



# WEEKLY SERMON

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**Sunday** May 28, 2023

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**Message** Family of God - #14

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**Text:** Jeremiah 31:3, Revelation 2:1-8

In Psalm 11:1-7 we read, **“In the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain? (2) For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart. (3) If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? (4) The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men. (5) The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth. (6) Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup. (7) For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.”**

In Proverbs 14:34 we read, **“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”**

In Proverbs 29:2 we read, **“When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.”**

Here are **Fourteen** statements concerning our Nation - America:

**1.** The Pledge of Allegiance was written in August 1892 by the socialist minister Francis Bellamy (1855-1931). Bellamy had hoped that the pledge would be used by citizens in any country. In its original form it read: “I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” In 1923, the words, “the Flag of the United States of America” were added. At this time it read: **“I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”** In 1954, in response to the Communist threat of the times, President Eisenhower encouraged Congress to add the words “under God,” creating the 31-word pledge we say today. Today it reads: **“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”**

**2.** **“FREEDOM** is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed down for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.” **“Government does not solve problems; it subsidizes them.”** **“Government is not a solution to our problem; government is the problem.”** **Ronald Regan**

**3.** **“From the first settlement at Jamestown to the present hour is based upon and permeated by the principles of the Bible. The more this Bible enters into our national life the grander and purer and better will that life become.”** **David J. Brewer**

**4.** **“We must remember that a government big enough to give us everything we want is big enough to take away everything we have.”** **Gerald Ford**

**5.** Liberty cannot be established without morality, nor morality without faith. **Alexis de Tocqueville**

6. "The philosophy of the classroom today will be the philosophy of government tomorrow." **Abraham Lincoln**

7. "It is impossible mentally or socially to enslave a Bible-reading people. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom." **Horace Greeley**

8. "If truth is not diffused, error will be. If God and His Word are not known and received, the Devil and his works will gain ascendancy. If [Christian] literature does not reach every hamlet, the pages of a corrupt and licentious literature will. If the power of the Gospel is not felt through the length and breadth of the land, anarchy and misrule, degradation and misery, corruption and darkness will reign without mitigation or end." **Daniel Webster**

9. "Any nation which for an extended period puts pleasure before liberty is likely to lose the liberty it misused." **A. W. Tozer**

10. "Remember that government of the people will be government for the people as long as there is government by the people." Unless our civilization is redeemed spiritually it cannot endure materially." **President Woodrow Wilson**

11. "A nation which does not remember what it was yesterday, does not know what it is today, nor what it is trying to do. We are trying to do a little thing if we do not know where we came from or what we have been about. ... America was born a Christian nation. America was born to exemplify that devotion to the elements of righteousness which derived from the revelations of Holy Scripture." **President Woodrow Wilson,**

12. "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. ... We have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace; too proud to pray to the God that made us. ... All this being done in sincerity and truth, let us then rest humbly in the hope authorized by the divine teachings; that the united cry of the nation will be heard on high, and answered with blessings no less than the pardon of our national sins, and the restoration of our now divided and suffering country to its former happy condition of unity and peace." **President Abraham Lincoln, March 30, 1863**

13. "History fails to record a single precedent in which nations subject to moral decay have not passed into political and economic decline. There has become either a spiritual awakening to overcome the moral lapse, or a progressive deterioration leading to ultimate national disaster." **General Douglas MacArthur, Pacific Allied Supreme Commander in World War II, September 1945**

14. "We have a dangerous trend beginning to take place in our education. We are starting to put more textbooks into our schools. We've become accustomed of late to putting books into the hands of children containing fables and moral lessons. We are spending less time in the classroom on the Bible, which should be the principal text in our schools. The Bible states the great moral lessons better than any other manmade book." - **Fisher Ames, Congressman from Massachusetts, September 1789**

In His Amazing Grace

*Pastor David Miklas*

# “Love’s Departure- Misplaced Affections”

**INTRODUCTION:** This may be one of the shortest honeymoons on record: A couple got married on March 6, 2007 in Las Vegas, Nevada. It took less than 24 hours for the bride to decide to leave the love of her life. They married on a Sunday. By Monday, as a result of an energetic and heated argument, she was in the hospital with a broken leg and the groom was in handcuffs headed for jail.

