

Conclusion

Any sinner who stands before the Lord will have to make a serious and critical choice: Christ or my sin! Once a believer on Christ, a person must again face up to a critical choice: Christ or my self! What is your decision?

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Because He died,
I too can die
To sin --
Its guilt and shame.

Because He rose
I too can rise
To be with Him again.

Because He conquered,
I can win
These battles with MY foe,
Content that I shall
Reign with Him
Who guided me below!

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THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

"Some Things That God Puts First"

Matt. 6:25-34

Introduction

1. There is a certain excitement about first things: first walk, first talk, first day at school, first date, first child, etc.

2. The significance of "first" has its thrill in the realm of personal faith also: first time to accept Christ (Acts 16:30,31); first time to pray in public (Acts 9:11); first time to testify to others (John 1:41, 42).

3. Let it be affirmed that God has a divine order for both temporal and spiritual matters. This is abundantly supported by the Scriptures: read Mark 8:36, Heb. 9:27, and Luke 12:15, 21.

4. For a closer look at this principle, give attention to these five priorities in the Book of Matthew:

1. SELF-JUDGMENT, THEN JUDGMENT OF OTHERS. 7:3-5.

Take note of the big verbs in these verses:

- a. Behold
- b. Consider
- c. Pull out
- d. Cast out
- e. See clearly

All of these action words tell the true story. Before one thrills to the excitement of helping others to grow, let him first grow! It is well known that the word for "mote" in v. 3 speaks of a splinter, speck, or some very small particle which may irritate. The "beam" is a log on which planks in the house are placed. Better taken as a rafter, joist, or pole.

This is not an argument against corrective judgment which is often needed, but a warning against indiscriminate judgment!

2. OTHER-CONSIDERATION, then your personal gift.
5:23, 24.

JOY is really the initial letters of Jesus first, Others second, and You last. The thought here is a remembrance of one's brother!

The remembrance provokes a knowledge of broken fellowship. No use, says the Word, to bring a gift so long as this stands. The action detailed is:

- a. Go.
- b. Be reconciled.
- c. Come.
- d. Offer.

If the tides of His blessings are dammed up in your life, is it because you need reconciliation first? As you think of this matter - - what is it you remember (v. 23)?

3. INTERNAL-CLEANSING, then external cleansing.
23:25-26.

The punctilious Pharisee was an observer of external ceremonies. So much so that he considered ritual devotion of more value than heart commitment. To this, our Lord objected. To be clean on the outside, yet to harbour within such vices as robbery (extortion) and graft (excess) is a picture of bold wickedness.

Behold how God puts the emphasis on the inside: 1 Samuel 16:7; Psalm 51:6, 10; Prov. 4:23.

4. CHRIST, then self. 8:21, 22.

Here are some important questions to ask yourself:

- a. Why do you allow the doubtful habit?
- b. Why do you wear the worldly apparel?
- c. Why do you pursue that harmful friendship?
- d. Why do you allow that crooked method in business?
- e. Why do you attend worldly places?
- f. Why do you fail in winning souls?
- g. Why do you not obey the voice of the Lord?

Let's be honest - - the reason is: "ME FIRST!" The biggest words in our text are "Follow Me." There is no other choice for a solid Christian. Without spiritual stoutness, where is the vitality of your Christianity?

5. ETERNAL CONCERNS, then mundane temporalities.
6:31-33.

The world today has focused its total interest on social and economic mobility. Here and there one may find a rare exception. Who is not giving himself to: what to eat, what to drink, what to wear, where to live, what car to drive, what job to have, etc? Read vv. 31, 32.

God's order or priorities, however, calls for:

- a. Salvation - - seek first the kingdom of God.
- b. Sanctification - - seek first His righteousness.

When the Lord is Lord of Lords in actuality, then this will obtain. But this is still His standard today! It is admitted that according to this world's evaluation and outlook it is entirely off center and a leaning Pisa.