

Going Backwards to Go Ahead

by Jim Cymbala

The book of Revelation is a message from Jesus to the churches, reminding them of their first love and calling them to persevere and stand against evil.

Duration: 38:38

Scripture: Matthew 5:13-16, Revelation 1:14-16, Revelation 1:20, Revelation 2:2-3, Revelation 2:6

Topics: "Relationship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of loving God and loving others as the greatest commandment. He highlights the significance of the church in spreading the gospel and changing hearts through Jesus. The preacher mentions the vision of Jesus holding seven stars and walking among the seven golden lampstands, symbolizing his concern for the state of his churches. The sermon emphasizes that the church's well-being is crucial for the expansion of God's kingdom and encourages believers to focus on the health and growth of the church.

Transcript

We finished our reading of the New Testament this week. We read through the New Testament, those of you who've been following. We went through this book, which has the New Testament in us and the NIV, but in a different sequence.

Instead of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, it has, I think, a little more intelligent and sequential process that they bring you through, starting with Luke and then into Acts and then the epistles of Paul. We've been reading one chapter a day and we finished this week, we're done. I've been purposing in my heart to preach for a while, as far as I can go and feel comfortable with it, from the book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, and a book, without a doubt, the hardest to read in the Bible because of its symbolism imagery, because of its lack of clarity as to what exactly is happening to whom, where, what does the symbol mean, there's not a lot of backup information.

It's a mystery book, for sure. The book starts with the writer, John the Apostle, who wrote the book of John and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John. He's in an island called Patmos and he's been there because he kept up his testimony and it got him in trouble with the authorities and they exiled him as a troublemaker to this island of Patmos.

There, on the Lord's Day, Sunday, he was in the spirit. He lost contact with the material world, for the most part, the physical world, and he had a series, long series of visions and messages that were given to him by Jesus Christ. The first chapter describes what he saw Jesus with an appearance unlike anything else in the Bible, eyes like fire and a sword coming out of his mouth.

He has seen Jesus holding seven stars in his hand, not just holding them, but holding them up, supporting them. John doesn't know what that means. He sees seven golden lampstands.

Lampstands don't give light of their own. They transmit light when they have a supply of oil and they're lit by fire. He doesn't know what the lampstands are.

And at the end of the chapter, Jesus reveals himself as the alpha or an omega, the beginning and the end, and he tells John the mystery of the seven stars and the seven lampstands. And he says that the seven stars are the messengers or angels, angels of the seven churches, and that the lampstands are the seven churches. So I should have reversed that.

The seven lampstands are seven churches, seven congregations. The stars that he's holding up are the angels or messengers, and we discussed last week that these messengers or angels are probably not heavenly angels, as if each church has its own angel that is assigned to it. There's no record of that in scripture, but that angel here is being used as messenger or leader or pastor or bishop.

Bishop, presbyter, pastor, and elder are four words in the New Testament, all meaning the same thing, someone that God has gifted and raised up to be a leader among God's flock. It's generally understood, but again, not unanimous by the experts, that the seven angels are the seven messengers to the churches, or maybe the spirit of that church, being used in a kind of loose sense. Jesus is gonna write a letter to each of those churches, and that tells us that churches need different messages because they have different conditions.

When chapter two begins, we get the first letter, which we started last week and which I hope to finish today, which is a church at Ephesus, and Jesus is gonna write to it. He sees one more thing. Jesus is walking among the seven golden lampstands.

That's not in the first chapter. He just saw the lampstands, saw the stars, but now he sees that Jesus' great concern is how his churches are doing. Not the UN, not the stock market, not the Democratic Convention, not the Republican Convention.

He is trying to see how his churches are doing and how he can help them. Always remember that. The most important thing to God is how his people are doing.

Why? We are the light of the world. We are the salt of the earth. Congress is not supposed to be the spiritual answer to anything.

We need laws and we need politicians and government in every country or else everything will break loose. There's a reason for authority and all of that, but the only one that can change a human heart is Jesus through the gospel, and the only one that can give the gospel is the church of Jesus Christ, and if that church is sick or on life support, if that church is sleeping, then what's going to happen to the world around it? So Jesus is walking among the seven golden lambs there. Whenever people get closer to the Lord and more mature, they automatically begin to get focused on how is the church doing.

