

Religious Affection and Enthusiasm

by Dean Taylor

This sermon emphasizes the importance of having genuine religious affections and enthusiasm in our spiritual life. It delves into the history of revivals in Boston, highlighting the need for passionate worship, discernment of false emotions, and the balance between zeal and discipleship. The message encourages fervent love for God, the casting out of fear through perfect love, and the fervent worship that elevates the soul to holiness.

Scripture: Psalms 100:1, 1 Peter 1:8, Matthew 22:37, Revelation 3:15, 1 John 4:18, John 15:11

Topics: "Genuine Religious Affections", "Balance of Zeal and Discipleship"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of having genuine religious affections and enthusiasm in our spiritual life. It delves into the history of revivals in Boston, highlighting the need for passionate worship, discernment of false emotions, and the balance between zeal and discipleship. The message encourages fervent love for God, the casting out of fear through perfect love, and the fervent worship that elevates the soul to holiness.

Transcript

All right, well the message that I have today is going to be a series. I'm going to speak three sermons, at least three, and it's going to be on the place of emotions in the spiritual life. So the name of the series is going to be at the place of emotions in the spiritual life.

And so I'm going to at least do three, I believe, on that theme, and they're going to be these three. Number one will be, and will be today, is religious affection and enthusiasm. That will be the message for today.

The next one will be depression and spiritual anguish. And the third one will be the sanctified feeling of abandonment and the spirit of adoption. And so today I would like to focus on religious affections and enthusiasm.

Praise the Lord. So for the text today, I want to get right into Psalm 100. Turn your Bibles to Psalm 100.

It's a jubilant song. It's filled with praise and worship and shouting to God, and I could not have asked for a better selection of songs that were shared, asked for today, and it was a wonderful selection. And so in this psalm, we have these words.

Psalm 100 from the New King James. Make a joyful shout to the Lord all you lands. Amen.

I'll say it again. Make a joyful shout to the Lord all you lands. Serve the Lord with gladness.

Come before His presence with singing. Know the Lord. He is God.

It is He who has made us and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise.

Be thankful to Him and bless His name for the Lord is good. His mercy is everlasting and His truth endures to all generations. Amen.

Amen. What a wonderful psalm. And the psalmist gives us here this idea that when we come before the Lord, we're actually coming before Him with the singing in our heart, this praising of God.

And I think the Holy Spirit knows that there's something that happens to us when we're worshiping Him and praising Him and coming to God's presence. And that's why we start with singing in our services and things like that. It's God has ordained it in our hearts that way to rejoice and to praise Him.

The New Testament passage that I would like to look at is first one verse in 1st Peter chapter 1 verse 8. 1st Peter chapter 1 verse 8 praising God of who Christ is and those things it says in verse 8. 1st Peter 1 8 whom having not seen you love, though now you do not see Him, yet believing you rejoice. And here's the good part. With joy inexpressible and full of glory.

Hallelujah. He's saying here that even though you don't see Christ now, it's so wonderful and it's so good and you have so much. But in faith, whom having not seen you love, though now you do not see Him, yet believing you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.

Again, today is going to be talking about religious affections and emotions and enthusiasm that we're going to be looking at. You know, my personal life, I guess by nature, I tend to be a bit on the emotional side, particularly for a man. You know, I cry a little easy for a man, I think.

And when I was younger, even more so. And I don't mind that. I think it's kept me soft before the Lord.

And, you know, I've naturally in my journey have been attracted to things that are passionate. It rings a bell in my heart. But growing up, I grew up in a difficult time in the Dallas-Fort Worth area in Texas.

And it was a time in the 80s where a lot of the big, exciting, huge ministries were falling. And they were being exposed as being things that were terrible. Names like Jimmy Swaggart, Jim Baker, Mike Warnke, and Robert Tilton.

Maybe many of you don't know those names. But in the 80s, they were big names. Mike Warnke was a comedian, was the first Coliseum service that I ever went to.

Thousands of us were there. And I was, one of my first services, I was probably in 10th grade or 9th grade. And I was there and he had so many incredible, fantastic stories about coming out of Satanism.

And he was a high priest Satanist and all these types of things. And it was incredible. And there was such an enthusiasm that was there.

Well, later, we found out the entire thing. And I mean, the entire thing was completely made up. He was exposed as a liar and all his different things were just a lie.

And the whole ministry was based on a lie. That, with several different of those big mega churches that fell in my high school days, really had a temptation for me to grow cynical, to grow agnostic, to give up on the faith. However, by the grace of God, there were men in my life that were very sincere about the Bible.

And there was something inside of me that just rang in my heart when I'm around somebody who's sincere for the word of God. My pastor that I had, his name was Dennis Bald. It's a local pastor there at Glenview Baptist Church.

A man named Robert Morris, who actually now is a big preacher in the area. These people were people that I saw that were very sincere, but yet they also lived a godly life. In my conversion, when we were in Germany and Tonya and I were really wrangling over just superficial Christianity and wondering how our life is just such, it's not real with God.

And it was the testimony of Keith Green in the book, No Compromise, that I'd say more than anything, got ahold of us. And this was the whole point. Just seeing a life, seeing a life that was totally and completely and zealously dedicated to Jesus Christ, gripped us in such a way that we got on our knees and said, Lord, no compromise.