While it took the unfortunate couple just described less than a day to lose one another, for most people it happens over time. One day, excitement and passion about life are in full bloom; and a year later, it's as if the candle had never been lit at all.

It happens not just in marriage or in personal relationships. The love that once fueled a hobby, a career, a ministry, or a dream for the future can fade like a dying ember. Something to which we were once vitally committed, no longer has a place of priority in our life.

While the loss of love is a disheartening experience in any area of life, there is one area in which the consequences are most serious. That is when we lose our spiritual love for the things of God. I have seen this happen to many Christians in my years as a pastor. Without diligence, the fire of love that burned brightly when we first met Jesus Christ can begin to fade and provide lesser and lesser amounts of light in this world.

**I. Love Lost in Ephesus:** In the Revelation of Jesus Christ, given to the apostle John, we find the record of a church that had started strong in the faith. I am talking about the church at Ephesus. To get the overview, we need to read the text found in Revelation 2:1-7.

**“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; (2) I know thy works, and thy labour, 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: (3) And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. (4) Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. (5) 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 his place, except thou repent. (6) But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. (7) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”**

First-time readers of Revelation with some knowledge of the New Testament are often surprised when they discover that the Ephesian church is the one called to account for having lost its love for God. In fact, they hadn't lost their love - they had left their love.

**Ephesus? Wasn't this the church to whom Paul wrote one of the deepest theological letters in the New Testament?** Indeed, it was.

In Ephesians 1:15-23 we read, **“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, (16) Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; (17) That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: (18) The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, (19) And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, (20) Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, (21) Far above all principality, and power, and might, and**

dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: (22) And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, (23) Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

In Ephesians 3:14-21 we read, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (15) Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, (16) That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; (17) That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, (18) May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; (19) And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. (20) Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, (21) Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

### **Ephesus? Wasn't this the church which had a long history of Christian witness, and some tremendous pastoral leadership?**

They had in their midst **Aquila and Priscilla**.

There was also the eloquent preacher **Apollos**.

The **Apostle Paul** spent 3 years preaching, and teaching them, warning them and winning souls to Christ.

They also had the privilege of being led by **Timothy** and the beloved **Apostle John**.

### **Ephesus? Wasn't this the church with whose elders Paul knelt and prayed and wept as he left them after three years in their midst?**

His words are recorded for us in Acts 20:17-38. Paul had taught them everything he knew to help them grow, going from "house to house," investing himself in their lives. The **effectiveness** of this church's ministry is found in Acts 19:10 where we read "All they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord both Jews and Gentile."

Returning to our text in Revelation 2, in the eyes of many, it would be a **flawless church**. In verses 2-3 our Lord paid a 5-fold compliment to them, with a lot of positive pluses. He tells them what is right in the church.

First: **They were a SERVING Church**, busy doing the work of the Lord, verse 2, "I know thy works, and thy labor." By using the word "labor" it means this church was "serving to the point of exhaustion." No doubt their schedule was filled with activities.

Second: **They were a SEPARATED church** in that they were **CAREFUL** in their **holiness**, verse 2, "...could not bear them who were evil." They could not nor would not tolerate immorality and sin within their midst. Here was a church in the world, but the world was not in the church.

Third: **They were WATCHFUL in their doctrine**. "Ministerial courtesy" had no place in Ephesus, verse 2, "They had tried the false apostles and found them to be liars." This church was concerned that Christ-centered, responsible men were getting the Word of God out. Paul warned them in Acts 20 they were as sheep among wolves, and they were to be on guard against wolves among the sheep.

Fourth: **They were a STEADFAST church**, verse 3. They were faithful in the midst of opposition. The word "patience" carries the meaning of "endurance under trial." They kept going when the going was tough. This tells me they had their problems, but they were not quitters.

Fifth: **They were a SUFFERING church**, verse 3, "and has not fainted." Here was a church that had not lost heart nor their spirit. They weren't easily **discouraged, dismayed or depressed** by the obstacles.

Here was a church with a lot of positive characteristics. No matter how you would examine this congregation, you could conclude that it is just about **perfect** as a church could

become. However, I am not the one who draws the line. The Lord Jesus Christ is the **Evaluator** and in spite of everything this church is, it's on the verge of **FAILURE**. They were barely getting a passing grade.

