

Undivided Devotion

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon emphasizes the importance of forgiveness and undivided devotion in our lives, encouraging us to preserve our focus on the Lord and avoid distractions that may lead to divided devotion.

Duration: 1:17:17

Topics: "Devotion"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the danger of having a divided devotion and being distracted from God. He uses the example of Demas, who had forsaken the apostle Paul because he loved the present world. The preacher emphasizes that when our hearts are divided and distracted, our taste for heavenly things diminishes. He urges the listeners to guard their hearts and deal with any distractions in their lives so that they can have undivided hearts devoted to Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Alright.

Hallelujah. Lovely Savior. Isn't the Lord wonderful? Has He captured your heart this morning? Do you find yourself lovesick? Does the name of Jesus bring tears to your eyes? Do you long to see Him? Do you long to love Him? Do you have a pilgrim's heart? A sojourner? Have you recognized that you are called with a heavenly calling? You have a heavenly citizenship.

That you are looking for a city whose builder and maker is God. And that there's nothing down here on earth that is permanent for you and I. For we have a house in heaven not made with hands of man, eternal, preserved for us. Has the Lord given you a heavenly perspective this morning? I trust He has.

I trust He has. Before we go into the word this morning, and I do have something from the heart of the Lord for us this morning. So I believe if we listen carefully, God will address us.

God will speak to us. I believe some have prayed prayers. God is going to answer some of those prayers this morning through His word.

See, we must expect God to speak to us. And He will. He will.

We're going to have Brother Gary come. He has a prayer request and a few announcements. Anything else on his heart he can share.

And if he wants to mention his friend that has come from Staten Island, that's fine too. We're delighted to meet other members of the body of Christ. Got to put this up six inches now.

Thank you. Two announcements and one prayer request. And also, Brother here, Mike, can you pronounce your last name? Chiloni from Staten Island is here to visit with us today.

So if you want to just make him feel at home, welcome him at some point in the morning. We went in a kind of weird way. This is the first time I've actually met him.

He works in New Jersey. He lives in Staten Island. And someone that lives in Allentown took a newspaper to where he works.

And my pastor from the church there has a little article every Friday in that newspaper. And so Mike read it and left a message on my pastor from Pennsylvania's machine. That's the church I go to there when I'm home with my parents.

And Pastor Lomac told me about it. I got his address off the answering machine, wrote him a little letter. And then we exchanged a couple letters.

And finally, we got to meet here today. So that's how we met. Two announcements.

One, Pam told me that she's inviting everyone over to her house afterwards if anyone wants to go over for fellowship. I guess you have to talk to her about the details. The second announcement is I'm going to be going tonight to Times Square Church in New York City and just want to invite and welcome anyone along who would like to go.

I'm probably leaving about 3.30. The service starts at 6, but we're trying to get there a little early to go see the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center. And probably get home around 10. The prayer request is for Melody Lundmark.

For those of you who know her, she's the daughter of the pastor of the church in Pennsylvania that I go to. She's having some very strange problems that are still continuing. She has bouts of weakness where she has a hard time walking even.

She has a shaking that just comes over her. And it seems to start from the inside. She was talking to me this past weekend and kind of just manifests itself outside.

It's almost like a fear or something from the enemy it seems. They've taken her to the doctors. The tests have not shown anything up.

They made some guesses at what it might be, but they're still not sure. It could be hormones. It could be a panic attack she's wondering.

Other women her age in their 30s have had that. I guess it's not uncommon. But they're really not sure.

But the enemy has been really plaguing her mind with wondering what this might be. Is she having a nervous breakdown? Is there a physical problem? So she gets about four hours of sleep a night on average. She has a hard time sleeping.

So it's just a real spiritual battle for her as well. So if you could just lift her up in prayer. She's a real precious sister, really loves the Lord.

She's really appreciative of everyone's prayers. I've mentioned that other people are praying for her, and it really means a lot to her. So just help her to really stand on the word and not let the enemy play games with her mind.

That's it. Let's bow our hearts. Father, we thank you for your grace.

We thank you for your mercy. Lord, we lift up melody to you, Lord. A girl who was born in a home that worships you, that loves you, has grown up in the church.

She's a sweet girl, Lord. We've met her several times. We lift her up before you even now, Lord, and pray, Father, in the name of your only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that you would touch her.

