

Losing The First Love

by Dan Young

This sermon emphasizes the importance of maintaining our first love for the Lord despite changing seasons and circumstances. It encourages believers to remember God's faithfulness, seek Him in dry and weary times, and keep Jesus at the center of their focus. The message highlights the need to stay sober-minded, humble, and patient, appreciating those who labor in the Word, and fostering peace and unity in relationships. It also stresses the significance of giving thanks in all situations, praying without ceasing, and discerning prophetic utterances while abstaining from evil and manipulation.

Scripture: Revelation 2:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:21, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 1 Thessalonians 5:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, 1 Thessalonians 5:15, 1 Thessalonians 5:24

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Description

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Transcript

I love hearing those testimonies, these days at work. We need to keep having them, working in our own life, you know. When you first start out, you have a strong desire and love for the Lord, but as seasons go by, and years and days, and your seasons and circumstances change, you tend to lose that first love.

We don't want to lose that first love. We need to remember from where the Lord has brought us, from where He has saved us from, and what He's continuing to do in our lives. I mean, it's not enough that we had a testimony back then.

We need to have a testimony today, like my brothers have shared. Sometimes you don't see that, though. The greatest test of faith is when you don't see those, really, where the evidence of God is working in your life in such a powerful way.

Sometimes you go through seasons where it's dry, where it's weary, and you have to cling to the Lord. You have to cling to the Lord. You have to hold fast to Him, and you can't go by what you see.

You know, me and my wife, this week, we've been marked our 10-year anniversary. We've been married for 10 years. We were reflecting on where the Lord has brought us from and how some of the attitudes in my own life has changed.

When we first got married, you could see certain attitudes in my life. When you have no kids, I mean, life's fairly good, but then you have kids, and I'm telling you, it becomes very difficult. You see attitudes in your life, and it brings, sometimes, division and conflict in a marriage.

The real thing is, no matter if you're single or if you're married, you still need to keep Jesus as the center of your focus. If you go by what you see, you will lose heart. We have to go by what we don't see, and then we will wait eagerly for it.

That's when our faith is tested, is when you don't see the Lord in your life all the time. You don't see the river flowing, and sometimes it seems as though every day is a bit dreary and dry, but the Lord allows that because it makes us not rely on what we see or our circumstances. It makes us rely on Him.

So, if we don't see the change, we need to learn to even give thanks in those circumstances because in everything, we're supposed to give thanks. I want to turn to 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 8. It says, Since we are of the day, let us be sober-minded, having put on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet to the hope of salvation. This is 1 Thessalonians 5. Since we are of the day, we are walking in the light as He is in the light.

Let us be sober-minded. One of the greatest dangers is that you don't stay sober-minded and your mind gets focused on so many other things. There's ways in which you can become not sober-minded.

You can have your mind set on all the worldly things and all the earthly things and the cares of life, the desires for riches. You can lose that, and your mind becomes almost drunk. You can't see clearly.

You can't hear clearly. You don't have a hunger for the Lord because you're so focused on what needs to be done. Another way in which your mind can lose its soberness is when you start to think of yourself more highly than you ought to.

And, you know, this is something that the Lord has to do in our lives. He's got to bring us to nothing, you guys. Nothing in our own eyes.

And that sometimes takes time because I can see that in my life because I can see how much pride I have in the Lord. He has to slowly whittle me down until I become nothing in my own eyes. And when you're nothing in your own eyes, there's an abundance of grace.

I believe the Holy Spirit can be poured out upon you because you won't take credit for it. It's nothing you've done. It's only because of what Jesus has done in your life in spite of you.

But in those situations, we have to have faith. So there's two ways you can lose your soberness. The other way is that when you're in the boat or you get out of the boat and you're walking in faith, you can start to look at the waves rather than looking at the Jesus.

And that's what happens when you start to walk with the Lord. You get out of the boat, he calls you into faith, and you start to go and you see Jesus and you start to see you get victory over these circumstances. But then suddenly the waves come against the boat and you take your eyes off of Jesus and you fix them

on the waves.

You have to remember in those situations that the Lord is allowing that we need to keep our eyes on him. But what Peter did when he started to sink in the waves was he cried out, Lord, save me. And what did the Lord do? He pulled him up and he saved him in those situations.

Sometimes we're going through that. We need to call on the name of Jesus. That's something that you can lose doing.

When I was first young in the Lord, I called on the name of Jesus every minute, you know, but as you get a little bit more experienced and more mature in the Lord, it's not so much calling on the name of Jesus because we have the ability in our own hands to make things happen. And I don't want to lose that desire to call on the name of the Lord. What did Abraham do when he went down into the promised land after God told him to leave his father's house? He went there.