And that's the kind of thing that I want in my life. And I want more about it. And if I've seen that, God has helped me not to grow cynical when I see different people fall or different things that are happening, and been able to see examples of people that passionately love the Lord.

When we got out of the army, we moved to Tyler, Texas. In those days, Tyler, Texas was a place of a lot of exciting ministries. Last day's ministry, where Keith Green was, was in that place.

David Wilkerson was there. Mercy Seat was there. Leonard Ravenhill was there.

And David Rousseau was there. And being around David, who had a sincere and passionate and dedicated life to God, was made an also big impression on me. I was able to see Leonard Ravenhill preach later in his life as an older man, and seeing a man who has kept the faith zealously and passionately up to the end in the years.

I remember he had a thing on Thursdays, I believe. We called it a prophet meeting or something, where all the people were invited, preachers and things were invited. Men were invited to this.

And he was getting older, and he would sit in a chair. This is Leonard Ravenhill. And I remember it was a big room, kind of like this, but probably much bigger.

And I'd come around the back to watch when I was peering through the back. And I remember there was this little group of guys that started talking. And I'll never forget Leonard Ravenhill pointing over and saying, are you serious with God? And just totally bringing the attention that we're here to worship God.

So when I've seen that, and I've got a taste of that, and I want it more in my life. And there's been times in my life where I just get cynical. I get frustrated.

I lose my vision. I get too proud. I get too academic.

Whatever the case, I come back and I remember some of these men who have lived these zealous lives. Again, seeing David Bersow, and I was there for 10 years going through college and the different things with graduate school that was there, our family was there. And being around just radical Christianity for the

first 10 years after we got out of the army was also very healthy for me.

After our college days there, we moved up to Pennsylvania and I was able to be with a man named Denny Keniston. And that again, was a man that was incredibly on fire for the Lord. His passion and his desire for God was just incredible.

He was always the kind of guy that was looking, what can I do more to save souls, to pray more, to have revival more. And that also made an impression. I think of many stories.

I can remember one that stands out. When they were building a new building in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, Brother Denny had gone to a zoning meeting. And all the guys from the city that were there with the zoning meeting to get their buildings through, got talking about hunting.

And you know how guys in Pennsylvania do, they all have their big hunting stories. And so they're sharing all their hunting stories. And Brother Denny's just listening to all this as it goes around the table.

And finally, they look over to him and they said, so do you hunt? Yeah, I sure do. So, oh, tell us about it. Where do you hunt? I hunt in Africa.

Oh, really? You hunt in Africa? What do you do? I hunt for souls. And you got to know Brother Denny, he meant that kind of passion. And so his heart for hunting for souls as he brought this zoning meeting into a zealous time of revival and looking at God was the way he was.

And that's been a blessing to me as I've seen. And you know, when I walked into that, there's been, as I've learned some things, you know, with enthusiasm, with revival, with passion. You know, I would say in those days when I was in Pennsylvania, it was quite impressive, the zeal that was there.

I mean, literally, the hymn books would hum and buzz from the fervency of the preaching. The prayer meetings were packed out. Children's, young people's lives were being changed.

And there was a lot of things that were happening very zealously and very passionately. As I look back on that, and you think of some of the testimonies and some of the things that I saw and wonder, how did this person, that this happened in that age, end up here? And it's been very shocking, very hard for me. If there's one thing that I've learned, as I guess, when I've looked at this enthusiasm, this revivalism that's there, that I've been a student of it.

In history, I've been a student of it in my life now, but it must be backed up with discipleship. I think if there's one error that we made, because it was so zealous, there was, there's revival, and then there's revivalism theology. And I believe that God can speak to us and come to us in fervent power.

And I'm going to talk about that today. But with that, the great commission that Jesus commanded us, that we should go and make disciples, teaching them all things that were commanded. There was a bit of a tendency, I think, to feel that if we just hit the altar hard enough, it would just fix everything, and the discipleship would not follow.

Again, I've been, I was very impressed with the zeal, but I believe God brings revival. And I've seen it historically, and historically I've seen it where it starts, and it seems like there's no doubt about it. God has anointed a certain spot in an area, but then discipleship did not follow.

Church life did not follow. Brotherhood and accountability did not follow, and they did not follow the pattern that we see in the book of Acts. But it's so easy then, when we see these mistakes, and we see these things, to throw out the baby with the bathwater.

A perfect example is when the Mennonites went to, of Lancaster County, went to Africa in 1940. They went there passionately and zealously. We're going to be missionaries.

We're going to leave Lancaster County. We're finally going to be missionaries. It was a big deal.

And when they got there, they ran into the East African revival. There was lots of sensationalism, and the whole thing got messed up, and it was sort of a discouragement of seeing what happened after that. When you read that, and you look at it through history, it's easy to throw the baby out with the bathwater, to say, yeah, that stuff, it's no good.

