



## Citizens & Strangers (Part 9) – The Remedy

Matt Chandler – April 29, 2018

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[Video]

**Female:** The kingdom of God is as multifaceted and mysterious as our Creator, a kingdom we only see now through a glass darkly. Though we can't picture it fully, God's kingdom is the story told in Scripture, from the garden to the city, and in the middle of the story God chose to reveal his kingdom in a new way.

The gospel is not only Jesus coming and dying to save us from our sins; it's also the story of God establishing his dwelling, dominion, and dynasty in the world. We live as both citizens and strangers, prisoners of hope in this shadow kingdom, all while knowing it's not our true home, that something better is coming, that God's perfect kingdom *is* coming.

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Good morning. It's good to see you. If you have your Bibles, let's go ahead and grab those. We're going to be in Matthew, chapter 6. We'll push on into Matthew, chapter 7, and then next week we'll conclude the Sermon on the Mount, which leaves us the week after that celebrating Pentecost. (My charismatics will love that.) Then from there we'll be on the ascension. We'll talk about the ascension of Jesus Christ and what that means for our lives.

Then this series on the kingdom of God, which started back in August, will be over and you'll remember it all forever, and it has been awesome. So you don't have to wonder or guess, let me just lay before you what I'm up to today. Here's what I'm after. I'm going to convince you that a life of pursuing wholehearted devotion to Jesus Christ... Every word has been picked. *A life of pursuing wholehearted devotion to Jesus Christ is better than all the riches and comfort of this present reality.* That's what I'm after.

So you don't have to wonder what I'm up to. I'm not trying to, with rhetorical device, do this or that. I am trying to convince you that a life spent pursuing wholehearted devotion to Jesus Christ is better than all the riches and comfort of this present world. Now, pursuing wholehearted devotion to Jesus Christ is a community project. It's not in the Bible, nor is it ever meant to be kind of an individual, "Thanks for that; I'll take that and run with it" kind of thing. It is forged, cultivated, and accomplished within the people of God with the Spirit of God indwelling them, surrendering to Christ as King.

Let me give you my outline, because some of you type A-ers are like, "Okay, I got the thesis. Where are you going?" You're my people. Let's talk about it. A community that is pursuing wholehearted devotion is *marked by faith and trust, cultivating our own souls, and living out the Golden Rule*. If right now you're like, "Where did you get that?" you are asking the right questions. Let's go to work. Matthew, chapter 6, starting in 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 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 he 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. Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 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, O 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 seek after all 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. 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 is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the 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 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.**

**Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 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."**

When we think about the law of God in the Bible... That's 613 commandments of "Do this" and "Don't do that." Can we just agree 613 is a lot? That's a lot of "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." Jesus in Matthew 5:17 said, "I have come to fulfill the law, not to abolish it," which means we have to do something with the "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not," because Jesus has not come to take them away.

You can't hear me say what I've been saying throughout this series, that what God is after is your heart, and translate that to "Then it doesn't matter how my external moral life looks." If that's how you're hearing that, you don't understand. One of the uses of the law is it serves as a kind of spiritual MRI. Are you tracking with me on that? It shows us where we're sick. What God is always after in the law is *you*, your whole heart.

Because we can't see it or we tend to justify it or don't see ourselves well, the law helps us see that we *are* sick and we *do* need a Savior and we *do* need God's help in our lives. This is what Jesus is doing in the Sermon on the Mount. He is radically and, I would even agree, violently going after our hearts. Do you remember our sentence from earlier? What does a community of wholehearted followers of Jesus Christ look like? We said they are *marked by faith and trust*.

Now, if you talk with Christians and go, "Do you have faith in God? Do you trust in God?" what's their answer? "Yeah. Oh, of course." So Jesus is like, "Okay. Well, let's stick you in the MRI and find out." What does he use to go after faith and trust? Money and anxiety. Everybody I know who is a Christian would say, "Oh, I trust the Lord. I have faith in the Lord." He's going to go, "Okay. Well, great. Then let's hop in the MRI and see whether or not that's true."

