

Dear Coleman Family present here in the Tab and Sharon and family there in Chile, friends here with us and those in many places around the world watching now or later. We gather here to honour God by honouring one of His faithful servants.

What a privilege to celebrate together a life dedicated to God, lived for God, and now lives in the presence of our triune God.

Thank you, Dave, for reading a favorite passage of Murray's for us, a passage which we could see evidently was his guide from the day he gave his life to Christ. The key verse in the passage is Matthew 6:33, the heart of the passage and a verse with much meaning in Murray's life. – "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

Jesus proclaimed these words during His Sermon on the Mount, given very near the beginning of His ministry, a sermon instructing his disciples and us, how a life in tune with God is to be lived in the practical things we all face everyday. Jesus began the sermon with the Beatitudes, gave us what is called the Lord's Prayer, reiterated the Golden Rule and ended with the parable of the houses built on rock and sand. And the verse that was so meaningful to Murray really is the heart of the whole sermon, drawing together and emphasizing the various themes presented in the sermon.

In the verses leading up to verse 33, the Lord Jesus discusses several issues common to human desire and vital to human life. He challenges us as to where our treasure is. What is it that consumes us, that takes our full attention? What do we strive for? Is it earthly, material, things, subject to decay- or is it the eternal things that will last and fully satisfy? He challenges us as to the condition of our eyes, "the lamp of the body is our eye". Several commentaries explain these verses as asking if we have good, clear consciences, rooted in clear, positive motives, looking to things beyond ourselves. Or are we acting out of consciences, clouded by self-centred determination to care for ourselves, which only leads to full darkness? If our eyes are clear, things will go well, but if our conscience and our motives are bent to self-centered desires, life will not move forward well. Jesus is talking about how we can be so wrapped up in what we eat and how we clothe ourselves, in making a living for ourselves, in taking care of ourselves, that we forget God's ability and desire to do that for us.

Then comes the 'but'. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

"But" – meaning in contrast to our self-seeking, all-on-our-own, for-our-own-good...

"But seek" – seek is a present imperative verb. That means it is a command for us, to pursue something and keep on pursuing it, without stopping.

"But seek first" means to live full out in such a way that it is clear that our priority is focused on and our dependence is on God, and what He has for us now and in the hereafter. Jesus made it plain that His Father will provide the necessities of physical life as we focus on who He is and what He does and wants us to do. I think farmers understand that though we must work and work hard, in the end, we cannot dictate the results. We who have laboured in other areas also must recognize that the ends are held in Someone else's hands. So, we must seek first the place where things are finally settled.

“seek first His kingdom” – you and I must first enter His kingdom, in order to follow this command. If you have not faced your sinner-hood, realizing you are on the wrong side of the door, that you are outside the kingdom, if you have not confessed that you have not only sinned but that you are a sinner, a member of a kingdom in opposition to the kingdom of God, if you have not entered God’s kingdom through acceptance of Christ’s atoning work on your behalf, accessing citizenship in God’s kingdom, Matthew 6:33 may sound like foolishness to you. You cannot claim the promise “all these things” – the necessities of life, physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, “will be added to you”. You are on your own in another kingdom, doomed to failure.

But you can knock on the door of God’s kingdom today and it will be opened to you and you will be received with great joy, as you begin a journey through God’s kingdom.

Then you can join with those seeking the welfare of God’s kingdom, seeking its expansion, seeking its peace and goodness to cover multitudes, seeking the glory of the Sovereign One, as Murray did.

As I watched and interacted with Murray, I came to know a man who had fully entered the kingdom and its welfare, a man, not perfect--as none of us are until we pass through the final set of heavens doors--but a man who exemplified kindness, humility, wisdom, dependence on God, love for you Bea, his wife, love for you, his family, and love for us, his fellow travellers in the Kingdom of God. This was a man who sought the well being and expansion of God’s kingdom. He was not rich as the world thinks of richness, but I recognized he knew a sufficiency in what God had for him, that underlay times of trouble and testing. Murray sought the kingdom for himself and for others, very definitely and clearly. You could not be around him for long before you were touched with his concern for the kingdom of God, whether you are a grandchild, or someone to whom God sent him to proclaim entrance to the kingdom, whether you were a friend, or even a stranger crossing his path. He lived life, not drawing attention to himself but to the King and His Kingdom.

In the sermon on the mount, Jesus gave us the example of how we should pray, how we should seek, what we should seek, and, in that example, showed us where our attention should be. He taught us what seeking first the kingdom involved, centering on Our Father, His glory, His Kingdom, His supply and His keeping. Christ showed us how to express in words our seeking first the kingdom of God. Would you repeat that prayer with me slowly, meditating on how it leads us in seeking first the kingdom of God?

“Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.”

Murray can now see the full meaning of that prayer--the hallowedness of God, the good, good will of God for earth, the Heavenly Father providing and forgiving. And he is awed by that Kingdom--its power and its glory. I think he would call back to us – “Seek first the kingdom of God, family and friends! It’s worth it!”