

Exercising True Kingdom Priorities

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[0 : 00] Well, we're going to turn to our reading this morning. I'm only joking, by the way. Please don't tell Jennifer I said that. Matthew's Gospel, chapter 6, and page 811.

Now, we're reading this morning. We're looking particularly at the end of chapter 6 and into chapter 7, verse 12. The main chunk of the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount ends with chapter 7 and verse 12.

Thereafter comes three paragraphs of pressing decision from the Lord Jesus. But if you flick back to chapter 5, verse 17, where it begins after the Beatitudes, you'll see that Jesus talks there about not abolishing but fulfilling the law and the prophets.

And then at chapter 7, verse 12, the very end, he says, So this is the law and the prophets. So those are the brackets that hold chapters, mid part of chapter 5, 6, and 7 together, which is all about Jesus' teaching on how the law and the prophets are fulfilled in the kingdom lives of his people.

But we're going to read from verse 19 of chapter 6, so that we take in these critical verses in the middle, which govern everything that goes before in chapter 6 and everything that comes after.

[1 : 29] So Matthew 6 and verse 19. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy, your whole body, that is your whole bodily life, will be full of light.

But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters.

For either we will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money, mammon, material things.

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you'll eat or what you'll drink, or about your body, what you'll put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

[2 : 32] Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.

They neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you?

Oh, you of little faith! Therefore do not be anxious, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear? For the Gentiles, the pagans, seek after these things.

And your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself.

[3 : 45] Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Judge not that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged.

And with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that's in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that's in your own eye?

Or how can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye, when there is a log in your own eye? You hypocrite! First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

Do not give to dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you. Ask, and it will be given to you.

Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, it will be opened. For which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone?

[4 : 50] Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father, who is in heaven, give good things to those who ask him?

So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them. For this is the law and the prophets.

Amen. May God bless to us his word. Well, please turn to Matthew chapter 6, page 811, and to the passage we read, which is all about expressing true kingdom priorities.

For some time, we've been looking at these chapters that we call the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus is teaching all his followers what the practice of true Christianity really looks like, the manners of Christ's people, if they really are his people.

And we've seen in chapter 5, the true kingdom morality, which is all about right relationships. And we've seen in chapter 6, that that all flows out of a true kingdom mentality.

[6 : 07] That is an entire outlook on life that is marked by real kingdom perspective. And that's the key issue. We saw it there in verses 19 to 24, right in the center of the passage, where Jesus says in verse 22, what we need above all is the healthy eye, an eye that sees with a true heavenly sight, and therefore brings the light of heaven into the whole of our earthly life and existence, fills it with light.

Our earthly life is flooded with a life-giving reality that our real home, that our real treasure is not here on earth, but is in the kingdom of heaven in the age to come.

And of course, that changes everything when we have that perspective. It'll transform every part of our earthly life. It'll transform the piety of our devotional lives.

We saw that last time in verses 1 to 18, the sort of things that he speaks about there, prayer and giving and self-denial and so on. We'll see that it's not a matter of impressing others. No, it's for God's eyes only.

And our whole devotional life, his life lived to the Father and for the Father. And so it doesn't matter, even if nobody else notices anything at all or has any idea of what we're doing.

[7 : 27] Our Father, says Jesus, our Father who sees in secret will see and will reward us. And so a true kingdom perspective will transform our attitude to our daily worship in these particular areas.

But more than that, it'll transform also our attitude to our whole daily walk in this world. Now, of course, the Bible is very clear that we can't distinguish between our daily walk and our daily worship.

The whole of life is worship, not just the specific acts of things that we might particularly associate with devotional acts. Read Romans chapter 12, and you'll see that. It begins, doesn't it, by Paul saying, we're to present our bodies, our whole bodily life, as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.

That is, our whole bodily life, he's saying, is our spiritual worship. And we're to live in everything, not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of our minds so that in everything, everything we say, everything we do, is pleasing to God.

And actually, that is just what Jesus is looking at here in the second part of Matthew 6 and 7. It's not just the specifics of our devotional lives, the things we might think of as being acts of worship.

[8 : 48] No, it's that we must understand much more about our whole life being worship to God. We must also exercise true kingdom priorities in every aspect of our daily walk in life, even in the most mundane things, the most ordinary things, the most domestic of things.

