

Keeping The Lord First

by Dan Young

This sermon emphasizes the importance of keeping the Lord first in our lives amidst distractions and challenges. It encourages serving the Lord above all else, offering a sacrifice of praise and coming into His presence with thanksgiving. The message highlights the need to choose to serve the Lord sincerely, putting away anything that takes precedence over Him, and seeking Him with all our hearts.

Scripture: Joshua 24:15, Proverbs 3:13, Isaiah 33:5, Deuteronomy 28:47, Psalm 34:9, Proverbs 1:7, Proverbs 9:10, Ecclesiastes 12:13, Hebrews 12:28

Topics: "Prioritizing God", "Sincere Worship"

Description

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Transcript

Joshua chapter 24, it's important for us as individuals that we would keep the Lord first in our life. There's so many things that can distract us, that can cause us to get off track, but it's more important that we serve the Lord than we do other things. It can be our job, it can be our family, it can be our ambition, whatever it may be, we need to serve the Lord.

And the Lord needs to take first place above those things. We need to bring a sacrifice of praise. I was convicted this morning, in my heart I had a bit of a complaint or a grumbling, and I thought, I don't want to come into the house of the Lord, you know, not saying this is the house of the Lord, but this is where we gather together, and where two or three are gathered together, there he is in our midst, and I don't want to come into the house of the Lord with a complaint or some fear or something, no, I need to come into the house of the Lord with praise, I need to come into his house with thanksgiving.

The Lord is greatly to be praised. I like that song, Above All, he's above all, the Lord is in control. I shared on Wednesday that we can get so focused on what everybody else is focusing on right now.

As Christians, we need to rise above that. We need to hear from the voice of the Lord, we need to follow and be led by his spirit. The Lord is greater than these things that are happening right now.

He can encourage us, he can be at our right hand, he can be our shade, he can be our protector, he can watch over us and keep us safe. He may allow things in our life to shake us, to cause us to seek his face again, to put him first again, because maybe he wasn't, maybe he may be disciplining us, maybe he may be bringing out a shaking in our life so that the things which can't be shaken may remain. He's doing that in the nations, he's doing that in the world right now, he's shaking all that can be shaken.

So that, what do we do? We get on our knees and we call on the name of the Lord and we ask him to save us, to help us, to lead us and guide us, to show us the way in which we should go. I like that song, it says he will teach us the way we should go, the humble he will guide in justice, and those who fear the Lord, it says the secret of the Lord belongs to those who fear him. We don't know which direction to choose in our life, guys, we don't, but you know what, we put the Lord first and he will choose for us, he will help us, he will show us the way in which we should go.

We should never make a rash decision based on fear, based on circumstances, no, we need to stay put. I heard recently about pastors in Afghanistan when the Taliban was taking over Afghanistan that the pastors who were living in North America, they flew home to Afghanistan. I mean if I saw the Taliban coming into my country, I'd probably, I need to go, I need to go somewhere, I need to go somewhere other than here, but those pastors were true shepherds, they said we're going back to the flock, we're going back to the flock to be with them.

I thought, man, what a convicting thing, we get so rattled by such a simple circumstance in our life that we quickly want to jump ship, we can't do that, we have to stay put, we need to be stable. It says in Joshua chapter 24 verse 14 it says, now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and truth and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the river and in Egypt and serve the Lord. I remember when I was a young kid, my dad, he used to take me to church on the morning on Sunday and he would take me to church on Sunday evening and I never liked it.

I did not want to go to church, but you know what, I'm 41 years old now and I'm so glad my dad took me to church, I am. He was a good dad, why? Because he wanted us to know that the Lord, he is God and there's no one like him, there's no one besides him, he is the one who's on the throne and we need to serve him. It's very important.

So we need to put away those things in our lives that are more important than Jesus, whatever it is. I'm not talking about an object, I'm talking about maybe the love of money, I'm talking about the fear of your future, I'm talking about just the desire for something else other than the Lord Jesus. We need to put those things away and we need to seek the Lord with all of our heart in sincerity and in truth.

