

Audio ■ Don't Leave Your First Love

by Hans R. Waldvogel

This sermon emphasizes the importance of maintaining a deep, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, highlighting the need to overcome distractions and worldly influences to stay rooted in the first love for Christ. It stresses the significance of spending dedicated time alone with God to allow His love to transform and empower believers to overcome the challenges of the world.

Scripture: Revelation 2:4, Ephesians 6:10, Ephesians 3:16, Revelation 2:7, Revelation 3:21, Romans 8:9, Revelation 3:3, Revelation 3:20, 1 Corinthians 2:9

Topics: "Intimacy with Christ", "Overcoming Distractions"

Description

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Transcript

The Lord is my light and my salvation, but how gracious of the Lord Jesus Christ to become our director and our guide, and the fact that he is willing to have me follow him. He is willing to lead me day by day and step by step, and wouldn't I be a fool if I didn't follow him? Wouldn't I be? And yet, how many, many people are such fools. They go their own way, and for a while it seems all right, but after a while they get into the bog and they can't get out anymore.

How often we see that. I found out in my business when I still was working with metals that all metals, silver, platinum, gold, and whatever the metals were, they yielded to certain laws of nature. I had to learn the business from the bottom up, and it was a hard job at first.

I spoiled many a job because I didn't know how to apply the fire or the acid or how to go about it. I had to learn that by myself, but I was always so happy when I found out that there was one way that worked perfectly. Once you've discovered that way, you can go to work and make your masterpiece.

It works. I remember many times I was very, very happy when I had discovered the method of working with gold and with platinum and with diamonds and rubies, and I found out just how to do that. There were times when I had pretty good teachers.

I had a fellow that had gone through himself and he taught me these tricks. They say there is a trick to every trade, and there is. Carpenters know that.

Shoemaker knows that. Seamstress knows that. Anybody that's learned a trade knows that there are tricks to every trade.

That is, there are certain methods of usage that work, and they work wonders. I found out how we got a job one time to make an engagement ring. I was going to say an elopement ring.

It was an engagement ring, and we'd never seen one like it. Well, the man next to me worked it out, and after a while he became my boss, and then when we found out how to work that, I had a wonderful job. I turned them out like hotcakes.

I knew just how to go about it. I told you once before how the Lord helped me to make an invention of a flexible bracelet made of platinum, and I think today, after 40 years, other jurors are still wondering, how is that made? And it worked so perfectly, but they couldn't figure out how it was done, and I didn't tell them how, but there was a certain way that worked perfectly, and it's that way in the spiritual life. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? Oh, that's the desire of every young man, to live pleasing to God.

How am I going to go about it? I remember when I was a young man, 18 years old, I was stricken with what seemed to be the galloping consumption, and I said, God, if I have to die, I want to die like you want me to die. That was my prayer. There's a way to live, there's a way to die, but above all, there's a way to walk and to please God, and you know, that will make a difference in all eternity.

Oh, Epaphras prayed for the Philippians, constantly for the Colossians, that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God, and I think there's no holier, happier ambition for a child to have than to be pleasing to Jesus as a child, or a young man to be pleasing to God as a young man, or a middle-aged person to please God as a middle-aged person, a married person to please God as a husband or as a wife, or an old person to please God as a grandpa or a grandma, and there is a way, and God shows us the way. Jesus Christ himself is the way, and when you've discovered the way, it works, we say in German, wie geschmiert. You know what that means? Like lubricated.

Wonderful, but if you don't find the way, it just doesn't work. Isn't it wonderful that Jesus says, he that followeth me, I'll see to it that he shall not walk in darkness. He shall have the light of life.

No wonder David says, the Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? And every one of us has the privilege to adopt this light, to have it shining within us, and through us, and from us, but like I had to learn my business, I had to learn my trade, and it was a job the boss demanded of me. He paid me, he demanded of me to put in eight hours at least every day doing my best, getting out to work, and I wanted to please my boss, and when I got into the ministry, I said, God, I'm going to be as faithful to you at least as I was to my earthly boss.

