

How Ye Ought to Walk and to Please God

by Hans R. Waldvogel

The sermon emphasizes the importance of walking and pleasing God by living a life of love and obedience.

Duration: 30:27

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:1

Topics: "Pleasing God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a powerful story about three officers who risked their lives to bring the gospel to a place where nobody cared. Despite being warned not to go, they endured being howled and battered for a long time, all for the love of Jesus. Eventually, their love and perseverance paid off, and many souls were saved. The speaker emphasizes the importance of having the love of God in our hearts and exercising it, as it is what we are saved for according to the teachings of the Apostle Paul.

Transcript

When you read the teachings of the Apostle Paul, for instance, that are given us in the Bible, they're so fragmentary, fragmentary pieces of doctrine and of teaching, so little of it. But oh, so weighty and powerful, and do you know why it is? Why, because it is simply a pointer to show us, as it says here, how to walk and to please God. When you're on the road, supposing you're wanting to go to Chicago from here, and you want to get on the right road, it doesn't take many words to tell you which is the right road.

But it may be a long distance. Before you get to Chicago, you'll have to do a lot of walking, unless you got a car, or you ride on the train. God here points us, points us the way, and shows us the way of holiness, the high way of holiness, and we can spend our lives talking about it, and reading about it, and writing books about it, and developing sermons about it, and that's what religion consists of today.

Talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk. Books, books, books, books, books. And we never get to Chicago that way, and we never get to Philadelphia that way.

You've got to learn how to walk and to please God. That's the main thing. And in a meeting this morning, you've gotten more than lots of theological students get out of a four-year university education.

We've got some here. You ask them whether that isn't so. Why, sure, you get the word of God that puts you on the beam, puts you on the right track, puts you on the right way.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I'm a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. How many sounding brasses and tinkling cymbals do you find in Pentecost today? And how many do you find that have the love of God? The Bible says the love of God is shed abroad into our hearts by the Holy Ghost which was given unto us. How many people have the love of God in their hearts? Quite plenty have it there, but how many exercise it? And here in this chapter, how very simple and how very brief are these words.

The Holy Ghost tells us something very wonderful. He tells us what we're saved for. He tells us what the goal is of our salvation.

Hallelujah. Why, it's to be transformed when Jesus comes. It's to be ready when Jesus comes.

It's to be transformed into the same image. Hallelujah. To wake in his likeness.

And he tells us that we're not all going to die, but that when Jesus comes, those who are alive and remain shall go into heaven like Enoch went into heaven. But he tells us another thing. He tells us that if we die and go into the grave, we're not going to lose anything if we have been ready.

That's the important matter. There are lots of doctrines developed today about the rapture which are not scriptural at all. You can read books about the rapture.

They're perfectly unscriptural. But beloved, what is more important, to know when the rapture will occur or how it will occur or to be ready? What is more important at a wedding than to be the bride? There's nothing more important than that, is there? The one that's chosen. Now, she may not know just how many bells are going to ring in the belfry.

And she may not know exactly what the preacher will say when he ties the knot. And she may not know how the church is going to be decorated. And she may not care very much about that.

The one thing that's important to her is that she is the bride. And that the bridegroom is not going to go to the altar without her. But he's going there for her.

The parson's waiting for me and my girl. Why, everybody's waiting. The people are waiting.

The bells are ringing for me and my girl. Hallelujah. And all the congregating for me and my girl.

Why, that's the important thing, isn't it? That when Jesus comes from heaven, great armies will come with him. The angels will come with him. All the universe will be vibrant with the power of his coming.

Everything will change. The dead will rise. But what is the important thing for me? Oh my God, there's just one thing that's important.

Just one thing I ought to be careful about. Never mind, let others break their heads about when the rapture will occur, before or after the tribulation. I'm not even interested in the tribulation.

Or whether the Antichrist will have seven heads and ten horns, or ten horns and seven heads. I don't care about the Antichrist. I care about my bridegroom.

And here the Apostle Paul says, we have written to you how ye ought to walk and to please God. But we beseech you that ye increase more and more. That's the important thing.

That's what we come to meeting for. If in every meeting Jesus Christ doesn't meet me, my bridegroom doesn't come to me, and kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, and put his loving arms around me, and draw me closer to his bosom. It's a loss.

