

Seek First the Kingdom of God

Michael Heiss—July 15, 2023

As Christians we have been given, by the Savior, Jesus the Christ, the most important goal of all. That is to seek the Kingdom. The whole purpose of God is to establish His Kingdom, carrying out His directives for all eternity!

I'm going to address two Scriptures right now to show where God gave us that command. Then, if I can, I would like to turn it around a little and view it from an angle that we maybe don't always look at.

Matthew 6:33: "But *as for you*, **seek first the Kingdom of God...**"—*all important!*

Luke 14 is the section where we find *counting the cost!*

Luke 14:26: "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."

Jesus didn't mean to literally *hate!* It's a *love less by comparison!* It means **to put Him first!** Or seek the Kingdom *first!*

So, we can play around with that and say, 'If anyone wants to seek the Kingdom He must put aside *father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters and his own life or he will not see the Kingdom! He will not get it!*

Verse 33: "In the same way also, each one of you who **does not forsake all that he possesses cannot be My disciple.**"

- He is going to be the King of the Kingdom
- He is the Door by which we get to the Father

That means that ***unless we put Him first we don't get the Kingdom!***

I would like to now turn it around if I could. When Jesus asked us to give up everything, in reality He's asking us to give nothing that He and the Father have not originally done.

- What did They do?
- How did They seek the Kingdom first?

We're going back to the beginning! And I mean *the beginning where the existed two glorious Beings, and that was just about all!* Here is the real beginning: We have God and the Logos:

John 1:1: "In *the beginning* was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and the Word was God. He was in *the beginning* with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him"

(vs 1-3).

So, the Word did it all! Then these two beings—two of them—came up with the most audacious plan you could possibly imagine! It was a big one. When God dreams, He dreams BIG! His goals are BIG! They wanted, as a goal, to create a vast universe with hundreds of billions of stars, galaxies, planets, ***and then create a Divine Family!*** Their own Family, with equals to carry out the directives of Father, Son—God and the Logos.

That was going to take a heap of doing. That was going to take a lot of planning. How do you do that? *They were going created everything:*

- plan it
- get it all lined up
- make sure it could support life

As they were going through Their plan, whether at very beginning or toward the end of it, or middle of it, who knows?

The thought that these humanoids—because that's what they're going to be—you and me—all of us are going to be given *free moral agency!* God did not want automatons or robots. He could make them by the 'gazillions'! Of what use were they to Him? *He wanted beings who could carry out His instructions:*

- see what the difficulty was
- know what needed to be done
- then go about doing it

to the interest of the Kingdom! But in so doing, that could present a problem.

- What if they turned on God?
- What if they disobeyed Him?
- What if they did not live up to His standards?

They had to come up with a contingency operation. There always was *one plan*, Plan A! There was no Plan B or C, but they had to come up with a contingency operation in case these human beings 'fell off the wagon.' They did, and most likely God and the Son knew they would do it!

God is a God of law and order! If you violate His Law, that is considered *sin!* We know that:

1-John 3:4: "Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, **for sin is lawlessness**"—*the transgression of the Law!*

The result of that the Apostle Paul explained:

Romans 6:23: “**For the wages of sin is death...**”

Sin is a crime, a felony! It has to be taken care of. A penalty must be paid, and that penalty was death. How are they going to do this? They realized the one of Them would have to come down in the form of a human being, shed His blood, ***which would be worth more than all the lives, all the sin, of all the people for all time!***

He had to do it, or else no Kingdom! Talk about counting the cost! Talk about seeking the Kingdom! That’s what They would have to do. So, They went about doing it!

The Son did come down! How long was this plan in the operational stage? And the planning stage, as well?

Revelation 13:8: “And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb **slain from the foundation of the world.**”

How long has that been? *According to scientists, and their computations and calculations in measuring*, they come up with a figure close to 13.8242-billion years for the emergence of the universe, and 4.5 billion for the moon. How accurate they are, who knows for sure? *But it’s long time!* They had that in mind back then.

Paul said to Titus; Titus 1:2: “In the hope of eternal life, which God Who cannot lie **promised before the ages of time.**”

That’s before the universe was even created, because there is no time without heavenly bodies. You know, the moon revolves around the Earth, a day; the Earth revolves around the sun, a year. This was before then! That’s how far back They were planning this. You want to talk about long-range planning, that’s it!

Ephesians 1:4: “According as He has personally chosen us for Himself **before the foundation of the world...**” *This was a long time in planning!*

1-Peter 1:18: “Knowing that you were not redeemed by corruptible things, by silver or gold, from your futile way of living...”

