

You Didn't Lose It, You Left It

by Greg Locke

The sermon emphasizes the importance of rekindling our passionate love for God, which can be intentionally left behind despite diligent service.

Duration: 36:34

Scripture: Matthew 3:1-2, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 9:17, Luke 13:3, Romans 2:4, Revelation 2:4-5

Topics: "Revival", "Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the message from God to the church. He starts by acknowledging that God recognized the church for their actions. However, God also rebuked them for their wrongdoings. The preacher emphasizes the importance of remembering the goodness of God and the salvation that we have through Jesus. He encourages the congregation to get back to their first works and to seek humility, honesty, and help in order to experience revival through the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

If you follow along your heart and mind, Revelation 2, 1, the Bible says, Under the angel of the pastor of the church at Ephesus' right, these things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil, and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars. And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake, hast labored, and hast not fainted.

Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent. Verse number four again, please look there for our text.

Jesus said, Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. I want to bring you a simple message this morning, as we begin again our revival meeting, entitled, You Didn't Lose It, You Left It. Thank you very much, you may be seated.

Let's bow our heads and hearts, and ask the Lord to bless our time together, shall we? Father, once again, we thank you for now this second week, a revival meeting that we can have, and Lord, truly, it's not going to be revival, unless you revive us, unless you come down. And Lord, we pray, as the psalmist did, Wilt

thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee? Habakkuk prayed, O Lord, revive thy work, in the midst of thy years. I'm reminded, Lord, of Habakkuk chapter two, in verse number 15, where you said that you would show us a work that we would not even believe, though it would be told us.

And, O God, this week, we pray you'd show us some things that are unbelievable, that, God, you would save, you would convict, you would convince and comfort, and, O God, you would do something this week in this local church and in this community for the glory of God. Help me now as I preach. Help these as they listen.

In Jesus' name, amen. In Revelation chapter number two, verses one through five, what we are going to be dealing with is of Asia Minor. Now, what you must understand in Revelation chapter two and chapter number three is Mr. John is here on the Isle of Patmos, and he has been kind of exiled there, and history tells us that he was boiled in hot seething oil.

His skin was taken from his body, and he was taken out there. God called him up to the third heaven and began to show him some wonderful, wonderful things. But in Revelation chapter two and chapter number three, we are not dealing with imaginative churches.

We are dealing with actual, physical, New Testament, local assemblies, local bodies, local fundamental churches. And in this portion of Scripture in Revelation chapter number two, we are going to speculate for just a moment, all right? What I mean by that is this. Let's speculate, and let's suggest in our message that this church did not have a pastor.

Now, the reason I'm just kind of suggesting that is because we know, according to the context, that they did have a pastor, all right? Because it says, unto the angel or the pastor of the church. But let's say for a moment that they did not. There would not be a fundamental Bible-believing preacher in his right mind who would not want to have pastored these people.

The word Ephesus, by its very name, means desirable. And there were very many things in this church that were very, very desirable. These were the fundamentalists of the day, if you will.

These were the sold-out, separated people of their day. Dan Sabner said one time very wisely, and I'll reiterate it. He said, you can dot every I and cross every T and still spell the word wrong.

And here was a group of people that dotted their I's. Here was a group of people that crossed their T's. They had the right Bible.

Theologically, philosophically, and doctrinally, they were right, but they did not spell the word right. I want you to see in verse number two, if you would please, what I call number one. God recognized what the church was doing.

God recognized what the church was doing. Basically, He gave them an old-fashioned commendation. Look what their commendation was.

It's fourfold, verse number two. He said, I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience. And how thou canst not bear them which are evil, and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars.

And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my namesake hast labored, and hast not fainted. I want you to see number one in his commendation when God recognized what this church was doing because they were doing some wonderful things. He said, number one, these people were diligent.

This was your Sunday school crowd, your Sunday morning crowd, your Sunday night crowd, your Wednesday night crowd, your revival meeting crowd. These were not people that laid around until the sun warmed their feet. These were not slipshod people.

These were diligent people. My Bible tells me in the book of Ecclesiastes, the wisest man in all the world, the man Solomon, said these words, And whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might. My granddaddy used to teach me.

He said, Greggy boy, he said, if you are going to do something, if it is worth doing, it is worth doing right. And ladies and gentlemen, since God's work is worth doing, it is worth being diligent and doing God's work right. We don't need lazy Christians.

We need Christians that all have the fire of God within their bosom and within their soul. And so he said, number one, these people were diligent. But he said, number two, these people also were disciplinary.

Say, what do you mean? Well, look back at verse 2 again. He said, I know thy works and thy labor and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil. What does that mean? These people did not put up with tomfoolery in the house of God.