It's a wasted meeting. I want to have nothing to do with it. I don't care who preaches.

The Apostle Paul said, and I'd rather made up my mind not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. He says here they come around with their Judaizing, with their circumcision, and with their doctrine, and all they want is to draw disciples after themselves. They want you to believe that they're the smart ones.

And I made up my mind not to know anything. I want to speak not one word among you which Jesus Christ has not wrought by me, that your faith might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Blessed is the congregation who has a minister like that, who wants to get out of the way, that Jesus might appear, that Jesus Christ might introduce himself, that these people might be filled with the Holy Ghost, that they might know how to walk, and to please God.

And when God gets a ministry like that, he will equip them, and he will empower them, and he will put his two-edged sword in their hand, and his word in their mouth, and he will not let anything lack, and he will supply the word of Christ to dwell richly among them. And while many will not accept it, there will be the bride. Hallelujah.

That was the ministry of the apostles, to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. And he says, you have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God. And he says, we were examples among you.

You yourselves know how wholly, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe. Look out for the ministry that doesn't behave themselves wholly, and justly, and unblameably. They're not safe, guys.

But here was Paul, the great apostle, and he said, you know how we taught you how you ought to walk, and to please God. What does that remind you of? Why, of an Old Testament saint who was not because God took him. And how did he get ready for that rapture, for that translation? Why, the Bible says, Enoch walked with God.

And I've often said, well, give me 365 years of meetings like these, and I won't be not either. I'll be translated before that time. With Enoch, that's what happened to Enoch, as he walked with God.

Hallelujah. And so this text reminds us of Enoch. He walked with God, and here Paul says, you know how we taught you how ye ought to walk.

Oh, that's it. As you have received Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk ye in him. It isn't a matter of being saved once, but it's a matter of staying saved.

Step by step to the glory land. How do I walk? How do I walk and please God, I remember when God saved me. These scripture texts became so wonderful to my soul.

He says here that you walk, would walk worthy of God who has called you unto his kingdom and glory. I remember how finicky I was. I wanted to walk worthy of God.

Our Father who art in heaven, tell thee thy name. Why, that ought to settle every question in your life. How I ought to walk and to please God.

Why, that's the only question. It isn't a question of bobbing your hair or letting your hair grow or having long skirts or short skirts or wearing buttons or hooks on your clothes. It's a question of pleasing God.

And that's a question of the heart. Often these exterior things are not important at all. Isn't what you have on top of your head, but what you have inside.

How to walk. Do you care? Tell me, tell me. Do you care to please Jesus? Do you really care to please him? Well look at earthly lovers, what they don't do to please the object of their love.

I told you I had a boy with me I couldn't get him to wash his ears or to be clean or to fresh his pants or shiny shoes. If I said anything about it, he'd spit. Just like that.

And one day I met him in the park. He was coming this way and I was going that way. And he had just gotten a haircut.

I don't know what made him get a haircut. I guess it was hot. And he wanted to feel comfortable.

And you know he had enough dirt on his face to grow beans. And I said, listen, get home and wash your hair. While the dirt shines through your short hair.

So he did that. But one day a marvelous transformation took place. One day that boy met me and I didn't know him anymore.

He had his pants fresh, he was cold, he was wearing a collar and a tie. He was shining like the moon day sun. He had washed himself and scrubbed himself.

And he had one of these new spangled hats tucked over one eye. And he came to me and he pulled on his kid gloves. He said, well, I said, Paul, he's bald.

Why, then I found out he was going to be a girl. Ah, that's what makes the difference. He wanted to walk and to please somebody.

He cared, you see. Now that's a vulgar illustration, but sometimes we need that to wake up. There's one coming who shines like the heavens of heaven.

One who is more beautiful than all the suns of earth. The lily of the valley, the bright and morning star. And he has chosen me from the foundation of the world to sit with him in his throne of glory.

To be above the angels, to be like unto himself. Not only that, but he has come down from heaven to work in me, to will and to do of his good pleasure. I will never walk and please God unless I walk in him, unless he walks in me.

And that's what Paul's talking about when he says, I live no more. This wretched man that could never please God has been crucified with Christ. And there's a new man living out his own life within me.

Oh, that's it. And that's how he taught the early church to walk and to please God. And God has not left us without his counsel.