All our thinking, all our planning, every concern relating to ourselves, relating to others, and relating to God himself. So if true kingdom piety is about personal devotion to the Father and from the Father, then true kingdom priorities means daily lives that are lived with practical discernment from the Father.

In other words, we see with heaven's sight, with clear vision in absolutely everything. And that's the healthy eye that will give us a clear perspective, not the bad eye that gives us blurred vision, that gives us an earthly outlook on the whole of our lives.

It's about living life, seeing everything in the light of the great revelation of God's gospel grace to us in Jesus. and therefore living all of life, trusting in his grace and trusting in God's provision for every

aspect of our lives.

And what that means is in practice, Jesus fleshes out for us by way of examples from some key areas of our normal life and existence here. He shows us that exercising true kingdom priorities in our daily lives involves three things.

[10:24] First, having a right perspective, a heavenly perspective on God's provision for ourselves and for our needs. Having a heavenly perspective on our perceptions, especially our perceptions of others and their sins.

And a heavenly perspective on our persistence. Our persistence in the pursuit of God and his grace. So let's look at verses 25 to 34 where Jesus at first says that we need to live with practical discernment from the Father that is with a clear heavenly perspective in this whole area of our thinking about provision for our own needs in life.

Again, like the paragraph on fasting, this is dealing with a selfward thing. He's thinking about our own personal needs. And by the way, you can see Jesus' great balance again in the first three paragraphs verses 1 to 18.

The emphasis is first outwards on others, giving, then upwards to God in prayer, and then selfward in fasting. And here, in the second half of the chapter, once again, it's selfward here, then it's outward to others, and then it's upward to God in prayer.

So notice verse 25. Notice the therefore. This is the direct implication of what Jesus has said in verses 19 to 24 about having a true kingdom perspective, about having a right understanding of where our true reward is to be found, where our lasting treasure is to be sought for.

[11:53] You can see this clearly, he says. You see with heaven's sight. Therefore, don't you be anxious about your life now. Don't be anxious about matters of food and drink and clothing and the future and whatever else.

Why? Well, because, verse 24, because you have a sound, healthy outlook on life. You know that there's only one master, and you know that you're servants of his and you know therefore that you depend on him for everything in your whole life and you know that he's your heavenly father, that you can trust him for everything in life.

The image of the servant, remember, in Jesus' parables isn't one of a sort of menial, mistreated slave. It's the opposite, isn't it? It's a trusted steward, a valued member of the household and yet he is somebody who is utterly dependent, ultimately, on the master for everything.

His patronage, his provision, it counts for everything. But you see, real kingdom sight means that we know God and we know he's not just the creator and the ruler of this world and the judge of this world.

We know him as something else. Do you see, all the way through this chapter, look at verse 32. Who is he? He's our heavenly father who knows our needs. Verse 26, he's our heavenly father who values us way above all these other things he's created in this world and which he provides for.

[13:27] True kingdom sight sees the father and knows the father and so can trust our heavenly father to provide everything, everything we'll ever need in these earthly lives.

In the first half of chapter 6, we were looking at rewards, weren't we? It's all about not seeking the wrong rewards and therefore becoming idolaters, not being tempted just by these earthly rewards, the praise of men.

But here in the second part, Jesus is not dealing with rewards, he's dealing with something different, he's dealing with needs. Things that we do require.

Verse 31, we do need, don't we, food and clothes? In verse 34, there is a tomorrow with all that that will bring. Tomorrow is Monday morning by the way in case you'd forgotten. With all the worries that that will bring.

We do need things, we do need to think about tomorrow. But Jesus' point is that worry and anxiety about things, however necessary, that that too can lead us to lose trust in God, the true God that we have the wonderful privilege of knowing through Jesus, his son.

[14:42] Notice verse 32, you see, what he says is, it's ignorant Gentiles, it's pagans with no knowledge of God's revelation in scripture. It's they who seek after things, all these things.

They live lives filled with anxious worry and concern. That's a mark, he says, of unbelieving earthly perspective on life. Just like in verse 7 where he says that it's unbelieving pagan Gentiles whose prayer is driven by prattling on and on and on with lots of words to see if they can get things out of God.

