SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Guest Pastor - H.B. Charles

October 11, 2026 | Matthew 6:25-34; Matthew 6:33

Prepared from the spoken message and lightly edited for readability. Scripture quotations and spoken phrasing are preserved as delivered.

May grace and peace be multiplied to each of you this morning in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Let me publicly thank Pastor Jarrett for the invitation to worship with you this morning and for the kind words of introduction. It is a joy to be with you today.

If you would, get your copy of God's Word. I want to go straight to the message and point your attention to Matthew 6:33. I am reading from the English Standard Version of the Bible, and therein the Word of God reads this way:

> *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*
> — Matthew 6:33

Amen.

I'll label the message "First Things First."

On September 27, 1885, the Prince of Preachers, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, in London, preached a sermon on this verse that he entitled "Something Worth Seeking." The opening sentence of that sermon said, "There is just as much need for this exhortation today as when our Savior first uttered it."

He's right. These words fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ thousands of years ago, and yet what Jesus says in this verse is as relevant as the breaking news today.

The passage is a part of an extended paragraph, verses 25-34. The theme of the paragraph is stated in verse 25, in verse 31, and in verse 34. Three places in this paragraph, Jesus says, "Do not be anxious."

The word anxious means care or concern. It can, on one hand, refer to legitimate concerns or cares, or it can refer to sinful anxiety. The tricky thing about the term is that if you don't guard your heart, legitimate concerns become sinful anxieties.

Jesus says you can end up worrying about what you will eat or drink or wear, or what tomorrow will bring. To be anxious is to have a divided mind. One thought uplifts; another thought discourages. Hope fills you in one direction; fear pulls you in another direction. You wish for the best and expect the worst at the same time.

In fact, our English word worry is derived from an old German word that means to choke or to strangle. Is that not what anxiety is and does? It is mental, emotional, spiritual strangulation at the ruthless hands of uncertain circumstances.

But Jesus says, "Do not be anxious." In fact, the grammar forbids an action that is already in progress. It reads literally as a cease-and-desist order. Jesus literally says, "Stop being anxious."

Friend, what are you worried about this morning? Is it a health issue? Is it a financial reversal? Is it a family problem? Is it a career challenge? Is it your children? Is it your marriage? What are you worried about?

Whatever it is, I have a word from the Lord for you. Jesus literally says, "Stop it. Stop worrying."

When I was a boy, the First Lady of the United States, Nancy Reagan, launched an initiative to help inner-city kids stay off drugs. She called it "Just Say No." It was a noble endeavor, but it was not successful. I think the reason is obvious: It is hard to say no if you don't have something better to say yes to.

Jesus says repeatedly in this text, "Stop worrying." But he knows that you cannot say no to anxiety until you have something greater, something deeper, something better to say yes to. And so he says to us in verse 33 - he gives us, if you will, a spiritual antidote for our sinful anxieties:

> *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*
> — Matthew 6:33

There is a lot on my heart and mind to say from this text. I very well may not get to say it all. So let me give you the take-home truth of the message up front. I can state it in three words: Put God first.

That's the answer to your anxieties. That's how you win over worry. That's how you conquer the cares of life. Put God first.

Why put God first? Because God put you first.

> *We love because he first loved us.*
> — 1 John 4:19

We woke up this morning. We are saved. Things are as well as they are because God went first. Romans 8:29 calls Jesus "the firstborn among many brothers." We are regenerated and adopted children of God because God sent his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, first. First Corinthians 15:20 says he is "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" and will rise from the dead.

God went first. You should put God first.

What does that mean? How do you put God first in everything? Two ways, two clauses in this verse. I want to lean into both clauses to show you two ways to put God first.

Seek God

There are three types of people in the world. There are those who do not seek God. They don't know what happiness really is. There are, secondly, those who seek God but do not seek God first. They are miserable people because they are a walking civil war. Thirdly, there are those who seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and I contend they are the happiest people in the world.

Do you want to be happy? Thomas à Kempis said, "Seek God, not happiness." Seek God.

Let me tighten that up. Seek God personally.

I learned this verse in the King James Version, which says, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God." That ye is not in the original. It's a translator's addition, but it's a good addition because it reminds us that seeking God is a personal matter. You cannot seek God for anyone else, and no one else can seek God for you. You've got to seek God personally for yourself.

Jonathan Edwards, when he was a young man, wrote a series of resolutions to govern his life, to guide his life. The first two, I think, are the best.

Resolution one: "I will live for God."