Lord, meet the need, we ask. Bring healing to her, Lord, inwardly, and let it manifest itself outwardly. We pray, Lord, that you will be the great God who searches the hearts.

Lord, you know the depths of her being. You know the deepest fears, the deepest questions that she has about her life. Lord, you search the heart.

Lord, you are the shepherd that knows every sheep. Bring healing. Bring that healing word to her, Lord, we pray, and we'll rejoice along with you.

Father, we also want to pray for Bill Cascio. We thank you, Lord, that you are leading him, that you are bringing him step by step, Lord, the principal of this school. We ask, Lord, that you'll save him.

We pray, Lord, that you'll continue to work in his life. We pray, Lord, that you'll continue to minister to him and show him his need for a Savior and call him out, Lord, and save him, we pray. We ask, Lord, again for the move of the Spirit in this high school.

We pray, Lord, that you will interrupt the ordinary events that occur in this school through an extraordinary movement of your Holy Spirit. Bring the knowledge of the Savior, Jesus Christ, into this school, we pray, Lord. Oh, Father, we ask you to do it in Jesus' name.

Hallelujah. Amen and amen. First of all, before we get into the message this morning, I feel from the Lord to emphasize something that we need to affirm on a daily basis.

I'd like for you, if you would, to turn to Matthew 6, verse 12. Matthew 6, verse 12. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

Listen carefully, beloved. Listen carefully. It is essential that we pray each and every day of our lives that we are enabled by the power of God's Holy Spirit to affirm in our hearts, with our mouth, that we will forgive all who may sin against us in whatever capacity they have done it.

We must affirm our desire to forgive. The power of unforgiveness comes right from hell, destroys lives, destroys marriages, destroys relationships in the church. You do not base your decision to forgive someone who has sinned against you on your feelings.

If you have not come to the place where you were faced with the need to forgive someone, you will. And be assured, beloved, that when you come to this place where you need to forgive someone, if you base your decision on how you feel, most likely you will not forgive that person. You will find some kind of a justifiable reason within your mind in order to convince yourself that it's not essential to forgive this person whatever they've done against you.

And if you remain in that state of unforgiveness, you will slowly be eaten up with bitterness. And this bitterness will come out of your actions. It will come out of what you say.

It will affect your ability to maintain a right, good testimony in your family and among your friends. Unforgiveness is like a cancer. It's like gangrene.

It eats you up from the inside out. Unforgiveness is a dreadful sin. It's a dreadful stronghold.

And the reason why I believe unforgiveness is so prevalent is because we have approached the subject of unforgiveness in an emotional way. But I just don't feel like I can forgive this person. I just don't feel like it's in me to forgive.

I can't forgive that person because I feel this way and that way about them. I can't forgive because of how this person has made me feel. You see, we're caught in the realm of feeling, the realm of emotion.

And as Christians, we do not base our decisions on how we feel and our emotions, but we base our decisions on the Word of God and the strengthening power that comes from the indwelling Spirit of God in order to choose to obey the Word of God. It's not based on feeling. It's based on dunamis.

And you shall receive power. After that, the Holy Spirit has come upon you. It's based on might.

It's based on strength. It's based on the competence that comes from God to do what God asks us to do. We know the story of Corrie Ten Boone, whose sister was killed in the concentration camps.

And we know that years later, Corrie Ten Boone ran into the very one who was responsible or had some part to do with the death of her sister. And as she looked upon the face of this man, she was overwhelmed with feelings. And I assure you, based on her testimony, that the feelings that she was overwhelmed with were not happy, lovely feelings of great adoration toward this person.

She felt resentment. She felt bitterness. She felt anger.

And she didn't feel like forgiving this man of the dreadful sin that he committed in being instrumental in putting her dear sister to death. But as she stood there, she says, she realized she had no choice in the matter. She had to forgive.

And based wholly on the knowledge of God's will and not the rollercoaster of her emotions, she said these lovely words, I will forgive you. Even though everything in her was saying, No! No! No! I will forgive you. Oh, what release.

What release. I will forgive you. See, it's not a matter of how I feel.

It's cooperating with the working of God in my life. God forgives. God releases men of their debts against Him through His Son.