But in total contrast, the Christian believer is to be. Look at verse 33. It's God himself and it's God's kingdom of heaven that is to be the focus of true believing prayer, seeking first his righteousness and his kingdom.

the things that are not passing, the things that are eternal. So you see, we're not to be taken up with things as Christians, earthly things, even in our prayers.

But we'll only be free from that kind of bondage to things, to material possessions, to material needs. We'll only be free from anxiety and worry about these things if we really do have God's perspective, if we really do have the discernment that comes from seeing with heaven's sight.

[16:08] And knowing that we do have a wonderfully generous and attentive heavenly Father who we really can trust. We can trust him to provide for all that we need.

Now notice, Jesus is not saying, and don't misunderstand that he is saying we can be irresponsible, we can be profligate. He's not saying, oh Christians, you don't need to bother to work, you don't need to bother to save, you don't need to take out life insurance or car insurance or whatever.

Of course he's not saying that. The New Testament is very clear. Read Paul to the Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians 3 this afternoon. He says this, we command, we command you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to keep away from a brother who's walking in idleness.

And such persons we command in the Lord Jesus to do their work and earn their living. If a man will not work, he won't eat. That's pretty clear. He says to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5, if someone doesn't behave responsibly and provide for their family, then they're acting worse than pagan unbelievers.

So of course, the Lord isn't telling us as Christians that we can be lazy, that we can presume on others, that we can make up, others make up for our laziness and profligacy.

[17:20] No. But what he's simply saying is don't you be preoccupied with these things. because if you are, you will be in danger of becoming possessed by them.

Possessed by an earthly master. And then, you will not be able to serve your true master, will you? Because you can't serve God and the material.

And in any case, it's fruitless, verse 27. Do you see? Can, by all your anxieties, can you add an hour to your lifespan? No, you can't.

Actually, by worry and anxiety, you may well make yourself ill with stress and shorten your lifespan and be thoroughly miserable in the meantime. I remember when I used to work in London.

Anytime I was walking across London Bridge at busy times, I would be passed by hordes of people coming from their commuter trains in Kent to work in the city. Every one of them virtually had a furrowed brow and a frown, worrying about the bond markets, worrying about the stock markets, worrying about their tenuous contract, wondering if that bonus was going to be there.

[18:32] A miserable, miserable bunch. The Gentiles, says Jesus, verse 32, the Gentiles, the pagans, seek after these things, but not you.

Kingdom people trust that our Heavenly Father knows our needs, all of them, and He will not let us down. He'll add to us, says Jesus, every single thing that we need.

Not everything we want necessarily, but everything that we need. If only we'll have our eyes and the eyes of our hearts first on His kingdom and His righteousness.

The very opposite, isn't it, of the world round about us, the absolute antithesis. The world has no thought for spiritual treasure in heaven. It's striving for men's praise now.

It's striving for treasure here and now. But it's totally taken up with worries about a material future. But as Christian believers, we are to see with God's sight.

[19:35] And so we're to live here and now with a great sense of personal detachment, with a great sense of contentment. Godliness with contentment is great gain, says Paul to Timothy.

Why? Because we brought nothing out of the world, into the world, and we can take nothing out of the world. Wouldn't the world be a much simpler place if people would only realize that?

But you see, you'll only have and know that kind of detached contentment if heaven really does possess your heart. And only if that's true so that you have a truly heavenly perspective on God's provision for all our earthly needs, only if that's true will verse 34 be true of you and me.

That we will be liberated from anxiety about the future and able to seize the day today that God has given us to live and give it our best and throw all our heart into it today.

That's living with God's sight. That's living with a truly heavenly perspective as far as our earthly possessions are concerned. And that's But the second area where we need to live with his sight is laid out in verses 1 to 6 of chapter 7 where Jesus says we need a clear heavenly perspective on our

perception of others and especially on our attitude towards others' sins and indeed our own sins. [21 : 00] Verse 1 Judge not that you be not judged. Now in our do as you please culture this command of Jesus might seem to be a very popular one.

Judge not I'll jolly well do as I please and you get off my case I'll do as I like. But of course that is not what Jesus is saying is it? Nor is he saying that Christians are to suspend all their critical faculties and never make any discerning judgments about anything or anyone.

