“God First” Series – Pt.2

“To Whom Does Your Soul Belong?”

Matt. 22:37-38 / Matthew 24:42-44 / Matt. 6:24-34

Matt. 22:37-38

“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

Matt: 6:24-34

*24 “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money. 25 “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? 27 Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? 28 “And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, 29 yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. 30 And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith? 31 “So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ 32 These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. 33 Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. 34 “So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.*

Matt. 6:21

“*For where your treasure is, there also is your heart”.*

Last week we started our series “God First” We looked at our hearts and asked if we are putting Him first in everything in our hearts...especially our finances. Our New Year’s Spiritual Resolution” this year is that we develop hearts that “Seek First Gods Kingdom”! If we would come to a place in doing this, Jesus says “we will have everything we need”. Whether that is physical needs or spiritual needs.

We are completely aware that in today’s world, there are so many things that compete for 1st place and most important in our lives, things always trying to keep God out of 1st place in our hearts & lives. With that being said, the reason for this series is follow this command in ordered to love the Lord your God with all our heart, soul, and mind & ensure we are putting “God First” above everything in every aspect of our life! It is an urgent call to check our own lives and is considered by Jesus to be the greatest commandment. This means every area of our life, even the most uncomfortable of areas of our lives... including as we discussed last week, our finances. This week we’re going to keep the uncomfortableness going and look at our...soul.

Do you, will you, love the Lord your God… with your soul?

Our souls are the “real us”. Our souls are what continue after this ole’ flesh and heartbeat give out. If our souls are what continue after we die, then for our sake and an eternity with God, we must stay awake and alert throughout our lives to ensure that our soul is always in His hands. We keep watch & we keep learning.

**Keep Watch**

If you have a Bible with you, turn to Matthew 24. This is a passage of Scripture where Jesus talks about the future, things to come. Here is what He challenges us to do in this passage…

* Matthew 24:42-44

*42 “So you, too, must keep watch! For you don’t know what day your Lord is coming. 43 Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar was coming, he would keep watch and not permit his house to be broken into. 44 You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.*

Jesus, in this passage, is speaking about himself. He says that we must keep watch for his coming. What does he mean by this? The Bible talks about the second coming of Christ. We know, as we just celebrated during Christmas, that Jesus came as a baby boy to save us from our sin! But there came a point in the ministry of Jesus when He returned to heaven.

Wouldn’t it be so cool if we could know when a crime would be committed? This is the very thing Jesus says in relation to His second coming. No one knows when the “Son of Man” will return, but the fact that he will return should affect our lives daily.

Have you ever wondered if Jesus came back right in the middle of you sinning against God, what would that be like? Though God’s grace is sufficient, we should never test that with “casual sin”. This should cause us to always be aware of where our souls lie.

Are we living in order that our souls will be with God in heaven in trusting Him for our needs, for strength to overcome temptation and not allowing sin to run our lives? Or are we living a life where our souls will FOREVER be apart from Him in eternity by allowing sin to rule our lives? This realization should affect you and cause us to “Keep Watch” on our decisions and actions.

This image should be one we keep in the front of our minds daily. God calls us to say “no” to certain things today, so that we may say “yes” to the things He wants to offer us. We must keep watch over our own lives, our hearts, and souls to ensure we have an eternity with Christ!

**Keep Learning**

As we think about the life-long process of faith, and the continuous work of sanctification in our lives, it is imperative that we stay curious and stay committed to learning. The Word of God is meant to serve as our guide for everyday life here on earth. God gave us a wonderful guide.

God says in Joshua 1:8

*8 Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.*

God says that the keys for Joshua to prosper & succeed in all he does lie in whether he would allow the Gods Word to guide his every move. Is this the case for us today?

* Does the Bible really take priority in our lives?
* Are you saturated with the Word every day, or are you content with a sparse sprinkling of it?

*\*Tell story about when I went through a dry season. Focus on what was affected in your life because of your lack of intimacy with God and His Word in that season.*

The Word of God is FOOD for your soul. If you’re not feeding it, it’ll die. The Bible is meant to guide us through our responses in every given scenario in life. The question is, will we do it God’s way, the way He says to do it in His Word? Is our soul seeking Gods way or our way? This is a good indicator to who is “on top” of your priority list.

* If the answer is to be “yes”, we must keep learning about what God says in His Word. This comes in daily devotion. It’s similar to what a heart doctor would tell you. Want to stay healthy? Workout in some form every day for 30 minutes. This has to do with strengthening muscles in our physical body. It is the same for our spiritual life. If we want to become close to God and respond well to the tough things we face, we must not only keep watch, but we must also stay committed to learning.

Closing:

Job 10:12

*You have granted me life and favor, And Your care has preserved my spirit.*

To put God first, our souls have to be living for Christ. Truth is our eternal state of being is that we ultimately need to come into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. The Bible says that people like you and me naturally live in a sinful state. We all know the story of Adam and Eve, where sin entered the world. Because of sin and its imperfectness, the only possible sacrificial offering to take care of its power had to be perfect. Therefore, we have hope in Jesus Christ for Salvation. Jesus, through His death on the Cross & resurrection from the grave has saved our souls from an eternity without Him, so that we might spend eternity with Him in heaven, free from pain, suffering, temptation, and all the negative consequences of sin. We can live ready and confident for any and every “curve ball” that life may throw our way when we are sure of our salvation.

Our response is to accept this gift and come to Him personally. And the good news is, the Bible tells us exactly how to do this.

* Romans 10:9

*If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

If we will confess, even right here in this moment, that Jesus is Lord and place Him on the throne of our hearts and lives, He will save our souls!

As I mentioned last week, in each of us, there is someone or something that is currently residing on the “throne” of our hearts. It directs our every step. But the problem is, only Christ can truly satisfy your heart’s desires. He can even align your desires with His, ultimately those that are best.

What is it in your heart today that's keeping you from a relationship with Christ? I speak from personal experience when I say that this relationship will truly change everything for you. Will you give up sinful ways of life to follow Jesus? Will you ready your soul, and commit yourself to Him and give Him first place in ALL things in your life? Do you at this moment know to whom your soul belongs?

Prayer