Verse 20: “**Who [Jesus] truly was foreknown before the foundation of the world...**” *Again, long time planning!*

We need to realize that the death of Jesus was a ransom! That’s right, a ransom! There are two aspects to the ransom.

We’ll go to Matt. 20 and we’ll find that this is spoken twice, recorded twice: one in Matt. and

one in Mark. We’ll read the one in Matt. knowing that the one in Mark is actually the same.

Matthew 20:28: “Just as the Son of man did not come to be served... [He didn’t come to be waited upon] ...**but to serve...**”

He was going to give His life, otherwise no Kingdom. They were faced with that, and They knew that from the very beginning!

“...**but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many**” (v 28). (tie in Mark 10:45).

The Greek word here for *ransom* is ‘lutron’—it’s taken from the Hebrew word ‘kopher’; let’s look at that word in:

Isaiah 43:3: “For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I gave Egypt for your **ransom...**”

This word has the root letters of ‘k, p, r’—atonement, a covering! So, the ransom that God paid for the love of His Son did two things:

1. it paid for the sin
2. it covered that sin so God doesn’t have to see it

In Gen. 6:14 God is instructing Noah about building the ark and He says **to cover it with pitch.** That Hebrew word is ‘kaphar’—*to cover*, and that’s what happened!

Jesus came to die as a ransom. He didn’t really want to die, but He had to. Father and Son knew They had to do it **IF** They wanted the Kingdom. **Do we want the Kingdom as much as They want it? Let’s see!**

Luke 22—this is after the supper, and they were going out and Jesus was about to be arrested by the Romans, and look at what He said:

Luke 22:42: “Saying, ‘Father, if You are willing to take away this cup from Me... [He stops immediately; He didn’t really want to die as a human] ...nevertheless, not My will, but Your *will* be done.’”

The will of the Father was indeed to have Him be a sacrifice so the two of Them could have Their Kingdom.

Hebrews 10:7: “Then said I, ‘Lo, I come (*as it is written of Me in the Scroll of the Book*) to do Your will, O God.’” ***He came to die, to do the will of the Father!***

We see Jesus as a human in John 12, knowing the time is short.

John 12:27: “Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour?”

But for this very purpose I have come to this hour.

He knew that He came to die as a human in an excruciating painful experience, but He had to do it for us! If He didn't do it, there would be no Kingdom!

- Did They seek the Kingdom? *Oh, yes They did!*
- Did They sacrifice just about everything? *Yes, They did!*

Matt. 26^[transcriber's correction]—this is where one of the disciples cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. Jesus said:

Matthew 26:53^[transcriber's correction]: “Don't you realize that I have the power to call upon the Father at this time, and He will furnish Me with more than twelve legions of angels?”

That's a lot of angels! He's being more literal. Remember that in those days a legion was 5,000, each Roman legion consisted of 5,000 troops. I was never one very well vested in high math, but even I could figure this out: 12 legions, 5,000 each; that's 60,000 angels. That's a lot of angel power! But look what Jesus said:

Verse 54: “But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled? For this is ordained to be.” *So, Jesus never asked for those angels!*

Both were focused on the Kingdom; must seek the Kingdom! Michael probably was ready. Michael means *who is like God!*

Revelation 12:7^[transcriber's correction]: “And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels warred against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels warred. But they did not prevail, neither was their place found any more in heaven” (vs 7-8). *Michael was the warring angel!*

He was ready, but the Father never gave the nod. He never gave permission. Why? *Because we must seek the Kingdom!*

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world... [He so loved these people] that He gave His only Begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life.”

Jesus said, ‘Let there be light...’ the Lord who created this whole universe as the Logos, the Word! Look at what He said to the disciples and to us, and this is enough to just let you shake your head in love and in comparison.

Matthew 12:46: “But while He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, *His* mother and His brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak with Him.”

Verse 48: “But He answered *and* said to him, ‘Who is My mother? And who are My brothers?’ And stretching out His hand to His disciples, He said, ‘Behold, My mother and My brothers. **For whoever shall do the will of My Father, Who is in heaven, that one is My brother and sister and mother**” (vs 48-50)—*equal!*

He's the Creator, the One in Gen. 2:7 Who came down and formed, fashioned, molded the man, and breathed into his nostrils and the person became a living soul, a being.

Yet, that awesome God says, ‘You're My equals, I love you, you're My brethren.’ That's the goal, that's the Divine Family and what the Father thought.