Again in our culture today the word discriminate or discrimination has become a dirty word hasn't it? But friends let me tell you it is a vital word. you need a surgeon who can discriminate between your cystic duct and your common bile duct if he's about to take your gallbladder out otherwise you're in very big trouble let me tell you.

You need one who can tell the difference and discriminate between an unimportant vein and a vital artery supplying your brain or you're in big trouble just as you need a pension manager who can discriminate between a good sound investment and a Ponzi scheme that's going to bankrupt his whole firm.

And although we fall over ourselves these days to insist that job interviews must never be discriminatory the whole point of a job interview is to discriminate between someone who can do the job and someone who can't and you don't want to employ.

[22 : 23] And indeed in so many areas of life we need wise judgments about people don't we? In all sorts of ways including deciding whether they're people best avoided because their influence might be a harmful one whether you warn your children to keep away from certain people or as Jesus himself says here if you look at verse six because there are times when we must not waste our time and effort casting pearls before swine so you have to make a judgment don't you on who are swine and dogs in Jesus words.

So what's Jesus talking about here when he says we must not judge? Well of course he is not saying we're not to judge in the sense of evaluate or discriminate or analyze or even criticize but he's saying we mustn't judge in the sense of condemning out of hand or denouncing or censoring or writing someone off.

It's the attitude of censoriousness towards others that he's condemning. John Stott puts it with great clarity as usual. The follower of Jesus he says is still a critic in the sense of using his powers of discernment but not a judge in the sense of being censorious.

The censorious critic is a fault finder who's negative and destructive towards other people. Enjoys actually seeking out their failings. He puts the worst possible construction on their motives and pours cold water on their schemes and is ungenerous towards their mistakes.

You see Jesus is not saying that we mustn't ever assess people critically. Of course we must do that. But he is saying we're not to judge them harshly. We're not to have a judgmental censorious attitude.

[24 : 12] And actually that will boil down won't it to the fact that we're to exhibit a true perspective of our own self as well.

And we're to be people who have a penitent attitude ourselves not a prideful attitude because it's that kind of attitude that is full of prejudice towards others. And kingdom people will exhibit that penitent attitude because they know themselves as well as others.

And they see themselves as well as others in the light of heaven. That is in the light of God's extraordinary mercy and grace in the face of sin. And so Jesus you see here he shows us both the wrong kind of judging the censorious judgmentalism we're to avoid but also reminds us that right judgments are often to be made with the gospel sight of heaven.

Verses one to four deal with the wrong judgments don't they? Judgments that betray mere earthly sightedness. See with the distorted vision of earthly sight that isn't enlightened by the grace of heaven.

And he's talking about the all too familiar hypocrisy that often is there in religion. The hypocrite verse three. He sees the speck in his brother's eye but not the log in his own eye because he's a self-justifying person.

[25 : 31] He's proud of his own morality of his own goodness. But his vision says Jesus is completely distorted. He has a bad eye. It's the eye he's talking about in verse 33 of chapter six.

He can't see anything clearly for the obvious reason that his own vision is blocked by an enormous great log. It's the utterly distorted vision of the self-righteous person that so quick to point out others'

faults and sins, to condemn them harshly, but utterly, utterly blind to any of our own faults. And I say our own because we are all often like that, aren't we? And Jesus says that is to view others and ourselves in fact with the blurred distorted vision of this fallen world and its sinfulness and its total blindness to the kingdom of God.

it's just self-justifying pride and hypocrisy. It's the world of the tabloid newspapers, isn't it? Full of that kind of judging all the time.

And of course the papers sell because we're full of that kind of judging all the time and that's what we like. We just choose our own particular political stripe. So the Daily Mail is full of the censure of the offended moralist against all sorts of things.

[26 : 45] This week it was outrage at prisoners being sent home all week and only going to prison at the weekends. Outrage! Well, fair enough maybe. And then the Guardian is full of outrage of a different kind.

The self-righteous left. So this week it was all full of outrage about Trident and the super-rich and all sorts of other things. And Jesus, you see, warns us that we're all like that at heart.

Even, verse 3, do you see, even within the church. He's talking there about the church, about condemning brothers and sisters in that censorious and self-righteous way. But that is not seeing with heavenly sight, says Jesus.