I saw there was a danger of letting down when you have no earthly boss over you, then you can do as you please a good deal, but I said, nothing doing. I'm going to take Jesus as my boss, and he's been such a wonderful boss. I said, if I ever get into the ministry, I'm going to try the Bible, and it works wonders.

It'll work wonders for all of us, every one of us. Oh God, how foolish people are. I saw a little boy one day, he's sitting on the sidewalk.

Somebody, I think his father or grandfather, had given him a board, a wooden board, and a hammer and some nails just to keep him busy. Here he was sitting on that board and hammering these nails through this board, and every time they came through, they struck the sidewalk, and they went crooked, and I stood there, and I had to laugh because every time a nail went crooked, he would get as mad as a horse and kick and yell at that nail and at that hammer, and then he'd take another nail and do the same thing, went crooked again, and he'd get mad again. The third nail went crooked, and never dawned on him that the fault was not with the nail, but with him.

He was not following the law of nature and doing the thing like he should have done it. I met a married couple some time ago. They're young people.

Both of them are nice-looking young people, and they have nice, they have a lovely family, children, such beautiful children, and they have not been married so awfully long, but they care for one another. If you've got two tomcats and tied them together by the tail and hung them over a marsh line, you'd have a scene like you see in that home every day, practically, and what is the result? Why, they're breaking up the home, they're cursing their children, they're cursing themselves, they're making life miserable for themselves, and simply because they don't follow Jesus. And then I went to another home.

A few days later, these young people are also married a short time, or two years maybe, have a beautiful child, and they just built themselves a lovely home. Man has a job, and he likes his job, and I saw that he told me, you know, since we got married, we love one another more and more every day. And God was in that home, and it was a pleasure to come into that home, and just to sit down with these people, to play with the child, to see the sweetness of this home.

It's a home like God wants it, and like God could make it for everybody, and all married people in all the world could have God in their homes, and could have the peace that passes all understanding, and could see their children grow up like vines by the side of their houses, and could bring their children up in the fear and in the admonition of the Lord. What would you think of a man that took a saw and sawed off his own nose just to spite his face, because he doesn't like the looks of his face? And yet, that would be no more silly than these young people that cannot live in peace. They could just as well if they would follow the Lamb, if they would follow Jesus Christ.

Listen, if you will follow Jesus Christ, you shall not walk in darkness. Those shadows will flee away. Those fogs will go.

You'll have Almighty God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and could any human being desire anything more wonderful than that? You may never own a home upon this earth, and you may never run a car yourself, and you may never possess the riches of this world, but to have God. Think of it. Of course, we've heard it a thousand times, but you'll never know it if you don't follow him.

You'll never know what it means until you get up and turn away from self, and hear the voice that speaks so lovingly. And why is it that they make such a job of it? Well, first of all, because we cannot see him. But you know, if we saw him, he couldn't do for us what he can do for us now, since he has beset us behind and before and laid his hand upon us, and since he has become the life-giving Spirit that fills this very body with resurrection power and makes this very body his body.

Praise God, makes my mind his mind, makes my hands his hands. Every member of my body is his, a member of his body, his the head. Oh, glory of all glories, hallelujah.

And I, I am beside myself with joy over my Jesus. It is such a wonderful thing, and you know, some people think I'm old. I don't think so.

I can't imagine myself being old. But some time ago, when I passed through a sty, and not in the subway, but in Germany, there was such a sty, and the grandma with the child was on the other side, and she said, get out of the way so grandpa can get through. I looked around to see where grandpa was.

But at any rate, I've gone through this life as a boy, and as a young man, and now a middle-aged man, and I can tell you it works. We love Revelation in these days, because it's a, it's a marvelous revelation. Isn't it? And there is one scripture text that appealed to me so greatly.

Now I think that I can find it in a minute. And he that overcometh, oh yes. 21.7. Hang on to that.

Revelation 21.7. Suppose we read it all together, those of us who haven't. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. That verse.