I'm in Argentina, I'm in Trinidad. You're wherever you should be. We should be asking, how's it going? How's the church doing? Because that's the only future for the kingdom of God expanding is through the church of Jesus Christ.

Now, Jesus gives this letter to the church at Ephesus, just a word before we read the whole seven verses and then we're done with it. What do we know about Ephesus? Unlike the other churches, we know a little bit more. The other six, we don't know much about how they were founded and all that, but we know about Ephesus.

The church in Ephesus was founded by the apostle Paul, and we have the letter of Ephesians that was sent to that church about 30, 35 years earlier than what John is getting this letter. So we're getting a letter to a second generation church. The church has begun and now 35 years later, a letter is coming to it.

We know that Paul spent three years probably, more than any other city we know, in Ephesus and God used him to begin this church. We know from history that Ephesus was the chief city, the number one city of Asia, what is called Asia in the Bible. We call it now Turkey.

These are where the first evangelistic movements went when the gospel left the land of Israel. So Turkey was evangelized and Ephesus was the chief city. And it was a port and there was trade and there was the Temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world that was 445 feet long by 220 feet wide.

There was a statue of this idol of Diana, short, squat, ugly, and a lot of magic and immorality connected even with the worship of this idol. So in this cosmopolitan, expensive kind of city filled with magic and idolatry and immorality, here were a band of Christians that had been planted 35 years before and now Jesus is gonna speak to them because he knows everything about everyone. Let's read.

To the angel of the church in Ephesus write, these are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, those are the messengers or angels, and walks among the seven golden lampstands. I know your deeds, your hard work, and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, we covered this last week, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not and have found them false.

You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name and have not grown weary. One translation has, you never gave up. Yet I hold this against you, you have forsaken the love you had at first.

Consider or remember how far you have fallen. Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

But you have this in your favor, you hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. Whoever has ears, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches. By the way, at the end of all seven letters, there's that one same sentence.

He who has ears, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, who battles on and trusts to the very end, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. Now if anybody would have been a pastor on staff of this church, there would have been a temptation there to be pretty confident and proud.

If you went to the church at Ephesus, there were so many good things about it, you probably would be feeling, boy, God has blessed our church. So many commendations, more commendations to this church

than any of the other six of the total seven churches. Think of this kind of church.

Imagine this kind of church. This church was laboring. Jesus said, I know everything about you, and this church was out in the street.

They had record numbers out in the street sharing the gospel. I know your deeds, I know your work, and that word labor, for the second word work and then labor, that means to the point of exhaustion where your vein is popping out on your neck. This was no sit back and just hang loose kind of church.

This was a church that was fervent and working. Notice what Jesus watches and commends. That's a lesson to all of us.

I know your deeds, I know your labor, and I know your perseverance. They didn't just start for 40 minutes and then quit. That's the tendency with a lot of us.

We get excited for half a year or a year, and then it all just fades away. No, this church persevered. But there was more.

This church that was so wonderful in so many ways, so blessed by God, the Bible says, we learned last week, Jesus said, you don't tolerate evil people. You don't let anybody into the congregation and become a member. To come and hear the gospel, anybody, everyone is welcome.

But in terms of membership and protecting the integrity of the church, you don't permit people who practice evil things to take communion, to be a part of the church, because a little leaven leavens the whole loaf, and you know that if you let that in, it'll spread to other members of the church. So you're careful about it. Not in a legalistic way, judging people as to their salvation, but guarding the purity of the church, just like a mother or dad would guard what their children eat, and not wanted to harm them.

But not only that, he said, I know that you have these so-called apostles or spiritual leaders, but they're bogus. They're talking smack. They're not preaching the true word of God, and you test them, and you find out that they're liars.

They're not preaching. They say they're preaching about Jesus. They mention Jesus.

They say they're leaders in the church, but you have tested them. You're mature. You have tested them and found out they're bogus.

See, not everybody on television, not every church that mentions Jesus really is preaching the truth of God. How many say amen? And the only way we test that is by the word of God. There's fakers in Trinidad.

There's fakers in America. There's fakers everywhere. And there's wolves in sheep's clothing everywhere.

Jesus said that would happen. There would be a growth in false teachers, false prophets. Paul says the apostle in another place, in the last days difficult times will come.