Indeed, that judgmental and self-righteous attitude betrays something in us that is dangerously lacking. The broken spirit of a humble, merciful spirit that shows that in fact we ourselves have received God's forgiving grace and that we ourselves are truly at peace with God and right with God.

Look at verse 2. For with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Do you see, that's just the same as what Jesus says in chapter 6, verse 14, that God forgives the sins of those who forgive others.

[28 : 04] In chapter 5, verse 7, where he says, blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy. Not that they earn God's forgiveness or mercy, but simply that someone who's unmerciful and unforgiving and judgmental and censorious towards others.

Well, they're betraying the fact, aren't they, that their heart has not been touched and changed themselves by the grace and the mercy and the generous judgment of heaven.

They're like that, they just can't be somebody, can they, who knows what really matters. That there's only one God who will judge every one of us. And that it's God's judgments that count and not ours.

And that's God's grace and mercy alone on which we depend. But we must need to be reminded of that in the church because Jesus is speaking to the church here, to his own disciples.

And the apostle Paul writes to the church in Rome, quoting Jesus' own words, doesn't he? Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Why do you despise your brother? For we'll all stand before the judgment seat of God.

[29 : 08] Each one of us will give an account of himself to God, not to one another. And that's the key to being able to make right judgments, the right judgments of true heavenly perception.

That's what verses 5 and 6 are speaking about, right judgments both within the church in verse 5 and outside the church in verse 6. You see, Jesus is being clear.

Not being wrongly judgmental doesn't mean to be soft, doesn't mean to be sentimental. There is a time to judge. There is a need to be discerning. And we do need a clear understanding and perception of sin when it's damaging the lives of brothers and sisters in the church.

If you've got a foreign body in your eye, even though it's a very small thing, it can cause a lot of problems. It needs help. But you see, we can only judge rightly. We can only bring help and healing if we are exercising true kingdom priorities and if we're seeing with true kingdom perspective.

Seeing others' sins from truly penitent hearts that have grasped that the grace and the mercy of heaven in the face of our sin is the only hope that we have.

[30 : 28] You see, we need above all, don't we, a clear perspective on our own sin and the forgiveness that we've known and what we've been blessed with in Christ. the perspective that knows that only one master will judge all and that in forgiving our sins, God's removed from our acquaint, not a speck, but as verse five says, a crushing weight of a massive log of sin.

My sin! Oh, the bliss of this glorious thought! My sin, not the part, but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more.

It's only when that's my song that I will sing, bless the Lord, O my soul, isn't it? It's only then that I'll be able to bless others and help others who are caught in sin and help restore them and help bring to them the clear eye away from that damaging splinter.

The brother with the splinter needs that splinter removed. But do you want to have eye surgery for a splinter from somebody who's got an enormous great log in their eye? What could be worse than your surgeon having that?

Well, I'll tell you what could be worse. A surgeon with a log in his eye who doesn't even know there's a log in his eye. That would be worse, wouldn't it? And that's the tragedy of the censorious critic, according to Jesus.

[31 : 47] And we can be like that. Condemning others for some particular weakness or lapse in their life. Maybe it's a sexual thing.

Often is. It's easy to condemn that, isn't it? Just because that particular opportunity has never come your way. Blind to the fact of how vulnerable and weak you would be in that and many other areas of life in those circumstances and perhaps if we had to deal with the terrible deprivations and difficulties and struggles that that person has that we know nothing about.

But Jesus says, no, not censoriousness, not hypocrisy like that among my people.

What is the mark of the truly spiritual? They're acutely aware, aren't they, of their own massive faults and failings. And that's what makes them able to help other people.

When somebody's caught in sin and struggling, Paul says to the Galatian church, you who are spiritual are to restore them in a spirit of gentleness, knowing that you keep a watch on yourself lest you too be tempted.

[33 : 05] You see, that's realism. When you see your own heart with heaven's sight and when you tremble at what you see, only then will you be able to measure not a harsh condemnation, but a heavenly comfort and a heavenly cure.

And that's exercising true kingdom priorities as far as our perception of others and their sin is concerned. But verse 6 makes clear that we must also at times make very clear judgments in terms of exercising heavenly discrimination among those outside the church.

