

# Meet Covenant Conditions in order to Receive Covenant Promises

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**Text:**

**Matthew 6:25-33** <sup>25</sup> "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? <sup>27</sup> Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? <sup>28</sup> "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. <sup>29</sup> Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? <sup>31</sup> So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup> For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. <sup>33</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

## 1 Introduction

Daniel Pipes writing in the American Spectator in 1988 said, "Having Kuwaiti citizenship is tantamount to being an aristocrat. What Aristotle wrote about every man needing a slave applies to Kuwait, except that every man, woman, and child in fact has two servants. Citizens exude a sense of well-being and superiority, of confidence and ease in command." (<http://www.danielpipes.org/article/179>) So, just by becoming a Kuwaiti citizen you become an aristocrat.

About two-thirds of the residents of Kuwait are foreigners who go there to work in order to make lots of money. But it is impossible to become as wealthy as a Kuwaiti if you are a foreigner. It is the attaining and sustaining of citizenship that confers enormous wealth in Kuwait. It is not the quest for wealth that results in wealth. Let me repeat. The quest for wealth does not result in wealth but the attainment and sustaining of citizenship automatically confers wealth.

In the passage, Jesus teaches that believers should not worry about creature comforts such as food, drink, clothes and by extension shelter. He then closes the passage by reminding us that attaining and sustaining kingdom citizenship will automatically bring us creature comforts. Just

as citizenship in Kuwait or Libya is what confers wealth, so also it is the attainment and sustaining of Kingdom citizenship that will automatically confer much creature comforts.

## **2 Paganistic Christianity puts creature comforts above Kingdom citizenship**

### **2.1 Jesus taught that pagans, lacking faith and in their anxiety, seek creature comforts first**

There is a run on supermarkets just before a snow storm. Anxiety over potential shortages that may be caused by the storm makes people to go to the supermarket to buy things that they don't even need! In verse 32, Jesus says that pagans place the quest for creature comforts as their primary goal. They worry about whether they will get these creature comforts so they go to all kinds of extents to get it. So, anxiety about the creature comforts leads people to seek them. Their entire existence is centered around the pursuit of prosperity and success. Such people have no faith in God who could have supplied them with the prosperity and success so they try to attain them by themselves.

### **2.2 Some preachers today teach people to seek creature comforts first**

Jesus' statement is true today, unfortunately, among churchgoers. There are some preachers who teach the importance of seeking prosperity and success based on a few isolated verses in the Bible without teaching the conditions given for attaining such prosperity and success. Many of these preachers make prophetic proclamations of prosperity and success on their congregations year after year which yield nothing. If the person is steeped in sin or unsaved no amount of prophetic pronouncements will bring prosperity.

Many believers have been misled by such unconditional pronouncements to their own destruction. I heard recently that a disgruntled member of one these prosperity churches has sued the pastor because the pastor, who derives his income from the church, has sucked lots of money from the members and he has become rich while the members don't see any wealth coming their way.

You see, such churchgoers and preachers have put the cart before the horse. They seek prosperity and success instead of seeking Kingdom citizenship. In the year 2008, you must set your priorities right and put the horse before the cart. You must prioritize kingdom citizenship in

order to gain kingdom blessings. You must meet covenant conditions in order to receive covenant promises. Maintain your Kingdom citizenship to get your Kingdom breakthrough.

### **3 Prioritize Kingdom citizenship to gain Kingdom blessings**

#### **3.1 The last verse is a typical covenant statement**

The King James Version of the last verse of our passage is very well known to most people: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (**Matthew 6:33**) This verse has the elements of a covenant.

A covenant is an agreement made by God to govern his relationship with man. We see several covenants in God’s relationship with Abraham, Israel, Moses, David and others. A template for Ancient Near East covenants which is also found in the covenants in the Bible consists of an optional Preamble, an optional Prolog, required Stipulations which are conditions, required Sanctions which state the Blessings or Curses for fulfilling or violating the covenant conditions respectively, required Witnesses, and optional Regular Readings.

