

First Love - John 14:23

by Hans R. Waldvogel

The sermon emphasizes the importance of loving Jesus wholeheartedly and the transformative power of that love in our lives.

Scripture: Psalm 73:25, Matthew 22:37, John 14:23, Romans 5:8, 1 Corinthians 16:22, Ephesians 2:4, James 4:8, 1 John 2:15, 1 John 4:19, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "First Love", "Intimacy with Christ"

Description

Hans R. Waldvogel emphasizes the profound love that Jesus has for us and the importance of reciprocating that love by keeping His words. He highlights that true love for Christ is not merely about zeal but a deep, heartfelt commitment that transforms our lives and draws us into intimate fellowship with Him. Waldvogel urges believers to recognize the significance of loving Jesus with all their heart, as this love is foundational to our relationship with God and our eternal destiny. He warns against the dangers of allowing our love to grow cold and encourages a passionate pursuit of Christ, who desires to dwell within us. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a return to our 'first love' for Jesus, reminding us that He longs for our hearts above all else.

Transcript

Selected Verses:

John 14:23. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

I Corinthians 16:22. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.

Ephesians 2:4. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us...

Revelation 3:20. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Opening:

He says, "If any man love Me, he will keep My words. And if any man love Me, My Father will love him, and We will come unto him." You'll have company. Oh, I tell you, you'll have the holiest company that anyone can possibly have--not just the blessing once in a while. Oh, this mighty word of my Lord Jesus

Christ shows us how deeply He longs for your love.

That's what it is. Jesus Christ, do You care whether I love You? Do You really want me, poor miserable creature, to love You? My, that changes my outlook in life. That changes my outlook for all eternity. Oh, this great God, of whom we read: "Thou art fairer than the sons of men. Grace is poured into Thy lips;" "God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth." And not only that, but, "He, by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

You'd think that when a man like that, or a creature like that, or a God like that proposes his love to my heart, you'd think that the whole world would flock into his arms, and the whole world would go wild with enthusiasm to think that so great, so beautiful a bridegroom--in whom is no fault, and no wrinkle, nor any such a thing: no sin at all. And now He comes to me; He knocks at the door of my heart, and He says, like He said to Peter, "Do you love Me?"

All the zeal that Peter was able to get up did not satisfy Jesus' heart. And he had a lot of zeal. He said, "Me deny You? Never! Why, I'll go with you into prison and into death." And Jesus knew that that was all human. That never satisfies the heart of Jesus.

...

Selected Quotes:

The very fact that God Almighty thunders from mount Sinai those wonderful words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength" expresses something very wonderful--expresses to me the fact that God is deeply in love with me. Why, He wouldn't talk like that to me if He didn't want my love. But He wants me to love Him with my whole heart. Oh, He asks for my heart! And that is the wonderful thing because everybody is able to give his heart to this great God. And how is it that we don't all open our hearts, and all rush into His mighty embrace and say, "Jesus I love Thee, I know Thou art mine; and if I had a thousand hearts to give, Lord, they should all be Thine"?

...

How is it that the blessing of God rests upon you so visibly, and "rivers of living water" flow from your body? How is that? Well, the Bible tells us how it is. "When you were dead in trespasses and sins," something wonderful happened: "for God, for His great love wherewith He loved us..." Oh, that great, burning heart of love cannot be satisfied until it sets my heart on fire with that fire of eternity, until I love Him with a passionate love, until I love Him with my whole heart. And I know what Madam Guyon says in one of her songs: "I love Thee, Lord, but with no love of mine, for I have none to give." Think of it: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us." Tell me, has He touched you with that "great love wherewith He loved" you?

...

Oh, that's what made the love of God send His only begotten Son into the depth of hell, to be made sin for me, to drink the dregs of that cup: not only to deliver me from my sin, but to make me eligible to be a lover of Jesus. (...) I tell you, Jesus Christ is not working just to build churches like this for a few years, and then

have you be buried in the cemetery, and the preacher telling some lies over your casket. No, He's working for eternity.

...

...billions of blazing suns, and planets, and God Almighty is the Lord of Hosts, and He has created all these things by His Son Jesus Christ. And why did He pick this little earth, just a little piece of dust in comparison to these great worlds? Why did He pick you and me? Why, because He wasn't satisfied with the hosts of heaven. He wanted a bride. He wanted men and women that would make their choice--amid all the clamoring voices of hell, and of the world, and the flesh, and the devil. And if you're going to be there on His throne, you're going to make your choice... And why do people not choose Jesus? Because they don't know Him.

...