Many kinds of false teaching and false doctrine. Doctrines even of demons, but attacking into the Christian church. No, no, Ephesus not only didn't tolerate evil people, they checked and said, wait a minute, I don't care you say thus, sayeth the Lord.

We're going to test that spirit. We're going to check what you're preaching by the word of God. That's a good lesson for all of us.

How many say aloud amen? Don't believe everything you hear. You tested with the word of God and that starts with me. What I'm saying today, you tested with the word of God.

You don't believe it because I say it. You have to only believe it because God's word says it. Oh, I love my Bible.

Everyone who loves their Bible, just clap your hands and say, I love my Bible. Amen. What a church.

You're the pastor of that church, a leader of that church. And you got commendations like that, not from a peer group, another pastor or a denominational headquarters, but from Jesus himself. Jesus whose eyes like a fire and he sees everything.

He makes those commendations. I mean, come on. Come on.

Come on. Boy, Paul started a church that has really been blessed by God. And despite all the darkness around them and opposition, they have so many good points in their favor.

One last one commendation is added in our reading today. Jesus said a thing very strange to us because we live in a very relativistic world where nothing's wrong and nothing's right. And if you believe that, then you're cruel and you're judgmental.

Jesus said, one of the thing I like about you, you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. Well, that tells us a couple of things. First of all, Jesus hates certain things.

And if you're close to him, you'll hate the same things that he hates and you'll love the same things he loves. Notice he doesn't hate the Nicolaitans. He hates the deeds of the Nicolaitans.

This I have in your favor also, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. Some things are so destructive, so evil, so against God, so hurtful to children, so hurtful to human beings, so hurtful to marriages, so harmful to the good of humanity that God hates them. And if you have any convictions in your own soul, you'll hate them too, not the people, but the deeds.

That's just hateful. That what you're saying and doing there is horrible. Who are the Nicolaitans? That's a hard one.

No assurance that we know exactly what it was about, the Nicolaitans, but notice it was some sect that was invading the church itself. This is not some group outside. This is something in the church.

In one of the other letters, which you'll learn, it talks about you have this problem, those who follow the doctrine of Balaam, that's an Old Testament prophet, I won't go into that now, who taught the people of Israel to worship idols and sacrifice to idols and to fornicate. So the general deduction here is that the Nicolaitans had invaded the Christian church, this teaching, and they did probably two things. Number one, they said it's not wrong to bow down to Caesar and worship him.

Remember, Caesar claimed he was God. Starting with Caesar Augustus, the Caesar that was the leader, Caesar, that was in charge of Rome when Jesus was born, Julius Caesar, the famous Julius Caesar, had come before that. He never claimed divinity, but Caesar Augustus and all those onward claimed they not

only were the leader, the president, the prime minister, but that they were God, that they were to be worshiped, that you sacrifice to them.

And if you didn't sacrifice to them, if you didn't bow your knee to them, you were disloyal and not a good citizen of Rome. This is how Christians got in trouble. Christians would not bow to Caesar.

They would not kiss his statue. They would not sacrifice to him. And many times it was that or your life, or that, or we're going to throw you out of the city.

And that was a tough one. We have it so easy now so far as Christians in America, but the persecution you can tell is starting to brew in subtle ways. But back then it was in your grill, right there.

You bow to Caesar. Well, these Nicolaitans, it seems, came and said, look, you can worship Jesus and sacrifice to idols too. You can worship Caesar and have Jesus.

You can have one foot in both worlds. And that, of course, when you start to do that, the idolatry comes in and God can't be worshiped along with anyone. He's the only true God.

Come on, is Jesus King of Kings and Lord of Lords? We don't worship any other God. We don't bow to anyone. We don't kiss anyone's ring.

We don't do anything like that to anyone. Everyone else is just a sinner saved by grace or just a sinner. So they also probably, which was a problem in the early church, started a teaching that later was called antinomianism, which was against law.

And what they said is, God is so full of love. How you live, who you sleep with, what your sexual practices are, God doesn't care because God is love. He's gonna save your spirit.

What you do with your body doesn't matter. So that's legitimate. God doesn't care.

And Jesus said, those deeds I hate. Idolatry and legitimizing fornication, the only sexual union is supposed to be between a man and a woman within marriage. Everything else, everything else, everything else is prohibited in scripture.

That's not my opinion, your opinion. That's what God says. So the Nicolaitans were trying to bring in, it seems, this idolatry and this sexual looseness.

