**Matthew Sermon VI**

**What are you devoted to?**

**Seek First the Kingdom of God**

The killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis and Ahmaud Arbury in Georgia.

Video is absolutely sickening.

How long must we continue to witness unnecessary violence on black men?

As a white person, to say nothing is to say something.

Our silence says is that this is not a problem for white people.

As a white man I need to change.

Our view African Americans needs to be transformed.

We need to talk about this.

A problem for all Americans.

We must stop treating black men as assumed criminals.

What can we do here? Talk to Josh. Talk to Jamal. Talk to Joyce.

Ask them their perspective.

We are not going to condone rioting, or mayhem.

But we cannot let this bad behavior distract us from the real problem.

We need to look at ourselves first.

We must speak out against white vigilantism and blue-on-black violence.

On a positive note… Space X

Last week:

Because Jesus is the fulfillment/completion of the Law and the Prophets, the kingdom has come in a new way.

Therefore:

Our righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees. The ethical standard in the kingdom of God is something that the world cannot understand. We avoid all bitterness and anger, we reject, not only sex outside of marriage, but lust in every form. We repudiate divorce, because God hates divorce. We turn the other cheek and go the extra mile—we are willing even to be abused for the sake of the kingdom of God, and we love our enemies.

Summary Matthew 5:48 Be perfect, complete, mature. Teleon. This is the calling in the kingdom of God. A high calling! This is a call to be like God. Be conformed to God’s character.

Today’s message is in two parts. Both have to do with motive of the heart.

I. Matthew 6:1-18

Remember that, at first glance, this entire section seems to contradict Jesus’ command in Matthew 5:16 to “Let you light so shine before people that they may see your good deeds and glorify your father in heaven.

The solution to the problem is not that Jesus is confused!

Here is the point: If you serve the church or the poor, pray, fast with “mixed motives” then there will be no blessing to you.

“Mixed motives” means that you serve or give money or share your faith, or pray or go on a mission team or whatever to impress people—so that people will like you or will think that you are awesome, as opposed to doing it so as to serve someone or to glorify God.

Based on Matthew 5, parts of our Christian life are public, but they should never be to show off or to seek praise.

Q: In your service and worship, do you have “mixed motives” Is it about being seen for you? Do you seek the praise of people?

My love language is words of affirmation, so I am particularly susceptible here.

For me, I can remember times in my Christian life when there was a reward ceremony in the church, and I was thinking about why I deserved my name to be mentioned. Ouch!

Robert Carrillo a couple of days ago.

I have had people tell me, “You are so humble.” I think, “If you only knew.” I still struggle with this today, believe me.

But… I do not want to lose the reward, and that is the warning here.

v. 2 “They have had their reward in full.”

Q: Who do you want your reward to come from, man or God?

V 3 Jesus uses an idiom here: “Do not let your right hand know what your left hand is doing.

Act it out: Hey, right hand, what are you doing? Oh, nothing!

The solution Jesus’ advice:

Let us occasionally do things purposefully that no one will know about, and let us make this a regular habit.

This is hard for me, because to some extent it is my job as a leader to visibly support what the church is doing—like attending Hope Dance Academy.

Jesus provides two categories here:

1. v. 1-4 Seeking praise for your good deeds. (when you give to the needy)

2. v. 5-18 Seeking praise for how religious you are (when you pray or fast)

By the way, v. 6 (go into your room) is not a proscription against public prayer. In fact Jesus prayed in public about 60 seconds later. It is about the heart.

Jesus gives the Lord’s Prayer as a model. It is simple, to the point and is not flowery.

Also note, “When you fast.” Jesus is assuming that his followers will do fasting.

For me, category #1 (wanting my accomplishments to be noticed) is the temptation.

What about you? Are you content with serving people without any praise at all?

Do you hope people will notice how spiritual you are?

Matthew 6:15 an important passage, but we will cover it in Matthew 18:21-35—the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant.

Matthew 6:19-34 Kingdom values.

Read v. 19-24

v. 20 Do not store up treasure on earth. Store them in heaven.

Why not? Because our citizenship is in heaven. Philippians 3:20

If an outside observer were watching your life, what country would they think you are a citizen of?

Q: What do you treasure? The return of live sports? Retirement? A great vacation? A good paying job? A boy/girl friend?

We all know these are OK to have. God may even want you to have them. God wants us to have a good life here on the earth. But if you seek these things first, they will rot in your hands. If you seek the kingdom of God first, then these things can be blessings as a byproduct.

If you steal a reward, it brings no pleasure.

