

Return to Your First Love

by Edgar Reich

The sermon emphasizes the importance of returning to a passionate love for Jesus as the foundation for loving others and fulfilling our Christian calling.

Duration: 1:06:59

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 22:37-39, Revelation 2:2-7

Topics: "First Love"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker expresses gratitude for being invited to share the word of God with the audience. They are moved to tears by the testimony of a fellow believer and the powerful song performed by a young person. The speaker then shares a story about a missionary in India who used a light bulb to illustrate the importance of the connecting power of the Son of God. They emphasize the need for our first love to be for God and for our neighbors, including our spouse. The sermon concludes with an invitation to attend the next sermon, which will explore the concept of God's tears and the reasons for His weeping.

Transcript

Good evening, my dear sisters and brothers in Christ. It is such an honor again to be with you tonight. And I want to thank Brother Brian and his dear wife Martha for inviting us to come one more time and to share the word of God with you.

And I'm so thankful for the hospitality of Rusty and his wife Mary and for all of you who have come. And I have heard his sermon already. I was sitting there just weeping, weeping and weeping even as I heard our dear brother give his testimony of how great God is.

We have a great God. We have an awesome God. We have a mighty God who can step in and do these incredible and wonderful things and how we praise God for that.

And then Kaylee giving that song to us and showing her faith and her love. And young people, what a powerful, powerful God we have. And he is in us.

He can work through us. He can do mighty and wonderful things. So I thank you so much.

Also the worship team and Brother Stan and what an honor it is to be able to give God's word. And then tomorrow night we would ask you to come back. And I believe there is a cookout first.

And then after that we'll have a sermon called The Tears of God. And the question is, does God weep? Can He weep? And what does He weep about? And so please come back tomorrow night. And now let us bow our head in prayer.

Please have me, Father, again. I thank You so much for Your Son Jesus, for Your great glory, for Your great power, Lord. And I'll pray that even as Your words are spoken from this Book of Life, from the living Christ, Father, we pray that You would open every heart and every mind and that they would be understanding, Lord.

And then You said faith without action, faith without works is dead, Lord. And so we pray that at the end of this sermon that everyone would know what they need to do and that they're willing to do it. And I thank You so much, Lord, that You will do it.

We praise Your holy name. In Christ's name, amen. Please turn in your Bibles to Matthew 22, verses 37 to 39.

Matthew chapter 22, verses 37 to 39. This is a familiar passage, but it's a wonderful passage, and I'm reading from the New King James Version. Matthew 22, verses 37 through to 39.

And Jesus said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. And beloved, the first neighbor tonight is your spouse. And so we will look at the love of God, and we will look at your love for your spouse.

And in order to do that and understand, I also ask you to turn now to the last book in your Bible, which is the book of Revelation, and we're going to read another passage from Revelation chapter 2, verse 2 through to verse 7. Revelation chapter 2, verse 2 through to verse 7. And that says, I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say that they are apostles and are not, and found them liars. And you have persevered and have patience and have labored for my name's sake and have not become weary.

Nevertheless, I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen and now comes the instruction of repent. You see, when you give up your first love, it's sin.

We don't consider it sin. We fear we have the right to go away from our first love. We fear we have the right to do our own thing against the Word of God.

And so we leave our first love behind and then we go on with our life and we struggle. And we do evil. And we do evil against our spouses, against our wife, against our husband, against our children.

And here Jesus says, because you have left your first love for Me, because that's where it starts. Your foundation is missing to love your husband or your wife if you don't have a first love for Jesus. He must be first.

If there is no foundation, you will be slipping and sliding. You will be falling all the time. You have nothing to hold on to.

You look for your spouse to give you strength and He cannot give you strength. It is God who must give you your strength. It must be the Lord Jesus Christ.

It must be your relationship with Him that gives you that foundation and that strength. And so here He says in verse 5 of chapter 2, Remember therefore from where you have fallen, in other words, you are no longer at your first love. Yet something less than that.

And He says repent. Repentance is for sin. So He says this is sin.

This is nothing to take lightly. This is not just a Christian thing that you can decide on your own to go away from your first love. And do the first works, or else I will come quickly and remove your lampstand from its place unless you repent.

Repentance is turning around. Being truly sorry for having done what you have done. It is taking a new course of action.

It takes action. It takes work. It doesn't come by its own.

It doesn't come by its own because even after we are Christian, we have a choice. I don't like my choices. I don't like to have a choice.

Brother Frank, I just want to do the Word of God and not say, Lord, force me to do it. And He says, no, I won't. You've got to make some choices of your own.