He tells us exactly what he wants of us, what he expects from us. Have you noticed how he says he are taught of God to love one another. We heard a while how Jesus loved them unto the end.

And you remember how there he said, and if you love me, keep my commandments. And this is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. That's a big order, isn't it? And yet, how can we get away from it? Tell me, how do I expect to meet my Lord if I have bad feelings in my heart against my brother or sister? Tell me, do you really and actually love everybody? But do you love your brethren like Jesus Christ has loved you? Why, that's an entire impossibility unless God fills me with his love.

You realize it isn't enough for me to hear a sermon. It isn't enough for me to know where the fountain is. I must go to that fountain and drink.

That's it. I must go to Jesus and let him do it for me. And the thing that the law cannot do, it cannot do today.

But Jesus can do it. And God has provided it for me. Hallelujah.

And I ought not to rest until my heart is filled with the love of Christ, until I love the brethren like that. And I must not wait for them to love me. But the Bible demands that of me.

That's how I walk and please my God. And this is far more important than we realize. Listen to another scripture, 1 John 3, where it says, Beloved, behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called sons of God.

And such we are. And we know not what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him. And every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure.

Now wherein does that purity of Christ consist? He tells us. Peter tells us about it. He says, Seeing ye have purified your soul through the Spirit unto unsustained love of the brethren.

Oh, that's where impurity is lost. It's self-love. Everything revolves around self.

But when Jesus comes in, when the love of God comes in, my soul becomes purified. Hallelujah. Pure, even as he is pure.

Pure from all passion, self-seeking, and pride. I could search my heart this morning in the sight of God and see, do I love my brethren like Jesus loved me? Well, how did he love me? He emptied himself. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Do you like that? Do you like that kind of purity? And you say, Even so, come Lord Jesus. And then God says, But what are these feelings? Jealousy, pride, self-seeking, backbiting, fault-finding.

Oh, woe is me. Oh, God has taught us how to walk, how to please God. Beloved, it's going to take something to be ready when Jesus comes.

Jesus puts it this way, that he might be a counted worthy to escape the things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. And that doesn't mean that we count ourselves worthy, or our preachers counted worthy, but it means that God Almighty counts us worthy. He counted Enoch worthy.

Enoch had God's testimony that he pleased God. He satisfied God. Is that the testimony you're seeking? To walk and to please God.

Oh my God. I know that that is possible. I know that thou has come to work in me that which is well-pleasing in thy sight.

Does he work it in you? He won't if you don't give him a chance. If you don't give him time, and he won't if you refuse the chastening of the Lord. Oh, how many have done that, until they become so calloused it doesn't touch them anymore.

When I was holding meetings in a Bible school, for two hours they confessed their sins, and they all confessed to having backslid. The professor was the first one. They had had a row in that Bible school the week before, and he confessed and asked them all to forgive him for getting mad.

And then one by one of those students got up and confessed to having been unkind, having lost their touch with God. Mind you, all of them. At 12 o'clock they were through.

And then one lady got up, and she was an old-time Pentecostal saint. She was the minister's wife. And she got up, and she literally sneered.

She says, ah, if I had to confess all my backbiting and criticism, I'd have to stay here till six o'clock. What's the sense of it? The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses. Beloved, that's the surest way to hell.

Why, that's crucifying the Son of God of Christ. And yet you find the churches full of that kind of a doctrine. Once saved, always saved.

The Bible doesn't say that. The Bible says, work out your own salvation with fear and with trembling. Jesus says, they that shall be counted worthy to obtain the resurrection from the dead.

And Paul says, I count everything but refuse that I may win Christ, that I might know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, that I may be made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from the dead. He wasn't dishing out to others what he wasn't eating himself. Oh, thank God for this epistle to the Thessalonians.

It teaches us how to walk and to please God. And beloved, we ought to get to the place in our churches where we do less preaching and more living. We ought to spend more time at the feet of Jesus than at the feet of preachers.

We need preaching. We need to know how to walk and to please God. But if a sermon lasts half an hour, our walking and pleasing God ought to last a whole week until we come to school again and learn some more, shouldn't it? Shouldn't we carry it into our homes, and into our shops, and into our offices, and into our daily life? That's what I walk, that's what I please God.

