

22 And He said to His disciples, "For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. 23 "For life is more than food, and the body than clothing. 24 "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; and they have no storeroom nor barn; and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds! 25 "And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life's span? 26 "If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why are you anxious about other matters? 27 "Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. 28 "But if God so arrays the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you, O men of little faith! 29 "And do not seek what you shall eat, and what you shall drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 "For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. 31 "But seek for His kingdom, and these things shall be added to you. 32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. 33 "Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, nor moth destroys. 34 "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

We find ourselves this morning in the midst, the middle of a sermon that Jesus is giving to a huge multitude of people. There are 10's of thousands listening to Him preach this day.

He is nearing the end of His earthly ministry. The cross looms not far off now. And Jesus is preaching of a parallel world in a way. He's calling for people to leave this present world behind, in a sense, and to come away with Him to a new and different world. A world unspoiled by sin and Satan and the demons.

He entered His earthly ministry preaching of a kingdom, and here at the end of His earthly ministry He is still preaching of a kingdom.

And packed within that word kingdom is the secret of what He is talking

about in this sermon. Authority to reign. Kingdom. Two kingdoms that are at war with each other.

The kingdom that we are born into is the result of original sin that has spoiled God's creation in regards to life and fellowship with Him. Sin has separated us from God. We are dead to Him, spiritually, and He is removed from us, because we are unclean. Vile, filthy detestable. Spiritually dead.

Jesus comes preaching of an authority to reign that is diametrically opposed to everything we are born into that is natural in this world.

We have carved out a living, an association with this fallen world that is made up of relationships with loved ones, work, comfort, food, sleep, dwellings, our clothes, our different methods of transport, everything that combines to give us life and comfort and place in whatever culture we find ourselves within the fallen world that is ruled by Satan.

That is true in some fashion of every person in every place that dwells on this planet. Poverty, servitude, slavery, racial conflict, ethnic cleansing, slavery to satanic religions, all of it contained within the authority to reign, the kingdom of this world which is ruled by the god of this world, Satan.

Whether in ease, in America or in desperate homeless filth of ethnic groups forced to flee places that are intent on killing them, and every situation in between, all of it is the kingdom of this world, the authority to reign of Satan.

And Jesus has come with a message. The first recorded words we have of His declarative preaching is; The kingdom of God, the kingdom of Heaven, as opposed to the kingdom of this world ruled by Satan, is at hand. Available.

Jesus is calling people to repent. To change direction. To come out of the kingdom, the authority of Satan, and to come into His kingdom, His authority to reign. Come out of this fallen world and belong to God. Your sins will be forgiven. Your rebellion against God done in ignorance and spiritual death will be removed. Come out of this world, come to Jesus.

One of the most offensive and blasphemous phrases of our current generation that curdles my blood is when people flippantly use the phrase and use it in derision, "*have a come to Jesus moment.*"

That satanic concoction is designed by Satan as a blasphemous attempt to make what Jesus came preaching and teaching out to be something that fools and idiots experience like a mist that is there and then is gone. Come to Jesus is what fools do. So says our culture as they blithely march to Satan's drum.

What could be more ridiculous than whatever it is someone is talking about that is relegated as a come to Jesus type moment. A fools errand of passion. Gone again in a moment. A much ado about nothing.

That blasphemy singly strikes at the very purpose and preaching of Jesus to a lost world. Because He spent His ministry offering an opportunity to come out of this condemned world into a world that is under the authority to reign of God.

God is furious with this planet. This world is condemned and judgement like a tidal wave is just off shore about to make landfall and destroy this place of rebellion and sin.

Jesus comes preaching, you can come out of this condemned world to safety and life and all of the pleasures of heaven and fellowship with the Creator, but you have to do exactly that. Leave this world behind.

That's the context for the rest of this passage that we began last week. And Jesus argument is very simple. You have to dis-engage yourself from all of the loves and cares of this world that would keep you in it, and follow Him. You have to be convinced that leaving this world behind, whatever that cost might be, is better, is worth it, to come away from the condemned and belong to the God who you were made to worship and bring glory to.

