

“Are You Really Committed to Jesus?”

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

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Today is Valentine’s Day—a day that many married couples use to celebrate their love for one another—love that is built upon the commitment they made to each other on their wedding day.

John 2:23–25 (NKJV)

²³ Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. ²⁴ But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men*, ²⁵ and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

The reason Jesus didn’t commit Himself to these people wasn’t because *He* didn’t love them—it was solely on the basis of *them* not really loving Him—of them not wanting to go all the way in their relationship with Him.

You see, they wanted to ‘hangout’ with Jesus and have a superficial relationship with Him—I mean they might need His help someday so it’s smart to keep Him close!

But like so many today—they didn’t want to go all the way and commit themselves to Him— *“for better or worse, in good times and in bad* for the rest of their lives—as a marriage covenant demands!

Jesus Christ loves people—all people—so much that He is proposing marriage to them, but without the other person accepting that proposal and making a commitment to Him—it is meaningless.

And again, that’s why Jesus didn’t commit Himself to these people, He wants a real relationship based on loving commitment—and the same is true today.

He already proved His commitment to us by dying for us (that’s total commitment)—and He wants the same from us. (*“If you want to be My disciples, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Me.”*—Explain)

Now look, the Lord Jesus doesn’t mind a person ‘*checking Him out*’ before making a commitment to Him—in fact, He actually encouraged that when He challenged potential disciples to first “*count the cost*” before starting to follow Him (entering into a relationship with Him).

But make no mistake about it—Jesus isn’t looking for a *perpetual, casual* ‘dating’ relationship with you.

He’s looking for a relationship based on a life-long commitment—in other words, He wants to marry you!

But again, many church-goers are satisfied with simply ‘*dating*’ Jesus—and are not interested in taking their relationship with Him deeper by making a commitment to Him.

A commitment to love Him, serve Him, and to stay loyal to Him no matter what life brings their way, whether blessings or hardships, sunshine or storms—for the rest of their lives.

This is the kind of commitment Jesus is looking for from those who are thinking of following Him—which is why the Bible talks about salvation in *marriage* terms calling Jesus our Bridegroom and Christians the Bride of Christ.

The problem with many church goers is they're satisfied with having a superficial, casual relationship with Jesus—but have no desire to take things deeper—to get serious about Him.

Here the Lord is proposing marriage to them (salvation) and their response is—*"I just want to be friends Jesus."* But there can be no salvation without believing in Jesus to the point of commitment and receiving Him as your Bridegroom—as well as your Savior.

Many today say they 'believe' in Jesus—when they say that to me, I like to ask them—

"What exactly do you mean when you say you believe in Jesus?"

Do you mean that you believe in the facts of Who Jesus is and what He did—in other words that He is the Son of God, Who died on the cross and three days later rose from the dead?

The Bible says that even the demons believe that and tremble!" (James 2:19)

To be saved you must take your '*passive*' faith (head knowledge) and bring it to the next level and make it '*active*' faith—which means believing to the point of commitment.

Casual Christianity has become a real problem in the Church today—where too many Christians just want to be '*friends*' with Jesus instead of making a full-on commitment to Him (as in marriage).

Now unfortunately, many other Christians who *have* made a commitment to Jesus when they received Him as their Savior and Bridegroom—have allowed their relationship, and their passion for Him to 'cool' over the years.

And so to compensate, they have ramped up their *service* to Him thinking that—'*My service is an expression of my love—and that's all Jesus really wants from me anyway.*'

Revelation 2:1–4 (NKJV)

¹ "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write...² "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;³ and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. ⁴ Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.

It seems that all of these positive works of service were being cancelled out by one negative—they were going through the *motions*, but they had lost the emotion in their relationship with Jesus.

Their church was a well-oiled machine—but God doesn't want '*machines*' cranking out *emotionless* service—He wants service that's born out of a deep love that His people (His Bride) have for Him!

Jesus said the greatest commandment is: *"That you love the Lord your God with all you heart, soul, mind and strength"*—not that you serve the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

And notice He doesn't say they lost their first love—He says they left their first love.

This was a conscious act of departing on their part that didn't take place all at once—but like the slow drifting off course of a ship at sea—it happened slowly over time.

In Weymouth's N.T. translation of this passage it reads—*"Yet I have this against you—that you no longer love Me as you did at first."*

What is *"first love"*? —It is the passionate love for Jesus that often characterizes the new believer.

It is the *"I can't think of anyone else"* kind of fervent love that newlyweds have for each other—in a word it's *"honeymoon"* love.

And while it is true that married love deepens and grows richer over time—it is also true that ideally it should never lose the passion of those *"honeymoon days."*

The word **"Ephesus"** means *'darling'* or *'desired one'*—they were still desired by the Lord, but He was longer desired by them as they had at the beginning of their relationship with Him.

This also happened with Israel—a cooling off of their love for the Lord that He lamented thru the prophet Jeremiah—

"I remember how eager you were to please me as a young bride long ago, how you loved me and followed me even through the barren wilderness..." (Jeremiah 2:2 NLT)

The worst thing that can happen to any relationship, whether you're talking about your relationship with God or your spouse—is when you begin to take the other for granted.

The church at Ephesus fell into the trap of thinking that *loveless* service was enough to please the Lord.

Love is expressed in service—but service is not necessarily done out of love.

It would be like a wife who says to her husband, *"I don't love you, I have no feelings for you at all, but I'll stay married to you and clean the house, wash your clothes, cook your meals..."*—what husband would be happy with a relationship like that?

I didn't marry my wife so that I would have someone to cook my meals and clean my house—I can hire people to do those things.

I married my wife because I fell in love with her and she with me and now all the acts of service she does for me are special and beautiful because I know they are an expression of her love for me—but without the love, they would be meaningless, empty acts of service.

It's obvious that Jesus feels that same way and wants more than service in our relationship with Him—He wants passion, fire—He wants honeymoon love!

Remember He is holding His church with His nail scarred hands which speak of the ultimate act of selfless love—to lay down your life for the person you're in love with!

What kind of love are you giving Him in return?

Is it *'loveless service'*—are you going thru the motions, but you've lost the emotion in your relationship with Him?

All Christians *love* Jesus—but not all Christians are 'in love' with Jesus.

I love my sister, but I'm in love with my wife—and there is a difference.

And so, for many Christians, because their love for the Lord has cooled—they (like the Christians in Ephesus) have substituted service for loving passion thinking they were 'interchangeable'.

How can you fall in love with Jesus?—How did you fall in love with your future spouse?

Start spending time with Him—talk to Him—share your heart with Him.

Ask Him, to give you thru the power of His Spirit the passionate love for Him that He desires and deserves—remembering:

Philippians 2:13 (NKJV)

¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

Want to know more? Click [here](#).