

First Things First

Living for the Lord! What a great life it is, living and serving the Lord, living for Him. Today, we want to look in the book of Matthew. We're going to look at several different Scriptures, but we're going to look at first things. You've heard that old saying, "Put first things first." Well, that's what we're going to do today. We're going to look at first things, and the first thing I'd like for you to do today is to consider looking at our website, www.LRWM.org.

Or sit down and write me a little note and let me know if this program is blessing your heart. You can write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731. You write me today and I'll be glad to pray with you for any prayer request that you might have, and I'll be glad to send you free of charge a transcript of this program and other programs of "It's a Good Life." If you go to that website, you'll be able to download transcripts free of charge. That's www.LRWM.org. I look forward each week to be able to come to you and share with you from the Word of God. I count it a great privilege. Today we want to look at first things.

In Matthew chapter 6 and verse 33, the Bible says there, *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* The first thing to seek is the kingdom of God. Well, in that verse, it says to seek *the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* Well, what things does the Scripture speak of here? Well, if you'll look back in Matthew chapter 6 and read all through the verses there, especially verses 25 through 32. Let's read verse 25. *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?*

Now, you keep on reading and it will talk about the lilies of the field. They don't have to worry about anything; they're beautiful anyway. And the birds don't take thought for what they're going to eat; the Lord takes care of them. So, why should we take thought of what we have need of? We need to be seeking first the kingdom of God...*seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

In Mark chapter 8, verses 35 through 38, the Bible says, ³⁵*For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's—This is Jesus speaking—the same shall save it.* ³⁶*For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* ³⁷*Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* ³⁸*Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*

Folks, Jesus is coming soon. I believe this with all of my heart. Jesus is coming back for those who have trusted Him as Savior. The Bible says He's going to descend from Heaven. The Bible says that He's going to descend with the voice of the archangel and say, "Come up hither." And those who are alive and remain shall be caught up with him in the clouds. The Bible says that those who have gone on before, they'll be resurrected. Now, they're with the Lord right now, but the Bible tells us that our bodies are going to be changed and so will theirs. We're going to have new bodies as we go up to be with the Lord. And He says that we are to be ready for that moment when that takes place. We are to understand that only those people who have trusted Him as Savior are going to go with Him up into glory. The Bible says the first thing to seek is the kingdom of God.

And then we understand that the first thing to preach is the Gospel. In I Corinthians chapter 15, verses 1 through 4, the Bible says, ¹*Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;* ²*By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.* ³*For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;* ⁴*And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.*

That's what I preach each week when I come to you on these broadcasts. I let you know that Jesus died for you, that Jesus is the only way to Heaven, that the Word of God...the first thing to preach is the Word of God, the Gospel. The Gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. First Corinthians chapter 1, verse 17, says, *For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.*

There is no other way to Heaven. Baptism is not going to save you. Going to church is not going to save you. Being a Baptist is not going to save you. Being a Pentecostal is not going to save you. Being a Catholic is not going to save you. Being anything other than a child of God, someone who has asked Jesus into his or her heart...that is the only way a person is going to go to Heaven.

Paul said, *[I came] to preach the Gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.* Romans 1:9 says, *For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.* Romans 1:15-16 says, ¹⁵*So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.* ¹⁶*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the*

Greek. The Gospel of Christ is for everyone, not just a select few. It is for everyone. So the first thing to do is to seek the kingdom of God, and then the first thing to preach is the Gospel.

And the first thing to do. In II Timothy chapter 2 and verse 6, the Bible says there, *The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.* The first thing to do is be a partaker. Now, in order to be a partaker, you must be a laborer.

In Luke chapter 10 and verse 2, the Bible says, *Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly [is] great, but the labourers [are] few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.* Are you a laborer with the Lord? Are you winning souls for the Lord? Are you teaching a Sunday school class? Are you doing your part? Are you preaching the Word of God? Are you going on visitation to invite people to your church so they can hear the Word of God? Are you a laborer for the Lord? If you're not, the Bible says you are not doing the first thing. The first thing you are to do as a saved person is to be a partaker. In order to be a partaker of the fruit, you must first be a laborer. First Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 9 says, *For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, [ye are] God's building.*

And then, the first thing in worship. It says in Matthew chapter 23...let's go to Matthew chapter 5 verse 24. It says, *Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* And oftentimes we look at this verse and we say, well, if we've done something wrong, we need to go confess it to the brother. Well, that's one way to look at it, but let's reverse that around. What if your brother has done something to you and you have aught against him? What if he's done something to you that you don't agree with or maybe it's hurt you? Well, the Bible tells me in Galatians chapter 6 and verse 1, *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual,*

restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

The Bible teaches me that, if someone has done me wrong, that if someone is out of the will of God and I can help them in any way, I need to go to that person and help restore that person back to the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not to be saved, but in order that their testimony would be renewed and that they would be able to serve God anew. Help them to get back to where they were. And I'll read that verse again. Galatians 6:1: *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

He that is without sin, the Bible says, let him cast the first stone. We're often understanding that, when someone does something wrong in the churches, in the Gospel-preaching churches, we often get the idea, "Well, that rascal, he's getting what he deserved. Let him alone. Don't mess with him." But the Bible says that we are to go to that person and we are to help restore that individual back to a proper relationship with the Lord. Now, it's up to them, of course, to get things right with God, but we should not turn our backs on our brothers and sisters in Christ who have a problem. Well, the first thing in worship is to be reconciled to thy brother according to Matthew 5:24.

And then the first thing in life. Cleanse first that which is within. In Matthew chapter 23 and verse 26, the Bible says, *Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.* Matthew 23:25: *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.* And what that means is that we get so high and mighty and righteous in our own righteousness that we think we're better than anyone else, but God says, *Woe unto you, scribes [and] Pharisees, hypocrites!* We need to have the

heart that is humble, a heart that is willing to serve God, not to think of ourselves more highly than we should. We need to be ready to help other people come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. We need to go to God when we do something as a saved person and say, "Lord, forgive me." First John 1:9 says, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

God wants to use you today. First, you need to be saved. Secondly, if you are saved, He wants you to be clean. He wants you to be able to be used of Him, and He cannot use a dirty vessel. Fall on your face today and say, "God, forgive me for not serving you."

And then, we see that the first thing to know is found in II Peter chapter 1 and verse 20. *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.* The Scripture is given for our admonition. The Scripture is written to human beings so, first of all, we can know Jesus is our Savior. *[To] as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God* [John 1:12]. Jesus didn't come into the world to condemn the world, but that through Him the world might be saved.

Are you saved? Do you know Jesus as your Savior? Ask Him to come into your heart today. Receive Him as your Lord. If you are saved and you're not serving Him, you need to turn from your sin and say, "Lord, forgive me. I want to be used of you. I want to serve you. Forgive me, Lord, so that I can be a vessel, fit, clean, to be used to help others know Jesus as Savior.

Well, it's been good being with you today, and next week I pray that you'll tune in when you'll hear me say, "It's a good life serving the Lord." May the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.