These people did not put up with sin. These people did not put up with immorality. And if there was no sin in that church, they practiced what is called church discipline.

Now, somebody says, well, I'll tell you what, you fundamental Baptist preachers, I'll tell you, you're so mean because you believe in church discipline. I'll tell you why we believe in it, because Jesus believed in church discipline. Now, friends, if you let sin into the house of God and you let it seed and you let it boil and you let it grow, it will forsake your assembly, it will forsake the local church, it will destroy the local church, it will destroy families, and these people were disciplinary.

They didn't put up with sin in God's house. Now, in the Bible, the apostle Paul, he was writing to the Corinthians. Now, it took him two books to write to the Corinthians, 1 and 2 Corinthians.

This was the most spiritually immature group of people in all of the New Testament. Paul told them, listen, when you should be eating T-bone steaks for the glory of God, you're still playing on a sandbox wearing diapers and sucking on a pacifier. He said, you need to grow up.

I mean, these people were taking one another to court. These people had open immorality. These people had dress problems.

These people had church problems. I mean, they had all kind of problems. By the way, can I just say this? This will just be green stamps.

It won't cost you a dime. Did you know that the most immature group of people in all the New Testament were the Corinthians and that was the only church in the New Testament that spoke in tongues? Tell that to your charismatic friends that think speaking in tongues is spiritual. The only group in the Bible that spoke in tongues was the most unspiritual people in the Bible, alright? And so, here was a group of people

that were very unspiritual.

Here was a group of people that were very, very carnal, Paul told them. Let me tell you what one of their problems was. In 1 Corinthians chapter number 5, there was a young man that was living in immorality with his stepmother.

He was living in adultery. He was living in fornication. He was living in, for lack of a better word, incest with his own stepmother.

Now, Paul came there and he began to write and do you think the apostle Paul was writing with his little pen to the inspiration of God's spirit? Then he came there to hold a revival meeting in the church and he got up and he said, now ladies and gentlemen, I understand there's a young man here that's living in fornication with his stepmother and for the sake of the tithes and for the sake of the offering and for the sake of the bus ministry and for the sake of the signs of the people and the signs of Sunday school, sir, we'll just have you know, junior, that you can just keep living like that and we won't rebuke you too harshly and no, we don't agree with it and it's not our lifestyle but you were probably born that way and it was probably inbred in your life and so you just keep tithing, you just keep being a member and God bless you, brother, we'll pray for you. That is not what Paul said. But if Paul came in there with both guns just to blaze and I mean, he pulled out the gospel gun, he shot it and let the tips fall where they may.

He said, turn such and one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. These people did not put up with sin in the church and we ought not put up with sin either. We need a purging in our local churches in America.

And so number one, these people were diligent. Number two, these people were disciplinary. But I want you to see number three, these people were very discerning.

They were discerning. Say, what do you mean? Well, look again at verse number two. The middle of the verse says this, and thou hast tried them which say, now that's an important word, S-A-Y, I have it circled in my Bible, here's why it's important.

It says, and tried them which say they are apostles and are not and has found them liars. These people were discerning. Here's the reason I think they were discerning.

I think they had their nose in the Bible more than they do in the newspaper and the Reader's Digest, TV Guide, and Time Magazine, and Sports Illustrated. These people were students of the Word of God. If somebody came to their church and mounted their pulpit and began to preach and he began to preach heresy or he began to preach false doctrine, immediately their spiritual fundamental antennas would go off and they would detect, hey, that is not right.

These people were discerning. I mean, this is a group of people that if they were alive in modern day Christianity, if they were alive in this year and at this century, if Ephesus would have been around today and they would have turned on TVN and all these other people on TV, they would have immediately known these people are heretics. These people are crooked as a dog's hind leg.

These people are lower down than a snake's navel in a wagon track. These people would have known they detected it because they were discerning. And I'm going to tell you something.

If we are lacking anything in our local churches in the day and age in which we live, it is a lack of discernment. Being able to tell that which is right, that which is wrong, that which is heresy, that which is not heresy. These people were diligent.

These people were disciplinary. These people were discerning. Sounds like a pretty good church to me, does it not? Look at verse number three, it gets better.

In verse number three, it says, it has born and has patience and for my name's sake, can I remind you, can I remind you that a man is not talking here? This is Jesus. It's not the pastor saying, you've done all this for my sake. It's not the evangelist saying, you've done this for my sake.

Hey, this is Jesus giving them a commendation. He said, and for my name's sake has labored and has not fainted. He said, fortunately, these people were devoted.

They were devoted to the work of God. They were as some of those Corinthians were when they began to grow what Paul called addicted to the ministry. These people were the Sunday school teachers.

