

Matthew 6:19-34

seek first his kingdom and his righteousness
and you will store up treasures in heaven

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Introduction

- ❖ Some people...
 - Some people possess billions of dollars, many people in the world are poor.
 - Some of them barely survive and need aid from international organizations or local governments.
 - Some struggle daily with their health, their relationships, looking for jobs, looking for a bit of happiness.
 - Some people are very famous, most people are only known by their relatives, friends, and colleagues.
- ❖ Some people...
- ❖ Jesus taught us to seek for a different world, the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Mt 6:33).
 - This kingdom is full of faith, hope and love.
 - This kingdom is governed by justice, mercy, and grace.
 - This kingdom promises a new community, children of God, where the lives of many will be changed and healed.
 - “No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD (Jer 31:34).
 - In this kingdom, there is no place for:
 - “evil, greed and depravity;”

- “envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice;”
- “gossip, slander, insolence, arrogance, and boast;”
- “senselessness, heartlessness, and ruthlessness” (Rm 1:18-32).
- ❖ And you will find WISDOM, a treasure in heaven.
- ❖ The context, form and structure, theological notes, technical and hermeneutical notes given in this sermon outline overlap somewhat with other sermon outlines taken from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). This makes it possible to use this sermon outline as a “stand alone”.

Context

- ❖ To understand the teachings of Jesus a brief summary of the background is necessary.
- ❖ The baptism of Jesus (Mt 3:13-17):
 - Before Jesus was baptized by John, he said: “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this **to fulfill all righteousness.**”
 - And after: “As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw **the Spirit of God** descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.’”
 - The Sermon on the Mount teaches this **fulfillment of all righteousness.** “For I tell you that unless **your righteousness surpasses** that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law...” (Mt 5:20).
- ❖ The preaching of Jesus:
 - Jesus had already been preaching in the synagogues in Galilee for some time before he delivered his sermon on the mount. Matthew summarized these sermons as follows:
 - “From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near**’” (Mt 4:17).
 - Jesus continued and took over the ministry of John the Baptist:
 - “In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, ‘**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near**’” (Mt 3:1-2).
 - And later on, when Jesus sent out his twelve disciples:
 - “As you go, preach this message: ‘**The kingdom of heaven is near**’” (Mt 10:7).
 - These two aspects, repentance and the kingdom, are prominent in the Sermon on the Mount.
- ❖ The life of Jesus Christ:

- Jesus taught the Law and the Prophets, and he lived according to the Law and the Prophets. The Sermon on the Mount reflects his life. He lived according to his own teachings and by doing so set an example for his followers, the disciples. A clear example is found in Matthew 5:39: “Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” When Jesus was arrested, he didn’t strike back.
- ❖ The future of the Kingdom:
 - After his resurrection, Jesus summoned his eleven disciples to go back to the mount: “**All authority in heaven and on earth** has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations (...) and **teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you**” (Mt 28:18-20).
 - This authority is reflected in expressions such as: “**But I tell you** that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment” (Mt 5:22).
 - And in: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘**Lord, Lord,**’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but...” (Mt 7:20).

Form and structure

- ❖ The Sermon on the Mount consists of five main parts:
 - 1. General calling to repentance and the promise of the Kingdom: Matthew 5:3-10, characterized by: “Blessed are...”
 - 2. Then Jesus turns to his disciples and all who want to learn from him: “Blessed are **you...**” The main theme is “**the prophets**” (Mt 5:11-16).
 - 3. The central part is an exposition of the Law and the Prophets (Mt 5:17-7:12):
 - “Do not think that I have come to **abolish the Law or the Prophets**; I have not come to abolish them but to **fulfil** them” (Mt 5:17)...
 - The Lord’s Prayer is found at the center of the sermon! “**Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well**” (Mt 6:33).
 - “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up **the Law and the Prophets**” (Mt 7:12).
 - 4. After his exposition of the Law and the Prophets, he returns to the theme of the prophets and warns against “**the false prophets**” (Mt 7:13-23). This contrasts with the second part of the sermon.

- 5. He concludes his sermon again with a general call to choose: **“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine...”**(Mt 7:24-27).