And what I would like to do is to look at some of the passages today, and look at some examples in history of maybe combining it, of having the zeal and the passion for God in our worship, in our life, but then following it through with discipleship, and church life, and all things of Jesus Christ. You know, we are here, and I, you know, obviously took this job here at Sattler College, or there at Sattler College, and as I've taken that, obviously, there's a lot of emphasis on the academics, and I love that. I am so stretched personally, just listening to the things the students talk about, and the different things that go on, and I've even wanted to audit different classes of the different people.

I'd love to hear Brother Finney's and the different ones, classes that are there. But in that, there tends to be, there has, there's always a tendency, with the emphasis of the academics, that we lose this passion, that it becomes too academic, that we become just an academic people, and I know that's not the heart. In our very mission statement, one of the things that we want to do there at Sattler College is to inflame the hearts of the students.

Here at Followers of the Way, I know that's our passion, and as we work with the different students that come here from Sattler College, and the other colleges that come, it is our heart to be able to do those things. We talk about a lot of theology, because a lot of things are messed up on this, in this generation, but with that, we need to remind ourselves of the passion that God calls us to in worshipping him. There's a book I ran across years ago.

It's a book called Religious Affections. It's by Jonathan Edwards. I don't know if anybody had a chance to read it.

It's an excellent book. Of course, we disagree with a lot of Jonathan Edwards' theology, but this book in particular is very good. We're living in a place that has had to fight the balance between enthusiasm and being sort of academically dry for quite a long time.

This is the place of the Puritans. This is the place where you're trying to find a balance between academics thriving, between being stoic and serious-minded with passion and zeal, and as I'm going to show you some examples right here in Boston, the baton has now come to us. How are we going to be different in fulfilling this balance between studying the word of God like the Bereans did, but yet also being filled with passion? What's interesting about Jonathan Edwards when he wrote this book, Jonathan Edwards became president of a new college called the College of New Jersey.

Anybody know what became of that college? Yeah, thank you. It became Princeton. And so he was there.

He died quickly because of some interesting thing he did with a vaccine with self-inflicted in his throat. But unfortunately, he was there and there. And while he was the president of this college, he was also working with the missionaries and the American Indians that were here.

He was also, if you read church history, Jonathan Edwards has got to be one of the best husbands. His letters to his wife were incredible. And the back and forth, that couple was a really special couple, the way they expressed their love for each other.

And he wrote over 75 books and hundreds of messages and preached all over different places. And in that, yet he says some things in this book that challenges just having an academic or dry understanding of God. John Wesley, who was in those days, the difference between the Calvinists and the Armenians was a huge rival.

I mean, literally, people would throw rocks at each other. You know, the Calvinists would throw it at the Armenians and the Armenians would throw it at the Calvinists and point at Wesley and call him the son of Satan and back and forth and all that. And it was very heated between them.

But yet Wesley was so impressed also with the message of this book that he printed it for his Methodist and had an edition for them as well. And so in this, there's some balances that I would like to encourage us that some some takes from this in this in this book. Here's one of the quotes from Jonathan Edwards in the book Religious Affection.

He says this intellectual understanding is a waste of time if it does not produce holy affection in the heart. True spirituality must be something more than pure emotion. And yet we cannot be truly spiritual if our hearts are untouched.

You see the balance that he tries to make. It has to be more than emotion. But if your heart is not touched and you just have a dry orthodox understanding of coming to God, you're missing it.

Remember, this is the president of the future Princeton University writing seventy five books. He's a very of all the Puritans, one of the most academic minded. He goes on to say the person who has doctrinal knowledge and intellectual speculation only without the heart engaged is never truly involved with the business of religion or spirituality.

And again, thinking of the different extremes that was even happening in here in the Great Awakening and the Wesleyan revivals that were in this area at the time, he makes this profound statement in the book. He says there are false emotions and there are true because a person is very emotional, does not prove that he has any true religion. But if he has no emotion, it proves he has no true religion.

Interesting, isn't it? In other words, just because somebody can talk good or act spiritual or whatever, it's no guarantee they could be hypocrites. We know we can think of hundreds of examples again when I grew up in the 1980s of people that had hundreds of examples like this. But it's not true the other way.

If you are a true child of God. If the spirit of God bears witness with your spirit, that you are a child of God. If you are true with God, you will have real emotions.

If you have emotions, you're spiritual. But if you are truly walking with God, it's going to affect you. John Wesley put it this way.

He said that it's kind of like any other thing you have. God gave us feelings, emotions to tell us something when you're if your fingers is feeling a pain around a candle, it's because it's getting it needs to be moved. We have hunger pains.

We have things that God has built within us to tell us something. And just like that, emotions were given to us for a reason. Now, I'm going to talk in the other series about how these emotions can get run away with and how we can lose ourself with depression and things like that.

But but at this point, for this sermon, let me make the point, though, you were given emotions for a reason. Yes, we don't need to be led by our emotions. As Edwards is right.

We don't want to say that you're a Christian because you can stomp your feet or be or something like this. But. God did give us heart and love and passion and anguish and emotions for a reason.

John Wesley, in a sermon called On the Nature of Enthusiasm in his day, there was a book written that criticized the concept of enthusiasm and gave the Greek literal translation, which made it talk about being caught up from something of God or something of spirits. And so people would bring this against the Methodist in a in a derogatory way. And speaking on Acts 26, 24, he says this, John Wesley speaking in writing, he said, in quoting the Acts 26, 24, and Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself.