Thank God! They'll run after you! When you're a lover of Jesus Christ, the Father and the Son will "come and make Their abode with you," and perhaps your life will be "hid with Christ in God."

...

Jesus Christ, that's the first thing He knows, the first thing He feels, "Because the iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that endureth unto the end..." Beloved, that's the place of overcoming. And if you overcome in that place, every demon in hell will be licked: "Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." "Seek ye first the kingship of Jesus Christ and all these things shall be added unto you."

And the trouble is we seek this and that and the other thing. But Jesus is looking for lovers. Jesus Christ is looking for hearts that are beating only for Him, and they show it to Him. That "first love" means that Jesus Christ is first, last, and always. Never mind: "Heaven and earth may fade and flee / Firstborn light in gloom decline. [But while God and I shall be / I am His and He is mine.]"

...

speaker icon My Father! "Rich, increased with goods, have need of nothing." Where's Jesus? At the door, knocking. Ah, I tell you, Jesus Christ knows them that are His--those who are really in love with Him. They heed His voice. They know His voice. They know His knocking at the door. Nobody else knows. "His head is filled with dew, His locks with the drops of the night." He's alone in the big city. Nobody pays any attention for Him. Nobody's looking for Him, except one solitary soul: His bride...

Oh, my heavenly Bridegroom. He knows how to prepare His bridal soul for that great day: He says, "and if you hear My voice and open the door"--what a promise!--"I will come in. I'm not going to stand on the outside and bless you once in a while, but I want to come in. I want to be on the throne. And I will sup with you, and you with Me." Oh, here is identification. Here's intimacy: Jesus supping with me, and I with Him. Oh, My Lord!

No wonder He says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed." After Jesus Christ has shed His hot blood, do you think that heart can be satisfied with your singing, and your talking, and your foolishness, and your half-heartedness?

Illustrations:

A girl whose love for Jesus soured. "She was not like she had been. It wasn't the love of Jesus shining from her. ... What had happened? She had gotten among the saints; that's what happened... She had gotten in touch with the unrighteousness." (from 5:10)

Illustration of leaving the first love: a woman whose love grew cold while her fiancée was away. (from 15:54)

German at 10:48:

Wenn die Stunden sich gefunden, bricht die Hilf mit Macht herein;

The first two lines of the fifth stanza of the old German hymn, "Gott will's machen, dass die Sachen gehen wie es heilsam ist." That stanza has been translated thus:

When it is the hour

Help breaks in with power

Putting suddenly to shame

All your worry, fret, and strain.

German at 11:12:

Herr, mit Dir!

Nicht um Lust und Erdenfreuden

nicht um Ruhm fleh' ich zu Dir;

freudig will ich leiden, wirken,

aber lass mich zieh'n mit Dir.

This is from the German translation of Fanny Crosby's hymn, Close to Thee, entitled, "Du mein ewig treuer Jesus." "Herr, mit Dir!" is repeated a number of times in the refrain: "Lord, with You," i.e. "Close to Thee." The second stanza is:

Not for ease or worldly pleasure,

nor for fame my prayer shall be;

gladly will I toil and suffer,

only let me walk with Thee.

German at 16:56:

Es hat ihn kalt gecatched.

Those with a German background would be amused by this mix of German and English. The proper German for this idiomatic expression would be "Es hat ihn kalt erwischt," or "It caught him cold," meaning he was taken by surprise. The use of the word "cold" is also a pun, alluding to the coldness of the girl's embrace.

German at 18:19:

Psalm 73:25. Wenn ich nur dich habe, so frage ich nichts nach Himmel und Erde.

In the King James Version, Psalm 73:25 says, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." Martin Luther's German says, literally, "If I only have You, I ask nothing of heaven and earth." The meaning here is, "When I possess Jesus, I do not care about heaven nor about earth. All things in heaven and earth will be best for me, just the way He ordained them."

References:

Majestic Sweetness Sits Enthroned, a hymn by Samuel Stennett:

Since from His bounty I receive

Such proofs of love divine,

Had I a thousand hearts to give,

Lord, they should all be Thine.

"It wasn't Cassius." Presumably, Cassius Clay, the prizefighter who changed his name to Muhammad Ali in 1964.

I Am His, and He Is Mine, a hymn by George W. Robinson, 1876:

His forever, only His; Who the Lord and me shall part?

Ah, with what a rest of bliss Christ can fill the loving heart!

Heav'n and earth may fade and flee, firstborn light in gloom decline;

But while God and I shall be, I am His, and He is mine.

But while God and I shall be, I am His, and He is mine.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/hans-r-waldvogel/first-love-john-1423/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net