He starts with money. We're not passing a plate. You're fine. This isn't the beginning of a campaign or anything. I'm just reading the Bible. Jesus is going to start with money. Here's how Jesus handles money. He starts going, "Hey, don't bet on earth. There's too much you can't control." That's how he starts. What are we talking about here? We're talking about security. We're talking about peace. We're talking about comfort. We're talking about insulating our lives for maximum pleasure. He says, "Don't bet on earth. There's too much you don't control."

Everything he lists is out of the control of our hands. "Watch out for the moths. Watch out for rust. Watch out for thieves." Those can be literal or figurative. There can be a natural disaster that removes you from the way you make money at any moment, and it doesn't even need to be here in Dallas. It could be in another part of the world. The economies of the world are so interconnected now there could be an earthquake on the other side of the planet that empties out all of our bank accounts.

Jesus is saying, "Don't bet *here*. Don't push all of your chips in *here*. Are you wholeheartedly devoted to me? Do you trust me? Do you believe I am good? Do you believe I'll provide for you?"

"Of course I do, Lord."

"Okay."

Are you betting on earth? Are you hedging your bets? Are you saying, "Of course I do, Lord, but just in case..." Are you 90 percent in and you just have this little 10 percent over here you're like, "Just in case. I trust you, but just in case it doesn't work, I need a little something back here in case you don't come through in the way I want you to come through." This is half-hearted devotion. For some of us, this is three-quarter devotion.

God doesn't make those kinds of deals. He gets all of you and you get all of him or there is no deal. Half-hearted devotion is not devotion. Three-quarter devotion is not devotion, and God is not in the business of bartering around what *he* gets and what *you* get. The deal is all of him for all of you or there is no deal. He knows we're prone to lie to ourselves, so he goes on and says, "Hey, don't bet on earth; bet on heaven, because you can put all your hope there. Nothing can destroy it and nothing can take it and thieves cannot break in and steal."

So you have this MRI question here. Are you betting on earth or are you betting on heaven? For the happiness of your heart, for the good of your soul, for the protection of your family, for your own safety, where are you betting? Do you have faith in, do you trust that God is good or do you kinda and then hedge your bets?

He goes on from here. This is Jesus' sermon. He says, "I appreciate your answer to that, because I get your answer." "No, no, no, Lord." We're like Peter. "Even if I might die, I'll follow you." Did you see Jesus' request? "Great. Let me see your monthly statement, and then I'll tell you what you really trust in, what you really love, what you're really after." Isn't that awesome and awful at the same time?

Not one of you fools had better tweet out, "Chandler wants all of his members' monthly statements so he can judge whether or not they love the Lord." I didn't say that; Jesus said that. You can tweet out Jesus said that. That's what he says. "Do you want to know where your heart is? Get in the MRI. Okay, look at your monthly statement. That's where your heart is." That's what he says. It's not an easy thing, and his followers do decrease after this message.

Then he goes from there. In verses 22 and 23, he has this beautiful little illustration about the eye. Here's the point. The person whose perspectives are distorted by materialism is blind to the kingdom of God. He's going, "You can't serve them both. You can't hedge your bets. That's not how this works." If your eye is unhealthy, if your eye is prone to look at materialism and comfort and the building of walls and insulation for protection, comfort, and joy, he's saying you have a bad eye.

If you're a Christian and you have that bad eye... If the light in you is dark, how great is the darkness. Then he ends strongly with, "You will not serve both of us. You *will* not because you *cannot* serve us both. You will find your hope, trust, and put your faith in me or you'll put it in your own hands, because you can't do both." You can't say, "You're my King. I trust you. I'm betting on you" while simultaneously going, "Except I'm also going to bet over *here*." That's not the way this works, and Jesus is trying to expose it.