And then John Wesley continues. And so says the world. And so say all the world, the men who knew not God of all that are of Paul's religion, of everyone who was so a follower of him as he was of Christ.

It is true. There is a sort of religion and it is called Christianity, too, which may be practiced without any such imputation, without seeing you're beside yourself, which is generally allowed to be consistent with common sense. That is a religion of form around and outward duties performed in a decent, regular manner.

Remember, this is the guy who coined the term Methodist. He believed in regular manners. He believed in and form.

He believed in order. He would have order that make us all blush. You may add orthodoxy there to a system of right opinions.

Yeah. And some quantity of heathen morality. And yet not many will pronounce that quote, much religion has made you mad.

But if you aim at the religion of the heart, if you talk of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, then it will not be long before your sentences pass. Thou art beside thyself. So here in Boston, we have an interesting legacy.

I did some research for this sermon. I realized that just about all the big names of revival history has gone through this town. And Boston has dealt with these extremes of revivalism, extremes and being dead formalism, academic agnosticism and all these types of things has been very much showcased in here.

And as it's our turn now here, as God has planted us in the Boston area and how we're going to to how we're going to respond, it's interesting. I have felt a calling in my life with historical theology to look at some of the ways that these expressions have been worked out in times before us. So I'm going to give you some examples just right here in Boston.

Forget anywhere else, just here in Boston. It's been handed down to us. How have people dealt with this balance of revivalism and sensationalism and dead stuff and those types of things? Well, it's one of the most impressive first things that really stand out.

Well, actually, there were some earlier ones with John Eliot. But coming into the 1740s, on October 12, 1740, George Whitfield preached in the Boston Common to 23,000 people. 23,000.

In those days, there was only 17,000 people living in Boston at the time. It was interesting. I know you've heard the stories probably on most of the tours that we give, but Benjamin Franklin had heard that you could hear George Whitfield a long ways off.

So he actually went and clocked a half a mile away to see if he could still understand the preaching of George Whitfield. And he could. And he wrote that he could.

And so it was amazing, this kind of affirmancy. But what kind of man was George Whitfield? And so what did people say of him when he wasn't preaching? Was it sincere? Was it, what did he say about himself? It's interesting the way even George Whitfield wrote in his diary about his time here at the Boston Common in 1740. He said this.

He said, a sight perhaps never before seen in America. It being nearly dusk before I had done, the sight was more solemn. Numbers, great numbers, melted into tears when I talked of leaving them.

You think of the idea of Paul leaving and how the brothers fell on his neck and crying. These kind of emotions of allowing ourselves to be moved in this way. And Whitfield talks about this.

But what did other people say? It's interesting that the response here in Boston, there was a big turmoil of people that were complaining about the Great Awakening stuff that was happening here. As a matter of fact, do you remember that song we read, the first song we sung today? Anybody remember what it was? We're marching to Zion. John D. Martin tells a story.

In those days, that was one of the first hymns that Isaac Watts had written. And he was a Puritan. And as he was writing that, in those days, they only would allow you to sing the song.

Singing spiritual songs based like that were something that was kind of new. And so they would make them go to another room to sing these spiritual songs. And so this group then of the spiritual ones who wanted to sing songs, couldn't do it in the church service.

You had to go to another room and sing the other song. And so now, with that in mind, listen to verse two. John D. Martin makes a point of this.

Let those refuse to sing who never knew our God. But children of the heavenly king, but children of the heavenly king, may speak their joys abroad, may speak their joys abroad. So it seems like I never have been able to sing that song without imagining that point.

There was people here in Boston that started calling this new, the enthusiastic ones, the new light. And those who didn't were called the old light. So you're either a new light church or an old light church.

God forbid that we turn it into these types of things. But Jonathan Edwards invited George Whitfield to preach in his local congregation. And he writes this in his diary.

The congregation was extraordinarily melted by each sermon. Almost the whole assembly being in tears for the great part of the time. Edwards was gone on some preaching trip or someplace at the college.

And Sarah Edwards was there when she was seeing Jonathan Edwards' wife. And she reported in her diary the effect that Whitfield was having on the church. And she writes this.

It is wonderful to see what a spell he cast over an audience by proclaiming the simplest truths of the Bible. I have been upwards of a, I have seen upwards of a thousand people hang on his words with breathless silence, broken only by an occasional half-suppressed sob. A prejudiced person I know might say that this is all just theatrical artifice and display.

But not so will anyone think who has seen and known him. He is a very devout and godly man and his only aim seems to be to reach and influence men the best way. He speaks, and here's the phrase I really want you to hit.

He speaks from a heart aglow with love and pours out a torrent of eloquence which is almost irresistible. He speaks with a heart aglow with love. Do you speak with a heart aglow with love? Jonathan Edwards, speaking in the Religious Infections, says this on this, on the difference between emotions and the intellect.

He says, he's speaking of our spiritually inspired emotions and feelings. He says, the kind of faith which God requires and will accept does not consist in weak, dull, and lifeless wishes raising up but a little above the state of indifference. God, in his word, greatly insists that if we be earnest we will be, quote, fervent in spirit and our hearts will be vigorously involved in our faith.

