of God, the church walking in obedience. If you look in Acts 2 and Acts 4, it talks about the church took seriously many of the things we find in the sermon of the, sermon on the mount. They took them seriously. They took their means and they voluntarily gave of their wealth to take care of each other. And that's why it says in Acts chapter 4 that in that congregation there was not a needy person. God's provision comes through people's obedience. Sometimes God's provision comes through miraculous means. We see this, the manna that would come up overnight. We see this with Elijah and the raven, 1 Kings chapter 17, where the ravens bring him food every day. Sometimes God does provide through miraculous means. But the majority of the time, His provision will come through natural means with people walking in obedience. We see in scripture though, His provision in our lives is far beyond just providing for us physically. Just

give you some examples. 2 Corinthians 12:8 says that His grace is sufficient for us. His power's perfected in weakness. God provides. His grace is literally enough for whatever you will face. There will be many situations that expose your weakness. Expose my weakness. But God's grace is enough. He provides His grace. We see in 2 Corinthians 1, for those of us grieving, for those of us walking through sorrow, it says that God is the God of all comfort who gives comfort. We see ultimately going biggest picture, 2 Peter 1:3 says this about God, it says that He has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness. Which means this. That when it comes to anything you need to know, love and follow Jesus Christ if you have been saved by grace through faith, if you have been washed in the blood of Christ, you have been redeemed. Your name written in the Lamb's book of life. There is absolutely nothing you or I lack to know, love, or follow Jesus Christ. Billy Graham does not have something special that you don't have spiritually. God provides because He is a provider. He is a cheerful giver. Why does He love a cheerful giver? Because God Himself is the cheerful giver. It delights God. It delights His heart. In fact, the best definition of God's love is the giving of Himself. God delights to provide. God is a provider.

But what else does God, what else does Jesus show us here in this passage? What does He draw our attention to? He draws our attention to more than just God feeding and God clothing. But He makes this statement. The reason He draws our attention to the fact that God provides is this. Are you not worth much more than they? Are you not worth much more than they? Scripture is clear. In all of God's creation, there is no one or nothing of greater value in His heart than you and I as human beings. There is only one being in all of creation, and that includes the unseen creation, angels. There is only one being whom God created and He said, "Let me make this being in my image." That's you and I. That is you and I. It is why when you read scripture, there is no redemption for the angels. The angels who chose to walk in rebellion, who've fallen, whom we now call demons, they are punished. There is no shot at redemption. You do not see Jesus stepping down out of heaven with signs saying, "I am here to save the whales and save the trees." But Jesus takes on flesh, He takes on our likeness. Why? To seek and save man who was lost. The whole story of redemption is the story of a God who loves and values the men and women He made in His image. This is why Psalm 139, the psalmist writes and he's blown away. He says, I give thanks to You. I'm fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Your works. And he moves on and he says, how precious are Your thoughts to me, O God. How vast is the sum of them? If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with you. Well, let me just use an example. It says here that how much more worth are we? Which I hope you notice in the text it says that Your heavenly Father feeds the birds. It's not the bird's heavenly Father. It's my heavenly Father. My heavenly Father who is so concerned, who Father's always give good gifts to their children, my heavenly Father is so good He even takes care of the sparrows. It says elsewhere that He knows every sparrow. He knows whenever every sparrow falls and hits the ground, that not one dies without Him knowing. It says that He thinks of me more than the grains of the sand. So here's some math for you today. And I apologize for all of you who aren't math people. But it is estimated on the earth that there is 7.5 times 10 to the 18th power grains of sand on the earth. So just to spell it out for you, now that's 7 quintillion, 500 quadrillion grains of sand on the earth. That's impressive. God thinks of you more than that. But what does that mean on a time level? Well, there are 86 thousand, 400 seconds in a day. If we take the amount of sand and we divide it by the amount of seconds in a day, then that means that God thinks about you 86 trillion, 805 billion, 555 million, 555 thousand, 555 and a half times per second. That His thoughts are consumed with thinking of you. But that's only the amount of grains of sand on the earth.

