

Remembering Your First Love

by Walter Brubacker

Walter Brubacker's sermon emphasizes the importance of remembering and rekindling our first love for God amidst life's distractions and challenges.

Scripture: Joshua 24:14, Matthew 13:44, Mark 10:15, Colossians 2:6, Revelation 2:4

Topics: "Spiritual Renewal", "Faithfulness"

Description

Walter Brubacker emphasizes the importance of not losing our first love for God and the need to continually pursue Him with zeal and devotion. He warns against the dangers of falling away from God and stresses the significance of remembering our initial pursuit of truth and righteousness. Brubacker encourages the congregation to reflect on their past dedication to God, make amends where needed, and refocus on seeking the kingdom of God above all else. He highlights the need to hold fast to the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, avoiding distractions and false doctrines that may lead us astray.

Transcript

I greet you in the name of Jesus. We've been reminded pretty sharply about a lot of things, different scriptures and passages. I've been edified by it, and some of the songs. We song #30, how the christian is searching to be a pilgrim, to walk that way of life, the way of truth, and to be a pilgrim. It was just edifying, and then the one we just sang. Isn't that one of our biggest dangers: falling away from God, or not even pursuing the kingdom and how much we need to keep these things that we've heard and consider them.

Let's pray, and those that feel to stand, can stand. Heavenly father, we thank you for this beautiful day and your goodness to us. We thank you for drawing us from darkness and teaching us the way of life, truth. And we just ask you to continue being with us. Be with all those that are striving to enter into your kingdom. Strengthen us all, that we can press even more. We need you. I ask this in Jesus' name, Amen. In some ways we're not supposed to look back, in certain ways, and there's other things we're supposed to look back and we need to be able to make a difference between the bad and good of that.

And so, when we lay our hands to the plow and look back, that is bad. Here we're trying to accomplish something going forward and we look back. Or, we're going through life and we're supposed to remember from where we came and the things we've done and improved. I was going to start with Revelations 2 about losing our first love and we have to look back and consider what we've done, and the direction we're going today. I'll start at verse 2. I know your deeds and your toil and your perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men - people that are diligent, intolerant of evil men- and you put to test those who call

themselves apostles and they're not, you found them to be false.

Very diligent people. You have persevered and have endured for my name's sake and have not grown weary. They didn't even grow weary! They were zealous people. Are we that zealous? Have we not grown weary? But I have this against you that you left your first love. Therefore remember from where you have fallen and repent and do the deeds you did at first, or else I'm coming to you and will remove your candlestick out of its place, unless you repent. So I'm going to be going somewhat through my life and also other things I observed, and see where it comes out.

To try and remember what we pursued at one time, if we're not still pursuing it and go back. That is part of the problem of becoming weary is to stop pursuing what we at one time in our life pursued very much. And if they're righteous things...when we turn to the Lord, or the Lord worked in us enough to where we wanted him, and we sought after him, we just need to go back and do that again if we've stopped. Of course the bad things, we need to forget those and leave those buried.

It's also in Matthew 13:44 And things gets into this again - what did it mean to us when we first wanted to follow God? It's like a treasure hidden in a field which a man found and hid again. I'm not sure if I have an explanation for that, it doesn't really matter to me. It says he hid it again and I don't know how this reflects to what I'm talking about. And for joy over it, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. He doesn't care anymore about this life, he's going to sell everything, he's going to get rid of it, he's not going to hold any of these things to any value at all.

And he goes and buys that field, which I believe is Jesus, the kingdom, the kingdom of heaven and Jesus taught us how to get there. So in the light of that as well, do we remember when we searched, at least in my life, just looking, wondering about things, reading, trying to find and we knew there seemed to be something beyond, we'd ask people questions and read books. Why were the Anabaptist what they were? Why were the early Christians like they were? Why were the Mennonites and Amish doing what they were?

All these go with years of searching and what we learned in those times, what we held as a pearl for God, and in my own life at least, different times I remember you'd search for something and finally find it and of course the big

pearl is following Jesus, but he told us of a lot of different things, it's helping the poor, it's forsaking ourselves-there's a way to get there, an actual reality. And the end result of all that and I found that these zealous people were all going back to Jesus and they were seeking what he taught, and like the Anabaptist, they had the bible. People accused them that they just want to do what the bible literally says, they're just stubborn about it, they won't give to our authority at all anymore.

