

7th grade Chapel Message

Nov. 7, 2008

"Seek Ye First"

Kristen- Our message this morning will involve this wooden basket which will represent our time. It illustrates the time that we spend on everyday tasks and interests that occupies our days and weeks. We will fill the basket with playground balls that represent our personal interests and the items we spend time pursuing. Our class and a few friends will come forward please....

What do you spend time doing, what interests do you have? (Repeat items)

And what are your special hobbies? (repeat)

What do you like to do with your time? (repeat)

What occupies your time? (repeat)

And you? (repeat)

(Continue until all the balls are in the basket)

Wow! Look at that, the entire basket is filled past the top. We have no time left, our interests, tasks and hobbies have taken all of our time. The things we like to do and the things that we must do has taken all of our available time and energy.

Olivia- Wait a minute...hold on... we forgot our time with God! We have to make time for Jesus, devotions, bible study, sunday school and church don't we?

Kristen- Oh you are so right! We have to put in the cross and spend some time with our Lord and Savior! Thanks for reminding us about that! Go ahead and put that inside the basket. Put it right inside... put it in... go ahead, get it in we have to make room for God! (Kristen helps a bit)

Olivia- (struggling) There is no room, it won't fit, we don't have any more time! There is no time left for Christ!

Kristen- You are right... oh my! This is not good at all! I guess we will have to take some balls out. We will have to give up some of the things we like to do to make room. What can we give up in our lives to make time for God? This is going to be hard to decide what we need to eliminate from our lives to have time left over for our relationship with Christ! (very concerned) Help me take some of these out. (disappointed)

Olivia- Just a second... what if we take them all out and put the cross in first! What if we put God first in our lives?

Kristen- Well that sounds good, I agree that God should come first, but we won't be able to fit all the rest of the balls in if the cross goes first. You saw that there was no room for the cross before. We will still have to give up some of the things we want to do.

Olivia- Well let's just try it and see what happens.

Kristen- OK let's give it a shot. Everybody come back and take out the balls. (balls are removed)

Kristen- OK let's put God first, we will make time for Christ first. Let's see now how many will fit inside now. (balls go in) Is that all of them? There must be more? That's every ball that was in before? Wow! Look at that, they still fit the same as before! With the cross in first the balls still all fit. (scratching head) So when we put the balls in first the cross would not even begin to fit, but if we put the cross in first the balls all fit. That is amazing! (exited) I think I get it now...

**If we put God first in our lives and make time for Christ *first* then all the other stuff still can be done!
If we seek *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness then all these things will be given as well!**

Chapel Message

'Seek Ye First'

Leader 1: Let's play ball today shall we, it's not often you get to play ball in church. We will need to be very careful though.

Leader 2: We are going to fill up our basket with balls and maybe something else also. Imagine that this basket is all the time we have in a day, we want to see how you spend your time and what useful things we do with the time God gives us.

Leader 1: We need our volunteers from 3rd and 4th grade to come forward please. Make a line right over here, thank you very much. (students line up in front of first pew on pulpit side) (leader 1 monitors the line)

Leader 2: (to first in line) What is your favorite thing to do with your time? (wait for answer, hold microphone to them, if it is spiritual then say "that's so important we will save that for last, place them on lectern side to wait) if the response is secular then have them toss the ball in as you say something like that sounds great, awesome etc. Leader 2 continues until all 3-4 people are gone back to seats.

Leader 3: We now need our 5th and 6th volunteers to come forward please. form the same line please. Leader 3 monitors the line.

Leader 4: What is something you spend a lot of time doing? Great, toss one in "it's good". Continue similarly.

Leader 5: We now need 8th volunteers to come forward. Continue pattern. Leader 5 monitors the line.

Leader 6: What is it that occupies your time and energy? Very good, sounds great, etc. (if anyone says anything spiritual say that's so important we will save it for last) (if nobody has then we will have an 8th grade plant say I spend time in worship and prayer to God.) That sounds like a great way to spend your time and energy. Why don't we illustrate that a different way, here place this cross into our time and talent basket, here I will help you. Oh my this may be difficult, push it down, don't break it, this is not working out so well. It will not fit, there is no more room, does that mean

we did not save any time talent and energy for God and service to Him? I guess there is just not enough time in our day for activities related to serving and worshipping God.

Leader 5: Wait a minute! Let's try something different, can we have the volunteers come back up here please? Dump the balls out carefully don't let them get away. Ok now who was it that wanted to spend time worshipping and in prayer and service to God? Come up here, let's put God first! Let's think of worship prayer and serving God first and focus on all the other stuff after that. Here, put the cross in first, and then put all the balls back in. (place cross into basket down to the floor the 8th grader can put it in) Yes just like that.