So Jesus said, that I have in your favor. You don't, you hate that thing. Isn't that strange? Jesus hating something.

Most of us have a picture of Jesus as just like, hey, everybody, I love you, everything's okay. Am I right or wrong, right? So just those words strike us, that he hates certain deeds, never people. Jesus doesn't hate anybody.

And no matter who's here today and what you do and what you believe, God loves you and he wants you to experience salvation and know the peace and joy that only he can give. But there are certain things that are just ugly, ugly. You know, you get a, like you have teenage son or daughter and some, in the group of friends, as we said last week, there's some drug pusher, drug user, heroin, let's say, or whatever.

This new K2 stuff, this new synthetic stuff they're using that is blowing people away. So you, someone, no, son, don't be with that person. What he does is, mom, who's to judge? He says, it's fine, smoke weed and use drugs, inject, mom, come on, why are you so legalistic? Oh, yeah, mom is gonna be real legalistic.

How many say amen? Mom's gonna turn you over and give you a pow-pow because if you don't stay away from that. Because that's the way we are about the people we love and that's the way God is about us. It might look good to us, but God knows better.

He says, don't touch that, that's evil. Oh, you're raining on my parade. No, he's saving your life, he's saving our lives.

He cares about us. One more time, come on. He cares about us.

He said, don't do that, don't go there. And now, let me bring this to a close. Can you believe this? After all those commendations, Jesus says, but I have something against you.

Now that just stops us and reminds us that Jesus is totally real and sincere when he deals with us as his people. And as churches, you know, there is a letter to our church. I don't know exactly what it is, but I would think leaders, we should be praying and saying, how does God see the Brooklyn Tabernacle? We have Pastor Nazarene, Pastor from Washington, stayed here, Brother Pastor Ali is here from Trinidad.

There's a letter somewhere to his church. It's different than this church. Every church has a different letter, but it's not what people think about you, has nothing to do with attendance, has nothing to do with how pretty the building is, or a choir that wins Grammy Awards.

That can be used to draw people to hear the gospel, but Jesus looks a little deeper than that. There's a letter to all of us, and he's totally real. He's not about what you and I want to hear.

He loves us, but if you really love someone, you tell the truth. A false friend, you know what a false friend is? Someone who tells you what you want to hear. You know what a real friend is? Someone who says, you know what, I love you, but I've been watching how you've been talking there.

I don't think that's appropriate at all, I really don't. And you take it from a good friend, don't you? Well, Jesus is the best friend, and he tells them the truth. He says, this is what I have against you.

King James has it, you've lost your first love. NIV has it here, you've left the love you had at first. Well, let's just examine that, because that's where I want to end.

With all these things going on, Jesus found out that it was all happening, but there wasn't the foundation of love that there used to be. The name of this message is Going Backwards to Go Ahead. There's this misconception, especially in churches, this fascination with something that's new, new teaching, new doctrine, new manifestation.

Politicians run on, we need change, and people have this excitement about, we need something new. This letter tells us something interesting. The only way to go ahead is to go back.

You've lost the love you had at first. You got to go back to go ahead. You lost something you had at the beginning, and what you had at the beginning is more important to me than these other things I've been telling you about.

What does it mean, you lost your first love? Is it love to God? Is it love to Jesus? Is it love to people? Is it love to the world? Somehow, that church that had begun with fervency, loving Jesus despite persecution, read the book of Ephesians, and you see all the good things God was doing there, weren't perfect, but it was a blessed church. Now, Jesus is saying, you know what? I love the way you labor for me, and you do it to the point of exhaustion, and I love the fact that you persevere, but during all of that, there's a certain hardness that's crept in because you lost your first love. I love the fact that you won't let people in the church who are evildoers, I love that, I commend you for that, but you know what? You're doing it, you're doctrinally sound, you know the word of God, but underneath, there's no softness anymore.

You lost your love, and I love that you test people who claim that they have the truth. I love that, that you just don't buy any doctrine that comes along the way, but you test them, and you try them, but even while you're being perfectly orthodox, and you're quoting verses, and you got it all together, there's something missing because you lost your first love. The love you used to have for me.

And yeah, you do hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans like I hate them, but it still doesn't erase the fact that you've lost your first love. Probably incorporates all three, that's my feeling about it. They've lost their love that they had at first for Jesus.