These people were the visitors and were the door knockers and were the hospital visitors and were the prayers. These people were very, very devoted to the work of God. Say, how do you know? You know what it means? It means to work to a point of physical exhaustion.

These people strained. They sweat. And as we talked about last week, a week before, I pressed toward the mark.

Agonize, strain, sweat, blood, push. These people were pushing for the glory of God. They were devoted to all that God had given them.

They were devoted to the local church. They didn't mind scrubbing toilets. They didn't mind painting walls, hanging drywall.

It didn't matter to them. These people were devoted to the work of God. They were devoted to the work of the church.

And God commended them for that. And He said, listen, you are doing some wonderful things. But you'll notice something in this portion of Scripture.

God just keeps pumping them. Keeps pumping them. Keeps pumping them.

And their head gets bigger and bigger and bigger like a watermelon-sized balloon. And in verse 4, God bursts their bubble wide open. And He said, because although I'm giving you a commendation, and although God recognized what the church was doing in verse number 4, God rebuked the church for what they had done.

Look at verse number 4. Nevertheless, in spite of all this. In spite of the fact that you're diligent. In spite of the fact that you're devoted.

In spite of the fact that you're disciplinary. In spite of the fact that you're discerning. He said, in spite of all this.

Nevertheless, He said, I have some want against me. Now, can I be honest with you about something? If I say I've got something against you, that's probably not a big deal because I'm only here every now and then. You know, I get in the truck and I leave and I'm gone.

Most of you don't know me from Adam's housecat anyhow. And so it doesn't make any difference if I say I'm mad at you. You might want to get it right.

You might not. Now, a pastor says he's got something against you. He's not leaving with me Friday night.

They said, I don't think he is. But anyhow, he's going to stick around for a little while. And so if he says, listen, I'm mad at you.

I'm upset at you. That's probably something you need to reconcile. That's something you need to fix because he's around more.

But can I tell you something, friend? If God Almighty says he's got something against you, you better sit up straight, get the crick out of your back, open your eyes, perk your ears up, put the coffee on and figure out what in the wide world God's got against you. Because, friend, when God says he's got a beef against you, he's not playing games, friend. And he said, you are doing everything right, but I have something against you.

God said, I'm upset about something. And then God dropped the bomb on him and told him what it was, verse number four, because thou hast left thy first love. I'm not trying to be cute.

I'm not trying to be arrogant. And I'm not trying to be cocky. But I've heard a lot of well-meaning preachers preach on this portion of Scripture.

And they say the church at Ephesus has lost their first love. No, that's what some preachers said. That's not what God said.

He did not say they lost it. He said they left it. Now, friend, there is a big difference between losing something and leaving something.

If you lose something, it's an accident and you don't have any idea where it is. But if you leave something, it's intentional. You can go back and pick it up, for example.

If you were to look... Now, this year in our itineraries, and I don't have any with me now, but this year in our itineraries, it's the first year of our ministry that we didn't have a picture on our itinerary. Our other three years, the four years we've been in evangelism, our other three years, we got pictures on our itinerary, and all three of our itineraries, on my face, I have a pair of glasses on that picture of that itinerary. People ask me, but why don't you wear glasses anymore? Do you have contacts? No, I don't wear contacts.

But here's the story. I was at the Grace Baptist Church of Riddleton, Tennessee, and before the service one night, the pastor and I, we went over and we got down on our knees and began to pray with a dear family that had been out of church and needed to get right with the Lord. I took my glasses off and I don't know if the kid got them.

I don't know if the vacuum sweeper got them. I don't know if the bulldog ate them. I don't know where they went, but I lost my glasses and I foamed it around looking for them.

Well, we was at a church, Parkview Baptist Church in Ardmore, Alabama, and it was raining outside one night. I had a new pair of glasses on my face and the pastor wanted me to go outside and help him. Pastor Mitchell wanted me to take some of his wife's junk from the house and some of his wife's baskets and stuff from the house down to a little shed, a little storage shed that they had down there.

And so I took my glasses off my face because it was raining and I didn't want to get them all fogged up and spotted, so I put them in my pocket and we got to load and load and unload and unload and do all this, that, and the other. After about 30 or 40 minutes I realized my glasses were gone. And so I went back and I said, Honey, where are my glasses? And I searched for the wife for me to find them.

I forgot what actually happened to my third pair, but I lost them somewhere else too. And the only reason I don't have a pair of glasses on my face right now is because my wife gets tired of buying me new pairs. She said, You ain't buying no more whatsoever.

She said, We've been to Optometer Center after Optometer Center. We've been to Walmart and Super Walmart. We've got your eyes dilated.