Resolution two: "If no one else does, I still will."

Friend, this is what it means to seek God personally. It is a personal resolve to trust and obey the Lord no matter what other people say or do or think.

In John 6, Jesus fed 5,000 with five loaves and two fish. The people wanted to make Jesus king by force. He talked to them about the cost of discipleship, and they all suddenly disappeared. With the twelve left, he said to them, "Will you leave too?"

You remember what Peter said at the end of John 6?

> *Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.*
>
> — John 6:68-69

Friends, this is why I'm sticking with Jesus. It's not because he always does what I want him to do. I am sticking with Jesus because there's no better alternative.

Peter is right. If you walk away from Jesus, where do you go? There's no one like him. No one was born like Jesus. No one spoke like Jesus. No one loved like Jesus. No one died like Jesus. No one rose again like Jesus. And ain't nobody coming back like Jesus.

Seek God personally. Also, seek God continually.

The grammar here refers to continual action or repeated activity. Keep seeking God. You don't mean it if seeking God for you is just a Sunday morning thing. It is to be a way of life.

In fact, this is how you can really distinguish between a true believer and a person who is faking it. The person who doesn't really know God doesn't seek God. They just seek benefits from God. They're just looking for what they can get out of God.

In fact, the unconverted, unredeemed person is not able to seek God.

> *None is righteous, no, not one;*
> *no one understands;*
> *no one seeks for God.*
>
> — Romans 3:10-11

The guilty person is like Adam and Eve, wearing fig leaves, trying to hide from God behind trees God created. The sinner is not seeking God. But, oh friend, God is seeking you.

Luke 19:10 is the mission statement of Jesus:

> *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*
>
> — Luke 19:10

God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to seek you. And he is not seeking you to punish you, but to save you. That's the hope of the gospel.

The word gospel means good news or glad tidings. But in reality, the gospel is bad news, worse news, good news, and best news at the same time.

The bad news is that all of us have sinned and will one day answer to God for how we have lived our lives. The worse news is that there is nothing we can do to fix what our sin has broken. Left to ourselves, we are on a collision course with eternal punishment.

The good news is God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, who lived a righteous life, who died at the cross to pay for our sins, and who rose from the dead that we may be justified, or declared righteous, by faith in him.

And that's not even the best news. The best news is, friend, whoever you are or whatever you have done, today, if you will run to the cross, throw yourself on the mercy of God, and trust the bloody cross and empty tomb of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin, you can have free forgiveness, new life, and eternal hope.

You can be saved today when you turn from your sin and trust Christ. You are saved immediately and eternally. But at the same time, it begins a lifelong process of seeking God.

In the Benedictine monasteries of medieval Europe, a young convert would be given a habit, a plain robe of unadorned cloth, to mark his new spiritual journey. But they didn't throw away his "street clothes." They remained in a monastery closet so that every morning he woke up, he would have to decide again to pursue his new life or go back to his old ways.

To seek God means every morning you wake up, you make a fresh decision to seek God rather than chasing sin.

Seek God personally. Seek God continually. Seek God ultimately.

How would you feel if the person in your life who makes the best cake - your favorite cake - showed up at your door with cake in hand? They have a pan fresh out of the oven and say, "I was thinking about you. I made this because I love you, and this is my gift to you. I brought a fork just in case you want to share, but this is your

cake. This is my expression of love."

Similarly, how would you feel if that same person showed up at your door? They make your favorite cake. They're there that day, not with a pan of cake, but with a bowl with tin foil over it, and they say, "I just made the best cake I ever made in my whole life. It was so good. When I got to the last slice, I thought about you, and I thought I'd bring you a piece before it was all gone."

It is a sad indictment that we treat God in the latter way. I'm trying to say to you, God deserves the whole cake, not just the crumbs of your life.

This is what that word first is emphasizing. First here is not first in order or process or series. It is first in priority. We are to seek God in and through and above everything else.

People give advice that you should set up a hierarchy in your life, that you put God first, your family second, and then your career third. That's well-intentioned advice, but that is not good advice. The way you should live is to put God first in your family, put God first in your education, put God first in your career. You put him first in everything.

And let me tell you why. You're going to hit a place where you're going to need his help in your family, in your education, and in your career. So you should put him first in everything.