Here's my book. You do it. Because I'm asking you to do it.

Because it's good for you. And there's a reward. There's a wonderful future if you do that.

And then in verse 6 He says, but this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. And then verse 7, he who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of paradise of God.

This message was given to the Apostle John on the island of Patmos. Patmos is in the Mediterranean. It's a small island.

It used to be a penal colony during the times of the Romans. And so when the Romans didn't like someone, they would incarcerate you and send you to this island out in the Mediterranean called Patmos. And this is where John was a prisoner.

He was the only Apostle that was spirit martyred, by the way. And so he was on that island and he had a vision from God about the book of Revelation. And it starts out with this vision about churches.

And Bible scholars agree that the seven churches addressed were a picture of all of the churches in those days when the Apostle John lived right after the death of Christ. That was a picture of the seven churches then. And then also everyone agrees that this is a further description of the seven future churches.

It is a description of seven church ages and that the seven churches also represent individually those who are called Christians. The number of seven is the number of completeness. And so the text we're dealing with is what Christ himself said to the Apostle John on the island of Patmos to give to the church of Ephesus.

And the church of Ephesus was one of the seven churches. Now the church of Ephesus was a strategic city in Turkey. And they had an important harbor.

The city was famous for the magnificent temple of the goddess Diana. Diana is also mentioned in the NIV and ESV version as the goddess Artemis. That's her Greek name.

But it's really the goddess Diana. And Acts 19:35 tells us that people thought that she was a goddess that had fallen from heaven coming from Zeus. In the ESV translation, the sacred stone referred to is likely Zeus.

So the temple was considered one of the wonders of the ancient world. And the Apostle Paul had planted a church in Ephesus, although a few believers were there already. And they had come from the time of Pentecost when there were 3,000 there from many parts of the Mediterranean.

And they went back to their city and they started the church there. Now Paul wrote an epistle or letter to the book of Ephesus and it's called the book of Ephesians in our Bible. So when Jesus spoke to the churches in Revelation chapter 2 and 3, he used a report card approach.

And a report card generally tells you a number of different things. So a report card would tell you when you get it in the old days what A's you had, what B's you had, C's, D's and so on. And an F was a fail mark.

Today they change the system but that's the old system that I'm used to children that are here. If you got an F mark, that was really, really bad. And then the teacher would write in the commentary what you could do about your bad marks.

So the teacher would write in their study more or do your home assignments with your parents or take a summer course. And so there was instruction on how you could improve. And then the teacher also might have added a note and said unless you improve I'm going to fail you next year.

You've got to improve. You've got to do things differently. And so Jesus used this five point approach with the churches.

And so here with the church of Ephesus he told the church what it did well and it told all seven churches what they did well except there were two churches he couldn't say anything positive. So he would not lie to them. He would not start with a good comment.

But if you want to give correction to someone, you can keep this five point approach in mind. Say something good to that person. If it's truthful they tell them what they do well.

Don't dwell on the negative first. Tell them what they do well. And then the second part is that he told each church what they didn't do well.

And two churches had no fault at all. And then the third part was he told the churches how they could improve. Just like the teacher writes in your report card how you can improve.

So Jesus told the churches how you could improve. And then he said to the churches I'll tell you what happens if you don't change. And so he tells me what will happen to me if I don't change.

And then he told the churches the reward if they did change. And so he tells me what reward he will give us if we do change. So what did this church do well? In Revelation chapter 2 verses 2, 3, and 6 Jesus said I know your works and your labor.

You have labored hard for my name's sake and have not become weary. Here was a hard working church. They were turning themselves upside down.

By the way I have seen the same in this your church here. Some of you are really turning yourself upside down to work very hard for the church. And it's so wonderful to see.

You're going from door to door to share your faith. To invite people and so I commend you highly on the wonderful work that you're doing. You are a hard working church.

Then Jesus said they had patience in verses 2 and 3. They could not bear those who are evil. And the same is true for your church. You could not bear those who were evil and you split from them.

And so God helped you to do that and you were patient in persecution. And this is what this church in Ephesus was patient with. They were patient in persecution.

And then they tested those who said that they were teachers of truth and they found them to be liars. They had good doctrine. The church of Ephesus had good doctrine and they rejected preachers not telling the truth.

So the church when they saw false apostles on television, they would know that there's something wrong. This is not in accordance with Scripture. And this is your church that knows when something is not in accordance with Scripture, you will speak out.

You will say something. You will do something about it. And then in verse 3 you have persevered and had patience and you have not become weary.