He moves from money to anxiety. If you wrestle with anxiety, here's an important distinction. The kind of anxiety Jesus is addressing here is tied to materialism. It's tied to the feeling we can get, if we have some means, of being able to protect ourselves from some of the darkness in the world. Here's why I know that's the case. Look in verse 25. "**Therefore...**" That *therefore* is connected to what we just read. He's talking about money and wealth and hedging our bets, and then he goes to "Therefore" and dives into anxiety.

I love this sentence that life is more than food and the body is more than clothing. Let's have a talk. Good food is amazing, and the Bible and other places say good food and good drink with good friends is a holy thing. Even if we think about how God describes glory, is it not the wedding supper of the Lamb? Isn't it a feast? The picture of being with God unfettered... Is it not an ever-increasing joy in the presence of our God at a feast? Did not Jesus promise to drink new wine with us in glory? For us Baptists I know that stresses us out, but it'll be fine then. You'll be all right.

It's this picture of a feast, but life is more than that. Nice clothes are great, but your body is more than what you wear. This is his argument. He has this series of illustrations that, at the time, would have been no-brainer illustrations. I think today we get a little bit more confused by them. His first one is about birds. He said, "Hey, consider the birds of the air. They don't have any barns. They don't have a 401(k)." Not that there's anything wrong with a 401(k). You maximize that thing.

He's like, "Have you just watched the birds? Doesn't the Lord take care of them?" Then he asks this question. "Are you not more valuable than they?" A hundred percent of the people who would have heard that would have said, "Of course I'm more valuable." Things are a little bit trickier in 2018, because it could be a bald eagle and a baby in the womb of a mother.

"Who *is* more valuable? Is it sea turtle eggs? Gosh, I don't know. Is that bird on the endangered species list, and is that baby breathing air still in the mom's womb? We're going to need more

information before we can make the distinction of what's more important." Is that too much? You're looking like I said something wrong.

Then from there he uses this other one. "Hey, have you considered the lilies? God decorates the grass with what is beautiful. In fact, Solomon, for all his wealth and splendor, looked homeless compared to what God has given to the grass, which, by the way, is here in the morning and is thrown in the fire in the afternoon. Are you not more valuable than the grass of the fields?"

Then he starts to make some common-sense arguments. He asks this question. "Hey, you're all really anxious about these things. How is that working out for you? Are you solving it with your anxiety, like when you're lying in bed at night? Is your life longer because you're anxious about these things?" Jesus gets very practical all of a sudden. He's tapping into "Do you really trust me, have you really put your faith in me, or do you trust *you*? Do you trust what's earthly rather than what is heavenly?"

What do we then trust in? It feels like, "Okay, what does that mean?" He answers us. Verse 33: "**But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness...**" Not *our* righteousness; *his* righteousness. "**...and all these things will be added to you.**" Let me tell you why I love this and get a little geeked out about it. What you're getting a picture of right now is what we'll just call *kingdom economics*. It's the currency of the kingdom of God, and it is upside down to how we think about life in the here and now.

What Jesus is teaching is "Do you want to get? Then you'd better give. Do you want to live? Then you'd better die. If you want peace, then you'd better surrender. Do you really want what you say you want? Then step off the cliff and trust me." That's the exact opposite of what *we* believe. What do we believe? "If you want to get, you'd better get. If you want to live, you'd better live to the fullest." Jesus is like, "No, no, no. You want life? You want soul-stirring, lung-exploding, ""Wow!" life? Then you'd better learn self-forgetfulness. You'd better die."

Just think how disorienting that is. That's what Jesus did here. He introduced kingdom economics that were shocking. Do you want to get? You want a 401(k) that's epic. You have one. It's in glory. Keep throwing stuff up there. Maybe I can use this illustration to help us think about kingdom economics. Let's just pretend two men right out of college... They have good jobs. They're grinders. They're hard workers. Both of them. They're like 55- to 60-hour-a-week brothers. They're not lazy. They're on it.

