

Awaken Love

Prayers for Returning to Our First Love

Thesis: The Lord is awaking our hearts to first love and calling us back to himself. In Song of Solomon 8:5-7, we have a picture of what mature love looks like between the Bridegroom King and his people. This picture helps us to know what we can pray for, desire, and expect.

Text: Song of Solomon 8:5-7 Passion Translation

Intro:

The Lord has been speaking to us and drawing our hearts back to first love. I am so grateful for what the Lord is doing in my life and in our lives as a congregation.

When we received the word from Apostle Mosy Madugba about returning to our first love, and when we processed that word as leaders at Calvary, I wondered what this word meant for me. I began to ask the Lord to speak to me and show me if and how I had left my first love.

As I have shared with you, one of our elders, Russ Gressett, shared an article from a missionary. When I read it, that article spoke to me so clearly. The Lord told this missionary, "I miss our times together." I used to have a fire wall between my devotional life and intercession. The demands of ministry and urgent issues crept into my devotional time with the Lord. When I read the article, I felt like the Lord said to me, "I miss the times when we just hang out and spend time together."

In June, I began to read the Psalms in the Passion Translation as a way to give voice to the desires of my heart and as a way to spend time with the Lord.

In July (7'24'19), I had an encounter with the Lord as I read from Song of Solomon 8:5-7.

Here is what I wrote that day:

- Lord, I am so grateful for the Passion Translation. It is helping me to feel what you think and say about me.
- Thank you for awakening my heart to first love, for calling me back to time with you... not just time for petition, intercession, wisdom, and needs... but just to be with you.

- Lord, as my Bridegroom King, I ask you to do for me and to do for Calvary what you did for your bride in Song of Songs 8:5-7.

In Song of Solomon 8:5-7, we have a picture of what mature love looks like between the Bridegroom King and his people. This picture helps us to know what we can pray for, desire, and expect.

I want to begin this morning by reviewing our recent journey with the Lord as we respond to the word of God to return to our first love.

Then, I want to look at Song of Solomon 8:5-7.

Returning to our First Love

Text: Revelation 2:1-7

The Lord is telling us as a congregation to return to our first love. We want to “give [the Lord] back that fiery passion which [we] gave to [him] before,” as Rev. Mosy said.

Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. 5 Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place (Revelation 2:4-5). 7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God (Revelation 2:7).

1. **Remember:**
 - a. **Lord, we remember your love for us and our love for you. Holy Spirit, we ask you to stir up fresh passion in our hearts.**
 - b. Thank you, Lord, for Calvary. For all of our hard work, for this people, for your calling, for you establishing us.
 - c. Lord, help us to spend time with the you and with others. We ask you, Lord, to show us the depth of our passion and hunger for the God in days gone by.
 - d. Lord, help us to remember when our heart burned for you, whether as a new believer or at different times in our spiritual journey with the Lord.
2. **Repent:**
 - a. **Father, we embrace your kindness, confess our sins, repent, and receive your forgiveness and mercies.**
 - b. Admit your need (where you are)
 - c. Ask the Lord for forgiveness (confess your sins)
 - d. Put your faith in the Lord (not just your own self-efforts), and
 - e. Follow Jesus with the help and power of the Holy Spirit.
3. **Renew (recover):**

- a. **God, we renew our commitment to keep the First Commandment in first place, and to engage in spiritual practices to keep our hearts tender before you.**
- b. Lord, give us grace and passion to do the spiritual practices and heart activities necessary to renew and rebuild love (time, talk, and touch).
- c. Remember: there are personal and corporate spiritual practices which fuel hunger and love. The word given in Revelation 2 was to the congregation at Ephesus, not just to individuals. We need each other; we cannot return to our first love on our own. It is encouraging to make the journey of returning to our first love together.
- d. **Lord, help us to step up in prayer and fasting and in corporate intercession and worship.**

Application: We are praying for hunger, thirst, and desire for the living God.

