

First Love

by Hans R. Waldvogel

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prioritizing our relationship with Jesus above all else, and the consequences of losing our first love.

Duration: 26:56

Scripture: Ephesians 2:4

Topics: "Devotion"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a passionate love for God. He explains that when we were dead in our sins, God's great love for us ignited a fire within us. This fire of love for God should drive us to shout His praises, share the gospel, and be fervent in prayer. The speaker compares this love to the rising sun, which dispels darkness and dominates everything. He encourages listeners to prioritize their love for Jesus above all else, as it is what truly matters to God.

Transcript

He says, if any man love me, he will keep my words. And if any man love me, my father will love him and we will come unto him. You'll have company.

Oh, I tell you, you'll have the holiest company that anyone can possibly have. Not just the blessing once in a while. Oh, this mighty word of my Lord Jesus Christ shows us how deeply he longs for your love.

That's what it is. Jesus Christ, do you care whether I love you? Do you really want me, poor miserable creature, to love you? My, that changes my outlook in life. That changes my outlook for all eternity.

Oh, this great God of whom we read, thou art fairer than the sons of men. Grace is poured into thy lips. God hath highly exalted him and given him a name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth.

And not only that, but he, by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created by him and for him and he is before all things and by him all things consist. You'd think that when a man like that or a creature like that or a God like that proposes his love to my heart, you'd think that the whole world would flock into his arms and the whole world would go wild with enthusiasm to think that so great, so beautiful, a bright room in whom is no fault and no wrinkle nor any such thing, no sin at all.

And now he comes to me, he knocks at the door of my heart and he says like he said to Peter, do you love me? All the zeal that Peter was able to get up did not satisfy Jesus' heart and he had a lot of zeal. He said, me deny you never, why I'll go with you into prison and into death and Jesus knew that that was all human. That never satisfies the heart of Jesus.

But after a while when Peter had learned his lesson and he'd seen Jesus bleeding and dying and when Peter had wept until he had no tears to weep anymore, then Jesus put his arm around him and said, Simon Peter, lovest thou me? The very fact that God Almighty thunders from Mount Sinai those wonderful words, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul and with all thy strength, expresses something very wonderful. Expresses to me the fact that God is deeply in love with me. Why he wouldn't talk like that to me? If he didn't want my love, but he wants me to love him with my whole heart.

Oh, he asks for my heart and that is the wonderful thing because everybody is able to give his heart to this great God. And how is it that we don't all open our heart and all rush into his mighty embrace and say, Jesus, I love thee, I know thou art mine and if I had a thousand hearts to give, Lord, they should all be thine. But if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, we have it in the seven epistles to the churches where Jesus Christ is dealing.

And you know that's what he's been dealing with in these two thousand years. He's not been dealing with an apostate church, with half-hearted, backslidden, half-baked Pentecostal people, but he's talking to overcomers. And the place to overcome is right here because the iniquity shall abound, not only in the world, but in the church.

Men shall be lovers of their own selves, proud, covetous, boasters, blasphemers, disobedient to parents. Those are the conditions that will prevail in the church. And because of that, the love of many shall wax cold.

Haven't we seen that? Haven't we seen that very thing happen? Haven't we seen people come with a fiery heart, giving themselves to Jesus, giving glory testimonies. And after a little while, they've grown sour. That brings to my mind a girl that was saved on the east side.

She was a beautiful girl. She had come out of the Roman Catholic Church, I suppose about 17 years old. And when she gave her heart to Jesus, she gave her heart really.

She was such a blessing. Every testimony that girl gave was clear and real. And it was in the days when women had to make their choice between short hair and long hair.

Fortunately, you don't have to make that choice anymore. There's a wig in your future. But she had to make that choice.

And she allowed her hair to grow while all the others bobbed it. She did it for Jesus' sake. And you know, then for years, I didn't see her anymore.

And one night she showed up and oh, it chilled my heart when I saw her. The very look on her face was expressive. She was not like she had been.