That's not all the sand in the universe. It's way the psalmist cries out elsewhere and he says, many, o Lord my God, are Your wonders that You have done. Your thoughts toward us. There is none who compare with You. I would declare and speak of them. They would be too numerous to count. You need to understand today that God provides and God values you. You understand that God knows. It says elsewhere in here; it says that He knows that we need these things. He knows our needs. Literally something we require out of necessity. He knows every need we have. He knows every circumstance. He knows when we rise up. He knows when we lie down. He knows our hearts and minds. He is the one who tests the righteous; who sees the hearts and minds. He knows our days. He is the one who knows His good plans for our life. There may be aspects of His plans I don't know. I don't know what He's got for me tomorrow. But He does. He knows everything in our lives and about us. And He doesn't just know it from, from an intellectual standpoint. I'm God. I know all things. I sit on my throne. No. He knows it from a personal and experiential standpoint. Because what we celebrate Christmas is God taking on flesh. Isn't it interesting that God didn't show up and come as a 30-year-old man? That He came, He went through the whole process of birth. Means He had to go through the process of learning how to walk. Of learning how to be potty-trained. Of learning how to speak. There is no aspect of your life that Jesus does not know from an intellectual standpoint and there is no aspect of your life and my life that He does not know and is not intimately acquainted with on an experiential, personal level. No level. These are the truths that, that Jesus explains about who He is. God provides. God values. And God knows. So do not worry. This becomes now the rock that we stand on in order to enact and to stand against worry. And in the midst of this, He tells us one other truth. He says, your worries, by the way, they are ineffective and damaging. Who of you by worry can add a single hour to his life? It's a simple statement. No matter how hard you worry, the more literal translation, a single height to his cubit, no matter how hard you worry right now, no matter how much worry you put in this year to growing another inch. I've got news for you; it's not going grow you another inch. I'm a big space buff. I love, as a kid, loved the movie Apollo 13. And recently in this last year, went back and actually read Jim Lovell's book on Apollo 13. Jim Lovell, the command module, in the movie when the explosion happens, everybody's freaking out. But in real life, if you watch the actual footage, you would almost, if you blinked, you wouldn't know anything happened because everybody remains calm. So someone asked Jim, as they are being thrown about halfway between the earth and the moon. In a ship, some parts of which are only as thick as a piece of aluminum foil. No lifeboat. No way of escape. As they're going through it, they said, "Jim how did you stay so calm?" And Jim said, "Well I went back to my training." And he said, "Inside I was freaking out." He said, "But I realized that if I spent the next 10 minutes freaking out, I'd still be in the same situation 10 minutes from now. Only I would have lost 10 minutes of valuable life supply that I might have needed in order to find a solution to stay alive." Our worries don't do anything positive. In fact, what they do, it says, why do you worry O you of little faith? What they do is they drive a wedge in the fellowship you and I have with the Lord. Because you and I were saved by grace through faith and Colossians says that now that we are in Christ, we must continue to walk in the same way we were saved which is by faith. So if worry is the cause of little faith, all worry can provide is damage in our relationship.

So Jesus comes right off the bat. He says, "Do not worry." He says, "Do not sit in the boat driven and tossed to and fro by the storm, but instead, here is the rock. Here is the truth you're to stand on. Your God provides. Your God values you. And Your God knows and your worries won't do

anything positive.” But He doesn’t stop there. Let me give you the last part as we wrap up our time this morning. Look at what He says, verse 33.

³³But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.