A million times better. Whatever the cost is, whatever it is you have to leave

behind in this world in order to belong to Him, pay it. Like the guy who finds the treasure in the field, the treasure of escaping sin and condemnation and having Jesus instead, for eternity, and he goes and sells everything else, all of this world's stuff that was holding him here, in order to have that better treasure, which is Jesus. Sins forgiven. I own Him and He owns me.

That's what this sermon is about. Leaving the cares of this world behind in order to have Jesus. What would I eat? What would I wear? How would I live? And ultimately how important are any of those things or all of those things compared to an eternity with Christ.

27 "Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. 28 "But if God so arrays the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you, O men of little faith!

We have a disconnect with this argument Jesus is making. Our clothing is not a problem for us. Even the poorest of us. No one in USA is worried about what they're going to put on their bodies for a covering. That makes this argument, and likewise the one about daily food, so disconnected to us as to be of little importance.

Jesus is telling me not to worry about what I'll put on. No problem, I can check that off my list. Worse case scenario, I'll go to the goodwill store. Something to cover myself with is not an item I spend any amount of time worrying about.

We attempt to use the historical - grammatical method of biblical interpretation in our expositional attempts. There is no difficult grammar to understand here. But there is a historical context that may be helpful.

It wasn't always the 21st century. I know that's a difficult concept for young people with I-phones. There was a time, not so very long ago, when the main business of daily living, of eeking out an existence, was what will I eat, and

what will I wear.

That was a daily battle. Cloth and coverings were valuable and didn't last all that long. Cloaks and tunics had to be woven and they simply didn't last very long, you'd need another one. And daily food wasn't a matter of going to the grocery store. Food and clothing were items that took up perhaps 70% of the daily cares of living. With wives and children, it was multiplied.

And it never goes away. As long as you're alive, the problem of a next meal, and of replacement bodily coverings was a big nut to crack for people in this period of history. We might laugh at that now. Jesus is addressing the main concern of a huge allotment of what people are concerned with daily. What will I wear. What will I eat.

So the grammatico-historical method is helpful. Not so important to us perhaps, but huge to the folks he's talking to. Come out of this world and follow me. What would that look like? How would I live?

27 "Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. 28 "But if God so arrays the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you, O men of little faith!

Jesus argument about how God clothes the lilies of the field, more glorious than Solomon on his best day, is not so much about God's provision, which always surprises us with His generosity, as it is about the brevity of both the lilies and also of us on this earth and in this timeframe we find ourselves.

The lilies are gone overnight. They vanish. The dead clippings of once live plants were used in Israel for temperature control on their ovens they cooked with. If the women were baking bread, they were adept at how much grass to throw into the furnace almost to the degree.

We set our dial to 400. Those women knew exactly how to keep their oven at

just the correct temperature by how much grass they would throw into the fire.

Jesus point is simple. That grass was glorious and green a week ago. Now it's thrown into a furnace for it's final disposition. It becomes ash and smoke and no one remembers it's brief beauty.

That's His argument. You're not going to follow me because of the worries of this world, and like that grass, you are here for a brief moment, and then forgotten. But your eternal disposition is forever.

You've got 5 minutes in this life to make the right choice, to leave this temporary and condemned world behind and follow Jesus, no matter what the cost. Your moment here, compared to eternity, is like the grass that was glorious on the hillsides, for a moment, a week or maybe two if the temperature is fair and some cooling rains come. But then inevitably, those green blades of grass will die, turn brown, vanish forever in the wind, they are gone from their place and not remembered.

Why am I perhaps the only christian on my street. If I walked up and down the street and got to the bottom of every single person's reasons why they did not give Jesus a moments thought, I think it would be mostly the same.

I simply don't believe. And if I did believe, if somehow you convinced me, it would cause an inconvenient loss of freedom to me. I like drinking beer and watching football on Sunday. I have no need for Jesus. In fact He would inconvenience me. He would demand some claim on me. Why would I do that?