Be ye fervent in spirit serving the Lord, it says in Romans chapter 12. If we are not serious about our faith and our wills and desires are not strongly determined, we are nothing. The things of our faith are so great that there can be no place in our hearts unless it is lively and powerful.

In nothing is vigor in the acting or of our inclinations so required as it is with faith. And in nothing is lukewarmness so odious. True faith is always powerful and its power is first demonstrated within the heart, the site of its source.

Edwards went on in this book saying, faith alone is not enough. It must be worked out both in our passion in our life, and then he goes on to say, and with the deeds of following this. Goes on even to be speaking that judgment is a judgment that we will be given by not rendering by our words or our attitudes, but by our works that we have here on earth.

Very surprising book. So coming out of that whole great awakening time, in the 1840s there was another revival that hit this area. And remember what Edwards said, there are false emotions and there are true.

Because a person is very emotional, does not prove that he has any true religion. But if he has no emotion, it proves that he is not true, has no true religion or no true spirituality. They use that word religion in those days as their spirituality.

So in the 1840s there was a revival going on here and it was a little bit more fluffy. But then there was a devoted church here that's it was that called a man by the name of Charles Finney. And he came in the 1840s to this to this area and actually lived in what was at the time there was a place called the Marlboro Hotel.

And I looked this up just last night. Anybody, if y'all have got to know Boston much, you know where the TJ Maxx is and there's like this these the those these stairs that are there. It's like some cement stairs.

That area there was a place called the Marlboro Hotel, which a Christian ran ministry that had a church there that was a radical church. In the midst of all this kind of fluffy revival, they called Charles Finney. And Charles Finney lived there for months and worked with the church that was there in a real passionate revival.

And he says this as he began to preach here. He says, I preached with all my might for two months. So, you know, we have such light commitments these days.

These men are amazing. I preach with all my might for two months. The spirit of the Lord was immediately poured out and there became listen to this and there became a general agitation among the dry bones.

I was visited at my room almost constantly every day of the week by inquirers from various congregations in all parts of the city, and many were obtaining hopes from day to day. A little after that, a few years later, in 1858, remember the Civil War started in 1861. Revival is building.

People are getting right with God in 1858. The Old South Church, the real fancy one down there, the Anglican Church, that's our Episcopal Church that's down there. They started having a businessmen prayer meeting.

That huge church was packed out with people just with the coming and getting serious and getting right with God. Finney attended that. Yeah, yeah.

Charles Finney. I don't want to get not our Finney. Charles Finney attended that and said, but there was such a great confidence in the prevalence of prayer that the people very extensively seemed to prefer meetings for prayer than meetings of preaching.

The general impression seemed to be we have had instruction until we are hardened. It's time to pray. The answer to prayer was constant and so striking as to arrest the attention of the people generally throughout the land.

It was evident that in answer to prayer, the windows of heaven were open and the spirit of God poured out like a flood. Amazing, amazing. This was building and people were getting right with God.

But then, unfortunately, a few years later, America fell into the terrible heresy of war. And I will call it a heresy because Christians were getting involved on both sides of the war, killing each other, the great heresy of war. And this building up of these different spiritual revivals, you see this all over the world, dies down and gets squashed during these times of these heretical times of war.

But so coming back after the war in 1877, another famous revivalist hits Boston. Anybody guess? D.L. Moody. So now D.L. Moody comes and he's coming to Boston to be a part of that revival.

And over on, now it's an apartment complex down in the Back Bay area, they set up a temporary stadium and he had 6,000 people and the 7,000 people that were coming and pouring and trying to get right with God. It's interesting when I read and studied the effects of that revival, there was a fundamentalist church 300 feet from where the tent meeting was, was not all that happy with all that he was seeing. And he writes that he was trying to discern and find his way through this revival and discern this.

And that's something we do have to do. We have to try the spirits. The next one that comes, I think, is the most impressive, but interestingly, the least known about.

And I'm going to ask you why. So now we're coming to the year 1916, November 12, 1916. And there was a fiery preacher that came to Boston, probably the most dynamic and fervent and spirit preacher that's probably ever been.

Anybody want to guess? It was Billy Sunday. So Billy Sunday came here and preached to crowds of 55,000 people. Through that, they built him, okay, where it is now, between Northeastern University and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, they built a huge temporary stadium there and built a place for him to preach there.

In his time that he spent here were 133 messages. He preached to, and I quote, 1,320,000 people. 64,484 people walked the aisles and made a decision to follow Christ.

Now, I ask you, why don't we ever hear about a revival in Boston of one million people? And I wonder, you know, of looking at the different passions and enthusiasms and things, it's funny, no one quite claims Billy Sunday in that camp. I think he was very sincere, but there was something, I don't know, that just, maybe I need to study him more. It's interesting, I read some of the newspapers of the day for that time, and I found a journal from Harvard, the student newspaper from Harvard, and they said, why aren't we inviting Billy Sunday here? All of the professors are sneaking to the revival, we should invite him here.