Seek first. Jesus calls us to a life where we reject worry, where we stand firmly fixated on the truth of who He is. But not just standing there. We are to stand on the rock so that we pursue a new direction. If worry is that way, we go this way. And our direction is not just any direction. It is to seek ambitiously after Jesus Christ. That word seek means to devote serious effort to realize one’s objective. The reason I say seek ambitiously is that the word ambitious literally means to go after something with the knowledge you’re actually going to get there. We are to seek with everything. Jesus Christ, you see Him use other examples. There merchant seeking for fine pearls. When he finds the pearl of great price, he goes after it. Sells everything he has to have this. You see Paul in Philippians 3 phrases it this way in his own life. For I have, more than that, I count all things to be lost in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. For whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them but rubbish that I may gain Christ and may be found in Him not having a righteousness of my own derived from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ. The righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith that I may know Him, the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings. Christ has called, He is bid, He has commanded us to seek Him supremely. That word first is not meaning Christ being, you’re to seek Me number one on your time slot. It means you are to seek Me as the sole, magnificent obsession, and ambition of your life. I am not your number one priority. I am your life. We are to seek Him. Here’s the problem of Jesus as your number one priority. It’s when it’s time to focus on the number two priority, you’re no longer focused on Christ. It also means at best, when you focus on that number two priority, which we’ll say number two, we’ll say number’s God, number two’s family. So I’m focusing on my family, the best thing I can do at best, is pull maybe some morals of Jesus there. But Jesus doesn’t reign there because Jesus is only my number one priority, not my number two. It’s not a matter of Jesus being number one priority. It’s a matter of Jesus just being the priority period and in Christ all our other priorities take existence. We are to seek Him first. Not just seek Him first, but it says to seek first His kingdom. Meaning this. We are to seek His rule, His way, over every last area of our life. Phrased this way. To seek first the kingdom is to so desire of first importance to spread of Jesus’ reign. Such a desire starts in ourselves until every aspect of our life; home, marriage and family, personal morality, professional life, business ethics, until our bank balance, our tax returns, our lifestyle, our very citizenship is joyfully and freely submitted to the will of Christ. To seek first His kingdom is to seek after His reign. His ways in every area of my life of highest importance and priority. We’re to seek first His kingdom. We’re to seek first His righteousness. His righteousness meaning that righteousness which He gives me by faith. That righteousness which now He calls me to live out. That righteousness if I am to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, I seek His will and His ways in every area of my life and I seek His ways lived out in the world in every area of my life. Let me give you one example on what that would look like and what that means. To pursue His righteous character in every area of my life, I mentioned earlier, God provides sometimes through volitional means. Someone can sit there and say, “Well if God is a God who provides, why do people go hungry?” Well, the problem with world hunger is not a problem of God’s lack of provision; it’s a problem with an inequitable human distribution. The problem is not God hasn’t created enough food. The

problem is that we hoard too much food. The problem is that God has given us wealth that we use in other places. Now I'm not, the statement I'm about to make, I'm not anti-pets. But it would take \$30 billion a year to eliminate world hunger. For not a single person in the world to die of starvation, it would take \$30 billion. In America alone, we will spend \$72.6 million on pet food this year. We could end world hunger for 2 ½ years with just the amount of money we spend on our pets for food. Not all the other stuff we spend on our pets. If we are to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, it this much means the overwhelming ambition and obsession of my life is to know Him. It is to love Him. It is to follow Him thoroughly in every area of my life. It means if you're a student in here and you're worried about, you're so busy, I'll just. Let me just share very simply here and know as I've been a youth minister, now I work with college students, the example will be a little weighted toward students. But adults, I trust you can understand the application. I watched so many of my high school students when I was at Carrollton, I have watched them undergo levels of anxiety and worry that are extreme, extremely unhealthy. Because of this idea that I've got to get up at 6 and I've got to be in all A/P classes and I've got to have all these extracurriculars so I can pad this resume so I can get into the school of my dreams. So when I get into that school of my dreams, then I can get the job of my dreams, and then I'll have this good life. And here's the problem. I finally realized one day when I was talking with a student and we were talking about them seeking Christ and they gave me their schedule. And I looked at their schedule and said, "Truly there is not a single ounce of time where you can actually give any time to Christ in the closet. And your parents are encouraging it." If we're to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, we need to stop bowing to the pressures that this world tells us we ought to have. Students if you are so busy that you don't have any time to pursue Christ in the closet, then your life is not seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness. And parents, if you are pushing your students to be so busy to have all those things so they can go to that college and get all those scholarships, then you are not helping them seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.