We had your eyes fixed and you've read every chart across America and I just can't keep a pair of glasses on my face. I lose every cotton-picking pair I get. I lose them, and the only reason I'm not wearing them is because I'd lose them tomorrow if I had them on my face.

That's why I just quit wearing them. I just gave up. I'll go blind.

I don't care. No big deal. I just keep losing them, losing them, and losing them.

Now, it just stands reason to me that if I left my glasses somewhere, like on the piano, I'd just go back to the piano and I'd just pick them up and get them. If I left them in the front pew, I'd go to the front pew. If I left them on the pulpit, I'd go to the front pulpit.

I'd go to the pulpit and pick them up. But I didn't leave them. I lost them.

On the flip side of that token, God said, listen, you did not lose your love, your passion, your zeal, and your excitement for me. He said, no sirree Bob, you didn't lose it. You left it.

He said it was an intentional thing. You willingly and voluntarily walked away from my love. Can I remind you He's not talking to lost people? So God's people aren't off the hook this morning.

He's talking to God's people. Now, He gives them all these commendations. He said, you're working, you're sweating, you're praying, you're preaching, you're teaching, you're going, you're giving.

He said, you're doing all of these things, but the problem is you are doing all of it in the energy of the flesh. He said, you're doing all of it without loving me. You're doing it out of rut.

You're doing it out of duty. You're doing it out of religiosity. And you're doing it out of routine.

And we give the Catholics a hard time for doing the same thing that a lot of we Baptists do every day of our lives. We serve Him because we feel like we have to. We go to church because it's just the thing to do on Sunday.

If the only reason you come to church is just because it's the thing to do, you'd be better off just staying in the bed. If the only reason you read your Bible just because the preacher gets up and tells you to read the Bible, you might as well just read another book, my dear friend, because it's not going to do you any good know-how. If the only reason you serve God is just because you feel like you have to or because you made to or just because you say, well, I tell you, the preacher's always up preaching, live for God, live for God, so I guess I'm going to have to live for God.

Now, as a God, if you have an attitude like that, you're not living for a know-how because God don't want your service out of rutting duty. God wants your service out of love and devotion. Then I'm telling you what the truth, I meet people, I'm convinced, you can believe what you want to, but I'm convinced that probably 85 or 90% of the people that come to our church has only come for a social status.

They come to shake a few hands. They come to hear a little preaching, a little praying because they know on Monday morning the preacher's going to see them somewhere running out and about making his little visits and stuff and he goes, hey, where were you at? And you know you don't have to give them some silly answer. And I think the reason a whole lot of people give is because they think God's going to blow their brains out with a lightning bolt if they don't.

I think the reason a lot of people pray is because they just feel like they have to. I think the reason a lot of men have family devotions is because they just feel like, well, it's just something that I've got to do. No, it's not something you've got to do.

It's something you get to do, friend. We don't have to serve God. We get to serve God.

And there's a big difference. And these people were serving God, yes. But they were doing it out of duty.

They were doing it out of routine. And they had a mundane, ungodly, wicked, unspiritual attitude about how they serve God. They were doing it all in the flesh.

And I preach in churches all over this country where all week long all we have is a meeting because, man, they're spinning their wheels. If you ride a bicycle you can get somewhere. If you ride a bike if you ride an exercise bike you ain't going nowhere, friend.

You're just spinning your wheels, spinning your wheels because there's no ground under you. And I don't want a Baptist church or any church for that matter, friend. They have no ground under them whatsoever and they are spinning their wheels and spinning their wheels and spinning their wheels and yes, they're reading.

Yes, they're preaching. Yes, they're teaching. Yes, they're going.

Yes, they're giving. But they're doing it all in the energy. Let's say for a moment that when I went to go pick up my wife on Monday.

Now, you know, it's interesting, fellas. How many of you fellas in this room right now are married? Stick up your hand. I'll be honest.

Get that kink out of your elbow. Raise your arm. Amen.

Okay, several of you. Okay, now. How many of you fellas have ever been away from your wife for at least three days? Stick your hand up there.

Okay. Quite a few of you. Okay.

Put your hand down. Now, when your wife goes out of town or when you go out of town for a couple of days no big deal. I can stay up as late as I want and she ain't go anywhere.

I can leave my dirty socks laying around the house and I don't have to pick them up until she gets home. When she gets home you better pick them up. I can eat anything I want.

If I want to go to McDonald's at two or three o'clock in the morning and fill my belly with some kind of grease food and rat food, man, that's fine with me and she can't say nothing about it because she don't know where I'm at. She's gone for three days. But three weeks is an entirely different story.

