

Putting God First

Matthew 10:32-42

Sunday 8-2-2026

Main point: Put God first.

Intro

It's amazes me that the God that Moses writes about in Genesis 1 is the same God that wants to have a personal relationship with us.

The God that literally spoke everything into existence in 6 days desires to have 1:1 time with us.

God makes that clear early on when he works with Adam in the Garden.

“So the Lord God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.” Genesis 2:19

There is a comradery or bond that is established when people work together to accomplish a project.

The people in my life who I am the closest to are the ones that stood side by side with me, fully embracing the suck, to meet a goal.

God didn't work with Adam because he needed the help, He worked with Adam because he wanted the fellowship with him.

If you are anything like me, you will sometimes struggle with putting God first.

Today we are going to talk about 3 ways that we can elevate where God lands on our priority list.

3 Ways

1. Acknowledging Him for who he is.
2. Loving Him more than anyone else.
3. Ministering to His flock.

Matthew 10:32-42

1. Put God first by acknowledging Him for who he is.

Because this first set of verses starts out with the word “therefore” we need to pause for a moment and find out what it’s there for.

If we back up to verse 31, we find the context to what we are about to read.

“...So don’t be afraid...you are worth more than many sparrows.”

There are two important points in this verse.

1. We are being told to not be afraid

This implies that what he is going to tell us is going to be hard.

2. Jesus is telling us that we have value in God’s eyes.

This is the motivation behind what he is about to tell us.

God will teach us hard lessons because he loves us and wants us to have a stronger relationship with him.

Verse 32-33

What does it mean to acknowledge Him before men?

That doesn't imply that we need to stand up in front of a crowd and say Jesus is Lord.

If that is what the Holy Spirit is moving you to do then by all means yell it from the roof tops for all to hear.

As great as this public declaration of faith is, it won't get you a place in heaven.

Simply put, to acknowledge Him is to confess Him.

"If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved..." Romans 10:9

To acknowledge Him before men establishes a time limit for that acknowledgement.

It has to happen "before men" or while we are here on earth.

We have until the very moment that we take our last breath to confess Jesus as our Lord and savior.

DON'T WAIT!!!

If we do this Jesus says that He will acknowledge us before "My Father" in heaven.

Everyone will stand before God to give an account of what we have done.

For believers that is the Bema seat found in 2 Corinthians 5:10

“For we must all appear before the **tribunal** of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or worthless.”
2Corinthians 5:10

The word **tribunal** translates from the Greek word “bema” giving us the term Bema seat.

This is a judgement of works for the giving of rewards only!

For the unbelievers it's the great white throne judgement seat Found in Revelation 20:11-15.

This is a judgement of works for the purpose of salvation.

Nobody that stands before this seat will be found worthy to go to heaven.

Because of the value God places on us, His creation, He wants to spend eternity with us.

That happens when we put God first and confess him as our Lord and savior.

Unfortunately, we know that not everyone will make that choice to follow God.

Jesus prepares us for the reality of what can happen when we choose to walk with Jesus and those we care about don't.

Verse 34-36

Jesus knows that everyone who hears the Gospel will react to it in a different way.

When its all said and done, we are either going to make God our priority or we are not.

That word “sword” does not refer to a time of mortal combat between believers and unbelievers.

The sword signifies conflict that will be unavoidable.

“Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?” 2 Corinthians 6:14

We are so diametrically opposed to the world and what it stands for that there is a guarantee of conflict.

Where can we expect this conflict to come from?

Verses 35 & 36 (**Read**) make the grim reality pretty clear.

All we can do is stand on the truth, put our trust in Gods promises, and have faith that God is in control and will carry us through.

2. Put God first by loving God more than anyone else.

Verse 37-39

There is nothing in this world that we should love more than God.

This doesn't mean that you shouldn't love your family.

Your family is a gift from God.

Don't love your family to the point that they stand between you and God.

When we place anything above God, even a family member, for any reason, including love, we make them an idol.

God is warning us not to remove Him from his proper place in our lives.

God wants our full devotion to Him, and if we are being honest with ourselves, we have no choice but to admit that He deserves nothing less.

How often do we go through our day serving the ones we love so intently, by checking off our to-do list, that we find that we don't have time left for God.

When we intentionally or accidentally replace God's position in our lives with something else, we make ourselves unworthy of Him.

I understand that this is a hard reality to accept but let me ask you this one question.

Do we love our family more by checking off the to-do list or by being an example of what it means to live for Christ by keeping God as the top priority of our day?

What does it look like when we make God our top priority?

When we are willing to take up our cross and follow.

This means that we are to take up our cross, just as Jesus did, ready and willing to sacrifice everything for a God who has given us all that we have.

“Then He said to them all, “If anyone want to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me”.” Luke 9:23

How often do we have to do this?

The decision to prioritize God in our lives needs to happen every day.

It's intentional, it's deliberate, and it's a critical step in our daily routine.

3. Put God first by ministering to his people.

Verse 40-42

When we help, or welcome, a brother/sister we are welcoming Jesus and will receive the same rewards in heaven that the person we are helping is worthy to receive.

How does ministering to Gods people equate to putting God first.

If we read ahead in Matthew, we find the true recipient of those that we minister to.

“For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you took care of Me; I was in prison and you visited Me...Whatever you did for one of the least of these, brothers of Mine, you did for Me.”

Matthew 25:35-36,40

When we minister to Gods people, He sees it as ministering to Christ Himself.

Take a minute and look around our sanctuary this morning.

I can assure you that there are plenty of opportunities to serve God through serving his people all around you.

The heavenly rewards we get for putting God first in this way can never be taken away from us.

We also get a blessing here on Earth too.

That's the joy that comes with knowing that we made a difference in someone's life by taking the time to meet a need that they could not meet on their own.

Conclusion

God deserves to be a priority in our lives.

We do that by:

Acknowledging Him for who he is.

He is the author of all creation.

He is the beginning and the end

Loving Him more than anyone else.

Putting God first mean loving Him more than we love anything else including our family.

This will create opposition with the ones that are closest to us.

We combat that opposition by standing firm on the truth of Gods Word, resting in Gods promise that he will never leave us, and by faithfully continuing to seeking God's direction through prayer.

Ministering to His flock.

Serving those around us is the same as serving Jesus himself.

By putting others before ourselves we make serving God the priority and not or ourselves.