It wasn't the love of Jesus that was shining from her. It wasn't the warmth of the Holy Ghost when I shook hands with her. What had happened? She didn't give any testimony.

She didn't praise the Lord. What had happened? She had gotten among the saints. That's what happened.

She had gotten in among the saints that gossiped, talked. She had gotten in touch with the unrighteousness. And instead of overcoming, she had fallen for their deception.

And she had left the first love. Thank God she came back. Thank God she repented and she came back.

But oh, what does that mean to Jesus Christ when He says, if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ and He speaks to the church at Ephesus, that wonderful church that had been lifted. God says, because when you have He quickened. Look the difference between you and people in other churches and people in the world and you.

How did you get in among this crowd? Tell me. How is it that you're shouting the praises of God? How is it that you're now moved upon by God to go out the street corner, give out tracts, testify for Jesus everywhere? How is it that you're always the first and the last at prayer meeting? How is it that the blessing of God rests upon you so visibly and rivers of living water flow from your body? How is that? Well, the Bible tells us how it is. When you were dead in trespasses and sins, something wonderful happened.

For God, for His great love wherewith He loved us. Oh, that great burning heart of love cannot be satisfied until it sets my heart on fire with that fire of eternity. Until I love Him with a passionate love.

Until I love Him with my whole heart. And I know what Madame Guyon says in one of her songs. I love thee Lord, but with no love of mine for I have none to give.

Think of it. But God who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us. Tell me, has He touched you with that great love wherewith He loved you? Have you been touched by that love? Has it lifted you? If it has, you're a different person.

He has quickened us together with Christ. Oh, that's what made the love of God send His only begotten Son into the depth of hell to be made seen for me. To drink the dregs of that cup not only to deliver me from my sin, but to make me eligible to be a lover of Jesus.

Bani radhi loko bo. I tell you Jesus Christ is not working just to build churches like this for a few years and then have you be buried in the cemetery and the preacher telling some lies over your casket. No, He's working for eternity.

Glory to God. Nai radhi gala bo zulu. That's what the love of my God does.

If it really touches your heart and if it really quickens you, He has raised us up together. He has made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Oh, what a life.

We heard the choir sing about it a while ago and then we sang, not for ease or worldly pleasure, not for fame. My prayer shall be, gladly will I toil and suffer, only let me walk with Thee. That reminds me of the time when something happened to me.

I don't know how it happened except that God Almighty did. He performed a miracle. He made me fall in love with Jesus Christ.

Some people pity me. When I went to Europe on a boat, we had a prayer meeting and there was an old woman when she found out I wasn't married. She was so sorry for me.

She said, Don't be discouraged. I wasn't. I know what it is to be in love, to be in love with Jesus.

Oh, that passion and love of the Son of God. And one night I had a dream. I stood all alone and I was looking up to heaven.

I was singing to Jesus. Herr mit dir, nicht um Lust und Erden freuden. He knows German too.

Nicht um Ruhm flehe ich zu dir. Freudig will ich leiden wirken, aber lass mich zieh mit dir. And then I got a punch in my spine, nearly fell over.

It was not Cassius, it was the devil. And he had a wicked fist. I said, Just like the devil, if he came to face me, I could face him, but he comes from behind.

He didn't like my song. He doesn't like your song. Ah, but when that yaj rabba, he has made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Beloved, that belongs to an experience of salvation. And God is not satisfied just to save you, just to forgive your sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. But God, was it Mr. Jelinek, the scientist, who told us about the holes that inhabit the great universes, billions of universes like ours, with billions of blazing suns and planets.

And God Almighty is the Lord of holes. And he has created all these things by his son Jesus Christ. And why did he pick this little earth, just a little piece of dust in comparison to these great worlds? Why did he pick you and me? Why? Because he wasn't satisfied with the hosts of heaven.

He wanted a bride. He wanted men and women that would make their choice amid all the clamoring voices of hell and of the world and the flesh and the devil. And if you're going to be here on his throne, you're going to make your choice.