And therefore, if God is in me, if I have become a new creation in Christ Jesus, and I find myself having been sinned against by someone else, then it is the nature of God, it is the presence of God in me that wills to forgive that person. And therefore, I am liberated from the captivity of my emotions, from the captivity of how I feel, from the captivity of what I would do in myself, and I can say, I will to forgive you. I will because God's Word says it.

And I desire, I will forgive you. And as you affirm God's Word regarding this issue of forgiveness and unforgiveness, and don't renege on it because you don't feel like it, then I assure you that your feelings will fowl eventually. And even if they don't, you stand on the Word of God.

Have you forgiven everyone who has sinned against you? Signs of not forgiving someone. When you see them or hear their name or someone else mentions their name, something happens on the inside, and it's not indicative of love. Have you forgiven men their sins that they've committed against you? Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us.

For a moment, let's bow our hearts. This is not a light issue. Each and every one of you, dearly beloved, will come to a crossroads in your Christian life where you are going to be faced with the decision to forgive somebody.

And it might even be forgiving them over and over and over again. Seventy times seven. Jesus said, and each time you come to the place where you must forgive somebody, you stand in a crossroads with the Lord.

If you make the decision to forgive them based on the Word of God and not your emotions, you will be triumphant, you will be victorious, and you will become better. You will grow in the grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. But if, on the other hand, you allow your emotions to control your decision and you refuse to acknowledge your desire to forgive, you will become bitter.

And that bitterness will infest your family. It will infest the church. It will come out in your speech when you talk to other people.

And you will begin to spread poison in the ears of those that you talk with. And unless this unforgiveness is dealt with, you will become very unfruitful for the Lord. Father, we thank you that when we came to Calvary we heard the words of Jesus, It is finished.

Payment in full. We thank you, Father, that through your Son, Jesus Christ, we have experienced perfect forgiveness. We thank you for the freedom that we have because of it.

We thank you for the joy that we have because of it. We thank you, Lord, that we are released from the guilt of our past sins because we have experienced forgiveness, perfect forgiveness, as far as the East is from the West. So far have you removed our iniquities from us.

We thank you, Lord. I pray, Father, that you will teach us to follow in your steps and forgive others who have sinned against us. Husbands, forgive your wife.

Wives, forgive your husband. Don't hold on to bitterness. Don't hold on to an unforgiving spirit.

That person who wounded you, that person who disappointed you, that person who maybe has no idea how deeply they have hurt you, forgive them, and you'll be a blessed man or woman today. God may, but

possibly not. He may require you to go to somebody and to look at them in the eyes and say, I forgive you.

Because there might be a person that you know of that knows you haven't forgiven them, and it might be that God is requiring you to go to them and look at them in the eyes and say, I forgive you in the person of Jesus Christ. I forgive you. Hallelujah.

The power of forgiveness. May the Lord grant to us the power of forgiveness. Now, turn your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 7. 1 Corinthians 7. The Holy Spirit is very, very jealous over you and I. Very jealous.

It is a godly jealousy that the Holy Spirit has for us. It is a jealousy that covets, that wrongs, that desires our entire affection. Our entire inner heart.

The Lord wants us all for himself. The Lord doesn't want us to share another lover. The Lord doesn't want us to acknowledge him as our lover and then have other lovers as well.

God's intention is to so work in the life of a bride, so work in the life of his people, so as to produce in us a heart, an entire lifestyle that is all toward him, that is progressively moving heavenward, that is in love with him. The Lord is after a people in whom the heart of true bridehood dwells. When we are espoused or engaged to someone, it means that we have reserved ourselves and everything about us for one exclusive person.

This is why the veil is over the head. The veil indicates that I am not available for anybody else. I am veiled to everyone.

In other words, the veil means you cannot know me. You cannot know me intimately. The veil is over my face as a bride.

Beloved, the Holy Spirit would say that the veil should be over your face as you walk in this world. You should not lift that veil up to anything or anyone but Christ himself. Christ alone should be the one who can take his hands and spiritually lift the veil from you and see you and see who you are and see the depths of your being and there you embrace him and he embraces you.

The veil should be over you in your dealings with the world. You shouldn't let anything or anyone get into the intimacy of your heart and steal that place of devotion, that place of love that belongs to Jesus Christ alone. We need to preserve by God's grace and God's power and God's word that place for him alone.

1 Corinthians 7, verse number 35. And this I speak for your own profit, not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. What is distracting you this morning from attending to the Lord? Now, when Paul was writing this, he specifically was dealing with the issues of virgins.