You see there was some hurting going on in the church of Ephesus. They had a great temple in the city and the people said, we have a goddess Diana and we don't want your faith. There was persecution and Scripture tells us that the silver souvenir sales for the goddess Diana went down.

You know, that's the kind of impact they had. And so the local people persecuted Christians and in verse 6, Jesus commended them for not believing the false teaching of the Nicolaitans. And the Nicolaitans had the teaching similar to Balaam.

They were trying to mislead people. They were hypocrites. They were telling people how to live by the Word, but they would not live it by themselves.

They were rejecting truth. They were talking about truth, but they were rejecting it in their heart. Now, in reading Revelation chapter 2-4, he says, you have lost your first love.

You know, from everything I said, you are a nearly perfect church. How good can a church get? This is also incredible, wonderful stuff. And I commend you and I love you.

But you see, there are some here who have lost their first love. And Jesus says, yes, I recognize all of the good you did, but you have lost your first love. So what was that first love of the Ephesians? And it's described in Acts chapter 19.

If you want to refer in your Bible to Acts chapter 19, in verse 10 it says that all in Asia, Asia Minor, today is Turkey, all in Asia heard about Jesus Christ, both Jewish believers and unbelievers. This was a church alive. This was a church burning.

This was a church full of the power of God. And they had the word spread in such a manner that it indicates that they were witnessing their faith both with their lives and with their mouth. And so they had love for their fellow man and beloved, I truly love you.

I have passed. I have prayed for you. I have fasted.

And I love you. And I come to give the word of God in love. So when something comes across that doesn't fit well, then bring it back to the word of God, not to me.

Because I love you unconditionally. I don't need to love your sin. I don't need to love my sin.

But as human beings, I love you unconditionally. And so they had love for their fellow man and for their families. They were living sacrifices.

And they had little or no pride. They didn't make themselves higher than those that went to the temple of Diana. Because when you make yourself higher than your fellow man, you lose your witness.

See, the person you witness to will no longer understand your witness. And their spirit will feel from your spirit that you have made yourself better than them. And you lose your witness.

So in Acts chapter 19 verses 11 and 12 are further clues. There were some unusual miracles. And miracles are only possible through God.

It requires faith, prayer, humbleness, giving God all the glory. Sickesses and diseases left and devils had to flee. There were seven sons of Sceva.

They tried exorcism and the evil spirits said, Jesus I know, Paul I know, but who are you? Who are you if you don't have the power of God inside of you? Who are you? And they were beaten by the evil spirits. And then in verse 18 we see that there was open confession of sins in the church. And I have perhaps only heard in one church open confession.

And it's something that is very difficult for all of us because we fear judgment. We fear how you how others feel about yourself. I have the same fears as you have.

And it's very, very difficult to sometimes say openly I have a problem in this area. I have a need. I need you to come by me and stand with me strong so that we can get through this thing.

And so in verse 19 then they cleaned house of all evil in those days. It was evil books and magic and witchcraft and perhaps today if we cleaned house it might include horoscopes. It might include evil DVDs.

It might include evil CDs. It might include evil books. Do a house cleaning today both physically and mentally.

And then in verse 20 the word of the Lord grew. Is there growth in your church? And if not, why not? And then in verse 23 and 24 we have the evidence of a dynamic church. Their love and their witnessing was so great it affected business.

It affected the souvenir sales of the goddess Diana. What kind of fire was burning in Ephesus? What kind of fire do we need to have burn in barnstow that God would be seen in every person? That God would be seen in us? And then we need to have that love as an emotion because the first love that we have for the

Lord Jesus is the love that then flows through us to other men and women. It flows through to our spouses.

That first love must come from Christ Himself. It must come from God and He says I am the vine. You are the branches.

If you're not connected to Me, there can be nothing of these things that you want. You must be connected to Me. I just heard the testimony about a pastor, a missionary in India.

He had gone to witness to a tribe there and he had brought along a generator and a light bulb so that he could talk at night. And so as he was speaking, the village chief said afterwards, that light bulb is incredible. Can I borrow it? So the missionary didn't know what was happening and he said of course he can borrow it.

So the village chief took it with him and then the next day he came back and he said, I'm sorry this light bulb is no good. It doesn't do the job. So the missionary said to him, well, can you show me what you did with this light bulb? And so the village chief took him back to his house and he showed him the rope that he had put from the ceiling and he had bound up the light bulb on that rope and he said, you see when I do that it's the same as yours but there's no light.

And this light bulb is no good. And so the missionary was able to explain to him that the light from God shines through the connecting power of the Son of God. And so our first love for the Son of God gives us that love for our neighbor and our first love must be our spouse.