And what happened there? A famine happened. A famine. He would think, well, Lord, why would you call me and tell me to leave my father's house to this promised land? And this was the land of the promise.

And there was a famine there. It was a dry place. And so what did he do in that situation? Instead of waiting on the Lord, he decided I'm going down to Egypt because there's nice fruitful land there.

And when he went there, his wife was taken captive. And there was a situation and the Lord had to bring about a deliverance. But when he came back to the land that he was originally at, it says he built an altar to the Lord.

And there he called on the name of the Lord. We can't forget to call on the name of the Lord, no matter where you're at, you can call on his name. You don't have to be perfect to call on his name.

You don't need to call on his name from a sincere heart. That's how we can lose our soberness. We get our eyes on the waves, we get our eyes on worldly things, and we get our eyes on us starting to think that we're more highly than we ought to.

It says right here, for God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you also are doing. We need to encourage one another.

There's no greater joy when you're going through a trial and you hear a word from the Lord. Many times some of us, the Lord puts promptings on our hearts to maybe reach out to a brother or reach out to a sister. And then they don't, because they think, well, what's the point of doing that? But then there's times where you do respond to that little prompting.

I have it all the time, and I know you guys do too. Whether it be a word of prayer for that brother or sister that comes to your mind, or just phoning them or sending them a text, you can have that gift. And that can be a very prophetic gift, in a sense, where you reach out to them and say, brother or sister, I'm praying for you.

I hope you're doing well. Or even, how are you doing? Many times we're stuck in our own world, focused on our problems. We forget about other people.

And sometimes you need to be responsible for that gift of that prompting of the Spirit in your own life to reach out to somebody and say, hey, how are you doing? There's times where I've reached out to people, and they may not even have responded to me at the time when I reached out to them. But years later, they tell me, I'm thankful that you reached out to me at that time, because I want to be obedient to Jesus. And I want you guys to be obedient to Jesus, wherever you're at.

It says, build one another up, just as you also are doing. But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction. We need to appreciate those who spend time in the Word of God, who labor among you.

You know, it's not an easy thing to labor for the Lord. It's a very difficult thing. You have to deny yourself and lay down your life for your brother.

You give up your time, your family, your own rights, your own desires, for the sake of the Kingdom of God. And God does not reward that. But as we receive the Word of God from people, we need to appreciate those who labor among us, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of the work.

We need to live in peace with one another. It's really hard to live in peace. And that's one thing the devil constantly wants to do, especially in a small fellowship, especially amongst a small group of believers, whoever it may be, especially in a family.

He wants to bring so much division. He wants to bring so much disunity and no peace. And we have to say, Lord, is there anything I can do to make peace with that person? Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall see God's righteousness.

They should see the Kingdom of God. And you know, these are children of God who know how to make peace. And sometimes when I'm in this conflict, maybe with me and my wife, or with me and a co-worker, or me and somebody, or my child, sometimes the best thing for me to do is just to say sorry and just take the lower road and just say, you know what, it's my fault.

Even though it may not be your fault. Just to do that. And you know what? That brings peace in a home.

That brings peace among brothers. That brings peace among friends. Just being willing to humble yourself because God gives His grace to the humble.

And even if it's not your fault, even if you did nothing wrong, you still go the low road. That person will be a peacemaker. That person will say, you know what, the Lord can entrust certain things to that man, that sister.

And that you esteem them. And it says, we encourage you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men. Now who are the fainthearted? The fainthearted are those who are lacking faith.

They're lacking faith. He said to Timothy, young Timothy, he said, Timothy, you know, don't be so timid. God has not given you a spirit of fear, but of power and love and of a sound mind.

You can become fainthearted. You can lose sight of Jesus. You can lose sight of the things that He's doing.

And this is what happens as you walk with Him. I'm talking five years, ten years, and you go with Him and you go through circumstances and you're wondering, where are you, Lord? And yet the Lord still calls you to battle the battle of faith, to trust Him and say, you know what, Lord, I'm trusting you in this time. You're the one who brought me into this season.

You're the one who led me to this land. I need to wait on you. Don't let me react in this situation.

That's not faith. Reacting when you see the problem, that's not faith. That's not.

True faith is learning to wait and to be still. It's like the glass that gets full of mud. It gets very clear and muddy and you can't see clearly.

But if you wait a couple days and you start to sit still and you start to listen, what happens? All that mud starts to flow to the bottom of the glass and you can start to see clearly. So we don't want to make rash decisions. We want to learn to wait on the Lord and to learn to trust Him.

It says right here, help the weak and be patient with all men. You know what? I need to be patient with all men because the Lord has been patient with me. Last week I shared a little bit too sturdily, so I apologize for that, guys, but I need to share in love.