You see, after three days it's kind of okay and after a week it kind of gets a little slow. It kind of gets a little mundane. You think to yourself, whew, it is not good that man should be alone and man, I try to read my Bible and all I can think about is my wife.

I try to preach and all I can think about is my wife. I try to go golfing and all I can think about is my wife. And I'm telling you what's the truth, after three weeks, friend, I mean, things start getting real slow and start getting real boring and real mundane.

And so, to be honest with you, I've been away from my wife for about ten days before but that's the longest. But I've never been away from her for 26 days and I'll never be away from her for 26 days again for the rest of my life. I'll tell you that right now.

But let's say that I got in my truck Monday night after I was all tired and I got through preaching. Man, I drove down the road real fast and popped some crystals in my belly or something like that so I'd smell good when I saw her. And so I get down there real quick, you know, and I come peeling in and I see her and I give her a big old hug and a big old kiss and she looks me square down in the eyeballs and she says, you know, honey, I've been thinking about something since I've been over in Thailand.

I've been kind of praying and spending a little extra time in my Bible and you know, I think from now on when I travel with you and when I get in that trailer and live in that thing, I think from now on when I help you out in your meetings and now when I clean up your dirty clothes and now when I fix your breakfast, lunch and supper and coffee and all the meals and snacks in between and now when I wash clothes and now when I clean the house and clean up after the little poodle dog and this, that and the other, now when I watch the children in the meetings and now when I sing sometimes through the week and she says, listen, I'm just going to have you know, big boy, that the only reason now for the rest of our marriage, for the rest of our days, for the rest of our ministry on God's green earth, she looks me square down in the face and says, the only reason I'm going to do any of this is just simply out of duty. I've come to the conclusion I don't love you anymore. Oh, I like you.

I've got admiration for you and I care about you a little bit as a friend, you know, but the only reason I'm going to serve you and the only reason I'm going to stay with you is just for the sake of the name, for the sake of the ministry. But I'm not doing it because I love you. Now, one of two things would be true.

Number one, I would not be coming back for the rest of the week because I'd need some terrible, terrible marriage counseling because I'd have a marriage on the rocks and I'd be probably ending up in a divorce court with a marriage like that. That's not how marriage works. But you know what? I know a lot of Christians that serve God the same way.

Oh, the only reason I'm winning souls is because I feel like you make me do it in the Bible. No, the only reason I even serve you and the only reason I even go to church, the only reason I even give, the only reason I do love my family and do have family devotions, the only reason I'm serving you, God, is because I feel like I have to. When I meet people like that all over this country, they have no real devotion.

They have no real passion. They have no real love, no real concern, no real admiration for the King of kings and Lord of lords. And Jesus said, nevertheless, I am somewhat against thee because thou hast left.

Your fault, not God's fault, not the preacher's fault, has left thy first love. I want you to look at verse number five, if you would please, of Revelation, chapter number two. You know, I'm glad that when God paints a dismal picture, He always gives a way out of the dismal, if there's such a word.

When God ever says, okay, son, I'm going to do this you got a disease. I'm glad he always gives a cure. I'm glad he always gives a way out.

I'm glad he always gives a prescription. Now, Dr. Bottle Stopper might not be able to help you. And Dr. Know-it-all and Dr. Do-good-a-little, he might not be able to help you completely and fully.

But if God says, listen, you got a problem and I'm going to give you a prescription, you put God's prescription into practice and it'll work every time. I promise you that right now, friend. And God told them in verse number five, He gave them a threefold mandate.

He gave them a threefold cure or a threefold prescription, undeniable prescription, three things that they could do in verse number five that would cause them to stay in love and to stay on fire and to stay hot and to stay passionate. He told them three things they could do. So let's recap.

Number one, God recognized the church for what they were doing. Verse four, number two, God rebuked the church for what they had done. Number three, verse number five, well, this will be through in just a little while.

He said, number three, that simply God reminded the church of what they could do. He said, here's what you can do if you want to stay right with me. Here's what you can do if you really want to love me, really want to have passion for me.

Verse number five, the very first word is the first part of the prescription. He says, remember. Remember.

Remember what, brother Locke? Read the verse. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen. Here's the best way, the most telltale way for you and I this afternoon to stay in hot love with God.

You know what it is? Just remember what you were and where you were before Almighty God found you. You just remember there was a time in your life when you were fallen. Some of you last week that got saved by the grace of God, although you might have been religious and although you might have been a church member, you were as lost as a ball in high weed under the judgment of God, under the wrath of God.

And one day, Revelation 20, 15, the Bible says that whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast headlong into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And my dear friend, you just remember you were born in sin.

You were conceived in sin. David said, we came forth of our mother's womb walking on this earth speaking lies. We were wicked, we were vile, we were ungodly, and we were reprobates.