And they weren't bringing him to Harvard. But there was something in that that, I don't know, I tend to get the feeling that it was motivated more with politics, it was wrapped up with the different agendas or something, and it just did not have the lasting power of some of these other moves of God. And so, as we look at these emotions and these things, that we have to discern ourselves, discern through that.

And then the last one I'm going to bring up is the one of Billy Graham. Billy Graham preached to over 50,000 in the Boston Common, and by the time he's finished in here, an estimated 115,000 people were ministered to through Billy Graham. Billy Graham had some incredible integrity that he used with his ministry about the accountability that he had in his life of living a righteous life and that kind of a thing, and I think that helped him with his claim.

Again, it's a little too political and wrapped up with politics, but nevertheless, I'm impressed with this kind of passion. Now, just a spattering of the more famous names that have been here in Boston, this area that we now have had the baton handed to us in the city of Boston. How are we going to respond? How do we discern through these things? And remember what Edward said, there are false emotions and there are true.

Because a person is very emotional, it doesn't prove that he has any true religion. Billy someday would literally leap off of different platforms and land on the, he would jump on the platform and knock things over, and yeah, he was quite a showman. By far the biggest showman I've ever heard of when it comes to this kind of revival preaching, but yet it seems to be almost the most amount of those that responded and not didn't stick.

There are false emotions and there are true because a person is very emotional, does not prove that he has any true religion. But let's not get cynical. I saw lots of faking when I grew up, but Edwards goes on to say, but if he has no emotion, if you have no emotion, if you're dry today, if you become cynical and there's

nothing that moves you, it does prove, according to Edwards, that you have no true spirituality.

Let's look at some of the Bible says. In second Thessalonians chapter two, verse nine, we hear that Satan does have the ability to inspire fakes just because people are having miracles or having different things that it doesn't mean that this is something that's of God. Second Thessalonians chapter two, verse nine says that is the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan.

Listen to this with all power and signs and false wonders. So many people chase signs. Many people chase different miracles that are happening.

The Bible clearly states that just because somebody has these even miracles and false wonders. Remember what Jesus said on judgment day? He didn't say many of you will still claim that you prophesied and cast out demons. He said, many of you will say you did this.

And so this, there's something that's, even if you have the power to do this, it does not guarantee that you're right with God and revelation 16, 14. It says this for they are spirits of demons performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the almighty. First John chapter four, verse one gives us what we should do in our day and age.

First John chapter four, verse one, beloved, do not believe every spirit. What would we have done when we saw Sunday jumping off the pews and doing a somersault or whatever and landing? It's impressive. But in all the things that we eat and we have today, there's now with the internet and all the fanciful things and all the things that can be done.

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. And that's in his day and age. How do we test the word of God by how do we, how do we test, excuse me? How do we test them by the, how do we test these prophets by the word of God? And we must know the word of God.

So therefore studying the word of God and understanding it and not to becoming anti study or anti intellectual or anti, I'm not, uh, you know, being those that do not want to dig into the word of God is also wrong. We are to test these spirits, but in the middle of all this, we must continue to be passionate. So what, what is about those people? What do we say about them? One of the things we think of as in Jesus, when he speaks of, uh, in the parables of, uh, Mark four 19, excuse me, Mark four 16, where Jesus is throwing out, you know, the, the parable of the soul, or he throws out the different types of seed.

Remember the seed that draws, goes into the ground. I'll read it to you. Mark four 16.

These likewise are the one sown on stony ground, who, when they heard the word immediately received it with gladness and they have, and they have no root in themselves. And so endure only for a time afterwards, when tribulation and persecution arise for the word sake, immediately they stumble. I believe in revival.

I believe that God wants to inspire us and to inflame our hearts to worship him, but we must continue to grow roots roots and to be disciplined and to be accountable and to, and to let that develop in a deeper way. That joy of the, of the, of the short commitments in the short, um, little, uh, uh, confessions is not what God wants. He wants us to be zealous and passionately following him, but then he also wants us to grow roots and Romans chapter 12, verse nine, very important verse.

And when we decide and discern in our day and age, having the passion, understanding the times, understanding the false prophets, understanding how we have to discern between the two and Romans chapter 12, verse nine, it says this, let love be without hypocrisy, abhor what is evil. These are passionate words were to love what is good and to abhor what is evil. Do you play with what is evil by watching the movies or watching the entertainments of this world, or are you but we should abhor what is evil.

These are passionate feelings cling to what is good. And he keeps going. Listen to this emotional stuff, be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love and honor, giving preference to one another, not lagging and, and, and diligence fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer, distributing to the needs of the saints given to hospitality.

That's a passionate Christian life. Amen. That is a passionate Christian life.

What's the example of the church that comes to your mind immediately. When you think of church in the Bible, that's rebuked the hardest for just being black. It's what? Yeah.

Laodicea. The, the lukewarm church of Laodicea and the, the, the severity of the rebuke that they're getting to being this way is astounding. The, in, in Rome, in Revelation chapter three, verse 14, and the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, right? These things say the amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

I know your works that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth.