Returning to our First Love is about putting first things first

1. What is the first of the Ten Commandments? *You shall have no other gods before me (Exodus 20:3).*
2. *Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness [the king and his character], and all these things will be given to you as well (Matthew 6:33).*
3. *Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." 38 This is the first [in priority] and greatest [in importance] commandment" (Matthew 22:37-38).*
4. *Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love (Revelation 2:4).*
5. Robert Morris' message, *The Principle of First*.
 - a. If God is first in your life, then everything will come into order in your life. If he is not first, then nothing will come into order.
 - b. This principle runs all through Scripture.
6. We forsake our first love when we fail to put the Lord first.

Looking at Song of Solomon 8:5-7 together. Lord, as my Bridegroom King, I ask you to do for me and to do for Calvary what you did for your bride in Song of Songs 8:5-7.

<p><i>6 Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. 7 Many waters cannot quench love;</i></p>	
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*rivers cannot wash it away.
If one were to give
all the wealth of his house for love,
it would be utterly scorned (Song of Solomon 8:6-7
NIV).*

The Bridegroom King says

*5 Who is this one? Look at her now!
She arises out of her desert, clinging to her
beloved.
When I awakened you under the apple tree,
as you were feasting upon me,
I awakened your innermost being with the travail
of birth
as you longed for more of me.*

*6 Fasten me upon your heart as a seal of fire
forevermore.
This living, consuming flame
will seal you as my prisoner of love.
My passion is stronger
than the chains of death and the grave,
all consuming as the very flashes of fire
from the burning heart of God.
Place this fierce, unrelenting fire over your entire
being.*

*7 Rivers of pain and persecution
will never extinguish this flame.
Endless floods will be unable
to quench this raging fire that burns within you.
Everything will be consumed.
It will stop at nothing
as you yield everything to this furious fire
until it won't even seem to you like a sacrifice
anymore (Song of Solomon 8:6-7 TPT).*

1. Cause us to arise and cling to you, our beloved.
 - a. The bride has made a journey with the Lord into intimacy and passion, which we read about from Chapter 1.
2. Awaken us to feast on you.
3. Awaken our innermost being to long for more of you with an intensity as great as childbirth or anything we can imagine.
4. Cause us to fasten you like a seal of fire on our hearts forevermore. A raging fire. An endless fire.
 - a. Seal of fire on your heart: intimacy
 - b. Seal of fire on your arm: partnership; your arm has reach and is visible; outreach
5. Cause your consuming flame to seal us as your prisoner of love.
6. Thank you that your passion is stronger than the chains of death and grave (comprehensive), because your fire is from the burning heart of God.
7. Place your fierce, unrelenting fire over my entire being.
8. Help us to love you like you love us (John 17:26; Romans 8:35-39). May rivers of pain and persecution never extinguish the flame of passion for God. May no flood, trial, trauma, or tragedy quench this raging fire that burns within us for you. May your raging fire stop at nothing as we yield to your heart of fiery passion, so that it won't even seem like a sacrifice.

Sometimes when I am praying this passage and lifting up prayers about first love, I find myself once again in tears. The Lord is touching me so deeply. My longings and passion for the Lord are burning deep within and surfacing in travail and anguish.

I am thankful that the Lord is awakening my heart to feeling and experiencing more of God. I am so very, very thankful.

I am thankful for the Lord tenderizing my heart.

I pray that the Lord will continue to do a great work in all of us, as well.

As we begin ministry time, I want us to sing our prayers to the Lord.

1. We want to sing Holy Love. I believe that this song captures the heart of Song of Solomon.
2. Let's stand and pour out our hearts to the Lord.

Ministry Time

Application: Sing *Holy Love* by Andy Park

Many waters cannot quench your love, rivers cannot overwhelm it
Oceans of fear cannot conceal your love for me
Many waters cannot quench your love, rivers cannot overwhelm it
Oceans of fear cannot conceal your love for me
Your love for me

Chorus:

Holy love, flow in me, fill me up like the deepest sea
Like a crashing wave pouring over me, holy love flow in me

Many sorrows cannot quench your love,
Darkness cannot overwhelm it
I will not fear, your love is here to comfort me
Many sorrows cannot quench your love,
Darkness cannot overwhelm it
I will not fear, your love is here to comfort me
You comfort me

When I find you I find healing
When I find you I find peace
And I know that there's no river so wide
No mountain so high, no ocean so deep
That you can't part the sea