In our passage, verses 25-32 serve as a prolog to the covenant in our passage as they motivate the statement made by Jesus in verse 33. In verse 33, Jesus then states the Stipulations of the covenant when he said “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.” The Stipulations are made up of two conditions. The first is “Seek God’s Kingdom.” The Greek word translated as “seek” is in the continuous present tense which will then literally mean continue to seek. The word “seek” here does not imply that the Kingdom is elusive and so you must daily seek it. It simply means that you place the Kingdom as the highest priority in your life. Furthermore righteousness is inherent in the Kingdom of God and so the placing of the Kingdom as first priority must necessitate the placing of righteousness as a first priority. That is why Jesus cites the quest for righteousness as another condition in this covenant.

Jesus follows the Stipulations just discussed with the sanctions for blessing when he says, “all these things shall be added unto you.” The reference to “all these things” is to the needs described in verse 25: food, clothing, and shelter not in its basic form but also in its abundant form. In other words the blessings are prosperity and success.

### **3.2 Sustain Kingdom citizenship to keep the covenant**

By this covenant Jesus defined the essence of Christianity as not consisting of asking for things but consisting of asking for God himself. When you get God then you get all the things you would have asked for. Therefore, it is more important to attain and sustain Kingdom citizenship than it is to pursue acquisition of creature comforts. Because as God's covenant in verse 33 provides, if you attain and sustain Kingdom citizenship then you will become prosperous and successful. God puts it this way to Israel during Joshua's time: "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." (Joshua 1:8) Prosperity and success comes from studying and practicing the Word of God because such practice is what enables you to sustain your Kingdom citizenship. Maintain your Kingdom citizenship to get your Kingdom breakthrough.

### **3.3 Have faith that God will keep his part of the covenant**

In verse 30 of our passage Jesus says, "If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" The phrase "O you of little faith" is a call to believe that God will keep his part of the covenant. In regard to covenant keeping the Bible says in **Deuteronomy 7:9**, "Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands." And then about God's faithfulness the Bible says in **Numbers 23:19**, "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" The Bible also says in **1 Thessalonians 5:24**, "The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it." So you must have faith that it is guaranteed that God will fulfill his part of the bargain if and only if you meet the conditions to attain and sustain Kingdom citizenship.

I call upon you to meet the covenant conditions in 2008 in order to receive your covenant promises. Maintain your Kingdom citizenship to get your Kingdom breakthrough.

## **4 When King Uzziah made God first he prospered but failed when he made himself first**

In 2 Chronicles 26:3-5, we read the following: “Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-two years. His mother's name was Jecoliah; she was from Jerusalem. He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Amaziah had done. He sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God. As long as he sought the LORD, God gave him success.” The verses following these describe how he also became prosperous and successful. His prosperity and success according to the story was contingent upon his continual sustaining of his Kingdom citizenship as part of the covenant conditions.

Unfortunately, at some point during his life he violated the covenant conditions as stated in 2 Chronicles 26:16, “But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God.” This pride is the sin of Satan, which was also committed by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and by King Saul, all of whom tried to usurp God’s authority directly or as invested in his delegate. Uzziah was struck with Leprosy for arrogantly violating God’s commandments.

When Uzziah met the covenant conditions he received the covenant promises of success and prosperity. When he violated the covenant conditions he was sanctioned, lost his success, and could not even take advantage of the wealth he had acquired; he lived in isolation as a leper to the end of his life.

I call upon you as we enter 2008 to emulate the life of the young Uzziah and not the life of the old Uzziah. Sustain your Kingdom citizenship in order to receive your Kingdom blessings of prosperity and success. Meet your covenant conditions in order to receive your covenant promises. Maintain your Kingdom citizenship to get your Kingdom breakthrough.

## **5 Conclusion**

Just being a Kuwaiti citizen makes you an aristocrat. Efforts by foreigners to seek wealth in Libya as non-citizens have been futile. The passage urges you to sustain heavenly citizenship as the number one priority in order to become prosperous and successful.

Paganistic Christianity puts creature comforts above Kingdom citizenship. Jesus taught that pagans, lacking faith and in their anxiety, seek creature comforts first. Some preachers

misguidedly teach people to seek creature comforts first, which is putting the cart before the horse.

The last verse of our passage says “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (**Matthew 6:33**) This verse is a typical covenant statement which teaches that if you sustain Kingdom citizenship, thus meeting the covenant conditions, then God, who is faithful, will honor his part of the covenant and make you prosperous and successful. You should learn from the example of King Uzziah. When King Uzziah made God first he prospered but failed when he made himself first.

So, maintain your Kingdom citizenship to get your Kingdom breakthrough.