Do not give to the dogs what is holy and do not throw your pearls before pigs lest they trample them underfoot and turn and attack you. Those are pretty harsh words, aren't they? But the same Jesus who spoke verse 1 spoke verse 6.

What he's saying is that there will be those who are persistent and vicious refusers of the precious treasure of the gospel, which is what in Matthew 13 he calls the pearl of great price.

There will be those who trample it underfoot like pigs. There will be those who like dogs devour holy things and then turn and attack the hand that fed them. It's the image that Peter picks up in his letter, 2 Peter 2, describing people who were once friendly to the gospel but have turned utterly and rabidly against God and therefore against all who are associated with Christ.

[34 : 33] And Jesus says there are extreme circumstances when we're to withdraw and not any longer squander God's gift in vain. We are not to cast the pearl of the gospel before swine.

And a few chapters on in chapter 10 of Matthew's gospel he says the same thing to the 12 when he sends them out on mission. If they will not listen ultimately you shake the dust of your feet against that town and you go elsewhere.

And that's what Paul the apostle did in Acts chapter 13. The Jews would not hear, would not receive the gospel so he shook the dust of his feet and went to the Gentiles. Again in Acts 18 and again in Acts chapter 28.

That's hard teaching but Jesus is plain. There's no room for sentimentalism in the Christian church when we're exercising these true kingdom priorities.

It was Spurgeon the Baptist preacher of the 19th century that said yes we are saints but we're not simpletons. And that does mean friends that for the sake of the gospel there may be times when we have to turn away and not cheapen the gospel by letting it be willfully trampled underfoot.

[35 : 46] John Calvin I think puts it well. He says it's not that we're to designate everyone who may be especially depraved or ungodly as pigs or dogs. He says we must present the doctrine of salvation indiscriminately to all.

Nevertheless he does acknowledge that there may be those who in time manifest such absolute contempt of God. that they seem to have decisively and defiantly refused every overture of grace and hardened themselves against it.

John Stott says can anything be more depraved than to mistake God's precious pearl for a thing of no worth and to actually trample it in the mud. So sometimes with great sadness we must withdraw from such.

We must take that precious pearl elsewhere to where it will be received. But you see we'll only be fit to make that kind of right judgment if first we have a right perception of sin in our own lives.

And if first we've grasped the wonder of grace for the huge log of sin that's in our own eye. Only if heaven's grace truly possesses our hearts and goes on possessing them will we be able to judge with heaven's sight and not earth.

[37 : 06] will we be able to judge with God's sight with heavenly perception in matters of sin and stumbling within the church and in matters of rejection outside the church.

And that brings us to this last paragraph verses 7 to 12 you see which teach us that we need a heavenly perspective on persistence in the pursuit of such grace.

How are we to show such balance such judgments in life? And how are we to show such trust in God's provision for all of our needs without anxiety and fear? And how are we to have a right attitude to all of our life in our daily walk and in our daily worship?

The answer is very simple. We're to ask God and keep on asking God. We need a true kingdom perspective on persistence in prayer that truly understands our relationship with the God of all grace.

And a right perspective like that understands three things about grace. First verse 7 grace is needed and needed again and again so that we keep on asking for it.

[38 : 13] Grace is needed not only to enter the kingdom but it's needed every step of the way. Only by grace can we enter and only by grace can we stand we sing. We come into God's kingdom poor in spirit don't we?

Hungering, thirsting after righteousness and we are filled by the sheer grace of God. But that's how it goes on. We need the every hour most gracious Lord.

And so Jesus says we're to ask, we're to seek, we're to knock, we're to go on asking and seeking and knocking day after day. The true Christian believer knows that. We know ourselves.

We know we need daily grace from God. And so we pursue it. We're persistent. We ask again and again. Because secondly we also know don't we that grace is promised and grace will be provided. Verse 8. For everyone who asks receives and the one who seeks finds and to the one who knocks it will be open. You see a true kingdom perspective knows the master as a father.

[39 : 19] He's not a tyrant who will beat us and flog us and scorn us and give us serpents. He's not even just like an earthly parent. Verse 11 that wants to give good things but still so often makes mistakes.