And I wrote in the margin, God says that to me in this 20th century. It's been a guiding light in my young life. God says to me, and I was a boy at that time, but I realized that I was in enemy's country.

I realized that I was surrounded by enemies. I couldn't see them. You know, it's a funny thing.

I didn't know there was a devil. I knew from the book, but I never met the old boy until I was born again. And then I found out that there was a real Satan.

There was legends of them. Lucifer, Beelzebub, whatever their names were. And I found out that I had a fight on my hands.

No man that wroth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life. And God has much to say, especially in this last book of the Bible about overcomers. It seems that's all that interests God.

Isn't it strange? All flesh is grass. The nations shall be turned into hell. They shall be like chaff in the threshing floor.

The wind comes and away it goes. All flesh is grass. He shall sit like a refiner's fire and he shall purify the sons of Levi.

Many shall be tried and made purer than gold, but the wicked shall not understand. And throughout the book of Revelation, God is dealing with his church, but he shows us plainly that in that church there's a great company of people that will be cast aside. It's an awful thing when Jesus says, I'll spew thee out of my mouth.

That makes me tremble. Or when he says, I'll kill her children with death. Or when he says, remove thy candlestick out of its place.

And seven times the Holy Ghost calls upon the church. We really ought to be like Edwin said a while ago, be so thankful for the Holy Ghost. Beloved, we've got something.

We've got a friend. We've got a teacher. And he not only teaches the truth, but those who apply their hearts to him receive wisdom.

I heard of a girl in Switzerland that was very dumb. And she thought she was told that there was a woman that could drill a hole in her head and, and pour wisdom in there. And oh, she wanted to find that woman.

Well, God can do better than that. He gives you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. You know, when you really follow Jesus, as we heard a while ago, something very wonderful happens to you.

You know what happened to Adam when God had made him? Our colored brethren have an interesting song. The good Lord thought he'd make him a man. He took a little mud and a handful of sand.

He thought he'd make a woman too, but then he didn't know what to do. But anyway, when he had a little mud and a handful of sand, he made a man. He made him a man.

Glory to God. But you know, that man was good for nothing until something happened because God made it to happen. And when I stand at Grand Central Depot or in the Idlewild Airport and see the crowd and crowds and crowds, I say, my God, you really started something when you made Adam and Eve.

What a creation. And why such a creation if God is going to cast them off in that day? Why? Because among these people, there will be those that will overcome. They will fight the fight.

They will finish the fight. They'll press the battle to the gate. They'll put on the whole armor of God.

They will take the grace that God gives to them. And that's a very, very practical thing. And when seven times the Holy Spirit says, he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit said unto the churches.

He shows how important it is that we come to meeting to hear. I've marveled for 36 years, ever since I came here, at the things God gives us through the Spirit of God. I marvel.

Do you know where we would be if we had listened, if we had hearkened diligently? But you know that most people do not hearken diligently. You could have me give a lecture on how to play the violin. 36 years, let's believe now, for 36 years, I told you how to play the violin.

And of course, that was a scratch. That was the first lesson. And for 36 years, you've come to meeting three or four times a week, and I'll tell you what a violin is for, how it's built, and how to tune it, and how to play it.

And I play it for you 36 years, and you never touch the fiddle. You're not likely to learn how to play it at all. But that's the way many people come to this meeting.

They're told how to be filled with the Holy Ghost. They are told how to live an overcoming life. And there's only one way.

There's only one way, beloved. Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. If so be that the Spirit of Christ dwell in you.

And now the Spirit of Christ has come to make intercession for the saints according to the will of God, so that upon the altar of my heart, the fire of the love of Jesus will burn so briskly, and will consume by and by all the flesh and all the things of self, until I can say, I live no more. Christ liveth in me. But never mind.

If we don't do it, we might be surprised if we could go through the world and find how many friends Jesus has, how many lovers Jesus Christ has, not only in Pentecost, but in all the churches. We would be surprised if we'd find out how many overcomers there are. And I think the place where Jesus desires us most greatly to overcome is in this first call to the church at Ephesus.