In Luke 9:59-60, the young man Jesus calls to follow him replies by saying, "Yes, I will follow you, but let me first go bury my father." Jesus said:

> *Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.*
> — Luke 9:60

That's a hard saying, but Jesus is not telling the young man to dishonor his parents. Jesus is stating the terms of discipleship up front, and you need to hear it today. He was trying to say to the young man, "I don't take next. When I issue a call and command, there's not a 'Let me do this first.'"

The Lord desires, deserves, and demands first place.

Friend, hear me. Beware if you are too young to seek God, too happy to seek God, too proud to seek God, too busy to seek God, or too hurt to seek God. You may look up, and it is too late to seek God.

> *Seek the Lord while he may be found;*
> *call upon him while he is near;*
> *let the wicked forsake his way,*
> *and the unrighteous man his thoughts;*
> *let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him,*
> *and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*
> — Isaiah 55:6-7

Seek God personally, continually, ultimately, and sincerely.

To seek God sincerely means that you seek God on his terms, not yours. What are his terms? They're in the

verse: "Seek first the kingdom of God."

That kingdom of God is not a geopolitical nation-state. It is the rule and reign of God.

> *The Lord has established his throne in the heavens,*
> *and his kingdom rules over all.*
>
> — Psalm 103:19

To seek first his kingdom is to pray:

> *Your kingdom come.*
>
> — Matthew 6:10

I think that petition is explained by the next petition:

> *Your will be done,*
> *on earth as it is in heaven.*
>
> — Matthew 6:10

Seek his kingdom, and seek his righteousness. Righteousness is conformity to the revealed will of God. To be righteous is simply to be right with God.

> *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*
>
> — Matthew 5:6

In his book He's God and You're Not, Ray Pritchard, concerning Matthew 5:6, says simply, "What you seek, you will find. What you seek, you find."

By that he means this: If Matthew 5:6 is true, that if you hunger and thirst for righteousness, God will satisfy that desire, it means today, friend, you are as close to God as you want to be. Your prayer life is as strong as you want it to be. Your walk with Jesus is as healthy and as growing as you want it to be.

The Bible says:

> *You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.*
>
> — Jeremiah 29:13

Seek God practically.

My favorite little prayer chorus says, "Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart." But it's not really in my heart if it doesn't show up in the rest of my life.

There are three external, independent, objective indicators of my devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ: my time, my money, and my relationships.

Put God first in your time. I think that means, practically, every day, start your day first with God in prayer and Bible intake. On the Lord's Day, Sunday, start your week in corporate worship with God's people under God's

Word.

There was an older man who was half blind and half deaf who never missed church. Somebody finally asked him, "Why are you here every Sunday? It's not like you can enjoy the service."

He said, "Yeah, that's true. But I'm here each week because I want everybody to know what side I'm on."

In a real sense, the fact that you are here now and not at brunch is a statement to your neighbors and to the world about what side you're on.

Put God first in your finances.

> *Honor the Lord with your wealth*
> *and with the firstfruits of all your produce;*
> *then your barns will be filled with plenty,*
> *and your vats will be bursting with wine.*
>
> — Proverbs 3:9-10

You can't beat God giving, no matter how hard you try.

And seek God first in your relationships. I think if you want to find a person who is seeking God, you will spot them hanging out with other people who are seeking God.

In contrast, let me warn you:

> *Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."*
>
> — 1 Corinthians 15:33

If you want to win over worry, if you want to conquer your concerns and the cares of life, if you want to have an answer for your anxieties, put God first. That involves, on one hand, that you seek God.

Here's the second principle of the text.

Trust God

How do you put God first? You seek God, first of all. Secondly, you trust God.

Verse 33 begins with a command:

> *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.*
>
> — Matthew 6:33

Then it ends with a promise:

> *And all these things will be added to you.*
>
> — Matthew 6:33

Warren Wiersbe said that Christians don't live on explanations. We live on promises. And I'd add, you can live

on a promise for a long time if you trust the one who made the promise.

God guarantees that if you seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, the things you are tempted to worry about, he will add them to you.

This is God's Build Back Better program. This is God's affirmative action program. This is God's Social Security system. This is God's stimulus package. This is God's insurance policy: "Put me first, and I'll take care of everything else."

So let me ask you two questions.

Question one: Where is your faith?

Verse 31 says:

> *Therefore do not be anxious, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?"*
>
> — Matthew 6:31

Verse 32 gives two reasons why you should not live in anxious care as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

The first reason is:

> *For the Gentiles seek after all these things.*
>
> — Matthew 6:32

There's our word again. The nations, the heathen, the unbelievers who don't know God spend their lives consumed about what they will eat, drink, and wear, and what tomorrow will bring.