❖ The structure of Matthew 6:19-34:

<p><i>Lesson (A)</i> <i>(verse 19-21)</i></p>	<p>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.</p>	<p>But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”</p>		
<p><i>Lesson (B)</i> <i>(verse 22-23)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">“The eye is the lamp of the body.</p>	
	<p>If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light.</p>	<p>But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”</p>		
<p><i>Statement</i> <i>(verse 24)</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">“No one can serve two masters.</p>	
	<p>Either he will hate the one and love the other,</p>	<p>or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">You cannot serve both God and Money.”</p>		
<p><i>Lesson (C)</i> <i>(verse 25)</i></p> <p><i>Example (1)</i> <i>(verse 26)</i></p> <p><i>Example (2)</i> <i>(verse 27)</i></p> <p><i>Example (3)</i></p>	<p>“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.</p> <p>Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?</p> <p>Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?</p> <p>Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?</p> <p>And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that</p>	

<p>(Verse 28-30)</p> <p>Conclusion (A) (verse 31-32)</p>	<p>not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?</p> <p>So do not worry, saying,</p> <p>'What shall we eat?'</p> <p>or 'What shall we drink?'</p> <p>or 'What shall we wear?'</p> <p>For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.</p>
<p>Conclusion (B) (verse 33)</p> <p>Concluding lesson (D) (verse 34)</p>	<p>But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.</p> <p>Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."</p>

Technical, historical, and hermeneutical notes

- ❖ It is important to realize that Jesus preached his sermon around 30 AD in Galilee.
 - To Jews living in a country,
 - which was part of the Roman Empire;
 - who had contact with the Hellenistic (Greek) and Roman culture: this culture was prominent in a city like Tiberias (Lake of Tiberias = Sea of Galilee) and the Decapolis, nowadays Jordan.
 - To Jews,
 - who frequented the synagogues and were used to listening to the teaching of the Pharisees and scribes, their spiritual leaders at that time;
 - who were expecting the promised One (according to Dt 18:15-18; Mal 4:4-5; Mt 11:3);
 - who were longing for the restoration of the Kingdom of God (Mt 11:12), the main theme of the teaching of Jesus.
- ❖ This background is necessary for the understanding of those passages of the sermon which speak of persecution (Mt 5:10-12), pagans (Mt 6:7, 32) and of hypocrites.
- ❖ Additional remarks:

- The selection of topics found within the Sermon on the Mount reflects some debated issues among first century Jews such as divorce (Mt 5:31-32; Mt 19:3-9). Jesus didn't cover all aspects of the Law, for instance, the fourth commandment (Sabbath Day) is not found here, although it was hotly debated between the Pharisees and Jesus (Mt 12:1-8), neither did he refer to the greatest commandment (Mt 22:37-40).
- He especially confronts the teaching of the Pharisees and Scribes. Some of the topics found in the sermon are also found in Matthew 23, where he condemns them for their hypocritical stance.
- Jesus doesn't give a new set of rules or applications but teaches a different mindset. This mindset is governed by (see also the application):
 - the blessings of the Kingdom (Mt 5:3-10);
 - the Lord's prayer (Mt 6:9-13), the central part of the sermon.

Verse 21

- ❖ Heart = “καρδιά”: 1. **heart** as seat of physical, spiritual and mental life; b. as center and source of the whole inner life, with its thinking (of moral decisions, the moral life, of vices and virtues), feeling (emotions, wishes, desires), and volition (the will and its decisions).¹

Verse 25

- ❖ Life = “ψυχή” : b. the condition of being alive, **earthly life, life** itself.²
- ❖ Do not worry = “μεριμνάω”:
 - 1. to be apprehensive, *have anxiety, be anxious, be (unduly) concerned* (...) of the distracting cares of housekeeping.³
 - “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “**you are worried** and upset about many things” (Lk 10:41).

Verse 27

- ❖ Compare NIV and NKJV:

NIV (ESV, RSV, NASB)	NKJV
Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?	Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

¹ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 508-509).

² Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 1098).

³ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 632).

- Did Jesus talk about stature or about time of life?
- ❖ **To his life (time of life) or stature = “ἡλικία”:**
 - 1. **the period of time that one’s life continues, age, time of life. a.** This may refer to length of life, not to bodily size. On the other hand, the context also speaks of nourishment and growth, and the saying may be one of the typically bold dominical sayings with the sense: ‘Who grows by worrying about one’s height?’
 - 3. **bodily stature;** small of stature (Lk 19:3).⁴
- ❖ **A single hour or one cubit = “πῆχυς”:** originally ‘forearm’ then *cubit* or *ell* as a measure of length. A cubit is the distance from the elbow to the end of the middle finger; about 45–52 cm. Matthew 6:27: This expression has produced two major lines of interpretation: as reference to length of *add a single hour to your span of life* NIV; as reference to bodily growth *add one cubit to your height / add a cubit to your stature* NKJV. The former has been commended because the addition of a cubit in the sense of time appears to be a small matter, whereas a cubit of bodily stature is monstrously large. But this objection fails to take account of frequent use of hyperbole in the dominical discourse. Moreover, the context of this passage deals with food and clothing. Food provides the nourishment that sustains growth as well as life. Disciples do not grow to their present height by worrying.⁵
 - All these explanations do not take into account the reference to the “pagans” in verse 32 and the general statement of verse 24.
 - The most likely explanation refers to “stature” to impress other people. See exposition.