We have been discussing Ephesus. Paul says, I have declared unto you the whole counsel of God. And now Jesus writing from heaven or sending from heaven says, I've got against you.

You have left your first love. And then he says, he that overcomes to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Dear Lord Jesus, I know you're in this meeting tonight.

I know you're here. I know that you have opened the way to the tree of life. I know that you've got the power to give me to eat of that tree of life of which Adam and Eve were barred, not allowed to eat and death reigned over all their descendants until Jesus rose from the dead.

But now they that receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life. And Jesus, I know you've told us these things many times and here you're talking to Ephesus, that wonderful church that had received the gift of the Holy Ghost, of whom God says that Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such a thing, but that it should be holy and without blame. You've left your first love.

What is that first? Well, I'm sure there are enough people in this meeting who have had a touch and the taste of the first love to know what I'm talking about. Do you know what happens to you when you got back? Yeah. You don't play with this heavenly breakthrough.

We had a couple in the faith home in Zion, young man and a young woman, and he began to make love to her. And she is, she's a robust sort of a girl, boisterous, noisy. And anyway, she wanted to do the will of God.

And she asked the Lord to tell her whether she should say yes. And the Lord says, don't you dare play with that young man's affection. Naturally, you'll say yes.

Now those were not the words he gave him, but listen, have you been playing with the affections of Jesus Christ? He gives me his heart and he will never be satisfied until he's got my whole heart. That's the first love. Who belongs to the bride of Christ? Well, the Bible tells us that he that has the bride is the bridegroom.

And you can turn that around and say, she that has the bridegroom is the bride. Who is the bride? Why the bride is the one that has said yes, with a vengeance, with her whole heart. Yes.

Without a question mark, Jesus says, give me thy heart. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. And Israel was not able to do that.

And so they backslid again and again. But now thank God he offers to set my heart on fire with his own love and to baptize me with the love of Jesus Christ. Beloved, no man can overcome without that love.

It is impossible. We are flesh. And as we heard a while ago, that which is of the flesh is flesh and is enmity against God.

Don't blame yourself. If you cannot love God with all your heart and you're torn between two, you don't know who is God. Is it Baal or is it Jehovah? Don't blame yourself.

You can't help it. It's because you haven't come to the fountain. It's because you have not followed Jesus Christ.

It's because you have not done what the Bible tells you to do. First of all, come out from among them and be ye separate and touch not the unclean things. These unclean things, they steal the love of Jesus Christ out of your heart.

And unless God Almighty gives it to you, that's what he did for the Ephesians. He filled them with the spirit of his love. You know that prayer that we often discuss, that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man.

Why? But we don't give him a chance to do that. Why not? Because we don't want him to do that. Everybody here can be a lover of Jesus.

God will give you that love. He will set your heart aflame with the love of Jesus Christ. I know what I'm talking about because he did it for me.

I was crazy for Jesus. Excuse the expression. I've seen men that were crazy for the love of a woman.

I've never been there, thank God. The Lord beat, beat them to it. And he beat me to it.

Well, ge weg mit deinen schmeichel ein, du kommst zu spät. Oh, how, I am going to be thankful to God throughout the ages of eternity that he gripped my heart, not just my affections, not just my feelings, but my heart. I don't know how he did it, but I know he wants to do it for all of his church.

That's what he bled for. That's why that heart of his was pierced. He couldn't go into the grave unless that heart was emptied of his blood for you and for me.

Oh, that heart is the heart of Almighty God. It stopped beating one day. God was dead and he died out of love and now says you've left your first love.

Oh, beloved, that's what's the matter. We've left our first love. Why? Because we're surrounded by enemies, all kinds of enemies, not devils that come around fooling it, you know, with green eyes and with a hollow voice and with goats horns and tails.

You'd flee from them, but he comes around as an angel of life. He's clothed in beautiful garments of white. He comes in every, every way possible to divert your attention from that voice that called you, come away, my sister, my love, my love, my undefiled.