Still served him, still believed in him, still doctrinally pure. You know, there's an old saying in church history as it's examined, there's a deduction that some people have come to, and it's basically this. And it's not only true for individuals, it's true for churches, it's true for families sometimes, for believers, for denominations for sure.

The first generation is holy and full of love. This next generation loses that, but they're orthodox, and they got doctrine sound, and they're going to argue about till three in the morning about what day to worship on or how you should baptize people, or what's the meaning of the mark of the beast. That's the second, and the third generation is just like worldly.

Because once you lose your first love, you're on a downward spiral. Even though you got sound doctrine, and you believe everything right, and you have more knowledge than you did when you first got saved, but you lose your first love. Love to Jesus, and when you lose your love for Jesus, that fervency, that passion, then you lose your love for believers.

Next thing you know, you know when you first got saved, everybody was your friend, you cared about everybody, and now you circle the wagons, and you got your own life to worry about. Oh, come on, that's the story of so many in churches. You know, I can't be bothered now, have my own children.

Come on, you know, brother. But at first, you were not for Jesus. You're crazy for Jesus, crazy for people.

You know, people called you immature. They called us fanatics. You know, you're a holy roller.

You're like crazy for Jesus. But a lot of other ministers, you know, you get a little notoriety, then I don't have to be with the people. I just heard of a minister in another state, he hasn't talked to any members in three years.

And his associate pastors don't meet with him either. He lives in some like bubble. Why? Because he's the man of God.

Oh, phooey. But that's a sign, you lose your first love. And then you lose your love for the world.

Because the world's so nasty and the world's so ugly and the world's so anti-Jesus and people are just doing all kinds of things that you just circle the wagons and keep them out and let me meet my family and earn a living and that's it. And now you're nothing like where you were at the beginning. Oh, does that not happen to Christians? Happens to pastors.

It could happen to me, maybe it's happened to me. You stop weeping over people, stop being concerned. But that wasn't the way it was at the beginning.

What's first love? First love is that simplicity, childlike love that people laugh at. You know, when people get older, many times they backslide, but they don't admit they backslide, so they call it, I'm maturing, I used to be that way, but no longer. You know, I used to be crazy like that, but I've matured.

No, you haven't, we've backslid. We lost our first love. Like a husband with his wife, you know, first week, honey, let me help with the dishes.

Can I go to the shopping? Let me help with the laundry. After about 10 years, hey, Alice, where's the food? Hey, bada bing, I want some food. Yeah, their first love is gone.

How many understand exactly what I'm talking about? Put your hand up. Hey, listen, this is the word that Jesus gave to the church. Doctrine, A1.

Tolerance of evil, A1. Testing false teaching, A1. Even laboring for my namesake, A1.

But the passion, the tenderness, the simplicity, the childlikeness, the all-outness, it's gone. You might think, well, so, nobody's perfect. That's not the way Jesus sees it.

He says, look from what great height you've fallen. Because when you love, the only thing that satisfies you back is love. When you love when he loves, let's examine the love question.

We love him because he what? First loved us. And his love was so great that when we saw him dying on the cross for us, we fell in love with Jesus. We realize he died for us, our sins.

And you fall in love. That satisfies him because love is only satisfies when it's loved back. And when that love dims and the flame goes low, nothing you do or give can replace that love.

You know, the story is told back in England, it's a true story, a father who I believe was a minister had a child, a daughter, 11 or 12 years old. And he just loved her, was the only child. And he just hung with her and walked with her and spent time with her.

And he would come home from the church, the rectory, and he would take walks with her. She'd be come home from school. And that was his life, this little girl.

So then suddenly, she starts being busy and she can't walk with him. And she's like, where is she? And then the next day or two days later, honey, can you walk? No, dad, you go for a walk, but I got some things to do and all. A couple months go by, he doesn't say anything, but it's hurting him, it's aching because she used to love to be with him.

She means everything to him. So then his birthday comes and she brings out a gift wrapped up and he opens it and there's a pair of slippers. And he says, oh, honey, you bought me some slippers.

How nice. No, daddy, I didn't buy them. I made them.

I sewed them. That's what I've been doing. Took me the last two months.

And he said, honey, the next time, please buy me some slippers because I don't want the slippers. I want you. That's what Jesus is saying to us.

I want you. I want you to love me. And as you love me, you'll love other people.