Please notice in verse 4 the Lord tells them what is wrong. **"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."** Jesus had told His disciples, concerning the last days before His return in Matthew 24:12, **"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."**

The church at Ephesus, for all her works, and toil, and orthodoxy, and perseverance, had abandoned their first love.

Please notice several things about this astonishing verse.

Number 1. Please notice they did not lose their first love, they **"LEFT"** their first love.

Number 2. You will notice in this verse there is an italicized word - **"Somewhat."** It ought not to be there, as italicized words indicate a word added by the translator. The Lord is not saying I have somewhat against you. Literally it reads, **"I have against thee."**

Number 3. The order of the words in the Greek is emphatic; **"Your first love you have left."** This rebuke contrasts what Paul had written to these Ephesians 35 years earlier, that he never stopped giving thanks for them because of their faith in Christ and their Love.

Leaving their first love, they were outwardly **WARM** yet inwardly **COLD**. Day after day they went through the **RIGHT ROUTINE**, and said the **RIGHT WORDS**. They were sound in doctrine and practice crossing the right Fundamental **"T"** and dotting the right Fundamental **"I"**.

Yet there inward problem was the heart. Someone said this,

**"To be aware of a time when Jesus meant more; or your DEVOTION to Jesus Christ was of a greater degree or your DEDICATION involved a greater commitment, to say it WAS and NOW is NOT is to SAY you have changed."**

The story is told of a father and daughter whose custom it was for a number of years to take a walk every evening after supper. But for a period of three months, there came a time where she was reluctant to go. She would always try to find an excuse to leave her father and go back to the house and shut herself up in her room. This grieved the heart of the father and he was distressed about it, but said nothing.

Finally on the occasion of his birthday, this little girl with a joyful smile handed her father a birthday present. When the father opened the package to his astonishment there was a pair of home-made bedroom slippers.

The father said, **"Did you make these for me."** She said **"Yes sir!"**

Then the father replied, **"I really appreciate the slippers and I am very grateful that you took the time to make them, but is that what has been keeping you from taking a walk with me for these past 3 months."** She answered, **"Yes sir."**

He said, **"Honey, next time tell me how much you need to buy me a present and I'll give you the money, what I really want is not what you can make for me as much as I want to be with you."**

I believe that's the way the Lord Jesus feels about us. **IT'S NOT WHAT WE ARE DOING FOR THE LORD THAT IS OF INTEREST TO THE HEART OF JESUS.** Rather it's the fact that Jesus wants us to be in love with Him!

**II. What causes this COLDNESS to come into our lives, that leaves the LOVE for Christ out?** There is no greater love than the love we have for Christ. But, regardless of



the object, love is love. The way we leave our love - whether love for Christ, the Scriptures, prayer, our family, or our ministry - is the same in every case.

**We leave by lusting.** If we do not guard against “**the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life**” as we read in 1 John 2:16, we can leave the things of Christ in pursuit of the things of this world. Money, position, power, influence, possessions - these are powerful enticements for the one who has not maintained a close walk with Jesus.

**We leave by lack of attention.** It stands to reason that what we ignore, we will eventually care little about. **If we ignore the Bible, our spouse, our responsibilities as a parent, our life in the church, it will only be a matter of time before we find little or no love for those parts of our life.** It takes years to develop the ability to play an instrument. But it only takes a few weeks of inattention to the instrument for it to be lost.

**We leave by lack of perseverance.** The greatest myth about sacrificial love is that it is easy. The truth is, nothing could be harder because true love is the opposite of human nature. Love takes work, diligence, and perseverance. It's easy to sleep in instead of rising to pray and read the Bible, and easier to take a spouse for granted than to practice acts of kindness. It's also easy not to take up our cross and follow Jesus as His disciples when the way gets hard.

**We leave by laziness.** Sometimes it's not temptation or time or the world; it's just us! It's easy to go through life as a couch potato, surfing the channels on TV or the Web on our computer. We can while away a half-day, a weekend; we can while away a lifetime by living an unfocused, self-centered, lazy life. It's human nature to do so, and the quicker we recognize that pattern and correct it, the sooner we'll find love returning.

**We leave by lapsing.** Finally, we can leave our love by lapsing into sin and staying there. We're going to sin in this life. But if we don't confess and repent of our sin when it happens, we are opening up the door for that sin to become a lifestyle.