But God, who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ for by grace are you saved. David said in Psalm 40 in verse number 1, I waited patiently for the Lord. I cried and He also inclined unto me.

Do you know what that word inclined means? It does not just mean that God heard me. It means that God drew near to hear me. Just think about that.

The God of heaven, the sovereign God of the universe drew near to hear my cry. David said in verse number 2, He brought me up. I'm glad He didn't say He left me there.

I'm glad He didn't say He drug me down. Oh, that's the devil's job. The devil drags down, God brings up.

He said, He brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of a miry clay. I was in the quagmire of sin. And I was lost.

And I was screaming and hollering and yelling like a wild banshee. Somebody help me. But the more I struggled, the deeper I got.

The more I wanted out, the farther down I got. But thank God, David said, He brought me up. And the Bible says, He put a new song in my mouth, even praising to our God.

Many shall sit in fear and shall trust in the Lord. And God said, the first way you can stay in love with me is just remember what you used to be or what you would be had it not been for His grace. I'm going to be honest with you.

If it were not for the grace of God, some of you husbands would be coming home that have wives and children that can't stand you because you always get liquor on your breath. Beating your wife black and blue and beating your kids and throwing them around the house. If it weren't for the grace of God, some of you ladies would be in here in Memphis right now in the red light alley of district somewhere of Memphis, Tennessee, selling your body for some wicked godless practice.

You'd have more legitimate babies than you know what to do with. We'd all be on a bunch of welfare. I mean, we'd be living under the bondage of sin and the bondage of everybody you can imagine.

I mean, we'd be giving our lives away and our minds away. We'd be watching filth and doing filth. We'd be a bunch of crack addicts and a bunch of dope heads and a bunch of winos on a skid row mission had it not been for God.

You say, Oh, not me. Oh, yes, you, friend. If it weren't for the grace of God, whether you were a Sunday school teacher before you got saved or whether you were as crooked as a dog's hind leg and wicked, it doesn't make any difference.

If it wasn't for God's grace, we'd all have black fingernails right now trying to scrape our ways out of the pits of the dam to a place called hell. And you take that to the bank, friend. God says the first way you remember how much you love, the first way you can stay in love with me is just remember all that I've done for you.

Just remember all that I've done and it'll keep you focused on all that I want to do. And so God said, number one, you're going to have to remember. But he said, number two, you're going to have to repent.

Look back at the verse. He said, Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen and repent. Look at the last part of the verse.

Remove the candlestick out of its place except thou repent. Two times in one verse, Revelation 2, 5, God said, we're supposed to repent. God said, we're supposed to repent.

Now, friend, you know from what I preached a couple of weeks ago that I believe that sinners ought to repent. The Bible says in Luke 13, 3, God liked it so much he repeated it two verses later, Luke 13, 5. He said, except thou repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Matthew 3, 1 and 2, in those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, Repent ye for the kingdom of God is at hand.

Matthew chapter 9, verse number 17, the Son of Man said unto them, I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. So repentance is for lost people but it's also for God's people. You see, the word repent means to turn a change of mind that results in a change of action.

And so God told these people right here, this Ephesus, this desirable church, he told them, you are going to have to change your mind about the way you've been serving me. You're going to have to change your mind about revival. You're going to have to change your mind about your Bible reading.

You're going to have to change your mind about your church going and about your tithing and giving. He said, you're going to have to repent and start serving me out of love and devotion, not out of brunt and out of duty. God said, you're going to have to repent.

A verse that I quoted in Sunday school, let me quote it again, 2 Chronicles 7, 14. If my people, you and me, if my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn, that's repentance, turn, T-U-R-N, turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land. God tells his people to repent.

But there's something else he tells us to do. Go back to verse number five. He said, remember therefore from whence thou art fallen and repent and do the first works.

Simple prescription for God reminding this church of what they could do. He said, number one, remember. He said, number two, repent.

He said, number three, redo the first works. You know what I think he's talking about when he says redo the first works? I think from a careful observation of this portion of scripture and several others, I think what he's saying is this. Get back to loving those things that you loved so much when you first got saved by the grace of God.

You remember how sweet church was to you when you first got saved? I remember I got saved on a Saturday night, April 17th, 1992, 830 at night, Metropolitan Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee. If you've heard me say it once, you've heard me say it a million times. I'll never get over it because that's the night God saved me and changed me forever and ever.

Wrote my name down in glory and hallelujah for that. But you know what? That was on a Saturday night I was in church. I was living at the Good Shepherd Children's Home in Murfreesboro, Tennessee at that

time and the very next day since we had to go to Franklin Road Baptist, that's where the children's home was members, we started a revival.

