

Lukewarm No More - Part 6

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of full devotion to God, denying oneself, taking up a cross, and following Jesus Christ, and warns against the dangers of lukewarmness and immorality.

Duration: 9:56

Scripture: Matthew 7:21, Matthew 16:24, John 14:6, 1 Corinthians 9:27, Ephesians 4:26, James 1:22, 1 John 1:8

Topics: "Lukewarm"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on a business meeting he attended where the topic of rejection was discussed. The message on rejection resonated with many people, as evidenced by the high distribution of the tape recording of the sermon. The speaker acknowledges his own weaknesses and limitations, as well as the time constraints we all face. He emphasizes the importance of living a faithful and committed life, using his own 35-year marriage as an example. The speaker also highlights the reality of spiritual warfare and the need to actively engage in the Christian walk, rather than living a double life. He challenges listeners to examine their own level of passion and commitment to Jesus, and emphasizes the importance of a deep relationship with Him. The sermon also touches on the topic of missions and the need for a greater walk with Jesus in order to effectively engage in spreading the Gospel.

Transcript

We get so uptight about immorality. Immorality is wrong. It's an epidemic in the church.

On our book table we have one of the most significant books on that subject ever written. Lois Mowdy, a dynamic woman from Colorado Springs, gave her husband a birthday present, a hot air balloon. He was killed in that balloon.

She stood there by his body and experienced supernatural grace, just in case any of you have gone through some heavy suffering. There's a testimony of the fire, God's fire, in a moment of awesome suffering. Lois Mowdy lived as a single woman for many years, and then during that time, facing very unique temptation, wrote that amazing book, you can pick it up free, called *The Snare*, warning the church against immoral entanglements.

Thousands of ministers have fallen. It's a sad tale. Some missionaries have fallen.

I just had word this week of another missionary that committed adultery out on the mission field. It's still a small percentage, and I believe it gets exaggerated. I actually fellowship with thousands of people who have not fallen.

They never get anything in the newspaper. Nobody talks about the pastor. Can you imagine the news tomorrow morning? Pastor so-and-so arrives at 40 years of age, spiritually, and has lived in total loyalty and commitment and faithfulness to his wife for 35 years.

Forget it, they're not going to print that in the newspaper. They like the bad news. It travels fast.

I want to shout from the housetops. Jesus Christ changes lives. Jesus Christ keeps people from immorality.

I was hooked on pornography at 16. Christ changed my life. He set me free from pornography, though I can still have the temptation.

I did have the temptation. In myself, I would never be satisfied with one woman. I'm more in the Muslim thing.

That's much more appealing. One for secretary of work, one for general, one for the bedroom, one for the kitchen. That's what the Muslims teach.

I get this Christianity thing, one wife. I thought, oh, no. But I've just celebrated 35 years of marriage, faithfulness, and a wonderful marriage in loyalty and in godliness by God's grace.

So if God can keep a character like me, and as far as I know, I've been on fire for Jesus every day since my conversion, not in the absence of struggles and doubts and buckets of cold water thrown by God's frozen evangelical fish, all kinds of weird things, but in the midst of those things, in the midst of the tears, in the midst of the tragedies, we lost one of our ships. Imagine getting a phone call, hey, your ship's gone. Still there, sitting on a rock off the Beagle Channel in South America.

A couple of years later, I got another phone call. Just been a hand grenade attack on your ship in the Philippines. Two teenage girls at 19, both flown into eternity dead.

The Lord Jesus said, if any man or woman come after me, let them deny self, take up a cross, and follow me. Is that going to be easy? Is that going to be easy? I don't think so. We have been brainwashed in America, in our churches, into thinking there's some easier road, there's some easy way.

We come to Jesus, and we get our little cup filled, and we have little praise sessions, and we read our Bibles, and we live happily ever after. But the Word of God teaches that we are in spiritual warfare. The Apostle Paul said, I buffet my body.

If Paul had to say this, what about us? And I'll just tell you, Frank, if you don't know how to buffet your body spiritually, I can almost assure you that you're not a disciple. You may be saved by the unadulterated, beautiful, powerful grace of God, but you're not going on as a disciple, because to go on as a disciple, you have to know what it is to deny self, take up a cross, and follow Him. To go on as a disciple, and get out of the doldrums of lukewarmness, you have to at times be willing to buffet your body, where the flesh is pulling you one way, and you have to take the Word of God and the Spirit of God, and buffet your body, and go God's way.