Jesus is saying there's a real sense, saints, in which sinful anxiety is functional atheism. People who don't have a God on their side have to worry about tomorrow.

But Jesus says in verse 32:

> *Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.*
>
> — Matthew 6:32

Friend, the burden, the concern, the problem that was weighing on you when you came into this room this morning - he knows what you need. What you need in your life most right now has already been factored into the compassionate omniscience of our heavenly Father.

In fact, Matthew 6:8 says:

> *Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.*
>
> — Matthew 6:8

I've got a question: Do you believe that?

What does it look like if you believe that? I think it simply looks like Philippians 4:6-7:

> *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*
>
> *And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*
>
> — Philippians 4:6-7

I trusted Christ and was baptized as a boy, six years old. I surrendered to a call to preach at the age of eleven years old. By the time I was in my teens, I was preaching on a regular basis.

At the age of sixteen, the week before Father's Day, I went from L.A. to Detroit to preach a youth meeting. As I was flying home, my father suddenly died. While I was away preaching, when I got to the house, the men of the church were there to tell me of my father's death and, remarkably, to ask me to preach in his pulpit the next morning.

When I pulled myself together, I spent the night sitting at my father's desk, trying to figure out what to say the next morning. I ended up reworking something I had just preached at the youth event from John 6. I mentioned the passage before where the little lad gave Jesus his lunch to feed the crowd. I think every youth minister has a sermon on John 6 about giving Jesus your lunch.

But as I sat there that night, the night my father died, one detail that I had skipped over came to my attention. Jesus, seeing the crowd, asked Philip, "Where will we buy bread so that all these can eat?" Parenthetically, John 6:6 says:

> *He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.*
>
> — John 6:6

I reworked my material and took that to the pulpit the next morning and preached less than 24 hours after my dad's death: "The Lord Knows What He's Doing."

I didn't know what was happening, but I was confident then, and I am even more confident now. Whatever your life may feel like - a small lunch before a big crowd - I want to tell you, it's only a test. He knows what he's doing.

Do you believe that? Where is your faith?

I've got one more question: Where is your focus?

My first preaching professor made a statement that I have never forgotten. Dr. Boore said, "You never find happiness by looking for it. You stumble over it on the pathway to duty."

I think that's the spirit of the text. Your needs won't get met if you are preoccupied with getting your needs met. I think you stumble over getting your needs met as you seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

He says, "If you just focus on me, seek first my kingdom and my righteousness, all these things will be added."

That term added means "to place alongside." So while you are focusing on God and putting him first, God knows when and how to place alongside just what you need, when you need it.

David says it this way:

> *I have been young, and now am old,*
> *yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken*
> *or his children begging for bread.*
>
> — Psalm 37:25

The stock market crashed in the Great Depression of 1929. A young businessman, J. C. Penney, lost everything. He took ill, and not only was he physically sick, but he also had a nervous breakdown. He lay in a hospital bed expecting to die that night, bracing himself to die.

He dozed off and, a little while later, was surprised when he woke up still alive. He determined that God was keeping him alive for a reason and he needed to get out of this bed. He got up and began to walk the hallways of the hospital. At the end of the hallway, he heard singing in the chapel, and the song attracted him to the chapel.

He went in and listened to the songs, prayers, testimonies, and message, and it changed his life. He marks that night as his conversion. God restored him physically, emotionally, and spiritually. He went on to build the great company he is remembered for.

But I bring up that story so I can tell you the old hymn that drew J. C. Penney to the chapel that night. The gathered saints were singing, "Be not dismayed, whatever betide, God will take care of you. Beneath his wings of love abide; God will take care of you."

One more verse of the hymn - my verse. I hope it'll bless you: "No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you. Lean, weary one, upon his breast, for God will take care of you."

Put God first, and trust him to take care of the rest.

Let's pray.

Gracious and heavenly Father, we thank you for your Word today. We thank you for being a speaking God. Your Word is profitable to teach us, correct us, rebuke us, and train us in righteousness. It is able to make us wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

I pray that you would draw to yourself this hour those who should be saved, as you lead them to repentance and faith in Christ.

I also pray for your children, that you would have mercy on us for the things that we have put ahead of you. Help us to reorder our lives so that we give you first place in everything. Help us to trust that we can actually cast all our cares on you because you care for us.

Help us today to trust you with our whole heart, to not lean on our own understanding, and to acknowledge

you in all of our ways, that you would make straight our path.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.