They both get paychecks, and they're like, "Oh gosh, I'm exhausted from all this work," so they take those paychecks and buy chairs. They both have chairs, and they sit on those chairs, but not for long, because "We have to get back at it." Then they head back to work, and they get another paycheck. Chair #1 guy goes, "Gosh, this chair is great, but my sciatic is starting to act up, so I'm going to buy a cushion." So he buys a cushion for his chair. Chair #2 guy is like, "I wonder if Bill has a chair. Hey, Bill, do you have a chair?"

"Oh man. I'm working, but we're in different tax brackets, brother. Give me a little bit more time, and I'll get my chair."

"I'll tell you what. Why don't you take what you have and I'll add a little bit to it, and why don't we get chairs and then sit with me?" So Bill gets a chair, and they sit down together and talk about how great the chair is. "This is great." Then they go back to work. They grind out. Third paycheck comes in. Chair #1 guy is like, "You know what? This has been good for my sciatic, but my lower back now... I need some lumbar support."

So he goes out and buys another cushion for his back, that kind of curved cushion that sticks him forward like *that*, and he feels good. I'm not dogging this dude's chair. This chair is legit. Then chair #2 guy with Bill starts wondering about Allen. "Does Allen have a chair? Does Allen work? I'm not buying that fool a chair if he doesn't work."

"Oh no, he has a job. He's saving up for a chair, but he has *this* going on and *this* going on."

So Bill and chair #2 guy are like, "Hey, man, let's get Allen a chair." So the two of them get Allen a chair. Now chair #2 guy and Bill and Allen are sitting around talking about life until they have to go back to work. Then everybody goes back to work, and then chair #1 guy gets that next paycheck, and he's feeling good. He's comfortable. His spine is straightened out.

Then he starts thinking, "Man! This chair is so comfortable, but sometimes I have to get up and go make myself an espresso. How much better would it be if I put the espresso machine *in* the chair? Just open it up. Just enjoy the espresso *that way*." So he takes that paycheck and has it done. I'm sure it can be done. If you really have a chair like this... I don't know that chairs like this exist. I'm not trying to dog you. I'm just using an illustration. All right? You'll do that thing where you're like, "I felt like he was talking right to me."

So that's what he does. This dude is comfortable. Hopped up on caffeine but comfortable. Then chair #2 guy goes, "Hey, Bill, Allen, here's an idea. Why don't we take our money and buy a table and then invite the neighborhood over?" I don't think I need to keep going here. I hope. I think what you're seeing in this is a picture of the kingdom and how it operates versus a picture of how our world operates and how they're in contrast to one another.

Now, in the 15 years I've been at The Village Church, we have never passed a plate. We've just never done it. Part of that was probably my jaded sensibilities when I became the pastor. I just didn't want anybody to be able to say, "All they want is my money." I didn't want to give the skeptic any ammunition to not listen to the beauty of the gospel message.

So we've just never done it. We have black boxes at the exits. We call those *joy boxes*. Our members give to those, and we've never passed a plate. Never. In 15 years we've never done it. We don't even *have* plates. If we wanted to, we'd have to order and wait. We'd have to spend money to collect money.

Yet I started wondering a couple of years ago if I haven't, for those of us who love the Lord, robbed us of the opportunity to be shaped by the call of the kingdom to live as radically generous people. You don't need to panic. We're not passing the plate, nor do I plan at this point on introducing the passing of the plate, but as we've thought and prayed and considered how we might all the more cultivate at The Village Church a people who are marked by radical generosity...

Let me quickly do this. What we saw in the early church was the church growing at about 30 percent a year for 300 years until Constantine becomes the emperor of Rome. So, 51 percent of the Roman Empire calls Christ *King* when Constantine ascends to the throne as emperor of Rome. In those first 300 years of our faith, we can't find one treaty, one document, one sermon, or one training course on evangelism. It's never mentioned.

