

# FIRST (SCOTS) SERMONS

## “FAITH OVER FEAR: TRUSTING GOD’S PROVISION”

Scripture Lesson: Matthew 6: 26-27

*This sermon was preached by Pinckney Smith on Sunday, February 9, 2025  
at First (Scots) Presbyterian Church in Charleston, South Carolina.*

### Matthew 6: 26-27

*26 Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?*

### Faith Over Fear: Trusting God’s Provision

Good morning,

I want to start today by asking you a simple question: Have you ever found yourself lying awake at night, worrying about something completely out of your control? Maybe it’s a financial struggle, a health concern, or uncertainty about the future. We’ve all been there worrying about what tomorrow holds. I personally have experienced the burden of worry many times, whether it was worrying about an upcoming test, what someone thinks of me, or worrying about writing the sermon you are hearing now. However, my most recent experience with worry has been during my college application process. Earlier in the fall I spent many nights stressing over essays, ticking boxes, and writing about myself wondering if my extracurriculars would be enough to get into certain colleges. During this time, I spent weeks trying to perfect essays wondering to myself if they would be good enough to get in. Each time I submitted an application a wave of anxiety would pass through me, and then the long waiting process would come. Each day I would check my email waiting for some kind of update, hoping for an acceptance letter, but fearing rejection. Since the fall I have grown in my faith, and I no longer spend nights lying awake worrying. Instead, during those times when I start to worry, I turn to my faith and, I trust in the Lord knowing that he cares for me deeply and, I must trust his divine process. Today, I want to remind you of something powerful: God never intended for His children to live in fear and anxiety. Jesus tells us plainly in Matthew 6: 25-27 that we don’t have to worry about our needs, because our Heavenly Father already knows what we need.

This passage is part of one of Jesus’ most famous teachings known as The Sermon on the Mount. At this point in Matthew’s Gospel a lot has happened in Jesus’ ministry. He has been baptized by John the Baptist, He has survived being tested in the wilderness for 40 days, he has called the first of his disciples, and now crowds have gathered due to news of his teachings and miraculous healings. Take a moment and imagine the crowd. Hundreds of men, women, and children have gathered upon a hillside to hear Jesus speak. Many have never heard anything like his teachings before. Now let’s think about who the people were. What were they worried about? Unlike me they were not stressing about any college admissions, but instead they were wondering where their next meals would come from. They were worried about food and how they would provide for their families. They were worried about clothing and staying warm during the coldest of

nights. Many that came to hear Jesus were poor looking for answers. Each of them was just trying to survive until the next day. Jesus sensed this and reassured their fears saying “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 than food, and the body more than clothes?” He then pointed to the birds and said, “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.” Unlike humans, birds do not plant fields, harvest crops, and store food in barns but still God continues to provide for them. Jesus then separates us from the birds saying, “Are you not more valuable than them?” This passage has comforted me during times of anxiety. When I had questioned whether my application was good enough or what if I didn't get in, his teachings were there for me. Jesus tells us that if God is there to care for the birds, then imagine how much more he will care for all of us?

My last highlight today is when Jesus says “Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?” This is a powerful message. Still today despite knowing of God's reassurance of providing for me I still worry. I know that I will continue to worry even within my final semester of senior year, whether its competing in lacrosse for a state championship or studying for a big exam, I know that I will continue to worry. Four years from now when I'm eventually graduating from college I will still worry. I will worry about where I will work, what I will do, or where I will live. But through all this continued worrying I will know deep down in my heart the message that Jesus told to the crowds on the hillside - do not worry for God knows exactly what it is that I need, and I know that he loves me deeply even more than the birds he feeds and sustains. I know that when I worry, I am able to find peace through prayer, and by talking with God my fears of the unknown are put to ease. So now as I look back on my time stressing over my applications, I think to myself did worrying actually help anything? I saw an analogy online that said worry is like a rocking chair, it gives you something to do but it never takes you anywhere. When I was constantly checking my email for college updates, my worry didn't change the outcome. It didn't make my essays any better. And It didn't get me into a school faster. It just exhausted me. Many of us spend our lives like that—constantly “checking” for signs, obsessing over what's next, and fearing the worst. Here Jesus is saying to stop, step back, and put your faith in the lord.

I will leave you with this. As you go through life Remember that you are more valuable than the birds of the air, who God feeds and sustains. God knows exactly what it is that you need, and he will provide for your needs. So, the next time you are worrying about anything whether it is something as significant as a sick loved one, a large financial burden or if it is as small as the outcome of tonight's Super Bowl, remember to place your faith in the Lord that God has a plan for you.