I remember, um, a sermon I read, I listened to years ago by Francis Chan called lukewarm and loving it. I mean, you all heard that sermon. He makes a statement in there is, you know, some people ask me, so, you know, so if you're lukewarm, can, are you still saved though? And he, and he, and he talks about, I don't know, can you be saved and be spewed out of your mouth? I mean, he made a joke about, you know, that let's look at the Greek for the word spewed, you know, and then try to come up with a way to get our way out of that.

It's a severe statement. Lukewarmness is not a right with, is not acceptable to God. And at the end of that rebuke of the Laodiceans, what does Jesus tell them of what they need to do? Verse 19, Revelation three, verse 19.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chase it. Now listen, therefore be zealous and repent, be zealous. This is an exhortation to us.

It's a rebuke to us to be, to be passionate, you know, good businesses, good leaders, good coaches, understand this stuff. Probably one of the most famous football coaches and an example of leadership was a famous one, Vince Lombardi. And Vince Lombardi, when he became and wanted to try to, to get his men excited about the battles that he had with, that they wanted to have in their, their, their world with their football.

He has this statement. He says, if you aren't fired with enthusiasm, you will be fired with enthusiasm. I'll say it again.

If you aren't fired with enthusiasm, you will be fired with enthusiasm. I love it. It's, it's a, uh, it's the idea of knowing what it means to be completely on purpose.

Now, Deuteronomy 12 says this 12, 12. And now Israel, what does the Lord, your God require of you? Let's narrow it down. Let's bring it down.

And now Israel, what does the Lord, your God require of you, but to fear the Lord, your God, to walk in all his ways and to love him, to serve the Lord, your God with all your heart and with all your soul and to keep the commandments of the Lord and his statutes, which I command you today for your good. This is, this is a beautiful, beautiful idea. It's beautiful.

Jesus telling us in Luke 24 32, this is when the, as the Jesus is, is, is resurrected, came back to this earth and the, the road to Emmaus people had met with them. And then they, they spent some time with him and listened to this passage, Luke 24 32. And as they were talking and they were sharing their experiences and what it felt to be with Jesus, they said, and they said to one another, did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us on the road and while he opened the scriptures to us in that beautiful, did not our hearts burn within us.

You know, emotions can lead us down the wrong path. We can get hung up on things. We can get caught behind them and fall into depression.

And we're going to talk about that in other sermons, but God made us emotional creatures. And this passion that you have for God, this, this zeal that he wants us to worship him and loving one another and loving him and serving him. He wants it to be filled with this kind of that our hearts burn with love for him.

You know, love is the primary emotion. And John, when, and finally Peter, you know, after Peter was repenting, the, the, uh, Jesus appears to John. And, you know, we know that it seems like most of the early Christians would have, would have felt that Jesus asked Peter three times, do you love me? And because how many times did Peter deny Jesus three times? There seems to be a correlate correlation perhaps, but it's interesting when you read it and you think about the heartfelt thing that was happening between Jesus and Peter and John chapter 21, verse 15, just listen to it in this way.

So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, so imagine him sitting there and they're, they're having some time and they're eating breakfast and it's kind of an intimate moment and Jesus is looking over to Peter and he says, Simon, son of Jodah, son, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these? And the love there, he was, I got, do you, do you love me? And it's interesting, Peter responds with a different kind of love, the love that has a filial, the, the feeling, the brotherly, that the, the sensation he says, yes, Lord, you know that I I love you. And he gives this passionate word to it. And then Jesus said, then feed my lambs.

Then the moment he said to him a second time, Simon, son of Jonah, do you a got fail? Do you love me? And he said to him, yes, Lord, you know that I feel you. I know that I love you, Lord. And he said, then tend my sheep.

And again, he said it to him the third time. This time, Jesus used his own language. Simon, son of Jonah, do you love, do you feel you owe me? Do you really have that? And he said to me, Lord, you know, all things, you know, that I feel, you know, that I love you.

And Jesus said, feed my sheep. This passion, this love can cure so many of our spiritual problems. You know, a lot of times we, we spend our, our spiritual life caught up in fear, caught up in fearful about what's going to happen tomorrow, fearful about how things are going to go, your final exams, fearful on all the

different things that are happening in your life.

And he's giving us a promise here that scripture says that love and these emotions will cure us of this. And, you know, fear is actually nothing, a light thing. Tanya, you quoted this in our, in our agape this, this morning and this afternoon, that it says in Revelation 21, eight, but the fearful, the King James of fearful, the new King James cowardly and unbelieving.

He puts it in a list, the fearful, the cowardly, the unbelieving, the abominable, the murderers, the sexual, immoral, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars. So have their part in the lake, which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. He puts fearful and cowards in that category.

He wants us to be zealously following him. And he gives us the principle that love can do that because in first John four, 18, he says there is no fear in love. So instead of just trying to be courageous, trying to, to cure this fearful, this fear thing by rationalizing or trying to go through some 12 steps things or something, the Bible, John, who John knows love, he's the one who, who put his, his, his head on Jesus's breasts and loved him.

And why do you think John was, was the most was the most loved? Why do you think, why do you think? Because he was the most lovable because he put his head on his, you know, it's like when you have a, a, a, a, a kitty cat, you know, which are the ones that you really love the most. It's the most lovable. And so when we come and we come to God and, and, and we're loving him and we're, it's like, that's why David with all his mistakes that God, he loved David because David loved him so much.