Have you heard the voice of that thief that comes to steal your heart? You've left your first love. You can't help it. Beloved, God offers it to me.

God offers it to me, but it requires overcoming. There are other places where God calls upon the church to overcome. He says there is that adulterous, that jezebel of a woman that diverts my servants and teaches them to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication.

And it really takes overcoming. And then he talks to the church at Sardis, be strong and love not your life unto death and I'll give you a crown of life. The devil's going to cast you into prison, but here that overcome us shall receive a crown of life.

But here is the place where a person really has got to make up his mind to overcome, to abide in that first love. How do you believe? I sought that all my life so that today I haven't had time to study how to be a preacher. My whole life goes for that one thing, to abide in the love of Jesus Christ.

How do I do it? Why to stay with him, to spend all the time I have alone with God. Does he care? Well, look at the lovers of this world. Sometimes I've had to break them up.

I don't mean that I break up love affairs. No, God helped me. I wouldn't dare do that.

But I said to a young minister whom you don't know, he'd go home with this girl after a meeting and then hold hands for hours till after midnight. Do you ever hold hands and look woe be gone? Oh heavens, those love songs, there's nothing to it. There's no bottom to that business.

But have you ever heard the voice of Jesus calling you? Come alone, come give me your time. Beloved, something will happen to your heart that couldn't happen any other way. I'm talking to these young girls here in this row here.

There was a girl in Italy, Catherine, she's called St. Catherine of Siena. She was only six or seven years old when Jesus called her. People in those days made much of going to church.

And one day while she was walking on the street, she had a vision of Jesus and Jesus called her. Her brother tried to pull her away, but he couldn't. She told later how that the Lord Jesus Christ asked her, will you be mine? And from that moment on, that girl, her parents couldn't do anything with her.

Whenever she had time, she did her work well during in the house. She had to do chores. And when the parents noticed that she was praying all the time, praying all the time, they gave her the dirtiest work to do.

And her mother tried to beat it out of her. But after a while, after a few years, her father saw that God wanted that child. And so he built her a little chamber, the second floor, made a regular prophet's chamber out of it.

And he allowed her to go in there as much as she wanted to. And from that day forth, Catherine stayed in her prayer closet. Then her mother saw too that God was after that girl and brought her her meals.

And she stayed there until she was 18 years old, alone with Jesus. The historian tells that she wouldn't go to bed until the church bells rang at three o'clock in the morning. She'd pray until then, and then she'd snatch a few moments sleep.

And then she'd go back to her contemplation and being alone with God. And when she was 18, Jesus said, now I got a job for you. What? She says, Jesus, don't you love me anymore? I want to be alone with you.

He said, I need you. I need you. God made that woman stand before kings, before popes.

She spoke the word of God so that the very pope trembled before her. They told how that when she looked at them, they saw the eyes of Jesus Christ. That woman was a prophetess.

And she said, Lord, why don't you take the cardinals? Why don't you take men and make them preach and prophesy? Jesus said, I can't get them. They all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus. Beloved, that condition has prevailed in the church of Jesus Christ to this day.

Everybody seeks his own, but Jesus Christ is seeking his own. He's seeking that for which he died. He says, I've got this against you.

You've left your first love. Listen, when you've left that, that candlestick is removed. I've seen that happen.

I've seen what happens when people give their hearts to Jesus. And I'm jealous. I know that if we, as a Pentecostal assembly, don't fulfill, God will find Roman Catholics, and he'll find Baptists, and he'll find Methodists, and he's got them.

And when they see the face of Jesus, they fall in love with him. When they hear his voice, every other voice will be silent. They won't hear it anymore.

Their hearts will be for him. And they'll say, had I a thousand hearts to give. Lord, they should all be like that.

Is there a greater call to any human being? But you know, that call becomes unreal unless the Spirit of God has time to strengthen you with might in the inner man. Something happens. He sets ablaze lights of the Holy Ghost.

You're changed inwardly. And the Bible says, he makes you understand what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passes not. And then you'll be filled with all the fullness of God.