So that means I was in church on Saturday night, Sunday school, Sunday morning, Sunday night, Monday night, Tuesday night, Wednesday night, Thursday night, Friday night. On Saturday night we had our youth pastor who's no longer a youth pastor, he's a pastor now. But our youth pastor Jimmy Crockett had a youth activity, had somebody else preach, give a devotion.

So I was in church on that Saturday night. Then the following Sunday school, the following Sunday morning, the following Sunday night I thought to myself, man, when you first get saved by the grace of God, you go to church every day! You go to church all the time! We had a magnet on the front of our van. I thought every time we got in the van it showed up at church somewhere.

I mean we'd travel all over the place and we'd do preaching and we'd do singing and we'd quote verses and we'd go to different churches and have people support the ministry there at the children's home. I mean every Sunday, every Wednesday, all the time, man, we were in chapel during school all the time and I thought, man, when a person gets saved, they're supposed to go to church all the time and you know what, when I first got saved I couldn't get enough of church. I mean I did not want to forsake the assembly of ourselves together as the matter of some is.

I wanted to exhort one another, I wanted to sing, I wanted to hear the preacher and then I'd go in there and I would be hungry for fellowship in the house of God. I loved it. But you know what, when you first get saved that's usually how it is and those usually aren't the people that give problems to God.

They're usually the people that give problems to God and those people have been saved for a long time and thank God everybody else owes them a favor. They just kind of come to church because it's the thing to do. When are you going to get back to loving church, to your first love, to redoing the first words when you first got saved, man, you couldn't get enough of the house of God.

But now you've had plenty. Now you don't worry anymore. Now you're just kind of mundane, going through the motions, this, that and the other.

Oh, I just feel like I've got to go, I've got to go. No, friend, you don't have to go, man, you get to go. You get to go to the house of God.

Let me ask some of you ladies a reverent question. When's the last time you read your Bible and your mascara began to run down your face as you read all the great wonderful things that God has done for you? When's the last time you read your Bible and it gripped you that you've got a salvation that you can never lose? That you've got a God that loves you, that He sent His only begotten Son for you? Hey, friend, when's the last time you got in the Word of God and it just broke you over the goodness of God? Romans 2, 4, Know ye not that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? Just look at God's goodness. It ought to make the world want to fall down and grovel in repentance.

Grovel in shame and grovel in the convicting, convincing power of the Spirit of God just by looking at God's goodness. And friend, we've got to get back to redoing the first works. I remember when I was 18 years old and I was living at the children's home one night.

I remember I woke up, I don't know if it was I had eaten something that didn't agree with me. I don't know what it was. There I was.

I guess I was a senior in high school at this time or I might have been a junior. I don't know because I graduated late. There I was and I was in school and I got up and I was a student body chaplain and I was preaching in chapel and preaching in different places at about 18 years old and I remember I woke up one morning about 2 or 3 o'clock.

Couldn't sleep. My eyes were wide open. I don't forget I got up and I had like a little office.

It was my bedroom but I wasn't one of them big preachers when I was a teenager so I had an office and a bookshelf and I called it my little office and had just a little bed over here. That's where I just kind of slept in my office. So I went over and I turned my little lamp on and I went down the corridor there down the hallway and I fixed myself some coffee.

I had to go to school the next day but I just felt like God was burdening me to read and do some praying and so I went down there and I fixed some coffee and I brewed it up and waited a little while down there and brought it back and came to my room and I just began to read and it was one of those times in my Bible reading where it seemed like the more I read the more I wanted to and it seemed like, Pastor, the more I took in the bigger my heart was swelling. I thought my heart was going to choke me to death. I mean, it was just such an overwhelming experience.

I mean, it was one of those times in your Christian life where it was almost like the Lord just sat down right beside you and put his arm around you and said, Son of the Lord, I'm here right beside you. I mean, it was just one of those overwhelming experiences. I left my coffee there and I let it get cold and I closed my Bible after about an hour or so and I don't know what time it was.

This had been some time ago but it was late and I mean, everybody was asleep and they wouldn't be up for a couple more hours for sure. I turned my little lamp off and I didn't get on my knees but I moved my chair out of the way and I laid prostrate on the floor as an 18-year-old teenager. I'll never forget it.

And I just began to call out loud. I didn't care if anybody heard me. It didn't make any difference.

I wasn't screaming or anything like that but I was just there in my room and had the door shut and I just began to cry and I just began to weep like a baby. And I just began to say things and I don't remember everything I said but I was just praying, God, please use me. I knew God wanted me to be a preacher.

