

SERMON NOTES:

Series: What is Needed Part 2: First Things First

BIG Idea: What we seek first determines how everything else is ordered.

Application: Intentionally place God and His Kingdom first—trusting Him to rightly order the rest of your life.

Join us as we read the Bible together in 2026.

<https://bit.ly/ReadwithMe26>

1. God has always revealed Himself as worthy of our first and best.

Cain and Abel — The First Example of Worship After the Fall

Genesis 4:3-5 (NLT)

³ When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the Lord. ⁴ Abel also brought a gift—the best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The Lord accepted Abel and his gift, ⁵ but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected.

God doesn't ask for what's left—He asks for what comes first.

Abraham and Melchizedek — Worship Before the Law

Genesis 14:17-20 (NLT)

⁷ After Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and all his allies, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

¹⁸ And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought Abram some bread and wine. ¹⁹ Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing:

“Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Creator of heaven and earth.

²⁰ And blessed be God Most High,
who has defeated your enemies for you.”

Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered.

Firstfruits — Codified, Not Created

Exodus 23:19a (NLT)

¹⁹ “As you harvest your crops, bring the very best of the first harvest to the house of the Lord your God.

Deuteronomy 26:1-4,11a (NLT) *Harvest Offerings and Tithes*

¹ “When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you as a special possession and you have conquered it and settled there, ² put some of the first produce from each crop you harvest into a basket and bring it to the designated place of worship—the place the Lord your God chooses for his name to be honored. ³ Go to the priest in charge at that time and say to him, ‘With this gift I acknowledge to the Lord your God that I have entered the land he swore to our ancestors he would give us.’ ⁴ The priest will then take the basket from your hand and set it before the altar of the Lord your God.

¹¹ Afterward you may go and celebrate because of all the good things the Lord your God has given to you and your household.

Proverbs 3:9–10 (NLT)

⁹ Honor the Lord with your wealth
and with the best part of everything you produce.

¹⁰ Then he will fill your barns with grain,
and your vats will overflow with good wine.

Malachi: Getting cheap on God – blind and crippled sacrifices

Malachi 1:9-14 (NLT)

⁹ “Go ahead, beg God to be merciful to you! But when you bring that kind of offering, why should he show you any favor at all?” asks the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.

¹⁰ “How I wish one of you would shut the Temple doors so that these worthless sacrifices could not be offered! I am not pleased with you,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, “and I will not accept your offerings. ¹¹ But my name is honored by people of other nations from morning till night. All around the world they offer sweet incense and pure offerings in honor of my name. For my name is great among the nations,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.

¹² “But you dishonor my name with your actions. By bringing contemptible food, you are saying it’s all right to defile the Lord’s table. ¹³ You say, ‘It’s too hard to serve the Lord,’ and you turn up your noses at my commands,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies. “Think of it! Animals that are stolen and crippled and sick are being presented as offerings! Should I accept from you such offerings as these?” asks the Lord.

¹⁴ “Cursed is the cheat who promises to give a fine ram from his flock but then sacrifices a defective one to the Lord. For I am a great king,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, “and my name is feared among the nations!

2. What we put first determines what has power over us.

Jesus Addresses Anxiety and Competing Needs

Matthew 6:25-32 (NLT)

²⁵ “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And

aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? ²⁷ Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?

²⁸ "And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, ²⁹ yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. ³⁰ And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

³¹ "So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' ³² These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs.

The Reordering Command and Promise

Matthew 6:33 (NLT)

³³ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

When God is first, everything else finds its place.

3. Giving God our best is a whole-life posture, not a single practice.

Scripture helps us see that while **priority is non-negotiable**, the way that priority is expressed touches every part of life.

What gets the best of us reveals what has the lead in us.

Faith that is given last rarely bears lasting fruit.

What we seek first determines how everything else is ordered.