It says if we seek first His kingdom he adds these things unto us. What does that mean that He adds these things? It doesn't necessarily mean that He gives us what He wants. But it means that He gives us what is His good. Sometimes His good will be what we want. Sometimes His good will be something else. The question we have to ask, go back to the student example. All that effort you're putting in to go to that college, if that's not where God wants you, why would you want to be there? Perhaps many times our worries do more to show what areas of our life have not been yielded to the Lordship of Christ. Because maybe I really don't want what I know He has. Because maybe there's an area of my life that's unsundered and hence my worry. Elizabeth Elliot, wife of one of my spiritual heroes, said this, "We have to be at a point where we can tell God, 'I am willing to receive what You send. To lack with what You withhold. To relinquish what You take. To suffer what You inflict. And to do what You command. And to be what You require.'" That is the cry of a heart who seeks first His kingdom and His righteousness. The heart of one who can seek first His kingdom and His righteousness because as a child of God, we are now standing on the truth that He's the one who provides. He values us. There is no ill will in God's hearts for you and I's lives. And He knows. So do not worry. Apollo 13, there's one other, it's in the movie, but it's more poignant in real life. As they're going around the moon, obviously they can't land, everything's gone awry, there's a lot of uncertainty. They're still not certain they can get home. They have to fire up the engines to get on a certain course that if they miss it by mere inches, they will not come home. And as Jim Lovell was getting ready and moving about in

the lunar module trying to get things ready, the other two guys are busy taking pictures and trying to do things for NASA. And he keeps bumping into them and finally he just gets really frustrated so he raises up in a loud voice and he says, "Gentlemen, what are your intentions?" He said, "Well we just figured, we can't land, we should at least take some of these pictures." And he says, "It isn't going to matter what pictures you get if we don't get home." You and I can be so caught up in this worry and that worry. This thing and that thing. How are we going to provide this? How are we going to get that? How are we going to take this? That my question to you today is what are your intentions? What is your supreme ambition? What is our magnificent obsession? Is it to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness? Or is it to seek after my kingdom and my righteousness? Where I indulge in worry because I live in a frenzied attempt to control that which is uncertain. There are a lot of things uncertain. But when I seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, I am entrusting myself to a God who provides. To a God who thinks about me more times in a day than I can even count. More times than we can quantify with a number. To a God who knows. To a God who came and took on flesh. To a God who came in a manger. To a God who came, who lived, who breathed, who walked. To a God who died. And in that death took on my sin and shame solely out of the fact that He loved me, a rebel who hated Him. To a God who rose. To a God who draws men and women to Himself. What is your ambition today? What is your obsession?

Pray with me.

Father I hope that all of us will be willing to take a look at our hearts. Not for us to examine. Not for us to see, but for us to quiet our minds to hear Your voice. And, Holy Spirit, if in any of our lives there are areas of our life as Your sons and daughters where we are not magnificently obsessed with You, supremely ambitious to seek You, Your Kingdom and Your righteousness; then Lord expose that and forgive us. May we be a people in this church who are defined by the magnificent obsession of seeking after You. Lord there is undoubtedly those in this room who do not know You. Father apart from a personal relationship with You, apart from them placing their faith in You, trust in Your grace through faith to save them, they will not know You. God if there are any in this room today that that is them, may they hear clearly the message of Your heart for them. And may they understand they can't seek Your kingdom and Your righteousness first until they have been brought into Your kingdom and given Your righteousness. Lord, You deal with our hearts as You want. You move in this time.