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**Dear heavenly Father, we worship You this morning with our tithe and offerings. We pray for the courage to put You first in our lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.**

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**AUGUST 7, 2021**

## **When Joseph Bates put God First**

Joseph Bates was considered a mad man when he put God first. Even then, he didn't give up. What can we learn from Joseph Bates today that will help us put God first in our own lives?

He was a retired sea captain when he first heard William Miller's message of Christ's soon second coming. He was convinced it was true. Bates was the kind of man who put God first in everything, so he gave his energy, his money and even sold his house to help spread the news of the Second Coming.

However, great personal sacrifice followed as Bates's son rejected the message and left home angrily to start a career on the high seas. Bates doesn't give up even when everything he hoped for didn't happen. The year 1843 came and went—and Christ did not return. Then the Great Disappointment of 1844 shook the faith of Bates and the other Millerites. They were a laughingstock for those around them and were forced to rebuild their lives in utter poverty, having sacrificed everything for the cause.

Bates and others returned to their study of the scriptures to find that instead of signalling Christ's

return, October 22, 1844 was the date Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary to intercede before the Father on behalf of believers.

But hardships were constant. One day Bates didn't have anything to eat at home. He pled with God and promised to remain faithful no matter what happened. That day an envelope arrived with enough money to sustain him. God had inspired someone to send this money in preparation for the day Bates needed it most.

As he continued to study with friends, Bates discovered the truth of the seventh-day Sabbath and shared this with his fellow believers, James and Ellen White. This small group of leaders soon established the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which has grown into a worldwide movement today.

*Joseph Bates put God first, even when he was laughed at. His courage inspires us today. Jesus gave up everything to redeem us and His love compels us to put His kingdom first in our own lives. As the deacons collect the tithe and offerings, we are challenged to put God first.*