I call Matt. 13 the parabolic chapter because it has so many parables in it; one after another.

Matthew 13:44: “Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to treasure hidden in a field; which when a man finds, he conceals, and for the joy of *finding* it, goes and sells everything that he has, and buys that field. Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a merchant seeking beautiful pearls; who, after finding one very precious pearl, went and sold everything that he had, and bought it” (vs 44-46).

- Who is the man? *The Father! God the Father is being pictured as the man who saw the treasure of the field!*
- What constitutes the pearl, the treasure? *God thinks of us as treasure! He wants us and He will have us!*

Verse 46: “...went and sold everything that he had, and bought it”

This is a parable, but in reality the Father sold—gave away—everything that He had, the most prized asset that He had, the most beloved individual, the personage, that He ever knew: *the Son!* He gave everything for us and the Kingdom! The Son gave His life for the Kingdom!

When they say what Jesus said, ‘you must give up father, mother, sister, brother, and even your own life. He's asking us to do nothing that He has not already done. It's almost mind-boggling to think that, but it's true.

Jesus was the ransom! And that ransom was used to buy us so we can be part of that Family!

Malachi 3:17: “‘And they shall be Mine,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘in the day that I will make up My own special jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.’”

We are those jewels; ***He treasures us!*** Can

we understand that? Sometimes I have a hard time! He treasures us, do we treasure Him as much as He treasures us? That's a lot! He wants us, He will have us and He sacrificed everything! Look at how He's pictured; Jesus mentioned it in Luke 12. He's describing the Father.

Luke 12:32—*Jesus talking to His disciples:* “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father delights in giving you the Kingdom.”

He delights in giving it to us. He wants to give it to us. He takes great joy and pleasure in thinking, dreaming of the day when we will all be together, one glorious Family!

Now let's look at something that every time I think about it, it blows my mind. It's hard to grasp:

John 17:20—*Jesus talking to His disciples:* “I do not pray for these only, but also for those who shall believe in Me through their word.”

- Ever feel down trodden?
- Ever wonder ‘am I good enough’?
- Is the Father really going to help me?
- Am I really going to be able to overcome?
- Will He really give me enough of His Spirit?

Jesus already prayed for us; He prayed on our behalf! If there's anyone who the Father listens to and hears intently, it is the Son!

Every time we pray, the Father harkens back to the prayer of the Son. It wouldn't do any harm for us to mention that to the Father: ‘As Your Son promised, please...’ and go on with our prayer.

Verse 21 ‘takes the cake’ as we say; Jesus is praying; read it and drink in!

Verse 21: “That they all may be one, even as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You... [all of us together as one and the Father and the Son together as one] ...**that they also may be one in Us...**”

There's the Family all equal. No, not in authority. The Father will always be the Grand Patriarch of the clan. The risen Christ will always be the Chief Executive. But in composition, in essence and having glorious power to carry out whatever directives the Father and the Christ want us to do. *Paul in essence said the same thing:*

Romans 8:17: “Now, **if we are children, we are also heirs—truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ...**”

I do taxes and inheritances, because we have to figure out the taxes on inheritances, and so forth. A joint heir, I know what that is! Equal!

When Paul said that we're joint heirs with Christ it means that whatever He inherits, we inherit:

a glorious spirit body, at one with the Father

- equal in substance
- equal in goal
- equal in purpose

This reminds me of the old novel by Alexandra Dumas—The Three Musketeers—all for one, and one for all! That is what the Family of God is going to be like. One for all, and all for One: one equalized family!

In concluding, since They—Father and Son—sought the Kingdom with all Their might, counted the cost and paid the price! **Therefore, we must go and do likewise!**

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 6:33
- 2) Luke 14:26, 33
- 3) John 1:1-3
- 4) 1 John 3:4
- 5) Romans 6:23
- 6) Revelation 13:8
- 7) Titus 1:2
- 8) Ephesians 1:4
- 9) 1 Peter 1:18, 20
- 10) Matthew 20:28
- 11) Isaiah 43:3
- 12) Luke 22:42
- 13) Hebrews 10:7
- 14) John 12:27
- 15) Matthew 26:53-54
- 16) Revelation 12:7-8
- 17) John 3:16
- 18) Matthew 12:46, 48-50
- 19) Matthew 13:44-46
- 20) Malachi 3:17
- 21) Luke 12:32
- 22) John 17:20-21
- 23) Romans 8:17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Mark 10:45
- Genesis 6:14

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