And John first John four, 18, this apostle of love says there is no fear in love, but perfect love cast out fear. And he says, because fear involves torment. You don't want to live your life with torment, do you? But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

Love God is the cure for these things. Loving God is the cure for these things. And when this happens for us, it, it, it changes everything.

Ephesians one, 18, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened Ephesians, the apostle Paul now writing to the Ephesians and giving them the cure, the eyes of your understanding, be enlightened that you may know what is the hope of his calling. And listen to all this gushy language. What are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saint and what is the exceeding greatness of his power towards us who believed according to the working of his power and Isaiah chapter six, when it speaks of the worship that's going on in heaven, it says there in Isaiah six, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts.

The whole earth is full of his glory. Now this is what happens in the next verse. And the post of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out and the house was filled with smoke.

Now, I don't know what the loudest thing you've ever been in your entire life. I've been around like a big jet engine. I've been around, unfortunately, some really loud rock concerts, you know, and I've never couldn't imagine pillars in heaven, shaking, trembling, but it says here that the worship is so vibrant and it's so crying out to God that when John looked there or when Isaiah looked there in Isaiah six, the pillars of heaven were shaking from the sound of the crying of holy, holy, holy.

So now is this a historic Christianity? I'm coming to the end here. My last point, I think my last point, what are they? How did the early church worship? Was it more of a liturgical? Was it more of a sober's time? Was it was it first Timothy 2:18? He says, I desire, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy

hands. Clement of Rome, which was it was a companion of the apostle Paul.

Speaking of, he says, full of holy design, you stretch forth your hands to God almighty. Let a little later in chapter twenty nine, let us then draw near to him with holiness of spirits, lifting up pure and undefiled hands unto him. You just get the impression that these people were were just worshipping him and praising him.

Manicious Mark Felix writing in about the one one one ninety one, just a little indication we get. He says, we surely see the sign of the cross when a man adores God with a pure mind, with hands outstretched. And you just get this impression that there's someone just worshipping God, just and he's literally taking like the hands of the the looking like the cross here.

And then this one by Clement of Alexandria, maybe could you make the argument that maybe this is some sort of a liturgical, maybe it's stuffy. And then listen to this one by Clement of Alexandria. Volume two, page five thirty four.

The Antoninus Fathers, he says, we who we who raise the head and lift the hands to heaven. So we also we raise the head and lift the hands to heaven and set the feet in motion at the closing utterance of the prayer, following the eagerness of the spirit directed toward the intellectual essence, endeavoring to elevate the body from the earth along with our prayer, raising the soul aloft, winged with longing for better things, we compel it to advance to the regions of holiness, magnanimously despising the chains of the flesh. Wow.

So the idea there is just this fervent worship and praise of God. Can you do that in Boston? I don't know. I think we can.

I think that we can find the balance between having zealous and passionate worship of God to let our prayers and our love be sincere and and heartfelt and not to fall into the air as a false miracles and false things and and be able to be instructed in the word of God carefully. First, Peter one eighteen says when and this, he says, whom we have not seen you love, remember, though now you do not see him yet believing you rejoice with joy, inexpressible and full of glory. And the last verse I give you is John 15, 11.

Jesus telling us all these things and he says, these things I have spoken to you that my joy may remain in you and that your joy may be full. And so as I look over the this this whole idea of enthusiasm and and and passion for God, I think of the examples that I've seen in my life. I've seen a lot of fakes.

I've seen so many fakes that it's tempted me to just give up and be cynical about it. But I've been fortunate enough in my life to also see men and women of God who are passionately serving God, loving him. And I've seen that's the way that I want to be.

I want to be able to discern through these different things and allow encourage all of us that our worship and our prayer life and our and our time to God would be filling our our our hearts with that. We can say like those that walked along with Jesus, didn't our hearts burn with us when we have time in sermons, we have time in our worship, we have time in our devotions. Didn't my heart burn? And I pray now that as as this this that the saints that have gone before us in this little city of this big city of Boston and all the different things that have happened here and it's now handed to us and the whole great cloud of witnesses is cheering us on.

We can learn from the excesses. We can learn from the mistakes and we can grow in grace and be fervent in spirit. So let's let's pray.

And then I'll hand it over to back to. Oh, God, we thank you, Lord. We thank you.

We thank you. You are a great God. You are an awesome God.

We praise you today, Lord, and we want to be instructed in the spirit. We want you to show us, oh, Lord, what it is you want us to do, Lord, and how you want us to worship. We don't want to be fake.

We don't want to put on things. We certainly don't want to be led into error. So, God, we do, though, want to fervently and passionately serve you fervently and passionately, even in our sorrow, even in our contrition.

We want to be passionate and loving you from a sincere heart. So, God, I pray sends your holy spirit to us just like you promised to anyone who asked and send your spirit to us, Lord, that we can worship you and you would be glorified in these people. It's in Jesus name we pray.

Amen. Turn over the chair.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/hXosbO6pjCg.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/dean-taylor/religious-affection-and-enthusiasm/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net