Well, because in 5 minutes this planet is going to be enveloped in flames of judgement. Your memory here is going to be somewhere on the scale of the blade of grass that went into a furnace. And you will be cast into outer darkness of flaming hell. For starters.

And further, you are missing out on a 3rd dimension of life. You are body and soul. But your spirit, which was designed by God to dwell with His Spirit in

glorious fellowship, is dead.

If you will come out of this condemned world and give your life to Jesus, He will quicken your dead spirit to life, with His Holy Spirit, and you will enter into a friendship and fellowship with God the Father, and Christ His Son, by His Holy Spirit that will be of more value to you than your very life.

29 "And do not seek what you shall eat, and what you shall drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 "For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things.

Christ's followers live on a different plane than the nations of the world. The world that surrounds us worries about lots of things. We've got so much to worry about these days that we have to have news shows on every network that are 24-7 never stop talk about what's going on.

I was listening to KGFN, the Goldfield station and they started in on some boring segment advertising for more money so I switched to KNPR and it took about 2 minutes of that stuff before I was shouting at the dashboard and reaching for the off button.

On and on and on ad infinitum ad nauseum. All of these \$5 journalists that are going to get the next Nobel prize with their soundbite stories about how somebody someplace is suffering because of Covid 19 blah blah blah.

Multiply that by the "nations". Non stop talk about what's going on. None of it matters. Jesus says; you're not on that plane where the rest of the world is at. Non stop concern and news about non stop problems and wars and starvations and plagues and concerns and on and on and on.

Jesus says, you're not part of that world if you belong to me. Stop worrying. I said it over and over last week. Relax! Jesus says, if you belong to me, relax. The nations are all tied up in knots about all of this stuff, but you don't need to worry.

Pam's brother Fred was joking with her in a text last week. He said you guys are 0 for 2. You've got plagues **and** earthquakes.

Your heavenly Father cares about you. He knows what you need. He supplies our needs. He loves us and cares for us. We're different than the rest of the world with all of it's cares and concerns. We cast our cares and concerns on Him. 1 Peter 5:7 *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

30 *“For all these things the nations of the world **eagerly seek**; but your Father knows that you need these things.*

31 *“But **seek** for His kingdom, and these things shall be added to you.*

We have more important stuff to do than worry about this world and it's cares. Those of us who belong to Jesus, who have transferred our lives out of this world and into His kingdom and belong to Him, we have other concerns that are not of this world.

The rest of the world is doing 24-7 news cycles on it's cares and concerns, but our hearts are not of this world, and our concerns are different if we belong to Him.

Jesus employs an interesting play with the same root word for **seek** in this command to those who belong to Him. The world seeks. But we seek.

The kosmos, the world systems, the nations, everybody on earth with the single exclusion of those who belong to Christ. They all seek for stuff. Whatever it is, it doesn't matter. Clothes. Food. Wealth. Success. Popularity. Whatever.

That word seek, in vs 30 is verb, present indicative active 3rd person plural. Everybody in every place is doing this thing. Seeking seeking seeking. Rich people in America finally get to the end of all possible seeking and they're still empty and they go to Tibet or some place and sit in the dirt with some Swami. They're still seeking! And not finding.

But by contrast, Jesus says to those who have come out of this world and have given themselves to belong to Him, He says, we don't waste time seeking that which doesn't satisfy.

He says, you, you who belong to me, seek the Kingdom. What does that mean. We have Him. We possess Him. And what we seek is more of Him. He's given us the Holy Spirit, our downpayment, our promise of greater things to come. But while we're still in this world, we seek for more and more of Him. His presence. His fellowship. His service.

And the starting, (and often ending place for that, since it is inexhaustable) is His revealed Word.

Seeking His Kingdom is essentially seeking less of this world and more of His authority to reign. Paul said to the Philippians, *that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings.*

There's a life long incrementalism in those words. At first, when we've come to know Jesus through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, an intimate relationship, we just want to know Him better.