They paint Enoch as a saint with a halo around his head, walking along the horizon there, with a camel way behind him, and, and the light shining on this end of the line. Enoch, with a long face and a long beard. And Enoch was down in the kitchen doing the dishes for his wife and a dozen kids around his fold.

But he walked and he pleased God. Oh, that's the place, beloved, to practice Christianity. It's in your daily life, in your shop.

Hallelujah. God teaches me how to walk. Oh my father, hallelujah, that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.

And my holy father will give me the Holy Ghost as a monitor to keep me in the way, the highway of holiness. And when I do not wear the garment of holiness, I don't glorify my father who is in heaven. Everything I do, and say, and feel, and hear, and think, ought to glorify my father who is in heaven.

Isn't it wonderful? Oh, isn't it wonderful that you and I can walk in Christ and have him live out his own life in us? It's a matter of choice. I make my choice between the flesh and the spirit. That's what it means to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

And that's what it means to worship God in spirit and in truth. It means that I live no more. Christ liveth in me.

Hallelujah. And I know that when Jesus comes, he comes for me. But ye have purified your souls through the spirit unto unfeigned love.

What is that? Unfeigned love of the brethren. And here he says, I don't have to talk to you about love. Ye yourselves are taught of God how to love one another.

But we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more. This love must become warmer, more ardent. Oh, children of God, this morning we have reason to repent how little we know of that love of God.

And you know, I love my Jesus not one bit more than I love my brethren. Jesus does not accept any more of my love for himself. He says, as you've done to the least of these my brethren.

That's what he accepts. Oh, that's where he accepts your love. That's where he writes in his diary.

Today he was kind to the least of these my brethren. One that was sick and in prison, and you visited him. One that was naked and you clothed him for the love of God.

What does the love of God teach you to do, tell me? Do you ever go out of your way? Oh, we do, generally speaking, when somebody's sick in the hospital or somebody's been injured. Then we pour our affection upon him. But somebody's sick of sin.

Somebody's committed a fall. Somebody can't make the grave because the devil's got them bound. Why, that's the place where the love of Christ ought to win over.

And that's what a lot of people don't understand. You know, in Pentecost, when it was in its prime, every assembly was marked by some of these more and some of these half-wits. You could go anywhere in the world and you'd find them in the Pentecostal assemblies.

Do you know why? Because they didn't find love anywhere else but among the saints of God. And there they found real love. Where should they find love but there? Imperfect people, sinners, drunkards, people of that type, they would love to crowd around Jesus.

Why, that was his reputation. This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them. Mary Magdalene found her way to the feet of Jesus.

Why, she'd heard words of love that no one ever spoke to her before. And you'd be surprised what God is able to do with the least, with the weakest, with the most unlovely, if you and I would let the love of God well up within our hearts. And you know that we've got a lot to learn from others.

I spoke about the Salvation Army, how that a hundred years ago, three officers of the Salvation Army took upon themselves the call of God to go to Devil's Island. Devil's Island was a place where the French government put its worst criminals and they let them loose. And they would literally chew up one another.

And they were so degraded that they were worse than animals. They were worse than bees. And these three officers said, we must go there and bring the gospel to them because nobody cares.

And they were warned, they were told, don't go. Well, there's no more sublime story of the love of God than the story of those three officers, how they went into that place where they risked their lives. And where for a long time they were howled at and spat at.

They took it all for the love of Jesus and how finally the love of God won. And these souls were saved. And you know that these souls on Devil's Island that were saved, they're going to shine brighter than stars of the first magnitude.

Because they, to whom much is forgiven, they love much. That's what God's looking for, people who love much. And we put on a cloak of righteousness and religiousness and spirituality, and we turn around and we say, well, I'm holier than thou.

We don't say it exactly, but we act it. Every time we find fault with somebody else, we say it in substance, why I'm holier than thou. Why do we find fault? Why do we talk about the faults of others? Why? Because we want to bring out in relief our own holiness.

We're not like that, you know. Oh, how sick we are. How degraded in the sight of God.

And how are we going to walk and please God unless God can cleanse us of that lack of love? Why, he can only do it by giving his love to us. We need to wait upon our God. We need a baptism of love.

We need 1 Corinthians 13. I show you a more excellent way. The love of God that suffers long in his kind.

Oh, why that beauty.

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