Leader 6: Wait a minute, this is not going to work, with the cross in there all those balls are never going to fit. You saw what happened before there was no room for the cross, so therefore if the cross goes in first we are going to have to leave some balls out, some of these students are not going to be able to put their ball in, there will not be enough room!

Leader 5: You mean there will not be enough time for the stuff we want to do if we put God first?

Leader 6: Well ...ya I guess that's what I am saying, I guess to put God first you have to give up quite a lot.

Leader 5: Well let us just see about that, I think putting God first is what we all need to do, and let's see if we have enough time, I mean room.

Leader 3: Wow! How did that happen? There is room for all we do with our time energy and talent even if we put God in first.

Leader 2: When we put God last there was not enough room in our basket, in other words not enough time in our day. Yet when we put God first everything fit. If we put God first in our lives we will be blest with time, energy and talents to do all the other things as well!

Leader 1: I guess I will see you guys in church on Sunday.

Leader 4: And Sunday school too!

Leader 2: See you there, I think I will have the time!

But Beth, all the other stuff filled the whole box, if we put our time with God first then there won't be enough time for all the things we want to do or like to do or need to do.

Well I'm game, let's give it a try and see what happens. (cross first then fill box)

Wow ! it all fits ! When we put God first all the other stuff still fits.

Does that mean that if we spend time with our Lord and put our spiritual life **first** then God sees to it that we have time and energy for even the stuff we like to do or have to do. I think so !

Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you. I get it, God will provide enough time for all of it if we put Him first in our lives !

And I know from personal experience that the same concept is true for our time *and* our talents, meaning our money and possessions. If we give back to the Lord generously as a first priority God will take care of those needs as well. I heard about a family that was trying to decide how much to give to the "Tell the next generation campaign for our new school and they decided to give a generous amount. Then through prayer they thought they should trust in God and give even more. They were a little anxious that they may not be able to afford that much but they went ahead and pledged the extra amount and took a leap of faith. Some time after that pledge, one of the parents got a raise at their job that was *exactly* the same amount that they added to their pledge. I have heard several similar stories about how God adds blessings to those who put Him first in their lives.

The Bible says that we are to Seek God first and all these things will be added unto us. If we make God our priority and make time for

You just heard Jack read about how we should not be anxious about our life, that God will provide all that we need and take care of us even more than he takes care of the flowers, grass and birds. We need not worry about food or clothes but instead trust that God will provide. What we are asked to do, however, is to *seek God first* and righteousness, then all the other things will be added unto us.

So this wooden box will represent all the time we have in a day or a week and we are going to see what might fill our time and demand our attention and energy. Let's see how we might fill up this amount of time with our activities and the things we like to do and that take up our time. Let's see what the eighth graders do with their time and energy.

What do you like to do ?

How do you spend your time ?

What interests do you have ?

What activities take up your time ?

Oh, now wait... we may have forgotten something...

Did we save any time for God ? Do we have time left for our relationship with our Lord ? (bring me that cross)

Oh no, I am not sure it is going to fit. Hmm there is not enough time left for God. We left no time for Jesus. Do we have so much that we do and like to do that there is no time left for our spiritual life ? That might be a problem

Beth: Mrs. Sterling, what if we made time for God **first**, then we might see what time we have left for all our other stuff.

devotions, Bible reading, church and Sunday School attendance and other Godly things then there will always be enough time for the other things. On the other hand if we put God last in our lives then we will rarely find enough time for devotions or prayer, we will run out of time and simply skip the time with God. As you know we can never repay God in money or time for the great blessings he gives us daily. Especially the blessing of Jesus Christ who gave his all for us on that cross so that we could have eternal time and happiness in heaven eternally. So Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you.

Now I would like 8th grade leaders to come get the things here on the stage so you can lead a similar demonstration with your faith families using some M&M's to see how putting God first works out very well for us.

Wrapping it up.

As you have seen here today, God expects us to put Him first in our lives. We are to have priorities, where we put the activities in our lives in order of importance. Our first priority is our relationship to Christ Jesus. Our second priority is our relationship to our family. Our third priority is to be a good student. The priorities after those can include friends, music, sports, entertainment or shopping. What God promises in Matthew chapter 6 is that if we seek God first and His righteousness then all the other earthly things will be added unto you according to His will, and based on what is best for you. You will have enough time, energy and talent to do the items you enjoy if you put God first, yet if you put God last there will seem to be no time or energy left. Many find as did the widow that helped Elijah that serving God first will result in an abundance of blessings in life. The widow found an endless supply of oil and flour when she served God, we found that all the balls will fit if the cross goes in first. God put you first when He sent His son to be our sacrifice on the cross. We respond by putting God first in all we do.