And so what can I say? I remember my first love in a human sense. You heard my testimony yesterday and yet I do remember those first days, you know, and her parents were from Ireland. She had beautiful dark red hair and deep brown pools of eyes and, you know, when you looked in those eyes you got lost.

And I remember I was so deep in love I couldn't think straight. I couldn't walk straight. I couldn't talk straight.

I thought about her in the morning. I thought about her at noontime. I thought about her at night.

I thought about her every morning. At 8, 10 a.m. in the morning I knew she would be on a certain streetcar going to work and I made sure I was on that same streetcar for about a year. And I loved her and the first thing that I would do is when I walked on the street I would look around the corner and think, is she there my first love? Is she there my first love? And this is the first love the Lord Jesus wants.

This is the kind of love that he wants. He says the Father wants that kind of love from us as well. That we look for him around every corner.

That we see his face. That we come close to him. And that he's on our soul, on our heart.

Love me with all of your heart, your soul, your mind and your strength he said. Look for me around every corner because I'm there for you. I love you with that everlasting love.

I, your great God, am around every corner looking for you. I want to see if you want to follow me. I want to see if you want to do my will.

I want to love you. And I want to take care of you. I want to help you.

And I'm there for you. And if you connect to my Son Jesus, then you will light up like a bright and shining star in the universe, in the heavens. And in Daniel it tells us that those who win souls will shine as bright as the firmament, as the sun in heaven forever and ever and ever! Do you want to light up? Do you want to brightly shine for God? Do you want to be a star? There's a television show with stars.

And some of you look at that and you say, I wish I was a star like that, but I have a better alternative for you. I have a better way to go because if you follow this Christ Jesus and you win other souls for Him, then He says that there will be a star in heaven forever. He will shine forever.

That will be one of the rewards from God for you that are wise that will win others to the Lord Jesus Christ. And so this is such a wonderful and incredible thing. Now then we got married, and by the way, my spouse was supposed to be my first neighbor.

The first person to love. She had thought I was a knight of bright and shining armor. I thought she was the princess of my dreams.

And when we first got married, I bought her flowers every week. We talked for hours. We went on outings.

We spent time with each other. We walked together. We could not get enough of each other.

What happened? We allowed Satan to come in and take away our first love. We allowed him to come in and take our unconditional love. Now we started to find little things here and there, and I don't know why it should matter if the toilet paper rolls off on the outside or on the inside.

Beloved, does that matter? Well, it matters to some of you, right? You go bonkers if the toilet roll is on the wrong way, right? For some of you, it's all right to press the dental cream tube in the middle and others press it at the end, right? Which is the right way? Tell me. Ah? The end? Or some are saying the middle, you know? Maybe it's the middle. What does it matter? What does it matter? And you know, then decisions were to be made together, and who was the boss? And Scripture says the man is the head, but he's to love his wife as Christ loves the church.

He's to lay down his life for her. And then you have a right to make the decisions. Don't make the decisions if you haven't earned her love.

Earn her love. And would I lay down my life for my wife? Would I have my hands pierced for her? I did not. We started to know things in each other.

You know, when you grow a little bit older, you don't quite look the same than when you got married. Maybe a little bit more weight, a little bit more stubbornness, a little bit more selfishness creeps in, a little bit of more unforgiving. What you first accepted when you met that person, you no longer are willing to deal with.

She tried to change me. Why doesn't he want to change, she thought. And I tried to change her, and she didn't want to change.

And I said, why doesn't she want to change? We started to get after each other, and our love grew cold. We got too busy with work, with the children, with the church. We had no more time.

We had no more first love for each other. And I said, I was in charge of the house, and you do this. Josh McDowell wrote and said, Rules without a relationship lead to rebellion.

Rules without a relationship lead to rebellion. Truth without a relationship lead to rejection. You could be right, sisters and brothers.

You could be right in everything, and you're rejected. And you say, I don't understand. Well, it's the middle part that has broken down.

Your relationship has broken down. And then the third part, discipline without a relationship leads to anger. Discipline without a relationship leads to anger.

And so, beloved, what is a relationship? Well, when we first were married, I bought her flowers weekly. We talked for hours. We went on outings.

We spent time with each other. We walked together. We could not get enough of each other.

We allowed Satan to come in and take it away. And so, beloved, there must be a correct sequence in our lives. And that goes for every husband, for every wife, for every young person here, for every pastor, for every church leader.

The father and son must be our first love individually. He's first. If he's not first in your life, then your marriage will be affected.