What does it say? Fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and truth. Did you know that in Deuteronomy, it says that in Deuteronomy 28 that the curses of disobedience came upon the men and the women and the families because they did not serve the Lord with gladness. They did not serve the Lord with gladness, it was an odious thing to come and worship the Lord.

It was an odious thing to come to church, it was an odious thing to spend time with a brother or sister and talk about the Lord. And he said, because you guys did not serve me with gladness, I'm going to allow all these things to come upon you. I thought, man, that's so important to the Lord that we rejoice in everything that he's giving us to do, that we would serve him with all of our heart.

And it says right here in verse 15, and it says, and if it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve. If it's disagreeable in your sight of whom you're going to serve, choose today who you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the river or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. And that should be your decision every single day. You personally, as for me and my house, in my own heart, I will serve the Lord.

And if I have a family or somebody around me, I want them to serve the Lord as well too. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. It's because our hearts have been overwhelmed with darkness and other things that our hearts are not sensitive to the Lord.

I want to read another verse in Proverbs 3. You know, the love of God is so great. He loves us so much. You know, you know, this morning, brother, when I came in, I don't know, but I had such a love in my heart.

I know that God loves each and every one of you. Specifically, this brother right here, I don't remember your name, but I know that the Lord loves you, man. When I saw you, I had so much love for you.

It's from the Lord. I know the Lord has a plan for you. Don't be discouraged by these things.

God loves each and every one of us individually. He knows where we're at. He knows that.

But in our hearts, let us put the Lord first. Let us say, Lord, as for me and my house, we will serve you, Lord, whatever you ask of me. Sometimes we have convictions.

Sometimes we don't know what to do. But you know what? The Lord, he can touch that inner man, that inner being, and he wants first place in that heart. He wants first place in your life, whether you're a mom at home with your kids or you're at work or whatever it is you're doing.

He wants first place in your life. He wants to put a song there. Proverbs chapter 3, verse 21, it says, actually verse 13, it says, How blessed is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding.

Its profit is better than the profit of silver and its gain than fine gold. She is more precious than jewels and nothing you desire compares with her. You know, how blessed is the man who finds wisdom and understanding.

There's nothing that you desire that compares with her. It's almost like, how blessed is the man who finds Jesus. There's nothing more that you desire than her, than him.

You know? It says, long life with wisdom. Long life is in her right hand and in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are peace.

She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her. A tree of life. Something that you can hold to that will give you strength in the inner man.

And happy are all who hold fast to her. Some of us may be miserable. We may be discouraged.

You want to be happy? You hold fast to the Lord. You hold fast to wisdom. You hold fast to the fear of God.

I shared a verse yesterday, I'm going to read it in a second, in Isaiah chapter 33. Happy are all who hold her fast. Isaiah 33, verse 6, the guy told me, he said, I'm struggling, he says, my foundation is no good.

My foundation is no good. I don't, I always seem to fall. I walk, I'm doing well, and then I fall.

I walk, I do well, and then I fall. I walk, I do well, and then I fall. And I said, well we need to ask the Lord that he would lay a sure foundation in your heart.

Because there's those who receive the word with gladness, but when time of temptation and trial comes, they quickly fall away. We don't want to be like that. We want to be stable.

We want the Lord to help us to lay a true foundation in our lives. And it says right here, Isaiah 33, verse 5, the Lord is exalted. He dwells on high, and he has filled his church with justice and righteousness.

And he shall be the stability or the foundation of your times, a wealth of salvation, wisdom and knowledge. The fear of the Lord is his treasure. I said, do you want to know what's going to keep you from going back to the life that you once came from? It's a fear of God.

It's the love of God that compels us, that breaks our heart, that humbles us, that brought us to the Lord. It's God's love. But you know what's going to keep us from turning back to the life that we came from? It's the fear of the Lord.

Do you know what's going to keep me from the love of money? It's the fear of God. Do you know what's going to keep me from the lust of the flesh and the boastful pride of life? It's the fear of the Lord. Do you know what's going to keep me from getting angry or impatient with my kids or getting bitter towards people? It's the fear of God, because God hates bitterness.

