

PRIORITIES (Matthew 6:19-33)

INTRODUCTION:

1. I want to talk about *priorities*.
 - A. Priorities according to Merriam-Webster.com are:
 - i. What someone *thinks* to be important and *addresses before other matters*.
 - a. Like one who thinks paying the *cable bill* is more important than paying the *electric bill*.
 - b. That choice reveals their *priorities*, but also reveals that their priorities are *wrong*.
 - ii. What is *truly important* and, therefore, *worthy of our attention before other things*.
 - iii. Although the definitions sound similar, the difference between them is significant.
 - B. But whether one has their priorities right or not, those priorities, or what one values, will determine how that person lives, the decisions he/she makes, etc.
2. Because priorities shape one's life, the Lord has a lot to say about them.
 - A. I would like for us to examine some of the Lord's words concerning our priorities.
 - B. I do so in hopes that by God's grace we may be given the opportunity to examine our priorities to assure they are in line with the Lord's will so we might glorify him in our daily lives!

BODY:

- I. **Choosing your treasures (Matthew 6:19-21** – “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 neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ²¹ for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”).
 - A. Heavenly treasures must have priority over earthly ones.
 1. This is **commanded** because God wants your heart, and your heart is where your treasure is, so there is **no middle ground** on this matter (Mt. 6:24 – “No one can serve two masters; for 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 wealth.”).
 2. The Lord is not negating working to meet one's needs, or that physical things mean nothing.
 - a. Instead, this is one of the N.T.'s “not-but” statements designed to stress the importance of the things of God over the things of this world.
 - b. It is much like Jesus' words to those who followed Him for free bread (John 6:27 – “**Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal.**”).
 - i. Here, as in Matt. 6, Jesus is not saying to stop working and storing up what is needed for physical existence but emphasizing the priority of the spiritual over the physical.
 - ii. For, in other places we are *commanded* to labor with our hand that we might have money and food to live and do good (Eph. 4:28; 2 Thess. 3:10).
 - B. Question: Why base one's future on heavenly treasures?
 1. Earthly treasures, no matter what they might be, are an unstable foundation upon which to build one's life (6:19).
 - a. It does not matter whether your top priority is your job, financial security, your family, your health, sports, etc. All are easily destroyed or taken from you.
 - b. The Lord asks a better question of why you would risk your future on something so fragile that it can be destroyed by a moth or rust, or so insubstantial that someone could just take it?
 - c. Yet people do it all the time. And, if/when these things are taken, what do they have?
 2. Only heavenly treasures, those of the spiritual realm, can be trusted as a permanent foundation upon which to base your future, being safe from earthly decay/theft (6:20).
 - a. Jesus emphasized this at the end of the sermon (Matt. 7:24-27 – “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a

foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”).

- b. Despite how the world may see it as irresponsible and unstable to put worship over work, or growing in godliness over growing one’s bank account, or basing one’s future on being better student of Christ than of the arts and sciences, etc., Christ’s truth teaches us otherwise!

II. Proper priorities produce peace (Matt. 6:25-32).

A. Here the Lord gives us a second command that we **are not to worry about our life** and what is needed to sustain it (6:25 – “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 not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”).

1. We should not worry because **life is more than food** and **the body more than clothing**.
2. What does the Lord mean?
 - a. We might think Jesus is saying that there is so much more to life than food and clothing.
 - i. That is an easy interpretation for most of us because we have so much more than food and clothing. We are a wealthy people!
 - ii. But it is not so easy if you struggle to have the basic needs, which many do!
 - b. So, a more plausible interpretation is that since you believe in **God** who has **provided you a body and life itself**, surely you can **trust Him** to provide the **lesser**, or what your body **needs for life**.
 - c. This is such a simple deduction that the Lord presents, but one often lost to God’s people.

B. When **God is your heavenly Father** life is different.

1. You have the all-powerful, eternal, self-existent, Creator God as your Savior, protector, and provider!
 - a. Take some time to think about what this means.
 - b. To help put it slightly in perspective, for most of us childhood memories are good because they were a time **without worry** because our parents protected us and insured that we had all we needed.
 - c. So how much greater should our comfort and peace be when we know that right now and forever God is our Father, our protector, our provider?!
2. There is no need to worry about what you will **eat** or **drink** (Mt. 6:26 – “Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?”).
 - a. God feeds the birds of the air that do not sow, reap, nor gather into barns (6:26).
 - i. They live despite having no man to see to their wellbeing.
 - ii. They live, therefore, a very tenuous and fragile life, yet go about their business *without worry* seeking out the food *which God provides*.
 - b. If God, **your heavenly Father**, feeds the lowly birds, surely you can trust Him to provide food and drink for you *His child* who *He made in His own image*!
3. There is no need to worry about what you are going to **wear** (6:28-30 – “And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, ²⁹ yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. 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!”).
 - a. One of the most beautiful things that adorn this earth are the grasses and their blooms that grow without thought or toiling (6:28-29).
 - i. God clothes them with exactly what they need to live in their time.
 - ii. That clothing is so beautiful that even the glory of Solomon, who surpassed all earthly kings in wisdom, gold, silver, and garments, etc., could not compare (2 Chron. 9:22, 24).
 - b. If God, **your Father in Heaven**, so beautifully clothes “grass” that lives today but is burned up tomorrow, surely He will clothe you, *His child, made in His image*!

4. Christians' priorities are **very different** from the world (6:31-32 – “Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’”³² For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.”).
 - a. Who your Father is makes all the difference. So, we should not worry, seeing **God** is our **heavenly Father** and *knows all that we need!*
 - b. So, we must not worry even though...
 - i. Those with whom we may seriously disagree are running our government, for our citizenship is in heaven and our Father controls all things and there are no leaders in place without His consent.
 - ii. Fuel prices, and all things related to that, are rising, because our treasures are in heaven where our God who created us and gave us life and who calls us His children resides and He will protect them.
 - iii. The shelves at the stores are not as full and we have grown accustomed to, for did not the Spirit say in 1 Tim. 6:8, “If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content”?

CONCLUSION:

1. Our most basic rule of thumb when it comes to godly priorities (Matt. 6:33 – “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”).
2. Seeking God's rule and righteousness first in your life is what life is all about.
3. All else is unstable, unprofitable, and unacceptable to the God who made you, sustains you, and will judge you in the end.
4. So, I invite you to consider your priorities and choose life, the best life, by making your service to the Lord your top priority!
5. If you have need, will you respond to the gospel call and...
 - A. Come to Jesus in F-R-C-Bp?
 - B. Return to Christ in repentance, confession of your sin, and seeking God's forgiveness in prayer?