In fact, one of the things we *have* found is that they thought it was over. "Oh yeah, yeah, Jesus going to all the... Yeah, we've done that. We're in Rome. We're to the ends of the earth. We're just waiting for Jesus to come on back now. We're in Rome, and here's the church in Rome, so come on, Lord Jesus." What caused the church to grow at 30 percent a year with no outreach program? What did it? Their peculiar love for one another and the other.

Their way of loving one another and loving the world around them was so counterintuitive and peculiar the world wanted to try to understand it, even as the world was putting them to death and feeding them to lions. So what I *do* want to introduce and what we will start reading every week in June... We're going to take about two to three minutes every service and read this together as an opportunity to have our hearts formed around what it means to be the people of God.

I'm going to put this up, and we're just going to read it. If you're on another campus, maybe you'll do this, maybe you won't. I don't know. We're more collaborative now than centralized. Flower Mound, we will be reading this moving forward. My ambition around it is that we might be shaped all the more to look like the citizens of heaven that we are. So let's practice. Let's read this together.

"Holy Father, there is nothing we have that you have not given us. All we have and are belong to you, bought with the blood of Jesus. To spend everything on ourselves and to give without sacrifice is the way of the world that you cannot abide, but generosity is the way of those who call Christ their Lord, who love him with free hearts and serve him with renewed minds, who withstand the delusion of riches that chokes the world, whose hearts are in your kingdom and not in the systems of the world.

We are determined to increase in generosity until it can be said that there is no needy person among us. We are determined to be trustworthy with such a little thing as money that you may trust us with true riches. Above all, we are determined to be generous because you, Father, are generous. It is the delight of your daughters and sons to share your traits and to show what you are like to all the world. Amen."

We're not going to take an offering. We're just going to read that together and hope that over time it shapes us. Notice the *we* and *us* in it and not the *I* and *me* in it. Formation is a community project always. It's God's intent. It's God's design. Now, it's not just faith and trust but also *cultivating our own souls*. The way Christ goes after cultivating our own souls is through judgmentalism and prayer. If we were to ask, "Hey, are you judgmental?"

"No, I'm not judgmental. That's crazy."

"Do you pray?"

"Yeah, I pray."

Jesus is like, "Great. Well, let's get in the MRI. Sounds good. Let's look at it." Here's what he says on judgmentalism. He starts those first two verses in chapter 7 by saying, "Hey, judge others the way you want to be judged." You can just take those first two verses. That's what he's saying. I've been thinking about this. Here's what I would love. I'd love for people to give me the benefit of the doubt. Wouldn't that be awesome? Wouldn't you like that?

How awesome would that be if we all just gave each other the benefit of the doubt? Or how about believed the best about people until they proved you otherwise? Already we're crazy if we're just doing those two things. One of the things I've been working on for the past year is I'm trying to become an expert in the strengths of people who I know maybe I don't fully agree with in other areas.

Here's the way it works. It's not uncommon for people to come up to me and say, "Hey, what do you think about Pastor Such-and-Such at this place over here?" They're not asking for me to be their cheerleader. Are you with me on that? What they want is some dirt on them. They want to hear what I think they're doing wrong. What I've tried to do instead is say something really positive and watch the other person get confused. They're like, "What do you think of such-and-such over at *this* place?" What I've tried to do is go, "Man, I tell you what. Those people know how to worship."

"Oh. They do. Well, don't you have concerns about *this* and *this* and *this*?"

I'm like, "I'm pastoring The Village Church. That ain't on me. I'm not going to be judged for that. They haven't been given to me. Is that false belief infiltrating The Village Church in such a way that it is forming us or distracting us from what is right, good, and true?"

"Well, no."

"Well, then, their worship is awesome."

It doesn't take much of that for people to stop coming to you to bad-mouth others. What if we did that? This is what Jesus is saying. Then he has this really great illustration. I love it. He has this great illustration about what hypocrisy actually is. Here's his definition of hypocrisy. *Hypocrisy* is pretending you don't have any faults.