Your relationships will be affected. So you must have a relationship with the father and the son first. Then our spouse must be the first neighbor we love, not our children.

It must be the spouse because you're one with your spouse that is God's arrangement for you. And if you break that and you put the children in between, they will bring havoc to your house. And the husband will leave or the wife will leave.

So don't do that. Then come the children after that. If the children are put above the spouse, the marriage will break up.

The fourth step then comes our job or our ministry. And for many men, it's the other way around. Number one is the job or the ministry.

Then comes pressures through the ministry. Then there comes a little time for the wife. Then come the children.

And it's upside down. A pastor was going onto an airplane and he was sitting down in a seat and next to him was a man sitting praying. And he said, wonderful! It's a Christian! And he said to the man, I just noticed you were praying.

Who were you praying to? And the man said, I was praying to Satan. And the pastor was just taken aback. And he said to him, why were you praying to Satan? And he said, well, I believe in Satan.

And I'm asking Satan to break up every marriage of a pastor and their wife. Because if that breaks up, then the whole church goes to destruction. It falls apart.

The church cannot stand. So I pray to Satan that he will do this. And beloved, Satan's ploy is to make us so busy that we don't have time, number one, for Jesus.

Number two, our spouse. Number three, our children. And then what Satan does is he brings good works to do more than we can handle.

Now, God never puts more burdens on us than we can handle. So it means if we get more than we can handle, there are some things from Satan where the person must say no. I cannot deal with this.

And there are other men in my church, there are other women in my church, they must take up this slack. They must step in and help. And you cannot concentrate on ministry and lose your home life.

Losing your wife and after that, lose your ministry. And so we had a pastor and unfortunately in New Jersey and it was just a very sad case with young children and she found no other way but to take her own life. And you see, church folk are not easy folk.

Church folk are selfish. They say when I have a need, you better come. You're a man of God.

It's my right that you come. And they call you 24 hours a day. It doesn't matter what you're involved in and you require that and then when trouble comes, somebody has to go to jail.

Somebody can't manage. There's illness and you say, pastor, you better come. I expect you to come.

And even if it means tearing him apart, you tear at him. And then if he doesn't come, then there are voices of opposition. A pastor often tries to cope with all of these things, but his wife has a hard time coping because she sees how this man is taking advantage of.

So you need to pray for your pastor. You need to pray for the wife. You need to stand beside them.

And you see, Moses couldn't manage anymore and he had two men holding up his hands. And while the hands were held up, they were winning the war. And then there must also be those men where the father-in-law of Moses said, you can't manage yourself, so you better appoint some man that will help you.

And so this must be done so that the church can function properly. And so, beloved, the same happens in our marriages. If I work too much and I put my wife second, she might run off with another man.

If I work too much, she will stand against me. And then she'll say, you know, what's the matter with you? And she'll become rebellious. She'll become difficult to deal with.

And then the man says, well, I don't want to go home no more, so I'll go and I'll have a drink with my secretary at the bar. And you know what happens then. So Satan gets busy in everything that we do.

And so, what happens in our lives, beloved, is that the light goes out in our marriage too if we leave our first love with the Savior. That's the beginning step of the problem. So I must return to my first love with my Savior to restore my first love in my marriage.

So the Ephesian church had gotten too busy. They were working too hard. They had little time to talk with their Savior individually.

They had little or no time to read His Word. They had no more time to listen to the small voice of the Lord. You see, His sheep hear His voice.

They knew Jesus and expected things from Him, but perhaps they didn't take time to say, Lord, Lord, how do you feel this day? Do you ever speak in prayer to the Lord and say, Lord, what is it that you want done

this day, or do you just go and say, me, me, me, me? You see, He wants your love too. And you can go to Him and say, Lord Jesus, how could I make you smile this day? What do you want me to do? Where do you want me to go? What is it that would really make you happy? And He might say, today stay home with your wife and have a day off. Okay? And it's alright if it pleases Him.

So, then when you withhold your love, the fire goes out. You don't have the strength to love others the way you used to. You no longer witness the way you used to.

There's no more evidence and joy of God's glory of the risen Christ. And you then look for alternatives to make you feel better. And that might be television, that might be the internet, that might be the cell phone, that might be music, that might be books, that might be sports, whatever it is, you look for an alternative to make yourself feel better.

And the Lord Jesus Christ says, come to me. Give me your burden. I want to walk and talk with you.

I want to have that relationship with you. Don't leave me, because if you do, you're going to go to the things where Satan says that's your solution. And it's a lie! It's a big lie! It's a big lie! It doesn't help you! But you go to that Savior, to the Lord Jesus Christ, and this is where we must follow His direction.