It has a lot to do with loving other people too because he says, now repent and do your first works. Well, works to God, what would that be? Just to trust him. John tells us that Jesus said, this is the work of God, that you believe in the one he has sent.

But it has an application. Did you know you can be doctrinally sound and not give a hoot about another Christian? You can come to church every Sunday and be cold as ice. And you can memorize verses during the week and read through the Bible and have no more compassion than that pulpit.

That can happen to any of us. I've caught myself, God has caught me, I don't know how many times over the years, just drifting away. So busy, busy, busy, busy.

And Jesus is saying, I don't need your busyness. I need your love. People need your love.

The world needs your love. Finally he closes, he that has an ear. Isn't this odd? He's the one writing, but he says, he that has an ear, let him hear what the spirit is saying to the churches.

So what we understand now is Jesus is continually speaking by his spirit. I want to ask you this question. He that has an ear, not this, not this.

You don't need this to hear it from Jesus. He that has been born again and hears what the spirit says. Now, if you have that, now listen.

So notice there's two things. You have to have the ear, but you can have the ear and not listen. I remember as a kid, my sister, when I would torment her, she would close her ears and say, I'm not listening to what you're saying.

And that's how we can get with God. I'm not listening to what you're saying. If we made an altar call, maybe the whole church would come.

So I don't want to do that. But I don't want to lose my first love. I don't want to have sound doctrine, checking things that are not right, and then lose that passion.

I want to be like a child in my love for Jesus. I want to be crazy in love with him. Doesn't he deserve that congregation? You up in the balcony, you don't want to lose your first love, do you? You don't want to drift away.

Remember, it has nothing to do with going to church on Sunday. These folks, not only going to church, they're killing themselves, laboring for him. But he says, I love you so much.

I'm not satisfied unless you love me crazy-like, first-like. Just, I need that love where I'm everything to you. Let's close our eyes.

Jesus, thank you for loving us. Can we all just, because we know how we have failed him over the months and years, can we just all lift our hands up and out loud begin to praise God just for his loving us, just loving us? Just open your mouth, come on, in English or Spanish or Creole. You're not embarrassed to do that to the one you love, are you? Let's just tell him, Jesus, thank you for loving me.

How you love me, I don't understand, but you do love me, and I praise you for that. Thank you for loving our congregation. Thank you for loving our band.

Thank you for loving our sound people. Thank you for loving the associate pastors. Thank you for loving the deacons and deaconesses.

Thank you for loving the people in the balcony. Thank you for loving the people downstairs. Thank you for loving the visitors.

Thank you for loving those that are going to be baptized. Thank you for loving us when we have failed you, when we ran away from you, when we drifted away. You kept loving, loving, loving, loving, loving, caring, loving, and we thank you for that love today, Jesus.

We praise you for that love. On behalf of this congregation, Jesus, I tell you in front of these witnesses, we want you to be happy with us. You have brought so much joy to us.

How can we not want to live lives pleasing to you? And now we learn something today. There's nothing more important than loving you. Sound doctrine we want.

Discernment we want. Labor we want. Evangelism teams we want.

But we don't want to go through the mechanical motions of it and lack in love for you. We remember how it used to be. We obey your word today.

Remember how it used to be. I just wonder why every head is bowed. Some of you look back.

I ask you to look back to 10 years ago, 20, 30 years ago. Maybe for some of you it's just five years ago. When you first met Jesus, I mean just in love with Jesus.

Just in love with Jesus. In love with his people. Fervent, in love, excited.

If it's grown old, if you've drifted away, just ask the Lord today, Lord, draw me close to you. We love you, Jesus. We love you, Jesus.

Because you first loved us. Lord, get rid of anything in our lives that has come into competition with you, including ourselves, our jobs, our money, our families. We want to love you with everything.

For your word says, what is the first and greatest commandment? Oh, that you said, Jesus, that you would love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind, and your neighbor as yourself. Give us that love today. All out for you.

Thank you for the visitors. Thank you most of all for the body of Christ. Brothers and sisters who are family forever.

Our biological family is going to end one day, but our spiritual family has no end. We thank you for that. In Jesus' name.

Everybody stand up and tell about 10 people, I love you with the love of the Lord. Come on, tell them. I love you.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/27/SID27163.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jim-cymbala/going-backwards-to-go-ahead/>

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