"Are you judgmental?"

"No, I'm not."

"Okay, get in the MRI. Do you judge others more harshly than you want to be judged?"

"Oh gosh. Okay, maybe."

Then he gets into hypocrisy, because the moment you're not cultivating your own soul, aware of your own weaknesses, then you get on a throne of iron and look down on everyone else, and if they could only be you and act like you... You would never say you act like that and believe that, so Jesus is going, "Are you judgmental? Well, then that's exactly what you're like."

Then he uses this great illustration about a speck and a log. He's like, "Why are you worried about your brother's speck? Can't you see you have a redwood tree sticking out of your face, man? Handle *that*. How could you ever help anyone with a speck? Take the tree out of your own face, and then we can look at these other little things." Do you see what Jesus is doing?

Then he moves from judgmentalism to prayer. "**Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and [the door] will be opened to you.**" Then he just repeats it with greater guarantee that he *will* hear it, he *will* answer it, he *will* open the door. It's important that you always read this verse in its context. You take this verse out of its context and lay it on something else and go, "Anything I pray for God is going to say yes to..."

You hear some prosperity preacher take that and say, "All you have to do is ask. The Lord will give it to you. How do I know that? Because Jesus said." Yeah, he did, but he also said it in the middle of a lot of other stuff. Here's why we get this confident... You have three imperatives here that intertwine. What Jesus is talking about is a habitual desperation for the kingdom of God to come and be seen and break through and reveal the glory of Jesus as King.

Here's the guarantee. Do you want to see the kingdom? Do you want to see supernatural breakthrough? Do you want to see the glory of Christ made visible to man? Then you ask for it and seek it and knock on the door, and he *will* hear, he *will* say yes, and he will open the door. You can be assured. When you ask, seek, and knock on the door of the kingdom, you'll get it. That's what he's saying here.

What he's doing is yet again asking us if we are cultivating our own souls, because that's what it looks like to be wholeheartedly devoted to Jesus Christ. Nothing exposes what we really believe in like our prayer life. Isn't that awful and awesome all at once? Your prayer life will let you know who you think really has the power. Your prayer life will let you know who you really think can solve your problems and keep you safe.

It really does, which is why this kind of imperative here is intertwined. It's this kind of view of habitually being in the presence of God and asking the Spirit of God to work and do and reveal the kingdom and open up the kingdom. Did not Jesus teach us that we should be praying that way in the Lord's Prayer, which is just above this? "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Just in case you're still tempted to take this "Ask, seek, knock" and lay it on your business or on your marriage or something like that, Jesus goes on to use this illustration. He says, "Which one of you fathers, if your child asked for a piece of bread, would give them a stone and if they asked for some fish would give them a serpent?"

Here's Jesus' point: God, the good Father, will never give to his children what will ultimately harm them. No matter how much they beg, no matter how much they throw a fit, no matter how much they're convinced they need it, God will never give to his children what will ultimately hurt them and harm them.

I love this verse in Luke 12. It fleshes out this idea even more. I think you get a sense of the character of God in it. This is Luke 12:32, yet again Jesus teaching. "**Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.**" Isn't that good? The Lord wants to give us the kingdom, so ask, seek, and knock. The door *will* be opened. You *will* be heard. He *will* say, "Yes." To what? The cry for the kingdom.

From there, he moves us to this last piece, at least that we're covering today. A life of pursuing wholehearted devotion to Jesus is not just marked by faith and trust, not just marked by cultivating our own souls, but it's also marked by *living out the Golden Rule*. Now, the so-called Golden Rule, broadly speaking, is the culmination of what Jesus taught in Matthew 5:17, that he has come to fulfill the law. In fact, Jesus does us a huge favor here.