Verse 30

- ❖ You of little faith = “ὀλιγόπιστος”: **of little faith/trust**, only in addressing the disciples (Mt 6:30; 8:26; 16:8; Lk 12:28; Peter alone Mt 14:31).⁶

Verse 32

- ❖ Run after = “ἐπιζητέω”: 2. **to be seriously interested in or have a strong desire for.**
 - a. wish, wish (Mt 6:32; Lk 12:30).
 - b. desire, want.⁷

⁴ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, pp. 435-436).

⁵ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 812).

⁶ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 702).

⁷ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 371).

Verse 33

❖ Seek = "ζητέω":

- 2. **to seek information**, *investigate, examine, consider, deliberate.*
- 3. **to devote serious effort to realize one's desire or objective**, *strive for, aim (at), try to obtain, desire, wish (for).*⁸
 - Both aspects are necessary for understanding the search for the Kingdom of God.

❖ Kingdom of God = "βασιλεία": a term relating to royal administration.

- 1. **the act of ruling**, generally. *kingship, royal power, royal rule, especially of God's rule the royal reign of God (usually rendered 'kingdom of God', and often understood as royal realm but with dilution of the primary component of reigning activity), (...) and taught by Jesus. The expressions vary; βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ and τῶν οὐρανῶν (= Kingdom of heaven) have essentially the same meaning, since Israelites used "heaven" as well as other circumlocutions for God. "Kingdom of heaven" may also emphasize the heavenly origin and nature of the reign.*⁹
 - It is questionable that "reigning activity" is not the primary component of "kingdom of God," as is stated. The Kingdom of God is a present state (1) and in the process of realization (2). Jesus declared:
 - (1) "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me;"
 - (2) "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, (...) and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Mt 28:18–20).

❖ Righteousness = "δικαιοσύνη":

- 1. **the quality, state, or practice of judicial responsibility with focus on fairness, justice, equitableness, fairness**¹⁰
- 3. **the quality or characteristic of upright behavior, uprightness, righteousness. c.** Uprightness as determined by divine/legal standards, that meets God's standard.¹¹
 - "For I tell you that unless **your righteousness** surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:20).

⁸ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 428).

⁹ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 168).

¹⁰ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 247).

¹¹ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 248).

In Matthew 5:20, Jesus connects righteousness with teaching in accordance with the Law and the Prophets: “Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (See also Matthew 28:19-20.)

Verse 34

- ❖ Trouble = “κακία”: 1. **the quality or state of wickedness, baseness, depravity, wickedness, vice.** It is the opposite of **excellence of character** (ἀρετή¹²) and all virtue and therefore lacking in social value. 3. **a state involving difficult circumstances, trouble, misfortune.**¹³

Exposition

Remark

- ❖ In this outline, the emphasis will be on verse 33 and 34.

Verse 19-24

- ❖ What is your focus in daily life?
 - Don’t search for wealth and treasures on earth! Store up treasures in heaven. But what are these treasures?
 - The treasures in heaven are assets for daily life as a child of God, and not primarily for the life to come.
 - “He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old” (Mt 13:52).
 - Your treasure will affect your moral decisions, the moral life, the vices, and virtues. It will affect your feelings (emotions, wishes, desires), and your will and its decisions.
 - “People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”
- ❖ **“You cannot serve both God and Money.”**

¹² Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 130).

¹³ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 500).

Verse 25-32

- ❖ **“Therefore I tell you”** After this vigorous statement, Jesus continued his teachings with the application.
 - **“Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink.”** These worries are unnecessary. He was not speaking to the very poor, the needy, the sick, who longed for health, some relief, some food, and drink.
 - **“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things.”**
 - Who are these pagans? In the region where Jesus was preaching, the pagans were the people with a Greek and Roman background, living in a city such as Tiberias. Often they belonged to the upper class, were rich, organized parties for their friends, relatives, and officials (Mk 6:21-22), where they served luxurious dinners and a good glass of wine. Stature and status were important to them.
- ❖ **“Look at”**
 - The birds of the air (food and drink) - **“your heavenly Father feeds them.”**
 - Note the emphasis on **“your”** and **“Father.”**
 - The lilies of field (cloths);
 - The grass of the field (cloths, stature/status) – **“how God clothes the grass of the field, (...) will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?”**
- ❖ **“Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.”**
 - This reference to Solomon is interesting. Solomon is mentioned twice by Jesus with regard to his splendor and with regard to his wisdom.
 - **“The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here”** (Mt 12:42).
 - Jesus surpasses Solomon in wisdom. He is the personification of wisdom.
- ❖ **“Your heavenly Father knows that you need them”** (Mt 6:32). Jesus taught faith!
 - This is in accordance with Matthew 4:1-4: Jesus answered, **“It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’”** (Mt 4:4).