I need to speak the truth in love. That's what God calls us to do. I had a tough week and I knew I was going to.

Sometimes some of us, we want to preach the truth, but if we preach the truth in a wrong spirit, you're going to have a tough week. I had a tough week, but praise God, He's teaching me and I want to learn from my mistakes and say, okay, Lord, help me to understand your ways. Help me to learn.

It's not God who's given us this urge or this desire to do things for God. That's from the Lord. That is, but we need to learn to do it in a right way.

It says we need to be patient with all men. Why? Because the Lord's been very patient with me. He's been very patient with me.

See to it that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all men. Rejoice always. Rejoice always.

Give thanks always. It's hard to do that, brothers. I'm telling you, this week I prayed to the Lord.

I got on my knees in my bathroom and I said, Lord, I need to give thanks in the tough times. I'm always giving thanks in the good times, but what about in the tough times? Why am I not giving thanks then? We need to give thanks when it's difficult, brothers, when the days are lonely, when you're tired and there's no one to comfort you, there's no one to call, and it's just you and Jesus and no one understands what you're going through. My friends, you need to call on the name of the Lord and you need to rejoice always.

It says we need to pray without ceasing. Praying without ceasing is a difficult thing to do, but simple enough is just saying, Lord, help me. Lord, save me.

Lord, change me. Take me a little lower with you, Lord. In everything, give thanks for this is God's will for you and Christ Jesus.

God's will is our sanctification. In 1 Thessalonians 4, it's God's will, your sanctification, that you would be purified from lustful attitudes, lustful hearts. He would purify you.

That's God's will for you. So if it's God's will for you, you can have faith that he's going to help you get victory in those areas. Another way to have God's will is giving thanks.

This is God's will. I said, Lord, I grumble like so much. My life is good.

I live it. My life is not bad, you guys. I don't live in a poor country.

I don't live where I can't go get a job. I can go to Haiti, and there's many people just standing there. Right now, the gangs run Haiti, but in Haiti, they can't go get a job.

There's no place to go hand in a resume and do that. We have many reasons to give thanks. We have a roof over our head.

We have food in our belly. There's so many food places you can go to just to get food, and other countries in the world, they don't have that. There's one reason you can start to give thanks.

You can thank the Lord for all that he's done, and it says, do not quench the spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. We don't want to despise those things.

We don't want to quench the spirit. That was obviously happening in that church. There was probably prophetic utterances, and people were probably skeptical of these things, but he said, you need to test them.

You need to test them. God's given you a spirit of discernment to understand what's of him and what's of not. Many times, I would get prophecies that would suit my personal desires.

They would suit my personal desires. I'm going to be a preacher. I'm going to be rich.

I'm going to be this. I heard somebody the other day tell me, this person told me that I'm going to be a billionaire. No, it's not funny, though, because the reality is, that's what's in their heart.

And I'm like, Lord, is that in my heart? Somebody said, Dan, the Lord's going to use you to make money for the kingdom of God. What would my heart do? We need to test these things, guys. We need to know what the true prophetic utterance is.

I think prophetic utterances is the word of God spoken under the unction of the Holy Spirit that you need to hear in the exact moment. And sometimes it's a sword, and sometimes it's a word of encouragement. We need both.

We need the Lord to cut us, but we also need him to heal us and teach us the right way. Do not, it says, but examine everything carefully. Hold fast to that which is good.

Abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely. One form of evil is manipulation, and I want to talk to you about that.

We can manipulate certain situations to have them go our way because we're selfish. My kids know how to do this very well. They know how to cry in such a way to get their way.

Many of us have these attitudes in our heart. We know how to manipulate. For me, I can put the iron fist down and manipulate the situation.

Some people can put on a sad face to try to get people to feel sorry for them. That's manipulation. We need to be careful that we don't do that.

Those are fleshly things, and they're not from Christ. We need to learn to put those to death. That's a form of evil.

So we need to be careful that we don't manipulate, that we don't try to manipulate the situation to gain an advantage. That's something that we have to examine our hearts and hold fast to that and say, Lord, am I acting in such a way because I want people to give me what I want? You can't do that. If you need to humble yourself, you need to humble yourself.

Just be honest about it. It says right here, now may the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete without blame at the coming of the Lord Jesus. Faithful is he who calls you, and he will also bring you to pass.

Faithful is the one who has called you, brothers, and he will also bring you to pass. But his main goal here, the last thing that he told them was that God would sanctify them both soul, body, and spirit. Our bodies need to be sanctified, our souls and our spirits.

So we need to ask the Lord to continue to do a deeper work in us.

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