And now after this breakdown occurred with my wife, you see, there was a terrible day that came. And that terrible day came when I said, I don't love you anymore. And that's when we have gone the way of the flesh.

We have gone away from the Savior. We have no more strength left within ourselves. And that terrible day came, and then I left my family.

You heard my testimony yesterday. My daughters forgave me. My wife got remarried.

And after she got remarried, some of the people had said to her, don't get married. We're praying for Him. My daughters were praying for 18 years that I would come back to the Lord.

And they said to her, don't get remarried, because He's going to come back to the Lord. Don't give up. But I can't understand why she did it.

I cannot be angry at her. And so I called her up by telephone, and I said, and her name is Mary. Mary, I have become a Christian, and I am starting to be a different person.

I'm a new creation, and I need to ask you for forgiveness. And I know that I've hurt you so deeply. I don't even know whether you can forgive me.

But I need to ask you for forgiveness, and I really want your forgiveness if you would be willing to give it. But I know I've hurt you so deeply. You don't need to if you can, but I just want to tell you that I really feel very, very sorry about the things that I did.

And she said on the phone that she forgave me, but it wasn't a sincere forgiveness, and it flared up later on when I came to Canada. And after I had asked my daughter for forgiveness, she wanted a meeting with me, and I insisted that her new husband would be there. And then for six hours, for six hours, she emptied her heart of all of the things that I had done wrong.

Of all of the things that I had done wrong. And all I said is at each point, Mary, if you're able to forgive me, please forgive me. That's all I said, because I had a responsibility.

Yes, there are two sides to a coin, but I didn't go there to argue. I wanted her forgiveness. And so she went through all of the things that she had accumulated over years and years and years.

Do you accumulate things over years and years and years? Do you keep a negative list somewhere that grows and grows and grows? Don't do that, beloved. Talk about it. Walk together.

Talk together. By the way, I was not able to read my wife's mind. Now she expected me to know, but I didn't know.

And I'm a foolish man, yes, but I could not read minds. And sometimes we men need to be told when we hurt, because we don't know. And so it's up to you ladies to make sure that you let the other person know what is on your heart.

Because if you don't, how can that person do the things that you want? You've got to share it. You've got to get back. And so the question is, could I ask you, do you remember when you first became a Christian and you were full of joy and love, and what you did then, how you talked to Jesus, how you walked with Jesus, how you talked to people, how you reached out to them? Are there signs in your Christian life that the fire has gone out? Do you feel lonely? Do you feel left behind? You can't wait for the right TV show to come on.

That's a sign that there is emptiness in you. That something has gone wrong. Your connection to the Lord has been lost.

Maybe you're going to smoking, eating, drinking, drugs, sex, money, power, or pride because you're hurting. But as my brother Frank shared, as Cayley shared, there is a better solution for you than all of these things. There's a great Savior.

There's a great God. And so I praise Him so much. Now the solution is in Revelation chapter 2, verse 5 because remember that report card? We've got the good.

We've got the bad. Then we're told what to do about it, right? So here in verse 5 we are told what to do about it. And here are three solutions.

And there are three R's. Starts with remember. The second one is what? Repent.

And the third one is do the first things. Now add an R and say redo. Redo, which means doing the things you did at first.

So could we say that together? Remember, repent, and redo. Now some of you didn't say that. Would you say it with me please? Remember, repent, and redo.

Forget the five points of the report card. I want you to remember these three things. Okay, forever.

Never ever forget them again. Remember, repent, and redo. So what is remember? And we just talked about you remember how it was first like when you first became a Christian.

So go back to that. Go back to that joy. Go back to what you did then.

Then go back in your first love, in your marriage. Remember what you did at first. How you first loved her or him.

Look at some photos together. Go out on a walk in the park where you first met. You're not perfect then.

You're not perfect now. But go back to the things you first did together. And so, will you walk together? Will you laugh together again? It's up to you.

It's your choice. Because you can do it. Yes, you've grown a little older.

Yes, you've grown a little different. But I am asking you to go back and every husband here, if you don't make one date a week with your wife, you're not doing your job. But you say, but, but, we have children.

Yes, yes, I know. Maybe you can exchange with another family that has the same feeling with you. You know, that you say, next Thursday, we want to have a date.

Can you take our children? Yes, go on your date. And then the following week, you take their children perhaps. Whichever way you want to work it out.

But take time for each other. Because you cannot get back without remembering. And then the other thing I would like you to do is, I'd like you to make a list about your partner.