Then as we mature in Christ, we long to see His power working in us as we serve Him. And that always leads to conflict with this current world, so the fellowship of His suffering is the natural outworking of His power working in us in combat against this world where Satan rules.

We see that same progression of growth in the kingdom in the apostle John's words in 1 John 2. Listen to the natural incrementalism of growth in Christ's kingdom in John's words; Little children, young men, fathers, in Christ.

12 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. 13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know

the Father. 14 I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

In the kingdom of Christ, those who belong to Him, who have been left in this world until He returns, we see this natural progression. Little children. New christians. Their sins are forgiven them. They know God, intimately. That's enough for them. It's all brand new. It's all about discovery. We want to know everything about Him. We want to know Him more deeply.

Then we see young men. Kingdom young men. And for these folks, they've grown up to some maturity in the Kingdom and both times, they are doing battle with the enemy, they are overcoming satanic powers of this world. Strong in Christ. Weilding the spiritual power that He supplies in the war against the god of this world. The word of God dwells in them. They are steeped in this book.

And then finally, the Fathers. And these men know God at a different depth than the little children in Christ. They know Him who has been from the beginning. Eternity has entered into their knowing after a lifetime of doing battle with Him at their sides. Some day if I'm brave we might do well to unpack John's letters together in depth.

Jesus says Seek the kingdom and all of this non important stuff will be added unto you. The depth and breadth of His authority to reign in this world that is at war with Him and those who belong to Him overshadows all the non-important stuff. Food, clothing, whatever else. We've got bigger fish to fry. There's a war against God in this world.

When soldiers are on the front lines fighting a war, they don't worry about food and clothes. That stuff gets supplied. Jesus says, you get in the fight. You'll have other stuff to think about than food and clothes and stuff of this world. That becomes non-important.

30 “For all these things the nations of the world **eagerly seek**; but your Father knows that you need these things.

31 “But **seek** for His kingdom, and these things shall be added to you.

Those words, *seek for His kingdom* are just loaded. His kingdom is at war with this world. He supplies the food and the clothes and the armor and the necessary rack to sleep in. That stuff is necessary, but unimportant in the battle.

These folks He's talking to, the multitude, He's trying to get them to come into His kingdom, to come out of this world and join Him in His authority to reign. And fear of making that leap from one world into the other is a valid concern.

Leaving your countrymen behind and joining an opposing force is a big deal. There is fear. And Jesus never denies that coming to Him will in many cases be very costly. Family may divorce you. You'll be un-synagogued. Shunned by your former friends. Booted out of your culture, your society.

Sure Jesus, I could follow you, and become a virtual leper to my friends and family and countrymen. Who does that? Cast out like a leper. Cast out of this world. Become an enemy of this world. Who does that? And why?

Answer: No one does that except for the ones who's eyes and hearts are quickened to see Jesus, and suddenly He is the treasure in the field more valuable than anything else on earth. Suddenly He is the pearl better and rarer than any other pearl anywhere, so you sell everything to buy that pearl. You sell everything you own in this world to buy the field where the treasure it.

The church in 2020 is all about making Jesus somehow palatable to this culture in this world. Jesus is actually cool. Jesus is hip man. Jesus is a democratic socialist. Jesus never said any of the stuff in the ancient book that outlaws sin. He digs sinners.

Let me introduce you to the real Jesus. Jesus is a slave owner. And if you want to be a christian, you're the slave. Why would anyone do that?? The

answer is in the next verse.

32 *“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.*

Little flock?? I thought there were multiples of 10,000's listening. There were. But within that number, the ones who actually belong to Him is a tiny number. After He ascended into heaven we see a "little flock" huddled together waiting for the Holy Spirit to descend. 120 people.

Sadly, I believe that within organized evangelicalism and then even further out, mainline denominationalism and pentacostalism, and beyond that the Roman church and the cults. All of those groups get lumped together by groups like Gallup and Pew research and other number crunchers that try to come up with groups.

