

SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD

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Reading: Matthew 6:19-34

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:31-33).

Have you ever tried to paint a flower? It is very difficult. Even the most beautiful flower that people paint is not beautiful compared to the flowers which the Lord makes. The flowers which the Lord makes are beautiful on every side. They are living. They dance and sparkle in the sun. They are soft to the touch, and they have a wonderful smell.

A picture of a flower is only on one side of a piece of paper. It does not move. It feels like paper, not soft like the petals of a real flower. It never grows, and it doesn't have a wonderful smell. Even the very best picture of a flower made by a person is not very good compared to the smallest flower made by the Lord.

Once the Lord was talking to His disciples, and He knew that they were worried. They did not feel very wise, and they were not important. They were afraid that people Jerusalem would laugh at them in. They wanted to be like the other people so that they would not be ashamed.

But the Lord showed them that they could not become wise or important by worrying about such things. He asked them if anyone of them could make himself taller by thinking about it. Now you will probably become taller as you grow older, but you will not become taller by thinking about it! The Lord makes you grow, and there is not much you can do to stop it.

Then the Lord told the disciples how the birds of the air do not work at all. They do not store up food in barns, but the Lord feeds them. The Lord also told the disciples about the flowers of the field. They do not work at all. They do not worry about being beautiful, and yet the most beautiful clothing on earth is not as beautiful as they are. Even the great King Solomon with all of his magnificent robes was not as beautifully clothed as a simple white lily.

The Lord used these comparisons to show the disciples how foolish it was to worry about things that they could not change. He told them that there was something else that they should worry about first, and then all of these other

things would be given to them. He told them: "Seek first the kingdom of God." This meant that they should worry most of all about loving the Lord and the neighbor. And this is true for us today, too. If a person does this, then the Lord will make him wise, and he will be important.

Actually, the disciples were wiser than all of the other people in Jerusalem, because they knew about the Lord and loved Him. And the disciples were more important than the other people in Jerusalem too. Even today the names of the disciples are known, but the names of most people in Jerusalem at that time have been forgotten.

The Lord does many things for you. He makes you grow. He feeds you. He gives you a strong body. He also builds your mind and makes you wise, but He can only do this if you try to obey what He tells you. And the most important thing He tells you to do is to love Him and to love other people. If you do this, then the Lord will do everything else.

Do not try to make other people think that you are wise, and important, and strong. The only really important people are those who love the Lord. And so the first thing you must do is to think about the Lord and try to do what He says. Then He will help you to become wise, and strong, and beautiful. This is what He meant when He said, "Do not worry.... For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Amen.