There's always people trying to discourage you from following the truth, and always have been. The truth was here and people hated it so much they ended up killing Jesus because of the truth. He was the truth. And so it is for us today. And I was thinking about how people are being persecuted today. I don't think we're under any less attack today than they were in the Anabaptist time, early christians, the apostles...they sought their lives in the apostles time, Jesus himself, the early church often, they searched the people's...you had to give your life for it if you got caught.

I don't think everybody got caught. In this country right now I just don't have that fear right now. I don't think because of what I speak is going to cause me to be killed tonight. I just don't fear that. It's not here, it

may come, but right now it's not here. So there must be another tactic that satan is using for sure, and if I could pick one this morning, I would like to say it's losing our first love. That we no longer continue on and we get sidetracked and taken away.

But do we remember how we searched and then we'd take steps, like, I built a nice big clock out of kit for an engagement clock, and all of a sudden I didn't want that anymore. I sold it. I don't think it was just the money, I think another part of it was that I didn't want to be an example that would cause other people to stumble, or desire something. But the money would be included in that. And we had a China set; it wasn't worth that much, but we didn't want it anymore. These are things that started coming out.

We have to go back and make things right where we've wronged people. It's all part of the price of this great pearl. We felt guilty about things we didn't use to, and can we think what our first love to God? Can we remember that? What were we willing to give? Our families? Our children? Our church? I think the same authority they faced back in Jesus' time we face today. There's been people over us, maybe not all of us, but a lot of us, and they said, "you can't do this, you got to do it this way".

I didn't say it this way, "Well, I'm serving a King now and I can't serve you anymore" I wish I would've, but at that time I maybe dodged the bullets. I didn't know what to do sometimes. We're now serving a king, but the bottom line is, if we pursue that kingdom, we'll be automatically at odds with anything else that is not of that kingdom, and so we feel that often, different times. This is talking about people, but we have sins that pursue us too, and I guess I was thinking that people do try to discourage us - "let's not be discouraged" is what I'm trying to say.

Let us pursue how we did when we first wanted God. Do we think these things are hard now? Have they become harder to pursue? As we grow older, time goes on, is this why people fall back? We get tired. Our first love is gone. So we did all these things, and I don't know how everything went in all of your lives. I just know we all had to make things right, but if we do something wrong now, do we still make it right? Do we have that same pursuit? Are we falling away? Have we lost our first love?

And this is my, I don't like to call it a fear, but a concern. It seems like many people do fall away as time goes on, and I would like to encourage that we somehow find that pursuit we had. As we have received the Lord Jesus Christ, so let us walk in him. And that's as much for me as anybody. Those of us who are married, are we still pursuing that same devotion, same forsaking that we did when we first got married? I think it's similar, as we get older, it's not new anymore, like the kingdom of God, we walked in it so long, there's just more of a temptation I think, to fall back in the kingdom of God or marriages.

When we first sought to follow the Lord, what all did we think about? Didn't everything become more important to us? Are we leaving a good testimony? Are we leading a life that people can pursue and say, this is a good example? And as people are people, there will always be differences in these things, but it didn't make sense to have half a covering, so we made a bigger

covering. I can't remember if it fully covered at that time, but I know that is my goal. How we use our money, we can't just think it doesn't matter. We have to consider what we do with anything that we have. What goals and passions do we have in our lives? Didn't we consider these things when we first served the Lord, wanted to be walking in his ways? Didn't we have things in our minds: goals/visions? Very easy to lose and hard to find. Pearls are not easy to be had. In Mark 10 I think this is also a nice example of how we might have received the kingdom in Mark 10:15 it says, Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child, will not enter it at all.

I just remember I didn't know the way out, I didn't even know for sure where I was going, but I knew I wanted to pursue truth, and I don't know if that is childlike or not, but I tend to think if we just rely on God in our perplexities and disturbances, things that buffet us, we can today, after, if we've served the Lord for 10 years or 20 years, or 50 years, it doesn't matter. Can we walk in him as we received him? In humble simplicity, of seeking him, just wanting to serve him.

I think so often we start thinking, 'we've got to save something, we gotta save people, maybe or we got to keep them from drifting away, we got to make rules, we got to make regulations', we become intense about these things and we end up destroying the kingdom of God instead of being just like a child, just walking and pursuing Him. And if we have fellowship in that, then I rejoice. That's been my goal for 10 or 15 years, to be able to walk in the truth and have fellowship.

