



SERMON ON THE MOUNT

THE WAY OF THE KINGDOM

AN INTRODUCTION TO “THE WAY OF THE KINGDOM”

This section serves two purposes. It is the close of Matthew 6:1-21 and introduces our final section (6:25-7:29). Jesus here sums up not only the previous section on spiritual disciplines but really the whole sermon. He teaches us two things: First, there are earthly and heavenly rewards and the heavenly rewards are much better and second, that what really matters (and what dictates which rewards you get) are a matter of the heart.

The eyes are the lamp of the body, so what are you looking at? What catches your gaze? What makes you dream? Jesus makes this important observation and then apparently changes the subject to money, or does he? Is this a non-sequitur or is Jesus pulling a Jesus and revealing what is probably true about us? Jesus spends more time than the average preacher talking about money because (as he says) it is at the root of all kinds of evil.

WEEK TWO: *“Do Not Be Anxious”*

Matthew 6:25-34

We live in a time where anxiety is at its peak, affecting nearly 1/3 of adults & adolescents in the US. For many, it seems that the more you have, the more there is to be anxious about. Having more children means keeping track of more heads at the grocery store, having more money requires better management of your funds, having more authority demands more responsibility, and the list goes on. As anxiety levels increase, sickness, depression, insomnia and brokenness in our relationships increase as well. Jesus knows that the anxiety ridden life is not a flourishing life – it's not the life He has for us to live.

So, Jesus tells us not to be anxious about our life and about our bodies. Now, your first reaction might be an exasperated eye roll. That's so much easier said than done, right? Exactly. It's easy to say and difficult to live out, and He understands this. Jesus is telling us to depend upon our own power to overcome our anxiety. His answer is to shift our ambition from chasing after things to seeking first God's Kingdom and Righteousness. This is another way of saying surrender and submit to God and more specifically surrender what you are anxious about to the authority and power of Jesus. Last week we talked about what we treasure and how our hearts are quick to cling to the things we treasure most. If what we treasure most is something that can go away, then anxiety is bound to run rampant through our hearts and minds. In this sense, anxiety is a gift from God showing us that what we trust in is actually not trustworthy – they can't save us, secure us or ultimately fulfill us. And, they can't control tomorrow. Only Jesus can.

God loves you, He sees you, and He know what you're going through. He wants to conquer the things that have been conquering you – that's the whole reason He sent His Son to take on the burden of these untrustworthy things in the first place! One of the biggest ways we open our hearts and minds up to anxiety is through forgetfulness. When we forget what God has done in the past we live with fear as we face the future. The sure way to face our future with hope is to remember that the God who holds the future has faithfully saved us and provided all we need in the past. This week, take time throughout each day to remember all the things God has done to bless you and show you how greatly He loves you. With a thankful heart, we are better able to recognize the abundance of life we live and breathe in daily.

1. *Read Matthew 6:19-24.*
2. *What can you learn about God's character in these verses?*
3. *How did Jesus fulfill what he is teaching?*
4. *Jesus encourages us to consider how well God takes care of us. Take some time to reflect on God's faithfulness and generosity over the past month or year.*
5. *Where are you presently experiencing anxiety? Why?*
6. *To seek first God's Kingdom and Righteousness means you surrender that area to Jesus' authority and power and then ask him to lead you in what you should do. Take some time to do that in prayer with one another.*
7. *What is the Spirit of God leading you to do in light of your time together?*