That's the first love. When we talk about the early days of Pentecost, that's what God began doing in those days. And the Lord told me one day how few people in Pentecost have stayed there.

And I know it's real because one Sunday morning in a German meeting, I made a statement that shocked me. I thought I better stop and apologize. I told the people how many out of 100 million fulfilled.

And I said, it can't be. And later God spoke to me in Zion. He says, do you know how many there are? And the exact number he told me.

But beloved, you and I are called. When Jesus calls us to overcome, there's something to overcome. And don't you think that you're going to overcome by your intellect? It takes the armor of God.

It takes the weapons that are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. It takes. And I am jealous over our young people.

Oh, what an opportunity boys and girls have. Young people have. What a glorious call.

And listen, young people, if you don't fulfill, somebody will. God will have some Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Babylon, and they'll make a vow. They'll take a vow not to defile themselves with any of the dirty stuff.

Nay, world, I turn away. Though thou seem fair and good, that friendly outstretched hand of thine is stained with Jesus' blood. If in thy least device, I stoop to take apart.

And what people call Pentecost today, beloved, that's the place to overcome. Everybody runs to be entertained. I went to a church, somebody, some two preachers advised me to go.

They said, it's a wonderful latter rain revive. Oh, they said, gifts and powers are manifested in that place. So I went there.

Well, you know, I'm sort of an old hand at this thing, and I, they couldn't fool me. They were prophesying, they were interpreting tongues, they were healing the sick, and they did other things. They advised their girls to paint and they hired a roller rink so that the young people could mash up.

Latter rain. You've left your first love. Beloved, when that first love goes out of your life, the devil moves in.

It were better for them that they had never known the way of truth than having known it and having been delivered from the pollutions of the world through the blood of Jesus Christ and the knowledge of the son of God to turn again like the dog to his vomit. But here's Jesus, Jesus Christ, I know like Edwin said, you've been here all day and you're calling with a plaintive voice, Adam, where are thou, child of my love? Where are you? Where were you today? Where are you? That holy bright groom will come as a thief in the night. And why at night? Oh, he's coming for those that are watching for his coming.

Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he comes, shall find watching. And it's very practical. I used to advise our young people, spend at least one solid hour out of 24 alone with God.

I know you can't get through any other way, but I know what God will do for you. When you come to Jesus, you banish all your friends, all the voices of earth. I know that husbands and wives must pray together to fulfill, but for that hour, you're going alone with God.

Alone with my heavenly bright groom, until he sets my soul on fire with his own love. And what the law could not do, God does. God finishes it.

He does it. Now, I'd like to ask the Lord, why do I talk like this tonight? Is there anybody in this place that can make that narkeila? Is there anybody that feels a little conviction, just a little conviction? Oh God, I know there are some that have tasted of that first love. They know what it is.

And God's after you. It won't be long now, children. Our salvation is nearer than we know.

It's coming. Prophets today are prophesying a nuclear war and the destruction of mankind. That doesn't interest me at all.

Oh, I've heard a voice. I know that voice. Jesus, I know your voice.

It's the voice of my beloved that calls to me saying, open to me, my sister, my love, my dog, my undefiled, underscore that, undefiled. Beloved, it's the overcomers that, where do they overcome? Oh, it may seem like a hard job, but you're overcoming Satan. The devil doesn't mind your advertising.

He doesn't mind your great big noises and all that sort of stuff. But when he sees a loving heart, he knows that he is defeated. That love of Jesus, what it is, none but his loved ones know.

Oh, let us give our hearts to Jesus anew. And I know today it sounds fantastic for anyone to be called upon to take off a day from your job and lock yourself somewhere in a garage or a barn and call on the Lord. And yet, I don't know how anybody can get through without some such effort.

I couldn't. Preacher and all that I am, I couldn't stand. I don't want to stand.

I want to hymn, oh my Lord Jesus, every atom of my being must vibrate with the fire of your love.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/6vDAdv6xsPl.mp4>

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