

Be Resolved to Grow Spiritually No Matter the Cost

by Tim Conway

This sermon emphasizes the importance of opening the door of our hearts to Christ, highlighting the struggle of maintaining spiritual resolutions and the distractions that hinder our commitment. It delves into the need for a strong will, healthy spiritual appetites, and a deep longing for Christ to settle within us. The message encourages repentance, recognizing our unworthiness, and embracing Christ's mercy and love despite our shortcomings.

Scripture: Revelation 3:20, Mark 9:24, Psalm 51:10, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 3:17, 1 Timothy 1:15

Topics: "Opening Our Hearts to Christ", "Embracing Mercy and Love"

Description

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Transcript

I mean, you can get gripped by this reality. There's a door here. Christ is saying, I'm on the other side.

Come and open. And I'll come in. And you know what? You can sit in a message like this and you can hear this and you can say, yeah, I want that.

I want that. Have you ever noticed maybe the word fickle is a good word? Any of you ever been in the place where you sat under powerful preaching? You had a sweet time in prayer or a powerful season in the Word? And you're resolved. I want that.

I want to go deeper. I want to go further. I believe it from Scripture I can have it.

But what happens? Any of you ever been there where you look up and it's like what happened? How did I get distracted? I mean, I was resolved for this. How'd I get here? I was determined I wanted that. I had made certain resolutions.

You ever been there? You make these spiritual resolutions and then what happens? What's the difference between the people that press on to know the Lord and the ones that kind of give up or are always

struggling, always falling short? What's the difference? Well, I think it comes back to this. I think it comes back to being strengthened by God Himself to have a will that's committed. I think it comes to having appetites that are strong.

We know it. You know what? I got sick this week. My appetite has not been there.

But you ever go through seasons in your life? Maybe you're saying, yeah, way too many of them. You're hungry. You're hungry all the time.

You can eat and you're still hungry. What's the difference? Well, there's a difference in the health of that appetite. I'll tell you, if our appetite itself were to be magnified 100-fold, we desperately needed Christ.

Maybe some of the trivialities that have sidetracked us and derailed us. Did any of you, after last week's message, any of you go out of here thinking, yeah, I want that. I want that.

I want you to want it. I hope so. See, that's the kind of thing that I'm afraid of.

That you went out of here not thinking that. I hope you did. I hope some of you did.

You were feeling like, I want that. I want to know more of the fullness of Christ settling in to my heart. I want that.

I want it deeper. But tomorrow came and what happens? We forget. We become distracted by something else.

Oh, you were fully resolved a week ago. A week ago right now, it was like, yeah, I want that. I'm going to open the door.

I want Christ to come in. You prayed last week. Lord, give me that.

The thing that Paul prayed for. Give me people to pray that for me. I want it.

But the cares and the concerns and the trivialities of the world. And you see, our commitment is weak. Our will is too weak.

Your faith is too weak. I mean, you hear the man in Scripture, Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. And I guess one of the things that I would have have our faith to go to in the very beginning is this belief that there is a God who can and will and does strengthen His people.

Has your faith even latched on to this reality? That there is more. I can have Christ settle in. I can have Him come into me in a way that He's never come into me.

Go back and read the Song of Solomon. You want to feel this at the level? Marriage is only the picture. The intimacies of marriage are only the picture.

And you can go back there and you can say, yes, my Beloved, He put His hand to the door latch. And what happened? Well, I already washed my feet. Is that not the sad commentary on too many of us? Yes, I want it.

He stands at the door. He's knocking. I want to let Him in.

But it's just like the Song of Solomon. We hesitate it. We hesitate it.

Something else was more important. And you know what will happen? The Lord will test your heart. I wanted to sing that song.

I asked the Lord that I might grow. Because you know what happens oftentimes? You say, yes, Lord, I want this. And I'm going to seek to be careful to not let the kinds of things into my life that might grieve and offend you.

I want You to find my heart a sufficient place for You to dwell deeply in. And you know, you begin to pray for this and you begin to long for this. And what happens? You begin to pray, Lord, strengthen me for this.

More of this. More of Christ. And then you know what happens? The Lord tests your heart.

You remember the song. Suddenly, Newton's hymn breaks in upon us. It can seem very discouraging.

Yes, brother, I went out of here last week. I was very determined. But you know what I found during the week? I found such manifestations of pride in my own heart and idolatry or something else.

I asked the Lord that I might grow. But you see, you forgot the song. Because you hear things like this and it's like, that's glorious! Christ coming in and bringing His fragrance, His power and His presence in my inner being.

Yes, I want that! I asked the Lord that He might come in. And it says, Newton said, and seek more earnestly His face. Yes, I want to seek more earnestly to open that door that He might come in.

"'Twas He who taught me thus to pray." Isn't Paul teaching us to pray this way? That Christ may come in. Lord, You're teaching us to pray. And He, I trust, has answered prayer, but has been such a way as almost drove me to despair.

You see, that's often what happens. Lord, please come in. Come close.

Indwell. Come in and sup with me. And see, we hope the same way Newton hoped.

I hoped that in some favored hour, at once He'd grant me my request by His love's constraining power to do my sins and give me rest. Instead of this, He made me feel the hidden evils of my heart, let the angry powers of hell assault my soul in every part. And you know what happens? You suddenly feel like, Lord, I want this.

I want to go deeper. But as soon as I set my heart to it and I begin to pray, I feel like I'm further away than ever from Christ. You may actually feel much worse now than before.

Why? Because things have come up. They've come to the surface in your heart that you never imagined were there. It drives you to despair.

It drives you to be desperate. But you know what I say? Look, this is often part of it. This is often what God is doing.

Why? You have to remember this. I think this is key. Those Laodiceans, if Jesus would have just broken right away and said to them, I stand at the door and knock.

Open up. Well, you know what they were saying. We're rich.

We've got our act together. We don't need anything. We've prospered in need of nothing.

And you see, you feel so boldly and confidently, yeah, I'm good. Christ, come on in. But Jesus said this to them, you know what the problem is? You don't recognize the reality about yourself.

What? The reality is that you're wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. And you see, what we have to recognize is this, that when Christ comes in, we don't deserve it. We don't deserve it.

Our faith needs to go there. Our faith needs to latch on to that reality. Christ coming in and settling down, it's entirely a mercy.

You don't deserve it and your performance isn't the basis of it. Look, it's true. You can do things to drive your Master away.

There's no question about that. But how does Jesus want the Laodiceans to approach the door? Confident. Got our act together.

Let me tell you this, if you began to pray and you began to seek this, and suddenly God began to show you things in your heart, then you know what? What you want to do is like the Laodiceans, you want to repent. You want to recognize what you are in your own strength and recognize that this is God's way of taking you on, taking you deeper, to sweep that heart that Christ may come in. Don't resist that.

And don't be in despair because of it. Oh, the devil will be right there saying, look at you, you're a mess. Isn't Christ going to come in and dwell there? Listen, whatever his foul language may say, you remember this, Christ came to save sinners.

And He came to save them, and He came to love them, and He came to commune with them, and He came to dwell within them. And never because of any merits on their part. Simply because for their sake, He's willing to die and to do this that the glory of God might be shown.

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