And my goodness don't we as parents know that. He is our heavenly father says Jesus. He's extravagant. He's the father of mercies and the God of all grace.

He loves to give grace to those who ask. That's why we can sing. Come my soul thy soup prepared. Jesus loves to answer prayer. For his grace and power as such none can ever ask too much.

That's why we can sing. He gives more grace as the burdens grow greater. He gives, he gives, he gives again. Look at verse 11. How much more will your father who is in heaven give to those who ask?

And the true disciple knows that. So we ask and we go on asking. We're persistent and pursuing God. It's just another way of saying that we love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength that Jesus tells us is the greatest commandment of the law.

[40 : 37] And that's why you see verse 12 follows on directly here with this section. It shouldn't be in a different paragraph like our Bibles has it. As I said, it brackets the whole Sermon on the Mount between there and chapter 5 verse 17 because both speak of fulfilling the law and the prophets.

And it's the natural conclusion because it's that attitude that pursues God and his grace with whole hearted ongoing perseverance.

It's that attitude which alone will flow out persistently into all our relationships with men and women in this world wherever we encounter them throughout our whole lives.

See, when we live with heavenly sight we know ourselves. And so we know that grace is needed constantly. And we know the Lord so we know that grace is provided always.

And so we also know thirdly, don't we, that grace by its nature overflows. It overflows through us and into this world. Wholehearted love of God that totally possesses us always, always leads if it's

real, to persevering love of our neighbor.

[41 : 48] forever. It's what the Bible teaches. It's the other half of the great commandment. And that's why Jesus has it right here in verse 12 in the words of the golden rule. Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them.

For this is the law and the prophets. this is the law and the prophets fulfilled. Because this is the true overflow from hearts that are filled with the light and life of heaven's kingdom.

And heaven's kingdom is the place where God's holy law is embodied forever and rules in glorious might. You see how amazingly positive verse 12 is?

It's not negative. It's not just don't do to others what you don't want others to do to you. Many philosophies and religions would espouse that. It's positive do.

And he means do with limitless expansive persistent attitude of heart that comes from the perfect father in heaven. That's why it begins with so.

[42 : 50] It's joined to verse 11. Your father in heaven gives abundantly. He gives good things above and beyond more than you can imagine so you likewise give to others.

Whatever you can imagine whatever you can imagine that you want them to think about you or do for you or do to you. My goodness that's pretty limitless. I can think of a lot of things that I would like people to say to me and do for me and do with me.

But that's living with God in your heart. That's living with heaven in your heart where generous grace overflows with abundance. And that's the life says Jesus.

That's the manners of true Christianity. Won't that be noted and noticed? Won't that shine as a light before human beings pointing them to our father in heaven?

Opening their hearts opening their ears to hear of the Lord Jesus Christ who reveals to us the father in heaven? It's a very clear instruction isn't it from our Lord Jesus Christ?

[44 : 02] This is the way he says this is the only way for my kingdom people. Very clear instruction but it's very exposing too isn't it?

Probes us. Asks us the question is your heart really in heaven and mine? This is the evidence from our piety from our priorities in our daily life does it really speak of true kingdom perspective heavenly sight?

Does our daily worship does our daily walk really show that to others? Perhaps as we've listened to the Lord Jesus we've been made more conscious than ever of our great need for his grace.

We have the answer don't we? It's right there in verse 7 ask seek knock be persistent and everyone who asks like that will receive grace for him.

The door of heaven will be open to us and it will fill us and flood us with heavenly light and heavenly sight that we might live for him day after day after day.

[45 : 21] let's pray. Ask and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find. Knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives and the one who seeks finds and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

Which of you if his son asks him for bread will give him a stone or for a fish will give him a serpent?

If you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children how much more will your heavenly father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him.

So whatever you wish that others would do to you do also to them for this is the law and the prophets.

Heavenly father open our hearts we pray and open our eyes to live with heaven's sight knowing your greatness and wise and perfect judgments knowing also your gracious goodness that has judged us so mercifully and so wonderfully in Jesus Christ.

So we follow you every step of our earthly path until the light and the glory of heaven envelop us at last and we shall truly be all that you have called us to be but till that day walk with us and grant us your grace we pray for we ask it in Jesus name Amen to when p we road to be we show the fear in the road so