Back in the Jewish tradition, a man, a father, could keep his daughter a virgin. That is, could keep her and she would remain unmarried and she would be a virgin unto the Lord. And the question was arising, is it okay if a father decides that he is going to let his daughter marry? And that's the question that is being dealt with.

In verse number 26, Paul says, I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress. I say that it is good for a man to be so. That is, a man to be in the sense where he is not married, a woman where she is not married.

But Paul is here dealing with something more than just creating a law whereby fathers can know what to do in light of their virgin daughter. And beloved, this morning the Holy Spirit would not want us to try and come up with a law here, but to get into the spirit of what is in the heart of Paul here. The spirit of this message now, the spirit of the heart of Paul and the spirit of the Holy Spirit, the heart of the Holy Spirit this morning, is that we would be undistracted.

That we would not be turned aside by anything from our devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. And so in response to that, Paul begins to write, and I want you to just see the mindset here that we are to have. This mindset enables us, it empowers us, it strengthens us to remain undistracted.

Now I want you to read, as we read this, I want you to consider these words and ask yourself, ask the Lord, Lord, is this the mindset that I have as I live in this world, as I go about my daily business, whatever it might be. Verse number 26, and I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress. I say that it is good for a man to be so.

Listen, are you bowing to a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife. But if you marry, you have not sinned.

And if a virgin marry, he hath not sinned. Nevertheless, she hath not sinned. Excuse me.

Nevertheless, such shall have trouble in the flesh. But I spare you. But this I say, brethren, the time is short.

It remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none. And they that weep as though they wept not. And they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not.

And they that buy as though they possessed not. And they that use, that word use means to borrow, to borrow. And they that use this world as not abusing, that word abuse means to use immoderately.

So they that use this world as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passes away. But I would have you without carefulness. That is, I would want you to be without distraction.

You see, the spirit of this exhortation has to do with preserving within the heart of the church, preserving within your life and within my life a heart that is undistracted. And therefore, Paul deals with even lawful things. Things that are lawful, like getting a wife, getting a husband.

Lawful things, such as weeping, such as rejoicing. Lawful things, such as borrowing things, possessing things. Paul deals with all of these things and says, if you are involved in any of these things, let it be as though you are not involved in them.

And the reason why the Holy Spirit says this is that we must have this kind of mindset unless we become preoccupied with these things and therefore become distracted from the Lord. The reason why the Holy Spirit is so concerned about this distraction is because when we become distracted from the Lord, listen carefully, the veil that is to remain over us indicating we have reserved ourselves exclusively for the Lord, that veil is removed when we become distracted. And our devotion becomes divided.

A divided devotion, listen, will result in a house that cannot stand. A house divided against itself cannot stand. Is that not what Jesus said? If a house is not in unity, it can't stand.

And likewise, if a devotion is divided, the house cannot stand. If we are intending to be devoted to the Lord and our devotion becomes divided and we become distracted, then we cannot stand. We cannot maintain that posture that is pleasing to the Lord in a position of being divided or distracted.

The call of the Holy Spirit in this late hour, beloved, is for a people who will recognize Christ's passion. For a people who are undistracted. A devotion that is not divided.

I'm going to read verse 35 one more time. In this I speak for your own profit, not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend unto the Lord without distraction. 2 Corinthians 11 verses 1, 2, and 3. You may turn to it if you like.

I'm going to begin reading. Another way that the Holy Spirit mentions the danger of becoming distracted. This is what we're going to look at now.

Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly and indeed bear with me. Here it is, verse number 2. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy. Oh beloved, I wish to God that he could communicate to us the meaning of godly jealousy.

Oh, I wish to God that we could understand the godly jealousy that Paul had for the church. And you know, Paul didn't get this godly jealousy from himself. But Paul got this godly jealousy for the church as one who was speaking for Christ.

He said, as though God did beseech you, what, by us. Paul was a bond servant, a bond slave of the Lord Jesus Christ, and had in him such a measure of Christ insomuch that when Paul was saying, oh, I have a godly jealousy for you, he was in fact demonstrating and expressing the jealousy that Christ had for his people. Have you prayed and asked the Lord recently, probably not, to give you an understanding of this godly jealousy that Christ has for us? Oh, if we could understand the depths of God's love, the depths of Christ's passion for his people, the desire for us to be reserved wholly for him.

A godly jealousy a desire for us, a desire that we would be wholly his, devoted to his, without distraction, without a divided devotion. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy. For I have espoused you to one husband that I might present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Paul here expresses a fear that he had. After telling them that they had been espoused to Christ, that means that they have got the ring on their finger.

He belongs to them, and they belong to him. The veil is over them. They are to be a chaste freedom from defilement, freedom from all impurity, freedom from mixture.

They are to be a chaste virgin, a virgin, one that doesn't know intimately anything else, one who has reserved herself and her heart's affections for the Lord Jesus Christ. I have espoused you as a chaste virgin unto the Lord. What a beautiful thing.

But I fear, lest by any means, the serpent. Beloved, listen closely. You can be assured that every time there is movement within the body of Christ, whether it's corporately among a group of people, or whether it's coming from an individual in their prayer closet, whenever there is movement in the body of Christ where a soul through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God is awakening to the fact that they have been called to be a chaste virgin unto the Lord, where they are committing themselves and devoting themselves

and offering themselves to the Lord in devotion to Him, undivided devotion, and in a posture where they have committed themselves to where they will not become distracted, where they're going to offer themselves to the Lord.

They're going to love Him. They're going to get in and search the Scriptures. They're going to belong to the Lord and walk in holiness and purity before God and men.

You can be sure that the serpent is nearby. You can be sure that the enemy is nearby. And I'll tell you, beloved, you can find this in the Scriptures.

Everywhere God began to move, even from the very beginning when God took Eve out of Adam and put him in a garden and there had communion with Adam. The very next verse, Genesis 3-1, and the serpent. Revelation chapter 12.

We see a woman clothed in the sun, the moon under her feet, and a crown of stars on her head. What this is indicative of is a person whose life is heavenly, a person whose life is Christ, who has put down the things of this world. And right down after reading that, we see the serpent is there, wanting to devour her child.

In the book of Ephesians, we see Paul starting out with the glorious revelation of us being in the heavenlies, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that we might be holy and without blame and spotless before Him in love, cleansed by the blood of Christ. And then we see God in Christ, raising Christ up from the dead, placing Him at the right hand of the Father. There we see Him being placed above all principality and power and having been given a name that is above every name.

And then in Ephesians 2, we see this incredible revelation, and you too. We too have been quickened together with Christ and have been given this new life in Jesus Christ. And then he goes on to tell us about the implications of this regarding our walk, how we're to walk holy.

We're not to walk after the flesh fulfilling the lusts of the mind and the flesh anymore. And then in Ephesians 6, what does he do? He goes from the heaviness of what we are in Christ into the battle of that position and the battle that we have gone into as a result of that position. Ephesians 6. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

So we find throughout the Scripture, whenever God is doing something significant, bringing His glory and His praise and His honor, the enemy is there close by. And likewise, here Paul is revealing the revelation that we are to be chaste virgins espoused to the Lord. And then he says, but I fear, lest by any means the serpent who beguiled Eve through his subtlety so might beguile your minds, that you should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

The simplicity here is the singleness of heart, the undistracted, undivided devotion to Jesus Christ. Your and my adversary this morning is seeking to distract us from the simplicity that is in Christ. The undivided devotion and undistracted heart posture that characterizes the bride of Christ is under attack right now in your life.

Have you sensed that? Do you sense, dearly, the need to guard, to fend, to flame, to watch, to be alert, to be careful? What does the proverb say? Guard your heart, for out of it are what? The issues of life. 2 Timothy chapter 4. The danger of a distracted heart. The danger of a divided devotion this morning.

Listen carefully. 2 Timothy chapter 4, verse number 10. For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica.

Demas was a man that traveled with the Apostle Paul. Demas is a man that sat under the teachings of Paul, of Cephas, of Apollos. Demas is a man who Paul indicated had sent greetings to some of the churches.

And yet, the Scripture says, down along toward the end of Paul's life, the Scripture says that Demas forsook him. Having loved this present world. Beloved, the results of having a divided devotion, the results of being distracted, is that we will begin to get a taste for the things of this world.

And our taste for heavenly things will begin to dim. That statement right there means this, beloved. Listen carefully.

The light of the body is the eye. The eye there represents the intention of the heart. Jesus is saying here, your light, the light of your body, the light of your being hangs upon your eye.

It hangs upon, listen closely, it hangs upon the state of your heart and its devotion, its treasure. It hangs upon the singleness of your heart. The light of your body hangs upon what you're really after.

And the kind of light that you have in your body, whether it is God's light, God is light and in Him is no darkness, or whether it is a distorted light, whether it is actually darkness, has directly to do with the heart. Now watch what Jesus says. He's a profound teacher, isn't He? Oh, I'd love to sit at the feet of Jesus and hear His words as they are recorded and just allow the Holy Spirit to open up the heart of my Savior and speak to me and instruct me in the way of life.

Listen to what Jesus said here. Now remember, beloved, we started out by talking about distractions. We saw how Paul's intention was that we would not be distracted.

And we saw the mindset that we need in order to keep ourselves from being distracted. And basically it's this, if you're weeping, let it be as though you're not weeping, unless you become so preoccupied in your weeping you become distracted from the Lord. If you are rejoicing, let it be as though you're not rejoicing.

Lest you start rejoicing so much and you get hung up in your rejoicing, you somehow become distracted from the Lord. If you own things, let it be as though you own nothing, unless you find yourself being owned by the things that you own. Lest you forget that the world and the fashion thereof is passing away.

Lest you forget that you are heavenly creatures called with a heavenly calling. And this world begins to look good to you. Lest you forget.

That's the mindset. And then we saw how Paul espoused us unto Christ as chaste virgins, and how the tether is out to seduce. He's out to seduce our minds from the simplicity.

That word simplicity means the single, faithful devotion to God. And now we're reinforcing that by the words of Jesus. To be distracted, to be divided in our devotion, is to have a heart that is not set on God alone.

The light of the body is the eye. If therefore thine eye be single. Ah, there you go.

If your eye be single. That word single means absence of duplicity, no folds. Oh, that's powerful.

The absence of duplicity, no folds. If thine eye be single. David said, one thing have I desired.

How many things? One thing. Paul said, one thing I do. Forgetting those things which lie behind.

Oh, how many times we live in the past. We are hooked to the past. We are so bound to the past we can't go wrong with God.

Paul said, I forget those things which lie behind. One thing. Singleness.

The absence of duplicity. No folds. Do we have any folds in our heart today? You know what a fold is.

You know, a fold. Something in the dark. God help us.

God create in me a clean heart, a pure heart. If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. Hallelujah to God.

But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness. Verse 24.

No man can serve two masters. Oh, now we're getting into the real issue here. No man can serve two masters.

A distracted heart, a divided devotion is a heart that wants to serve two masters. A heart that wants to be devoted to two things. What does Jesus say about such a dilemma? No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other.

Ye cannot serve God and mammon. We cannot have hearts that want God and fill in the blank. I want the Lord Jesus and fill in the blank.

Luke chapter 14. Oh, how I love thy love, for it is my meditation day and night. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.

How shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereunto according to thy word. Thy word is a lamp and a light. By thy word I am instructed.

By thy word I am wiser than mine enemies. Oh, may God give us a love for his word, that by it we might be instructed. Luke chapter 14.

A divided heart is a distracted heart. A distracted heart produces light that is darkness. And if the light that bringeth thee be darkness, how dark shall that darkness be? What has distracted us this morning? Verse 16.

Luke 14. And a certain man made a great supper and bade many, and sent his servant at suppertime to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuses.

Beloved, listen closely. A divided heart, a distracted heart, is a heart full of excuses. Excuses.

Why I cannot be his altogether is your heart full of excuses. And they all with one accord began to make excuses. Verse 18.

And the first said to him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it. I pray thee, excuse me. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them.

I pray thee, have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came and showed his lord these things.

And the master of the house was angry, and said to his servants, Go out quickly into the streets and the lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the maimed and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said to the servant, Go to the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

And I say to you, none of those which were bidden shall taste of my supper. Same thought. Verse 25.

And there went great multitudes with him, and he turned and said unto them, Stop, listen closely. Jesus is now attacking the divided heart. Oh, he's a loving Savior.

He loves us with an everlasting love. But love and truth go hand in hand. Never can we ever suppose that Jesus loves us at the cost of sparing us the truth.

Brothers and sisters, may I warn you from the Lord. Never, ever, ever get under the influence of a so-called love from anyone that spares you from truth. Love and truth go hand in hand.

Love and truth. I love my children as much as any father could love them. But that love will never, ever, ever keep me from telling them the truth.

I love you, but you have sinned, you have rebelled, you are deserving of punishment, and I have to punish you this time. Love and truth. By mercy and truth, iniquity is purged.

Now Jesus speaks. If any man come to me and hate not, listen closely, his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Now, are any of the things that Jesus just mentioned evil? They're all lawful, aren't they? Actually, God's for the family, isn't he? He's not against it, is he? Doesn't make sense, does it? What is Jesus after here? He gives you good things.

He gives you a family. He's for the family. He teaches us how to have good families.

But he says, don't let anything, including your family, distract you. We'll give you a divided devotion for me. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

Are you distracted this morning? I'm going to close in Revelation chapter 2. Revelation chapter 2. The inevitable heartbreaking result of having a distracted, divided devotion heart is found in Revelation chapter 2. Verse number 4. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen. Another translation says, remember the heights that you have fallen from and repent.

And do the first works. Now, beloved, listen carefully. The first works.

Jesus just got done telling the Ephesians how they were full of good works, weren't they? I know thy works. Verse 2. Thy labor, thy patience. How you cannot bear them that are evil.

How you've tried them that are apostles and are not, and have found them to be liars. You have borne, you have patience, for my name's sake. You have labor, and you have not fainted.

They sound like pretty good works to me, don't they? Listen, beloved, carefully. We're closing. Nevertheless, God says, I have somewhat against thee.

You have fallen from the heights of first love. Listen, your hearts have become divided. You are distracted.

But yet, you are engaged in a lot of good works. Remember, and repent, and do thy, what? First works. Beloved, may I submit to you this morning that the first works that Jesus is looking for here has to do with the heart.

Undivided. Undistracted. Aching.

Loving. Worshipping. And adoring.

It's Savior. The Lord Jesus Christ. The works.

The first works. What were the first things you were engaged in when you really fell in love with someone? Oh, how I love that person. The first works is a heart filled with utter devotion, tenderness, and adoration of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Such a heart can be absent in the midst of all kinds of religious activity. And the Lord says, repent. Do your first works, because I want an undistracted, fully devoted heart in you.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. To him that overcometh who I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Shall we bow our hearts? Thank you, Lord.

Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the Holy Spirit that takes the letter and makes it life. We thank you, Lord, for making known to us this morning that you search the hearts, that you might give us an undistracted, undivided devotion and heart towards you.

Lord, we pray that you will deliver us from all things that you have made known to us by the Holy Spirit this morning. That is bringing distraction. That is causing a divided heart.

That is resulting in trying to serve two masters. Deliver us, Lord, from all distractions. Give us the heart of a chaste virgin belonging to you alone.

We pray, Lord, deliver us. Unforgiveness is a great distraction. Preoccupation with a failure.

Preoccupation with your present circumstances. Living in the past. Afraid of the future.

All of these things distract us. The Lord wants to release us this morning from everything that's distracting us and give us the joy and jubilation of a devoted heart to him. Father, I pray in Jesus' name for each one.

If you want to be free from distractions, beloved, reach out in your heart now to the Lord. Father, in Jesus' name, free us from everything that's distracting us by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. And give us a song.

Give us a joy. Give us a peace that comes when the heart is committed to you. When the heart is free from distraction.

When our eye is single. I pray, Lord, for your honor and glory. For Jesus' sake.

Amen. Let's sing together and as we worship for a few moments. If you want special prayer, we're here to pray with you, weep with you, and believe God for you.

For Jesus' sake. Amen. Everyone together.

Lord, you are more precious. Remember, saints, Pam has invited anyone who has no place to go for a dinner at her house. So if you want fellowship afterwards, please hook up with someone.

And it's my prayer this morning that God will give us undivided hearts. May God give us the courage to face the things in our life that distract us and to deal with them. So that we can arise as men and women with single hearts committed to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Prepared to follow him wherever so ever he leads us. God bless you. In Jesus' name.

Don't forget about Times Square Church tonight. If you want to go, see Gary. God bless you.

Yes, we did have a baby boy. His name is Andrew Charles. Don't you love him? He's so precious.

Five minutes later he was poopy again. Turn the thing off.

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