I knew God wanted me to go into evangelism and man, I couldn't preach myself out of a paper bag and I said, God, I've got to have some help and I said, Lord, I need your power and I need your grace and I need your glory and I just prayed and prayed and prayed and begged the power of God to be on my life. I mean, I just prayed and sweat and cried and lied and begged and begged and begged. Next thing I know it was daylight time to get up and go to school.

And I'm going to be honest with you. I'm going to show my true colors to you, can I? I wish for those times in my ministry even now sometimes that I would have such a heart to beg for the power of God to be upon me. I will be honest with you.

Get mad at me if you want to. I've preached some microwave sermons in evangelism. I'll just reheat one of them ones I've preached all over the country before.

Work there, might as well work here. No prayer. Just jump up the energy and power of the flesh.

Open your mind and we're going to preach here tonight. Woo! Preach the word of God and see people get saved by the way. See things happen.

But walk down out of the pulpit as empty as a burnt out volcano knowing that I was Greg Locke that preached that message not Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit preaching through me. And friend, I'm going to be honest with you. I still sometimes long to get back to the first works.

When man, when you first got saved, you couldn't pray enough. It didn't bother you to go to a restaurant and pray. But after you get saved for a while, somebody starts praying and you, kind of like you're rubbing your head, kind of like you're rubbing your eyes, kind of like you're yawning and you're looking around to make sure nobody's looking at you.

I don't get pried. You know you've done it. But remember when you first got saved, you'd have stood on the table and prayed.

You didn't care what they thought about you and shown it. Man, you'd have stood up and said, Oh dear God, bless my food and bless God, bless everybody else's too and if they don't bless it, choke them to death, God. I mean, you're as bold as a lion.

But nowadays, somebody says, let's bow our head and pray and you get a little bit timid. You start looking around making sure the waiter is not going to come. Making sure nobody's looking at you.

Man, I remember when you first got saved, how on fire for God you were. Remember how many gospel tracts you passed out when you first got saved? You couldn't have enough tracts in your pocket. You didn't pass that one in six months.

Every time you go to the grocery store, there's a little lady there, she's got a little name tag on, it says Lynn or Georgian, something like that. You see her, you talk to her and you got \$40 worth of groceries, you give her a \$50 bill, she gives you \$10 back if she does it right and you walk out the door and you never thought one time, hey, that young lady has got a never dying soul, she's going to spend eternity in heaven or hell. You ain't given up gospel tracts in a long time.

Remember when you first got saved, you could read your Bible and you thought to yourself, man, is it already work time? Is it already 2 o'clock? Is it already time to go to bed? Is it already time to go to school? And man, you wanted to read all night. Now very rarely do you have morning classes. And over to the right there's a little three or four foot deep scum covered, frog infested, swamp.

Where there once stood a thriving, fundamental work for God. What was the difference? God said, if you don't remember, God said, if you don't repent, and God said, if you don't get back and redo the first works and get back to serving me out of love, not out of religiosity and duty, He said, if you don't get back to that, He said, I'm going to remove your candlestick and guess what? They didn't listen to Him and God healed them. And today there is no Ephesus.

And might I boldly say, if God's people keep down the road that we are going down today, possibly one day there will be no grace, Baptist temple. Because God will remove your candlestick. And friend, might I just tell you this morning, you did not lose your love for Christ.

You left it. Your heads are bowed, your eyes are closed, please, there's no one looking, there's no one talking. Heads are bowed and eyes are closed.

No one's looking, no one's talking, our instrumentalists are on their way. Appreciate them so much. They can begin to play that which they correlated together the moment they find it.

Men, women, boys and girls with heads bowed and eyes closed, just please listen to me closely for a moment, would you? Oh, how we want the Spirit of God to work in our hearts, And if we really want revival, there's a couple of things we're going to have to do this week. Number one, we're going to have to get humbled. When we get humbled, I believe it will help us get honest.

When we get honest, then we can get help. And when we get help, then we can have Holy Spirit revival. But you notice where it started? You didn't have the revival until you got the humility.

We're going to have to humble ourselves this morning and say, God, to be honest with you, my devotion to you has just been emotional. I've just kind of been going through the motions of the Christian life and God, with your help this morning, I'm going to get on fire. I'm going to serve you out of a heart of love, remembering all that you've done for me.

Your heads are bowed, your eyes are closed, everyone's standing, please. There's no one looking, there's no one talking. In a minute, I'll deal with sinner friends, but I preach to God's people this morning.

Right now, child of God, the Spirit of God has spoken to your heart. Right now, you step out of your place and you come down and get on your face of this altar and say, Oh God, give us the revival that we so desperately need. Help my heart, God, it's grown cold and a little bit lethargic and oh God, please, please this morning, help me not to walk away from my first love.

If God speaks to your heart right now, I want you to step out of your place.

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