I learned that, fortunately, as a baby Christian, because of Billy Graham's influence, because of Donald Grey Barnhouse's influence, Oswald J. Smith's influence, and because God brought into my life as a baby Christian, dynamic, life-changing Christian books, as we are attempting to distribute this morning. This is real. I couldn't get up and just fake you out.

I couldn't get up and pull off some kind of little drama this morning if this wasn't real. My wife's here to testify, if you were doubting Thomas, and I love doubting Thomases. A lot of the people who joined when O.M. was first born are still with me today, and a high percentage of them are much smarter than me.

Most of them are not my temperament. They don't have the exact same struggles that I have. I am extrovert, I'm choleric, I'm sort of aggressive, I've got too much energy, and that's not true of everybody.

In fact, in our work, a lot of our recruits came out of Cambridge University, they came out of Oxford University. They were English, they were phlegmatic. Initially, I turned them off, but God then turned them on, and they have been laboring in O.M., many of them, for a quarter of a century.

We, by the way, have 2,600 permanent staff in 70 nations across the world and train another 5,000 or 6,000 in the summers and Easter's in our short-term programs. Brothers and sisters, this thing is real. We come to Jesus.

The Holy Spirit indwells us. He produces this fruit. We yield to Him on a daily basis.

We repent whenever we're convicted of lukewarmness or pride or arrogance or any other sin. In fact, the Bible says, another one of my top 15 major problems in life was anger. The Bible says, don't let the sun go down upon your anger.

Anger almost destroyed me. I don't know if any of you wrestle with anger. I am a miracle of God's grace.

More over my sex problem or over my anger problem than even my sex problem, which has competed with each other all of my life since I was 5. God can give victory over that anger problem. Christianity is real. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

I want to ask you, are you experiencing the reality of this? It says in James chapter 1 that it is possible to be diseased. That's a terrible verse. If we hear the word of God, we don't respond, we don't obey, we don't begin to walk in the light.

We deceive ourselves. The most subtle, awesome form of self-deception. That's why C.S. Lewis said, we have the tendency to think but not to act.

We have the tendency to feel but not to act. And if we go on thinking and feeling without acting, someday, he went on to say, we will be unable to act. In one of my earlier books that brought me 22,000 personal letters, I read them all, didn't answer all of them, but I answered most of them.

A lot of the people that wrote to me in response to a message I gave at the Urbana conference way back, I think in the late 60s, on the subject of schizophrenia, spiritual schizophrenia, have confessed to me that they were living a double life. One foot in the world, one foot in the church. One minute singing the praises of God, the next minute, a bad attitude, someone murmuring, losing temper in the home, or into some kind of lust trip.

That's not God's way. I want to ask you, are you on fire for Jesus? If we push missions, as we're trying to do this week, without seeing people come into a greater walk with Jesus, which is what we're trying to do this morning, in His fullness, in His grace, through repentance and brokenness, for the Word of God says in Peter, humble yourself, humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. And there's nothing like arrogance and pride that can keep us from the full flow of God's Holy Spirit.

Don't do it. I was in a business meeting just before I left England about 10 days ago, and the man who spoke to me in the business luncheon or evening meeting, just before I was there, I guess two weeks before, he spoke on the subject of rejection. Rejection.

They distributed more of that tape than any other tape. They always make tapes at these sessions. And they distributed more of that tape.

And the Holy Spirit so mightily used that. This has been on my mind because I just long, I long to reach out. I'm weak.

I'm inadequate. I'm limited in time. We all live in time capsules.

I got 10 times more to do my short time in Houston than I have time to do it. Some of you have that every day, you business people, you executives, doctors, so many people I meet, to be really honest in America, they are hard-working good people. And I praise God for that, and I have the privilege of fellowship with them.

But I've been wrestling with how can I be more grace-awakened in what I say? How can I minister to hurting people? How can I minister to rejecting people? Many people today have been hurt in their church experiences. Some of you may be in this church because in a previous church you went through some very heavy hurt. There's new brands of extremism breaking loose in some churches today.

Everybody's excited about it. I'm fearful because I see how easily people get hurt in the church. We have unrealistic expectations.

We live in sort of a fantasy view of what the true Christian life is all about. And don't understand how to repent. Don't understand how to deal with failure.

Don't understand how to bounce back when we're rejected, when we're hurt, when things go wrong. And you can't join a church without things going wrong. In fact, if you don't want anything to go wrong, let me tell you, I'm sure you already know that you're on the wrong planet.

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