And why not make your choice now? Why do we choose Jesus? And why do people not choose Jesus? Because they don't know him. They don't give themselves a chance to get alone with God. But here, Ha-Nirajah baigal obeyil bachal aizol o gaba.

He says, I go to my father and your father and behold, I send the spirit of God upon you, whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him, but ye know him. For he dwelleth with you and he shall be in you. And father, he says, when I was with them in the world, I kept them.

None of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now father, I come to you and now you keep them, keep them. I don't ask you to take them out of the world.

They're not ready for that. They still have a job to do. But you keep them in thy truth.

Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is the truth. And oh, how wonderful he has arranged for us to dwell in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

And that's the work of the Holy Ghost. It's not to make a big shot out of you. It's not to make a big profit out of you.

How people go astray by looking for signs and wonders. Thank God they'll run after you. When you're a lover of Jesus Christ, the father and the son will come and make that abode with you.

And perhaps your life will be hid with Christ in God. But one life like that is worth a million others. Oh Jesus, to satisfy your great heart.

Aadza gara baadze, I found out that nothing, nothing can satisfy your heart and nothing can satisfy my heart but this union with the son of God. That's why he's talking to Ephesus to that church. God had raised them, made them sit together in heavenly places, gave them that wonderful spirit of God.

And now he says, I've got this against you. Oh, I know your works. I know in the last to be greater than the first.

I know all that. But all those blazing eyes of Jesus Christ, they saw a lack. You've left your first love.

And what does that mean? Oh, we could still go on and do great works. Sure Lord, we found out how to do mighty works in thy name. Cast out devils in thy name.

And he says, and I'll say, depart from you. I don't know you, you workers of evil things. You left your first love.

I was telling the other night about a young minister who was engaged to be married, had a beautiful girl, a lovely girl. And she was devoted. And he had to spend six months at the school to get his diploma.

And he said goodbye to her. And he said, darling, six months only. And then we'll go to the ends of the earth.

We'll serve Jesus as missionaries, wherever he sends us. She says, honey, I'm going with you, wherever you go, where you go, I go. Where you labor, I will labor.

And he was happy. And those six months, they passed so fast. And then when he came home on the train, he looked out the window.

He couldn't wait until he could greet his bride. And there she was, dressed in her tux, her best clothes. But when he got off the train and he took her in his arms, he got the chills.

Hadn't kalki kachd. Something had happened in between time. She had gotten interested in somebody else.

He felt it. Oh, you can, Jesus Christ, that's the first thing he knows. The first thing he feels.

Because the iniquity shall abound. The love of many shall wax cold. But he that endureth unto the end.

Beloved, that's the place of overcoming. And if you overcome in that place, every demon in hell will be licked. Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give you the desires of your heart.

Seek ye first the kingship of Jesus Christ, and all these things shall be added unto you. And the trouble is, we seek this and that and the other thing. But Jesus is looking for lovers.

Jesus Christ is looking for hearts that are beating only for him. And they showed to him that first love means that Jesus Christ is first, last, and always. Never mind, heaven and earth may fade and flee.

The firstborn light in gloom decline. But Jesus, wen ich nur dich habe, so frag ich nichts nach Himmel und Erde. Strange.

And all through these seven epistles, the same theme, until we come to the last. And that great call of God, I shall grant him to sit with me in my throne. Who is it? Not the people that boast and say we're rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.

That belongs to a proper revival today. Propaganda. We've got to publish magazines.

We've got to get out pictures. Jesus Christ when he healed somebody says, keep still, don't tell anybody. Go home, go to the priest, show yourself.

Oh my Lord and my God, my father, my father, my father. Rich, increased with goods, have need of nothing. Where's Jesus? At the door, knocking.

I tell you, Jesus Christ knows them that are His. Those who are really in love with Him, they heed His voice. They know His voice.

They know His knocking at the door. Nobody else knows. His head is filled with dew.

His locks with the drops of the night. He's alone in the big city. Nobody pays any attention for Him.