And on the one side of the list, you put down the good points. And then on the other side, you put down the bad points. Now, one side of the list will have five, and the other one will have twenty.

Can you tell me which will be the five? The good? Everyone agrees on that? Alright. So what you do then is, you cross out the twenty. You tear off that piece and you throw it away.

Alright? You throw that away. And from then on, you only zero in on those good five points. You don't go anywhere else.

You go to those five good points. The second point that Christ said to do is, consider the loss of your first love's sin. The first love for the Savior, and the first love in your marriage.

It's sin. Repenting is telling God that you've gone wrong. Then you tell Jesus that you need help to turn around.

You can't do it on your own. So it's going from independence because you've taken it into your own hands to fix things, and you can't! So go from independence to dependence. It must be His power and your dependence, because you cannot do it in your own power.

It must be the power of the living Christ. You've got to be connected. If I stick my fingers into an outlet here, what happens? I light up, right? That's what you do with Jesus.

You stick your two fingers into Jesus. That's prayer and Scripture. If one is missing, you don't have power.

It's got to be two that go into the Lord Jesus Christ because He is the vine and we are the branches. Alright? So then the third part is to redo. Now we all know what happens when we make New Year's resolutions, right? We weep and cry in front of the television.

It's five minutes before twelve. And we are saying, Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, next year I'm going to lose weight. Next year, I'm going to make more money.

Next year, I'm going to be friends with my wife again. And those are wonderful resolutions, okay? And then one minute past twelve or five minutes past twelve, you head for bed and then the next morning you get up and you say, well, I made some kind of resolutions but this breakfast looks awfully good. I'm used to five eggs and six slices of bacon.

I can't do without that, you know. And then you go on and you say, well, I was going to make more money. And how do I make more money? Well, maybe I have to take a night course but no, I've got videos and I've got TV.

Why should I take that course? And then you said you might make friends again with your wife. And you're behind your newspaper in the morning and she gets up and she walks into the kitchen. She sees you behind the newspaper.

You growl at her. She growls at you. Not much friendship there, is there? I watched a couple the other day.

They had dinner together for two hours and they didn't talk a single word. Marriage and trouble, right? Something wrong somewhere, right? So what is it? The Lord Jesus said, redo. Faith without works is dead.

Faith without works is dead. So Christ wants to help you to remember, repent, and redo. So what I want each person here to do, if your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ is broken, I want you to write on a slip of paper what it is that you will do to redo that relationship with the Savior.

It might be prayer. It might be something that you need to do. You keep that.

You keep that every day. Don't go away from it. Don't leave it.

Don't forget to do it. And then if you are a couple, I want you to take a sheet of paper that goes on your fridge with one of those magnets. And you're going to only write on there three things, not more than three, because you can't handle more than three.

What are you going to do for your first love to reestablish your marriage? What are you going to do? What is it that you will do? Remember, repent, turn around, and redo. And first must be your connection to the Lord Jesus Christ, because you cannot redo your marriage without being connected to the Christ. And we heard from Brother Frank about his mom.

She loved Jesus so much she wouldn't give Him up. And that's what we all need to do first. Our relationship with Christ must be first.

And then comes the repair of our relationships. And kids, maybe you have some bad situations in relationships. I mentioned marriage, but it also means that you as a young person, just as Brother Frank stood up and said, I love you, Dad.

I love you, Mom. It doesn't matter how evil they are or what they do to you. You tell them I love you.

Ask Jesus to help you in that. Ask Jesus to help you. So there are three things I want you to remember.

Remember your first days of your first love with Christ of your marriage. Repent. Turn around from where you're at today and then redo.

Let us bow in a word of prayer, please. And Heavenly Father, we thank You so much for Your mercy, for Your love, for Your greatness and for Your glory. We thank You for this word that You have given us today because it comes right from Your mouth and it tells us that this will work if we follow this and if we do, Father.

And so I thank You so much for Your love and for Your mercy. I pray that You would touch every heart here, even as we reflect on these words from the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I pray that those words would sink deep and that You would help each person here to change this night and to walk from this place changed.

And I thank You that You will do it. And I'm going to ask You to rise, please. Would you all please stand? And my dear brother, as you play some soft music for us, please, I'm going to ask you today, all of you, everyone in the auditorium, would you please come up front and stand here in a group? And I'm asking you to come right now, please, even as the music is starting.