Bitterness will destroy your soul. Randy shared that last week, and you know what? I struggle with bitterness many times, and I have to ask the Lord to cleanse me of it. Help me to remember how much you've forgiven me, and I will remember how to extend that forgiveness to others.

Lord, you've forgiven me such a great debt, and I trust that you're going to help me to not hold grudges against people, because it will actually affect you physically and your health. It will. You need to forgive, and you need to say, Lord, I've done so much sinning, and if I don't forgive that person, it says in your Bible that I'm not going to be forgiven.

So help me to forgive those people who've hurt me. Help me to forgive those people who I hold a grudge against. Help me to forgive those people who are mad at me for no reason.

Have you ever had somebody who's mad at you for no reason? You've done nothing wrong. I said to one brother, I said the other day, I said, you know what, because we're talking a little bit about COVID, and we're talking about how the government is kind of, the regulations are this. And I said, you know what? It doesn't make you more spiritual if you get vaccinated or unvaccinated.

These things are not salvation issues. It doesn't. If I'm unvaccinated and you're vaccinated, it doesn't mean that I'm better than you.

Or if you're vaccinated and I'm unvaccinated, it doesn't mean that you're better than me. What matters is what Jesus did for me on the cross. I said, when it becomes a problem is when we start to look down on people who are either unvaccinated or vaccinated.

We can do the exact same thing. That's not how we measure our spirituality, my friends. How we measure our spirituality is us following the Lord.

It's what Jesus done in our life. And I said, that's why we need to rise above it. That's why I don't submit to the government in those situations, because they're painting a picture of discrimination about those things.

And I don't want to do that. I don't want to do that. There's nothing wrong with those things.

You do as you feel led before the Holy Spirit and as Lord Jesus, as the Lord guides you and leads you. What I'm more concerned about, a vaccine is not going to keep me from getting angry. A vaccine is not going to keep me from loving money.

You know what I mean? A vaccine is not going to keep me from being proud. What's going to matter is, Lord, I need your Holy Spirit to keep me from doing those things. He's not going to judge me on the day of whether I was this or not.

He's going to ask me, Dan, Dan, you were entrusted with much, were you faithful with much? You want to be faithful? You want to be somebody? Then you're going to have to be faithful with the little things. Until you start being faithful with the little sins in your life, I'm not going to entrust more to you. And many of us here want more.

We want more. We want more naturally. We want more spiritually.

And you know what? He's going to say, Dan, I can't give you more naturally or spiritually. You want to know why? Because you're not faithful with the little things. And that sometimes means just as for me and my house, we're going to serve the Lord.

Today we're going to pray together, family. Today I'm going to get on my knees beside my bed with my children and I'm going to pray with you. Are we faithful doing that? Well, then we need to start looking back and say, Lord, until I start being faithful with these little convictions you've given me, there's no point in you giving me more.

There's no point. Until I start faithful with the little bit of money that you do give me and I don't go spend it on the dumb things that I shouldn't spend it on, then I don't ask you to give me more. In fact, he says, finally, you're learning the lesson, Dan.

I didn't want to give you more anyways, because you keep spending money on some stupid little things. Right? Come on. We have such grand ideas, but we're not sober-minded in our minds to say, man, I need to be realistic with my expectations here.

I'm obviously ignoring the small convictions that the Lord's given me. Don't expect him to pour out his spirit in an abundant measure in my life. He won't.

He'll hold it back because he says he's not going to be faithful with it because he sees what I've been doing every single day. When that little temptation comes, I give into it. It's the fear of the Lord, guys, is his treasure.

He will be a stability of your times, a stability. He won't allow you to be shaken. He will be a wealth of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge.

This is the true wealth. He will enrich your soul. He will fill it with life and joy and peace.

And the fear of the Lord is his treasure. We need the fear of God. We will value the love of God when we have a true reverence and holy fear for God, because one day we're going to stand before him and we're going to give an account of our actions.

We're going to give an account of our deeds, and we don't want to do that. We don't want to live a life that's not pleasing to him.

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