What are we willing to give? Haven't most of us given a lot to have fellowship? Didn't we pursue that almost the same as the kingdom, if not the same? If there are people walking in the truth, walking in the light who have forsaken all. I know I have. If we have fellowship are we helping one another grow stronger, grow more faithful, more holy? Matthew 10:37 He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me and he who does not take up his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me.

He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for my sake, will find it. There's really no option to following Jesus. Either we follow the kingdom or we don't. Either we've given all for that pearl, anything on this earth is not of great value in comparison to that pearl, including our family, our churches. As a child, is there not some humility involved in a child? There's a lot of stubbornness in a child too, the older they get, but they're just pretty forgiving, pretty humble.

Especially a young child is just totally dependent. Even if they might disagree with what we do for them, they really are totally dependent on us, and they're willing to be fed and clothed, and we can continue being like a child. As you have received the Lord Jesus Christ, walk ye in him. Don't forget where you came from. I think that's a great value, eternal value, in not losing our first love. The angel said to the church, if you don't repent, you will be lost. You have so many good things, you fought battles against men that were trying to come into the church, you fought against so called apostles, prophets. you've sought out all truths, very diligent, went through a lot of hardships, but we've lost our first love and unless we repent...and I think it's a big danger in all this as time goes on in our lives for forget that, and it's just by way of reminder to think what we came out of, and why we came out of it.

A little verse in Joshua 24: 14. Therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and truth and put away the gods you served along the river in Egypt. Serve the Lord. If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourself this day who you will serve. If you're not going to serve God, just choose who you want, whether the gods which your fathers serve which were beyond the river or the gods of the Ammorites in whose land you are living, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

This also seems to be that pearl to me. Just chose which God you want for your master is what he's saying here, and it's true in our lives. And as you have received the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk ye in him. Remember how you pursued him at one time. I'm not saying to anyone that you've stopped doing that, but as a way of reminder. I'm sure there's some places in all of our lives where we've lost zeal, where we

held something very important but now we don't hold it so important anymore. These are drifting away from the truth and they're drifting away from life. I will read Col. 2: 5-23. I started at 5 and I just couldn't

stop. Therefore as you have received the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk in him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in him, establish your faith just as you were instructed and overflowing with gratitude. See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the word rather than to Christ.

These things are around today, they're not just back there. For in him all the fullness of the deity dwells in bodily form and in him you have been made complete. He is the head over all rule and authority, and in him you were also circumcised a circumcision not made with hands in the removal of the body of flesh by the circumcision of Christ. Having been buried with him in baptism in which you were also raised up with him through faith and in the working of God who raised him from the dead.

When you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all our transgressions. He's always trying to help us out of any pit we might find ourselves in. He's willing to. Having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us which were hostile to us, and he has taken them out of the way, nailing them to the cross. When he had disarmed the rulers and authorities and made public display of them, having triumphed over them through him.

Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink, or in respect to a festival or new moon or a sabbath day. These things are a mere shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. All the teachings of today, all the different doctrines, churches, it belongs to Christ, He's the head. Let's not be misled. Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind.

There's always people saying, well, I've done this, I've seen this, I've heard that, I've had this vision, I've had this idea: if it's not one with Jesus taught, or the apostles taught, we do well to be very careful. And not holding fast to the head, these men are not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body is supplied and held together by joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. As we have received him, as we have pursued him when we first started, when we found this pearl of great price.

We need to hold to that head and God will cause us to stand. There's one place where it says, I think it's about judging a brother, if we condemn, try to put him down, but it says God is able to make him stand. If we like a child trust God, he can make us stand. I think king David is an example of a man who would not take the kingdom himself or try to force people. Two times he had the opportunity to kill Saul, his bitterest enemy he had in the whole kingdom, but he would not, because he was the Lord's anointed.

He wouldn't touch him, he wouldn't hurt him. And other times through his life he would not keep the kingdom. It was not in his hands to keep. He said what if God has perhaps taken the kingdom out of his hand. So humble a man. We need to be careful how we think we have everything lined up and fixed and right. If it's of God, it'll stand. God can make those stand who will stand for him. If you, having died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why as if were living in the world do you submit yourselves to the decrees, such as do not handle, do not taste, do not touch, which all refer to things pertaining to things that perish with use. According to commandments and teaching of men, these are the matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion, self-abasement and severe treatment of the body but are of no value against fleshly indulgence. I will leave it at that, feel free to share.

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