Verse 33

- ❖ The concluding and summarizing lesson is: **“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”**
 - Note the following parallel between the Lord’s prayer and Matthew 6:33:

The Lord’s Prayer (Mt 6:10-11)	Matthew 6:33
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“your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.”	“But seek first his kingdom, and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”
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- At the center of the beatitudes, Jesus taught:
 - “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled” (Mt 5:6).
 - Filled = “χορτάζω”: 1. to fill with food, feed, fill; 2. to experience inward satisfaction in something, be satisfied.¹⁴

The beatitudes (Mt 5:3, 6)	Matthew 6:33
“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”	“But seek first his kingdom
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,	and his righteousness,
for they will be filled.”	and all these things will be given to you as well.”

- ❖ What does a disciple of Jesus find, when he/she seeks the Kingdom of God and his righteousness? He will find:
 - Wisdom and justice!
 - Mercy and grace!
 - A pure heart and peace with God!
 - Jesus is the embodiment of wisdom and justice, mercy and grace, a pure heart and peace with God.
 - “The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD—” (Isa 11:2).
- ❖ Wisdom and Justice:

¹⁴ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (2000, p. 1087).

- Jesus referred to the splendor and to the wisdom of King Solomon.

The Wisdom of Solomon (1 Ki 3:5-14)

At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”

Solomon answered, “You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. “Now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”

The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both riches and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.”

Verse 34

- ❖ “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”
 - Again, a look at the Lord’s prayer is instructive. Jesus didn’t teach us to pray for tomorrow’s bread, but: “Give us today our daily bread” (Mt 6:11).
- ❖ Wisdom and love are needed to cope with today’s troubles, which are not primarily misfortunes, but *baseness, depravity, wickedness, vice* (Rm 1:28-32).
 - Wisdom is the main theme of Proverbs:
 - “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline” (Pr 1:7).
 - The final lesson of the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus taught was about the wise and the foolish man (Mt 7:24-27).

Application

- ❖ Jesus taught his disciples to seek for a different world, the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Mt 6:33) and not to worry about food and drink, clothes and status according to worldly standards.
- ❖ What really matters in daily life is:
 - faith, hope, and love (1 Cor 13:13);
 - righteousness, justice, mercy, and grace;
 - a new community of children of God.
- ❖ In this kingdom will be no place for:
 - “evil, greed and depravity;
 - envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice;
 - gossip, slander, insolence, arrogance, and boast;
 - senselessness, heartlessness, and ruthlessness” (Rm 1:18-32).
- ❖ This has been taught by the Law and the Prophets, which is the main theme of the Sermon on the Mount.
 - “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD.
“I will put my law in their minds
and write it on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.

No longer will a man teach his neighbor,
or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’
because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest,”
declares the LORD.
“For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more”
(Jer 31:33-34; see also: Jn 17:3; Jer 24:7; Isa 11:9; 60:19-21; Hab 2:14).
- ❖ When a disciple seeks the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, he will find, gain, learn and acquire WISDOM, the wisdom of Christ and the Holy Spirit.
 - Wisdom is a treasure in heaven. Thieves cannot steal it. It cannot be destroyed by moth or rust (Mt 6:19-21). Wisdom is not only a treasure for the individual but also for the community of the church and the society as a whole.
 - Wisdom gives light to the eye (Mt 6:22-23).
 - Wisdom is given to serve God and will despise Money (as a god).

- Wisdom is necessary for everyday decisions and for coping with the troubles of today (Rm 1:28-32).
- Wisdom is like a diamond.
 - Jesus often referred to the “wise” (Mt 7:24-27; Mt 25:1-13).
- ❖ Jesus taught his disciples to trust the care of the heavenly Father “and all these things will be given to you as well” (Mt 6:33; the Lord’s prayer – Mt 6:10-11; Mt 4:1-4; Mt 5: 3, 6).
 - Luke wrote: “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Lk 2:52).

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