

(English translation)

May 1979

## Word of Life

**“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides.”** (Mt 6:33)

The whole Gospel is revolutionary. The words of Christ are not like those of any other person. Listen to this: *“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things [the necessities of life] will be given you besides.”*

The major preoccupation people usually have is searching for what will make their lives more secure. Perhaps this applies to you as well. If so, Jesus lays out before you his own way of looking at things and presents you with his plan of action. He requires from you a behavior totally different from what society would expect, and to do so not only once, but always. It is this: “seek first the kingdom of God.”

When you redirect your whole being towards God and do everything for his kingdom within yourself and in others (that is, ordering your whole life with his laws), the Father will give you what you need day after day.

If, on the other hand, you are preoccupied with yourself, you will end up caring mainly for the things of this world and fall victim to them. You will end up seeing the goods of this world as your real business, the goal of all your efforts. And therein arises the serious temptation of relying solely on your own strength and less on God..

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Jesus changes the situation. If he himself, or rather, if living for him is your first concern, "these things" will no longer be the main business of your life; rather, they will be given to you “in addition” to other things or as a “surplus.”

Is this utopia? Are these words difficult for you as a modern person living in an industrialized world that is highly competitive and often in economic crises? I wish to remind you that at the time when Jesus uttered these words, the concrete difficulties of life among the Galileans were no less serious than our own.

It is not as if you were being made to choose between utopia and something less. Jesus shows you his way; it is entirely up to you to choose whether you wish to live your life for yourself or to live it for God.

Let us try to understand well these words: *“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides.”*

Jesus does not propose that you become “passive” or do nothing with regard to your everyday or temporal needs, nor that you be irresponsible or superficial at work. Rather, he wishes you to reorder your priorities in life and, by so doing, rid yourself of anxiety, fear, and restlessness.

In fact he says: *“Seek first the kingdom....”* “First” means “above all else.” The search for God's kingdom should be given priority and does not exclude the concern that a Christian must have for the necessities of life.

*“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,”* also means living in conformity with God's desires as revealed by Jesus in his Gospel.

Only when Christians actively seek the kingdom of God will they experience the wonderful power of the Father working in their favor.

Let me share a story with you.

It took place quite some time ago but I find it relevant to this Word of Life. In fact I am aware of many other young people who now live as this girl did.

Her name is Elvira and at that time she was taking courses in education at the university. She was poor, and she could continue her studies only if she maintained high grades. She had a strong faith, but she happened to have a professor in philosophy who was an atheist. He made it a point to present the truths of her faith in a confused and distorted manner. On such occasions, Elvira felt a strong reaction rising up inside her, not for herself but for the love she had for God, for truth, and for her classmates.

She knew that if she contradicted the professor, she stood a chance of irritating him and thereby get a failing grade. In spite of this, however, she would raise her hand and beg to speak saying, "Professor, that's not true." At times she did not know how to present her arguments in a manner that would convince the professor, but her words "That's not true" embodied her whole faith, which was a gift of truth.

Her classmates were all on her side and tried to persuade her to stop contradicting this professor because they feared that her grades in his subject might suffer. But they did not succeed.

A few months later, when the grade cards were distributed, Elvira went to get hers. She was trembling; but then, her heart leapt for joy. She got an "A"! The highest grade!

She had sought first of all that God and his truth would reign and then the rest was given to her.

**"Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides."**

If you seek the kingdom of the Father, you will experience that God is Providence for all the needs of your life. You will discover how normal are the extraordinary ways of the Gospel.

By Chiara Lubich

Chiara's complete commentary can be found in *Words to Live By* (New City Press, 1980).