You ask google how many people in the world. 7.8 billion. Then you ask what percentage of those 7.8 billion are christians. 31.4% That means there are 650 christians hiding out right here in Tonopah.

How many of the "christians" (in scare quotes) are leaving in the rapture and going to heaven. Well, out of the 10's of thousands Jesus was talking to, it was a *little flock*. Out of 650 people who would identify on some Pew research poll in Tonopah as christian, a couple of dozen go to church? Really? That sounds like the same problem Jesus was having. He has a little flock that are His in these 10's of thousands who are in the sound of His voice on this day. No surprises.

32 *“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.*

This is a startling verse, really. Look again at the little flock. I see election all over this verse. A multitude, and within the multitude a little flock. And why are they there? Why did they recognise the treasure? Why did they realize that Jesus was a pearl far outweighing any other pearl? *your Father has*

chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.

The kingdom of God, the authority to reign of God, is going to win the battle to take back the authority to reign from the god of this world, satan, and God, through His warrior Son, Jesus, is going to eliminate and judge evil and evil rebellers, all enemies, eliminated.

Then He sets up His throne in Jerusalem and rules here for 1000 years. But not alone. This verse says we are also heirs to the kingdom. Our Father has elected to gladly give US the kingdom. We will rule and reign with Jesus.

Right now, if we understood the odds against us, it's scary to separate yourself from this world and belong to Jesus. Massively outnumbered. We become enemies of this world. But Jesus tells His little flock; *“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.*

Don't be afraid. Ultimately, we win. Jesus wins, and we are His. We are in Him. The cost may be high now, but ultimately, the spoils of victory are forever, in His kingdom, with Him.

So then, how do we live if we believe those truths? Do we grasp all we can get in this world? Do we log onto the stock market every day and rejoice over our gains and weep over our losses . . . in this current world.

No. Everything here is going up in flames in about 5 minutes. We hold onto the things of this world, loosely. In fact the best investment you can make in this world, is to buy stuff for the next one.

33 “Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, nor moth destroys. 34 “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

We're still picking up large cartons of mail that come to my Mom's box. Need to get that fixed. So the ladies will hand me those white spill-over tubs of

mail, addressed to mom. And a big percentage of it is from people that she gave money to. Causes she identified with. Animal mis-treatment and abuse. She gave those folks money.

And I used to argue with her. Mom, why are you wasting money investing in that? There's no treasure in heaven for giving money away to animal activists.

I'm a giant cheapskate. Huge. Money is hard to get. Nobody's giving that stuff away. So if any of it comes out of my tightly sealed purse, along with a few moths gasping for air, it better be to an investment that's going to count for eternity.

I don't give money to politicians! They steal it out of my wallet. Taxation. I'm forced at gunpoint to give those guys their money. Jesus said I have to. But there's no treasure in heaven from that.

Out at work there used to be a lot of pressure on the managers to compel us to give to the "united way" or some other worldly charity organization. The managers were rewarded on percentages. They were under pressure to get 100% of their people to donate to some charity. So I used to give \$1 a year to United way. That way my manager could add me to the column he wanted me in. I'll never see that dollar again, in heaven. It probably went to some abortion center.

I do give a little money to Daniel and Jhansi in India. I consider them a good investment that I'll see a return on in heaven. And I give money to an organization called The Master's Academy International. TMAI.org. Because they have schools all over the globe teaching men how to critically study and then exposit the scriptures. I think that's a good investment.

But fwiw, I consider very carefully giving money away unless I'm convinced it's being invested in heaven. Big old cheapskate. I want to see that money again, with interest, in heaven.

That's all Jesus is saying here. Don't waste your resources and money on this

world. It's going up in smoke. Soon. Invest your money and your resources, and your time and your talent, your spiritual gifts, in things that will have eternal consequence. Treasure in heaven. Nobody can steal it from the bank of heaven.

98 years ago, Helen Lemmel wrote these words to a hymn that we love;

Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in His wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace