

Is Jesus Your First Love

by R. Edward Miller

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of making Jesus our first love and the dangers of idolatry in our lives.

Duration: 35:39

Scripture: Matthew 3:17, Matthew 12:18, Mark 12:30, James 2:10, Revelation 19:10

Topics: "Jesus"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of putting God first in our lives and not allowing any idols to take His place. He shares a story about a young lady named Jackie who knew what God wanted her to do, but chose to go against His will and live in His permissive will instead. The preacher also highlights the example of Paul and Silas, who praised God even when they were imprisoned, showing the importance of praising God in all circumstances. The sermon concludes with the reminder that Jesus is to be exalted and glorified in our lives, and that we should align ourselves with His purposes and desires.

Transcript

I want us to go this morning to Revelation 19.10. I was reading this a couple days ago, my regular Bible reading, and I'm reading actually from a book that has 26 translations or versions in it. Revelation 19.10, and I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not.

I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren, that hath the testimony of Jesus, worship God. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. And one of the versions made it very emphatic.

It said, Don't do that. Don't do that. Don't do that.

Don't worship me. There's only one. Don't worship me.

I'm thy fellow servant. Worship God. He's the one to be worshiped.

He's the only worthy one. He's the one that has been exalted. We worship whom we love.

That's the one we worship. We praise the God that we serve. We have hymns of praise.

They're written to Jesus. But do you realize that the Buddhists have hymns of praise to their God? Do you realize that the Mohammedans have hymns of praise to their God? Do you realize they even write hymns of praise to dictators and kings? And if we have a praise and tack the name of Jesus on it like an address,

doesn't mean that he receives it, does it? God has been rejecting offerings since the days of king, hasn't he? But Jesus is the one worthy of praise. Praise to a king ends when he dies, and they put another name in it.

They might sing the same song, or maybe scrap the song, but he goes on forever. Don't do that. Don't worship me.

Now, it's a big thing for John the Apostle to vow and worship. In other words, even for a Jew to worship any idol of any that nature, it was absolutely, to them it was totally rejected. It's anathema.

They wouldn't do a thing like that. And for him to vow and worship that this angel that had been talking with him, I wonder what appearance he must have had. I know we read that when we see him we'll be like him, and he said, I'm one of your fellow servants.

I wonder who he thought it was then. Whoever he thought it was, he was a wonderfully glorified being, but he said, don't do it. I'm not the one.

I'm not the one. There is only one to be worshipped, that's God. There's only one to be worshipped, and that's Jesus with God in flesh.

There's only one to be worshipped, and that's the one who is worthy of all praise. I read in Matthew 3 17, I read a voice from heaven saying, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. And he was trying the same thing also in Matthew 12 18.

He is the wonderful one. He is the one that pleased the father. He was the only one that ever pleased the father.

He said, the father is always with me because I please him. I do what he tells me to. No one else has ever pleased the father.

In all of his works, he had this testimony. He pleased God. He lived righteous, which none of us ever do.

He lived in holiness, and he lived in righteousness, and because he lived in righteousness, he has now given it to us. We have his righteousness because ours is no good. Ours is full of holes.

Ours is as filthy rags. I would never stand the glare of the eyes of holy angels. So he's covered us with his own righteousness, and he lived it, and he is worthy.

But I was noticing that way back in the Old Testament, there is one that's exalted. There is one that's exalted above his fellows, we read. The Lord is exalted.

He lives on high. He lives in Zion. We have a mighty God.

We have a God that's high up. We have a God and he's come to us now and cohabited with us, lived with us, lived in our world, and he's given a name, and that name is Jesus. Does that name every knee should bow? He has been exalted by the father.

He's been lifted up. He is the one that must be worshiped. He is the one that must be exalted.

When God said to, Jesus said actually to John in the Isle of Patmos, Ephesians, the second chapter and story to the Ephesian church, he said, I have somewhat against you because you've left your first love.

Remember that? Now, as I said before, we worship whom we love. And if I have left my first love, then something else has moved up into its place, hasn't it? There always has to be something first because we have many loves, the love of our families, the love of our children, the love of all kinds of things.

One of them is first, isn't it? It has to be, doesn't it? And if the love of Jesus Christ is not first, as it was not in the Ephesian church, then something else has moved in, hasn't it? Is that, are we logical? Are we right there? Can we agree on that? Then doesn't that, doesn't that bring idolatry? If something else is in the place of Jesus to be worshiped, to be loved first of all, isn't that some form of idolatry? Wouldn't you say that? I don't think I'm twisting the scriptures, am I? And so, if he is not first in our life, if he's not the center of everything, if he's not the one we really worship and adore, if he's not our first love, then we're living in idolatry. Pretty strong words, aren't they? But isn't it logical? And he said, because of that, he said, if you don't repent and come back, he said, then I'm going to take away your light. Take away your candlestick.

You'll have no more light. And when, when a people turn into that idolatry that's really not recognized as idolatry, because there's a realm of idolatry that isn't a graven idol, that isn't a clay or gold or silver or tin idol, it's an idol of the heart. Ezekiel 14 speaks of the idols of the heart, the hidden idols, the loves that are first before God.

Quite a few years ago, there's a young lady named Jackie. I was holding meetings in a, in a Bible school, and this young lady, this Holy Spirit was drawing her, and she came up to me, and she said, I know that God wants me to come to this Bible school. She wasn't, she was only visiting there, to come to this Bible school and, and spend three years here.

But she says, I don't want to. She said, I'm engaged to be married in four months. And she said, I'm not going to either.

She said, I'm going to get married. I know what God wants, but I'm not going to do it. She said, I'm going to, I'm going to live in God's permissive will, that's the word she used, and I'll give him my second best.

She said that to the long person. I looked at her, I said, how dare you, how dare you claim the redemption and the forgiveness of the one that gave everything and gave his life for you, and you say, God, I'll take your permissive will and give you my leftovers. I scolded her, I said, how dare you.

You know what God wants, and then say a thing like that. Well, incidentally, she ended up in Bible school and stayed there too. We put other things first.

He has to be the center. Don't do it. Don't worship me.

Don't worship anything else. Worship Jesus. Worship God.

That's who we worship, and if we don't, then light goes out. Then our light goes out. Then we don't see things.

Then we see things darkly. Then we see things confusedly. Then we see things that are misformed.

We get wrong ideas completely, and we may go on in church or may not. The Ephesian church remained, but it lost its light, and incidentally, it did lose its light because history tells us that. The doctrine of meriolatry in the Catholic church was installed in the Christian church in the city of Ephesus.

He lost his light. Don't worship me. He was a high angel.

Don't worship angels. Don't worship me. Don't do that.

He has to be centered. He has to be worshiped, and we cannot worship him unless he is centered, unless he is first in our life. Worship him.

That's the one. We bring into church all kinds of idols. We exalt men.

We exalt women. We exalt the works of men. We will even use the name of God once in a while.

We will--I was in Malaysia, as I told you, which is a Mohammedan country, and I saw tremendous, expensive, thousands of dollars spent in great Christmas decorations. And they had all they had--the reindeer and the tenequas, and they had the angels, and they would even have the creche, and they'd have the carols. Holy night, silent night, I would hear here coming out.

They're a Mohammedan nation. Oh, they use the name, but they worship mammon. They worship mammon.

And I remember being in a church. They had a living Christmas tree. Do you know what that is? Some of you know what it is? A few of you.

They had a great decoration, and instead of baubles on the tree, they had little cubicles where people were, and they sang cantatas, and they sang some beautiful things. And it was a great Christmas celebration, and they had all kinds of--in fact, they had an angel tied on a wire, and they pulled him up there and gave this announcement. Oh, it was wonderfully done.

On their practice night, he kind of fell out, but then--but I wondered, where's Jesus? Where's the one that came in a manger? Where is that simplicity that Paul said, I'm frightened about you? He said that that subtle enemy hasn't moved you away from the simplicity that is in Jesus Christ. And we've got to put in its place all kinds of events and celebrations and extravaganzas. Don't worship me.

There's only one to worship, and that's God. We need to come so we don't have to be entertained in church. We need to come so that we're not saying, how wonderful, what a wonderful voice that person has, or how beautifully the choir performs.

And no one says, how beautiful is the presence of Jesus. Don't worship me. I'm not the worthy one.

I wasn't the one that lived my life pleasing God all the time. I wasn't the one that so loved my Father, that when my Father loved the world and wanted to save me, it was my joy to say, here I am, take me. You know, Jesus didn't die, first of all, for man.

Robert said that last night. Let me go back and show you something. When the Father was ready to destroy the world in the days of Noah, did Jesus run in and save it? Did he? No.

He says, I only do what the Father wants. And he was rejoiced just as much when his Father executed judgment upon the world in the days of Noah, as he rejoiced in doing the will of the Father when it came to prepare him to die. Did you ever think of that? He loved his Father.

He worshiped God. God was first in his life. We weren't.

But God so loved the world. And God was in Christ reconciling the world, wasn't he? We read in 2 Corinthians, And we worship him who sits upon the throne, high and lifted up, and has been given unto him, and given unto him that every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, until he is the one we desire. He is the one we seek after.

He is what we want more than anything else. And we recognize his rulership, that he reigns upon the throne, and he's the head of the church, and he does what he wants to in the church, and I'm one of that church. Which means he does what he wants to with me, doesn't he? And if he wants me to preach, that's fine.

And if he wants me to sit in jail, oh Lord, what happened? But that wasn't what Paul said, was it? What did Paul and Silas do in jail? Sang praises, didn't they? Sang praises. You know, I think that surprised the angels. They had to come down and listen to that one.

Say, hey, what's happening on earth there? We see you put Paul and Silas in jail. Well, you've done that with a lot of your saints, so nothing new about that, but what's that? What do I hear? Father, could we go down and listen? Go ahead. They had a big crowd listening down there.

They were praising God. Well, you know, it's really easy to praise God when you're locked up in jail and the enemy has turned against us, but try praising God when it's just a little thing, and we don't like it. The big things, you know, we can kind of react to, sometimes the wrong way, but the little restrictions, that's harder, too, isn't it? Until we learn, until we learn that He must become first in our lives.

He must become first. For many people, especially after the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit comes to you, and always after the true baptism of the Holy Spirit, He will exalt Jesus Christ. I've heard that testimony hundreds of times.

It just makes Jesus so wonderful, so beautiful, so desirable. But sad to say, a few months later, that's all gone in so many, many lives. We leave.

Jesus did not say to the Ephesian church, you've lost your first love. He said, you've left it. He said, return, return, return, until you can worship God.

You know, we have found here, we have found right here at this, in this very church, we found in other churches, I have found, and that is, people can enjoy church when there's power, when there's manifestations, when people are healed, and you see this glorious healing. It is wonderful, absolutely. There's no denying it.

And when there's a praises of God. But you know, I found so many suddenly turn off when they begin to quietly worship. They don't know what to do with themselves.

I've seen it many times. Where is the dwelling place of the Lord? In heaven, of course. Where on earth is it? Can you tell me? Is it in here? Is that where it is? Then can we get quiet and slip in and worship him? Oh no, it's got to be up there.

Praise you Jesus! No, no, we can't go there. And that is worship. This is praise.

This is worship. And so many people, they can either go as far as praise, but they cannot go to worship. He is not first in their life.

He is not the one they've learned to love. He is not the one they adore. And they had it, they left their first love.

And there are other idols in its place. Other idols are there. But God has exalted him, not me, not you.

God has exalted him, not church, not a preacher. God has exalted him, not a Bible, not a ministry, not a mission field. God has exalted him.

Don't do it. Worship God. You say, I can't.

Then return. Repent and return. Repent from what? From idolatry.

From what is written? What is the first commandment? After all, in Mark 12 30, what is the first commandment? Thou shalt what? Remember, thou shalt praise the Lord thy God. Is that it? No. What is it? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul, strength.

Is that right? And didn't James tell us that if we break commandments, if we break one of them, we break them all? Didn't he? And therefore, if I'm not loving him, he's not the first love of my life, I've broken all the commandments. All the rest of it doesn't matter. John the prophet said last night, he said, he said, this is all the commandments.

See that thou do it not. Stop worshiping false gods. Stop worshiping idols.

Return church. Return Ephesian church. Ephesian church was the most advanced church at that time.

John himself was a bishop of that church. But Jesus said, return, repent, and put Jesus first. Stop worshiping.

Stop worshiping that which is not God. We are gathered together in his name. The song says, what for? To worship him.

To worship him. And the Holy Spirit, more than anything else, would bring us to worship in spirit and truth. And the more he has freedom in your life, the more he will bring you to Jesus.

Because he has pleased the Father, and it has pleased the Father to exalt him and lift him up. It has pleased the Father to make this same Jesus both Lord and Christ. And until we get in line with the purposes of God, even the very purposes of church service, even the purposes of life, which is to glorify Jesus on earth, we have some way missed the mark.

That's what it's all about. Because he pleased the Father. He obeyed the Father.

That's more than I can say. That's more than you can say. Oh, and sometimes we do.

Yes, but the other times. And furthermore, he pleased the Father even unto death. And therefore, God has highly exalted him, given him a name above every name, that the name of Jesus is in each vow.

In every tongue confess he is Lord. And Jesus said, why call you me Lord, Lord, when you don't do the things I tell you to do? It is not popular to build big churches, because to worship the Lamb means he has to be put back into first place, and the idols torn down. As a songwriter says, break down every idol, break down every idol, until Jesus is the beloved of my heart.

Robert said last night, is he your beloved? So you can hear the voice of your beloved. Say, come away. Is he first? Is he your first love? Is he the one you are married to? Is he married? Yes.

Read it in Romans 7. We are to be married with Christ and bring forth fruit unto God out of that marriage relationship. And a marriage relationship is a love relationship. I have said in more than one church gathering, I have said if my wife had have loved me like most Christians love Jesus, I would have never married her.

We're married to Christ, but not unless he's my beloved. Not unless the Holy Spirit has brought me or brought me again, one of the two, to the first love, which is Jesus. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, with your emotions, all your strength.

Then we're worshipers of the Lamb. Then we are those that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. As a bride follows her husband, as Ruth says, where thou goest, I will go.

But until then, we're someplace but not in the right place. And so I trust that every one of you here this time will renew your relationship with Jesus Christ. I trust that anyone that has left your first love will say, what have I done? I'll return.

Whatever has taken the place of that first love. Maybe it's a child. Maybe it's a resentment.

Maybe it's myself. Maybe it's some possession. Maybe it's my fears that has come between me and my beloved.

And I trust that those things are put away. I trust you can hear the call of the Holy Spirit. Come away, my beloved.

Come away, my love. My fair one. Come away with me until he is first and our love.

And we worship him, that beautiful, beautiful being. Maybe John thought it was Jesus himself that was so beautiful. Maybe some high angel.

They said, don't you do that. Don't do that. Don't you do it.

See that you don't do that. That's just one of your fellow servants. Maybe he was a beautiful servant.

Maybe he had a powerful ministry. Maybe he was highly exalted in the heavenly spheres. But it was still Lord Jesus Christ.

There is none like you. You have no rivals. And you will permit no rivals.

You are the one and the only one. You are the exalted one. You are the high and holy one.

And there is none like you. There never has been. There never will be.

You are always the only one. You are Lord. You are Christ.

You are high. You are holy. You are wonderful.

Master, glorify thy name. Glorify thy name in all the earth. And glorify thy name in this earth.

We would have you, John here. We would have your presence. We would have you, Lord, to be pleased to dwell amongst us, O Lord.

Jesus, O Jesus. Your presence, your presence can make us whole. Your presence can bring us to reality.

Your presence, Holy Spirit, bring us more and more into that presence. Until we truly fall in love with you. Until, Lord, you have captured our hearts.

Until you've turned us away from every idol, every substitute, every rival. And it is you and you alone, and we will have none other. Wonderful Jesus.

Work on our hearts. Jesus.

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