And I would like each one of you, even as you come and you stand here and you pray, would you pray to the Lord Jesus Christ if your first love is not what it should be to Him? Would you pray? Would you ask Him to help you? Would you ask Him to repent, to turn around from that and to make Him first, first in your life, that He be your first love? And then even as you pray and you close your head, I give you a minute to pray about that, please. Thank you. And even while you keep your heads bowed, please, if you have any broken relationships, either in school, at home, with your husband or wife, where you're not at the place where you ought to be, would you pray to God right now that He would help you to repent from where you're at today and that together, together, you would return to that place you were once at, that you would remember the beauty of your first love with your spouse, that you remember the first love, even in your home, and that you would return to that, and that God would do that in your life.

And children, if you are in a home of turmoil, if you are in a home of strife, if you're in a home of shouting, if you are in a home of beatings, will you ask Jesus to come into your home? Will you speak up to your parents? Will you say, Jesus says there's a better way, Mom and Dad. I don't want you to scream no more. Will you pray? Will you pray? Will you pray children? Oh Lord, let there be a breakthrough in this congregation, Father.

Let there be a breakthrough in this church, Lord. Let there be a breakthrough in this town, Lord. We know how many families are suffering.

We know how many people are hurting. We know how many children are hurting, Father. And I pray, I pray, Lord.

I pray, Father. I thank You. Help, help each person here in this church to be that bright and shining light that reconnects to You, Father.

I pray that You would do it, Lord. Let them be shining lights when they go back to their homes. Father, change every person here today.

Change every person in their relationship to You. Change every person here in their relationship to each other, Lord. I pray that You would do a mighty and wonderful and awesome work.

And I thank You so much, Lord. I thank You so much. I thank You.

And I praise You holy, holy, holy... Heavenly Father, I thank You so much for what You've done tonight, O God. I sense in my spirit, Lord, You've done something very deep tonight. Very, very deep in our hearts, Lord.

In our relationship with You first, Lord Jesus, You've branded things on some of our hearts and minds of what it means to really return, redo. And I ask You for the grace, Lord, to do that. You've given us three things, Lord, to return, repent, to remember first of all, to remember the things that we did first with our relationship with our spouse.

I thank You for those, O God. Help us to return. Help us to redo, Lord.

Help us to redo that first love, those first works. I thank You for speaking to us tonight, O God. You spoke to the very depths of our hearts, Lord.

And I thank You and praise You for it. Thank You, Jesus. Thank You with all my heart.

Let this be the beginning, Father, right here. Let this be the beginning of homes, of marriages and families and homes that are set on fire for You, Lord God. Let Your glory rise among us, O God.

I pray, Lord Jesus, that You will revive marriages, hearts and homes right here tonight. Begin with us. Let this be the beginning of a fire that spreads, Lord God, throughout this entire community.

Please, Lord, begin with us. It has to start with us, whatever the cost. And then, Father, I pray that You would make us a shining example of this entire community, Lord, of what only You can do in a marriage, in a home, in a love relationship with Jesus.

We pray for the young people here tonight, Lord. The young girls, the young boys, that even as they go into their schools, they would shine because they have a first love for Jesus. That as our brother said, around every single corner, they see You, Jesus.

They see You waiting for them with outstretched arms to join You, Lord, to abide in You every single day. I pray, God, for a rekindling of first love in every young person's heart here tonight. I pray, Father, for those who are up in years, maybe who have known You for a long time, those who are wondering, what's my purpose? I'm at the end of my life.

I pray, God, for a first love kind of love to be ignited in their hearts, that those two things, Father, of prayer and Scripture, we would put our fingers in the plug as it is, the outlet. We would join with You, Jesus, and abide in You, and meet with You again every morning in prayer, in Your holy word. God, that this fire, this fire of love and devotion for You, Lord Jesus, would burn brighter by the day.

Take us deeper into Your presence. It's only then, Father, it's only then that we can truly love one another in the home. Help us, God, to first love You with all that is within us.

Thank You for first loving us. And then, Lord, I don't want to just leave this place, Lord, and forget what we've heard. We must take seriously what we've heard tonight, to remember, to repent, and to redo.

Help us, God. I'm committed, Father. I'm committed right now as a pastor of this fellowship.

I'm committed before You, Lord God, to do these three things, Father, in my relationship with You and in my relationship with Martha. And I thank You, Father, for Your grace. I'm committed, Lord.

I trust You. I trust You to help me in this. And I thank You for it.

Thank You for the breakthrough, Lord. Thank You with all my heart. We bless Your holy name.

I pray Your special blessing upon everyone standing here tonight. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

Amen. Praise the Lord. God bless all of you for being here.

I'm committed, brothers and sisters. I give You my word before God. And I ask You to do the same.

We can hold one another accountable. Amen. Praise God.

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