Like Rosie Ruiz who cheated to win the New York Marathon. Did she think she would enjoy the victor’s crown?

Like the movie Chariots of Fire. The two British sprinters were Eric Liddle and Harold Abrahams. Eric Liddle gave up his place on the 100 m sprint to Harold Abrahams for spiritual reasons. Harold won the gold medal, it gave him no pleasure. He had achieved his worldly goal. OK. Great. Now I have the gold medal. So what is next? He achieved his life’s goal and found it did not satisfy. But Eric Liddle was able to treasure what he had done for life. That is why we should put our treasures in heaven.

Let us seek heavenly treasures, and accept with joy if earthly pleasures come our way.

Let your motivation be with regard to things which cannot be seen.

If you can buy it, then you should not store it up.

Things you can buy Things you cannot buy

medicine health

books knowledge of God, wisdom

position favor with God

attention love

vacation peace with God

Matthew 6:22-23 The eye is the lamp of the body is probably more like the headlight of the body—helping us to find our way.

If your eye is healthy (NIV) not a good translation. literally single or sound.

If your eye is single—laser focused on the right thing, which is the kingdom of God…

Again, it is about motives.

In the margin of the NIV it also has generous. The Greek word can also mean that. It is likely that the double meaning is used on purpose.

If you are singularly focused and generous (see v. 24) with what God has given you to serve the kingdom of God, then your whole body will be full of light.

If you see the kingdom of God correctly—the need for undivided loyalty, then you get the whole enchilada.

The point. If you get this one kingdom principle right, everything else will be clear.

Matthew 6:24 Jesus makes it quite black and white. v. 24. Q: Do you love money? Let’s be honest. All of us love money to some extent. Are you “devoted” to money?

This entire section is about what you devote yourself to.

A man can have two employers, but not two owners.

Matthew 6:25 The key passage in this section. Literally “Do not give a thought to your life.” This is an incredibly high standard.

This is what it means to seek the kingdom first (Matt 6:34)—to not give a thought to your life—to your stuff.

This is the meaning of Matthew 6:22-23. It took me 35 years to “get” this passage.

Jesus is saying that if you get this principle, you get everything, but if you do not get this principle, you get nothing.

“Do not give a thought to your life” is not an excuse to be thoughtless about your life. We need to be wise in how we use our money, our time, etc. But these thoughts should not consume us. Thoughts of God and his kingdom ought to consume us.

Matthew 6:25-34 So, what do you worry about?

This could be a ninth beatitude. Blessed are they who do not worry about their lives.

v. 26, 28 What shall we eat or drink or wear, or where shall we live?

The world does enough worrying to take care of the rest of us.

Son or daughter of an elderly parent: Do not worry about the coronavirus?

Parent of an African American male: Do not worry about the blatant racism still alive and well in our country?

Father with a wife and young children: Do not worry about the fact that I might lose my job and my family will be in financial distress?

We need to be concerned about these things, but we need to hand them to God and “worry” about the Kingdom of God.

Jesus: Look at the birds. God seems to have them covered (literally)

Look at the flowers of the fields.

Do you believe that if you seek the Kingdom of God first, that God will be able to take care of you? Really?

So, let me ask you again, what do you worry about?

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.

This is the key to the entire Sermon on the Mount.

It is what putting your treasures in heaven is about. It is what “the eye is the lamp of the body” is about. It is what “Do not give a thought to your life” is about.

This is not principally about going to church and giving sacrificially. It is about the priorities of the heart being on God and his kingdom.

It is about treasuring the righteousness that comes only from him.

v. So… Let the world worry about tomorrow. Seek his kingdom and his righteousness first.

Matt 7:1-5 Do not judge

Matthew 7:6 But do make wise judgments.

I am not judging this person, but wisdom says to be careful.

When we study with people… This is a heart issue for us.

Matthew 7:12 The Golden Rule.

(aside: In marriage, apply the Platinum Rule: Do to others what they would want you to do to them)

Matthew 7:13-27 How to get into the kingdom vs. how to live in the kingdom (5:1-7:12)

Small is the gate, and narrow the road. Q: How do you feel about this?

7:15-20

Who is the false prophet? He whose message, if accepted, would keep you from entering the kingdom of Heaven.

How can we know?

1. by their fruit. v. 16-20

2. whether they are doing God’swill. v. 21-23 many will be shocked.

Matthew 7:24-27 Final thoughts.

Q: What is the rock?

Take-home lesson: Do these things!!!!!!

 What in Matthew 5:3-7:12 do you need to put into practice?