If you still have your Bible open, look at the last phrase he uses in 7:12. He says, "**So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.**" I love when Jesus says things like this, because here's what he just did. "The Law and the Prophets, like, all that? Let me just wrap that up for you nice and neat. Do unto others the way you want them to do to you. Love others like you want to be loved. Serve others like you want to be served."

What happens is those compulsions toward self can now be viewed as the prompting of the Holy Spirit to love others. How great is *that*? Let me give an illustration. So you pull into the parking lot. We're moving toward summer, which means you have to burp your car. You have to open the door and let it kind of fly out before it kills one of your children or something.

So you got here early enough. Thank God. The flag guys weren't out yet to lead you away from that epically beautiful parking spot, that one we have out there that the leaves come over and form this perfect little shady spot, and you think, "Man! I love that spot. I want that spot. How great would it be to open up the car door and not have to worry about third-degree burns?"

What happens in that moment is the Spirit has just revealed to you how you get to serve another. That impulse you feel about yourself, what you would like, what you want, what would be nice...praise God for that. If you're like, "That happens to me all the time; I'm hypercritical," then, man, does God have good stuff for you.

If you're hypercritical and all you see is what could be better, that's a gift not a curse. It's just a gift to be stewarded to serve others rather than to make demands of others. It's sinful if you take your criticism and want to tell everybody else what they should do with it. It's a gift of God if you take that and go, "Oh, God has a call on my life. I'm going to step into this. I'm going to help shape this. I'm going to serve others, because this is what I would want them to do for me."

How odd would we be...? I'm telling you, this place would think we were a cult. "Oh, The Village? Ooh, that place is weird, man. Why are you always giving stuff to each other? Is that like a thing? Are you all socialists? You all make me sick. Are you all Marxist? I knew it. I saw some stuff online about y'all. Yeah, I knew it. I knew it was just a matter of time."

No, we're not. We just want to love like we've been loved. We want to serve like we've been served, because it was Christ who gave his life for us, the one who had everything and surrendered it so

that we might be found. We live out the generosity of God toward his people by loving one another, serving one another the way we would want others to serve us.

I just want to commend any impulse you have toward what you want and the way things ought to be and what would be a great thing for you as the Spirit of God prompting you into action. It's going to be awesome. Let me read this last verse as we close. This is Mark 8:35-37. It's yet again the kingdom economics.

**"For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?"** Here's that idea of kind of bargaining with God again. **"For what can a man give in return for his soul?"**

Here's the deal God is making: all of you for all of him. That's it. That's the only thing on the table. There's not all of him for 10 percent of you. There's not all of him for you to just stop getting high. It's not all of him for you to watch your mouth. It's not all of him for you to not get drunk. No, no, no. It's all of him, all of you, for your joy and his glory forever. That's the deal. That's the offer.

It is self-forgetfulness, Christ-exalting joy found in spending kingdom capital, which is give to get, die to live, sacrifice to gain. This is the way of the kingdom. You won't be able to serve two masters. It's so tempting, isn't it? Yet per Jesus' own words, it *cannot, will not, does not* happen. You'll love one and hate the other or you'll serve the other one and ignore the other one, but you will not serve God and money.

Wholehearted devotion to Jesus Christ. A church pursuing it together is probably going to be one of the more powerful forces imaginable. It always has been and will continue to be where we're willing to pursue wholehearted devotion instead of give lip service to Jesus. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for your grace and mercy. Thank you for the way you love us and pursue us. We thank you, as painful as it can be to get jammed into that MRI and have our souls exposed. So where we've seen today some ugliness, we thank you that Jesus is the cure. Where we have seen in us waywardness, foolishness, anything like that, we thank you that the MRI can show us we're sick, but it cannot heal us.

So we don't need to try to do the law. The answer to this is not better budgeting. The answer to this is not reading a book on how to be more positive. The answer to this is surrender to Jesus. Help us. Thank you that you've made a way. It's for your beautiful name I pray, amen.

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