II. **How to Find and Keep our Love.** Jesus told the church at Ephesus that unless they repented, He would remove the lampstand-the light of His presence-from their midst. Notice again the words in verse 5, “**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 his place, except thou repent.**”

Jesus stood before the church at Ephesus and told them in verse 5 to **REMEMBER, REPENT, REPEAT, or be REMOVED.**

Let us **REMEMBER** how we loved Christ as young Christians when we were the happiest people in the world. Literally the text says, “**keep on remembering**”.

**Remember** the love affair you had with Christ at salvation.

**Remember** the joy, the tears and the contentment from hearing the word of God preached before you began to sit in the seat of the scornful.

**Remember** when your heart was warmed as you served Christ.

**Remember** how your heart burned to win folks to Christ.

**Remember** how you used to love the brethren and be concerned for their spiritual and physical welfare.

**Remember** all the victories you had from the Lord.

**Remember** your sweet heart love for the Lord before it degenerated into cold mechanical church work.

Let us **REPENT**, turn, confess, go back and ask God to fill our hearts with the love of God shed abroad by the Holy Spirit. "Is the furnace in your heart still there; or has the fire gone out?"

Let us **REPEAT**, do again the first works as we used to do when our faith was aglow with a loving heart and our church work was a labor of love and not just labor. "Have you gotten so involved in the work of the Lord you have forgotten the Lord of the work?"

If we don't "**Remember, Repent and Repeat**" there is one more "R" to endure. "Or else I will ...REMOVE thy lampstand out of his place, except thou repent." **It is either revival or removal!**

With Ephesus it meant **REMOVAL**. Today, the city and the church lay in ruins.  
The church that loses its **LOVE** will soon lose its **LIGHT**, no matter how doctrinally sound it may be.  
**God help us to remember, repent, and repeat that there may be revival and not removal!**

God calls us to love Him, our spouse, our children, the church, the lost - there are many objects worthy of our sacrificial love. But if we ever leave our first love - our love for Jesus Christ - we will not be able to love anyone or anything as we should.

The way we rekindle and keep our love for Jesus and others is by reversing what we did to lose it. In short, stay close to and focused on serving those you should love. Rekindling the flame of love for Jesus will cause that flame to spread and burn brightly for everyone and everything in your life.

In closing, let me quote three of the greatest verses in the Bible on Love, and three hymns that tell us of the love of God.

In Jeremiah 31:3 we read, "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

Wonderful story of love, tell it to me again.  
Wonderful story of love, wake the immortal strain!  
Angels with rapture announce it.  
Shepherd with wonder receive it.  
Sinner, O won't you believe it?  
Wonderful story of love.

In Romans 5:8 we read, "But God commendeth his LOVE toward us, in that, while we were yet SINNERS, Christ died for us."

Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
and were the skies of parchment made,  
Were every stalk on earth a quill,  
and every man a scribe by trade -  
To write the LOVE OF GOD above,  
would drain the ocean dry,  
Nor would the scroll contain the whole,  
though stretched from sky to sky.

In John 3:16-17 we read, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life..."

I stand amazed in the presence,  
Of Jesus the Nazarene,  
And wonder how He could LOVE me,  
A sinner, condemned, unclean.  
How marvelous, How wonderful!  
And my song shall ever be:  
How marvelous, How wonderful!

## Is my Saviour's LOVE for me!

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If God has spoken to your heart after reading the sermon **“Love’s Departure - Misplaced Affections”** then right now talk to God about what He has spoken to you.

Do you have the assurance that one day you will go to heaven? If you have no assurance that you know Jesus Christ, then I trust you will decide to accept Him as your personal Savior. The Bible tells us in

Acts 16:31, **“...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...”**

Romans 10:13, **“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”**

This prayer is here for those who need to ask Jesus to be their personal Savior: **“I do want to go to Heaven. I know I am a sinner, and I do believe Jesus Christ died for me. I realize I cannot buy this great salvation, nor can I earn it. Knowing Jesus died on the cross and arose from the grave to pay my sin debt and to purchase my salvation, I do now trust Him as my Savior, and from this moment on I am completely depending on Him for my salvation.”**

If you made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior let me know? Please send an e-mail to, [pdmikBBM@aol.com](mailto:pdmikBBM@aol.com) and I will send you some literature that will help you in your Christian life.

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