Nobody's looking for Him except one solitary soul. His bride, open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled. What a description of a pure heart, a heart that guards its heart with all diligence.

If any man love me, he will keep my commandments. And what wonderful commandments these are. They're a two-edged sword piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and joints and marrow and a discerner of the thoughts and of the intents of the heart.

Oh my heavenly bridegroom, He knows how to prepare His bridal soul for that great day. He says, and if you hear my voice and open the door, what a promise, I will come in. I'm not going to stand on the outside and bless you once in a while, but I want to come in.

I want to be on the throne and I will sup with you and you with me. Oh here is identification. Here's intimacy.

Jesus supping with me and I with Him. Oh my Lord. No wonder He says, if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.

After Jesus Christ has shed His hot blood, you'll think that heart can be satisfied with your singing and your talking and your foolishness and your half-heartedness. Listen, don't you stay there. Come, do the first works.

Get back to Jesus. That first love is not your love, it's His love. It's when you get so close to the heart of Jesus that you catch fire.

You can't escape it. Oh beloved, when you draw nigh to God and that's how Jesus Christ finds His own. He doesn't find them in the coffee clutch.

Coffee clutch is all right sometimes. I know people don't like me to talk about the coffee clutch. You need it of course, but I mean Jesus Christ finds His own at the altar, in the prayer meeting, in the prayer closet, alone with God.

Oh to be alone with you. Jesus is my privilege, is your privilege. Alone.

Jesus. Beloved, we need the love of Jesus Christ. We need His love to set us on fire.

We'll never go through, there will never be an overcoming. That mark of the beast is today being placed upon the forehead and right hand of God's people and they don't know it's happening. What is it? Why it's flesh, spiritual flesh if you like it.

There are two beasts. One comes out of the bottomless pit. The other one looks like a lamb.

Oh don't let them fool you. Jesus won't fool you. Jesus Christ will come and make His abode with you.

He will come and dwell with you. He'll sup with you and you with Him. Oh Jesus, do you still care to have me love you? Then here's my heart and if I had a thousand hearts Lord, they should all be Thine and if He has my heart.

Look at that promise that God gives through one of the Old Testament prophets. A woman, Deborah, the enemies of the Lord shall be destroyed, but they that love the Lord. Ah, that's what heaven is interested in today.

Praise God. Not they who preach, not they who do miracles. God bless them.

There ought to be more of them, I know. But what God is interested in is hearts and every one of us has a heart. Our call may be to preach and it may be to do great things and it may be to do signs and wonders and it may not be, but your call is to be a lover of Jesus.

And they that love the Lord, the Bible says, shall be like the sun when he ariseth in his power and his strength. You ever see the sun rise? Do you ever see that sun take up the fight with night? The sun rises just after the night is the darkest. I've seen it come up over these mountains of Switzerland.

What, what a picture. What a theater. Here night has been ruling the ranch.

Night has been covering every city and everything with blackness and now comes the sun. What is he going to do? What in the world is he going to do? He shoots his first arrow. You see that streak of light coming up over the horizon.

Now you know that's the first arrow and that great sun comes forth and little by little, little and oh how the spirits of darkness flee. How the ghosts of night have to disappear. The clouds disappear.

The fogs disappear and a great body of fire dominates everything. He's everything. Shines away all the darkness.

That's what you're like, the Bible says, or you will be. Beloved, can we really take and if you don't like this talk, you don't have to take it at all. I can tell you a thousand places where you can hear something nice.

But listen, if you have a heart, if you have a heart, I tell you something, all hell is beating for that heart of yours. And if Lucifer and Beelzebub and legion don't get hold of it, then it's these little imps that you don't discover. Oh, they put on a little halo.

They come crawling around you. Oh, they're so sweet. They're so darling.

And you harbor them in your heart and presently they grow into dragon like proportions and they'll swallow you up. Oh, this heart of yours, this heart of yours is either going to be possessed by flesh and the world

and the devil or by the father and the son, which shall it be?

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