

Priorities in 2019

- Based on a prayer meeting recorded
- **Acts 13:1-3 (ESV)** *(1) Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. (2) While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (3) Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.*

Together in prayer and worship

- We must spend time... together seeking the Lord
- They were together - and God moved
- We must come together to seek the Lord
- Currently meeting on Wednesday evenings for prayer

Ministry empowered by the Spirit

- From that gathering, the Spirit called Paul and Barnabas into the mission field
- In 2019 - every believer filled / refilled with the Holy Spirit
- In 2019 - every believer used for ministry in the gifts of the Spirit

Active in the great commission

- Outcome of that prayer meeting - Christianity spread among the entire region
- When the Spirit is using us, we will fulfill the great commission
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Series Review

- Started this series two weeks ago
- Looking at the priority of seeking first...
- **Matt 6:33 (ESV)** *(33) But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

Week 1 - The promise

The Problem

- Everyone has needs - we live in a physical, natural world
- Provision, healing, etc.
- Problem - we spend our times trying to solve these problems

God's promise

- God has promised to provide "all these things"
- We talked from Psalm 23 how the Lord knows what we need and like a shepherd provides

The process

- Seek - actively pursue in order to obtain

The priority

- First
- i.e. instead of chasing the other things

Week 2 - The practice: Seek first His Kingdom

What is the kingdom?

- Phrase used throughout Scripture, and depending on the time period may have different meanings
- Simply put: the Kingdom of God is where He reigns
- It's a place where creation is restored to the time before sin - first in the millennium, and then in a new heaven and new earth
- No more violence
- No more predator and prey (lion and lamb, child and cobra etc.)

- In **Revelation 21:3-4** (3) *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. (4) He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away*
- We talked about His Kingdom in our lives is *righteousness, joy and peace through the Holy Spirit* **Rev 14:17**

Why don't we seek it

- Since this kingdom is perfect, why don't we seek it
- Because we think we know better
- Because we want to be in control
- We are rebels who want to be king

How do we seek it

- Be reconciled to it
- In prayer (thy kingdom come)
- In the word - learning what the Lord wants
- In surrender - submitting to his kingdom decision by decision

Message

Introduction

The second thing we seek

- This morning I want to finish the series looking at the second thing we are to seek: *Seek first His righteousness*
- I've chosen to celebrate communion today, and I speak a lot about the righteousness of God each communion Sunday
- Today I want to look at His righteousness as something we seek

The universal need for righteousness

- Before I get into the message, I want to just remind us that everyone - every descendant of Adam was born needing righteousness
- **Not fair** early toddler's cry

- Intrinsic knowledge of right and wrong (separates us from animals, under attack as we are constantly told we are animals)
- Knowing that - there is right and wrong, we all know at some level we are not with
- This leads to a vacuum of righteousness that we seek to fill or satisfy
- Might ignore: eat, drink be merry.
- Might seek to establish our own by being religious, or karma, etc.
- See **Rom 10:3 (ESV)** (3) *For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.*
- Or we might seek His righteousness!

The provision of righteousness

- Today we celebrate His righteousness
- We know but let me remind you of some Scriptures
- **2 Cor 5:21 (ESV)** (21) *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
- **1 Peter 2:24 (ESV)** (24) *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.*
Rom 5:8 (ESV) (8) *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

What does it mean to seek his righteousness

- I want to use Paul's words in Philippians 3 to help us understand His righteousness
- We'll ask two questions: What does it mean to be righteous?, and How do I seek to obtain it?
- Find Philippians 3, and follow along with me as I read
- **Phili 3:8-14 (ESV)** (8) *Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ* (9) *and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith--* (10) *that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,* (11) *that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.* (12) *Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.* (13) *Brothers, I do not*

consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, (14) I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

What does it mean to be righteous?

To gain Christ and be found in him

- See again **Phili 3:8-9 (ESV)** (8) *Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ (9) and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith*
- Jesus is the prize, our pursuit
- Sin has separated us from God
- Jesus paid for our sin
- **Point:** Jesus should be our objective, our goal
- Consider: For the sake of Christ (v7), Knowing Christ Jesus (v8), To be found in Him (v9), That I might know Him (v10)
- Jesus took hold of me - now I take hold of him

What's the metric?

- So we need to talk for a minute about how righteousness is ultimately measured
- If I ask "are you righteous" - what would your answer be based on?
- Paul uses the metric of resurrection: See **Phili 3:10-11 (ESV)** *that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, (11) that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.*
- Our salvation is ultimately measured by our resurrection
- That's why we struggle with "seeking" his righteousness
- Until I am resurrection - I need to be seeking His righteousness

How do I seek His righteousness

Recognize I'm not

- Hardest thing
- We don't seek what we think we have (wallet illustration)
- Paul recognizes he's not righteous **Phili 3:12-13 (ESV)** (12) *Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. (13) Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,*
- He doesn't think he's already there
- See how God's used him, etc.
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Forget the past

- See again **Phili 3:13 (ESV)** (13) *Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,**
- We can't let the past keep us from seeking him

The bad

- Easy to see with our failures
- Enemy will always stop us with the past
- Remember Paul - persecuted and killed? Christians
- I don't know how bad you are - but probably not that bad!
- You're not too far gone, too far away
- Illustrate: **Lam 3:22-23 (ESV)** (22) *The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; (23) they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*

The good

- We aren't there yet
- It doesn't matter how much God has done in and through you
- This is much more of a problem for us!
- We don't seek what we think we need
- **Matt 7:22-23 (ESV)** (22) *On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' (23) And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*

Press on to obtain His future

- Straining towards something
- Seeking daily to be found in Christ
- forgetting the sin, not relying on the victory
- **Note:** Work “press on”, “straining forward”
- **Point:** Seeking His righteousness is the practice of being in Christ (and Christ in me through His Spirit) until he comes
- **Rom 8:11 (ESV)** *(11) If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.*
- **Heb 12:1-2 (ESV)** *(1) Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, (2) looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Conclusion

- So we come to the end of our study
- **Matt 6:33 (ESV)** *(33) But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*
- How will you prioritize your life going forward?

Communion

1 Cor 11:23-26 (ESV) *(23) For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, (24) and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." (25) In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." (26) For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*