

Finding Our Way Back to God – 9/26/21

Pastor Rick – Awakening to Love

Message Summary:

When we find our way back to God, we will discover our identity as a deeply loved, unconditionally accepted child of God.

(1) Awakening to Longing.

We awaken to our Longing when we begin to realize that these longings are God-given and can only be met in a relationship with Him.

(2) Awakening to Regret.

In this awakening we come to a crossroads that will move us in one of two directions. We get caught in a continuous pattern of searching for fulfillment on our own terms and finding disappointment.

(3) Awakening to Help.

In this awakening, we make the turn that begins to lead us home. We admit we are powerless to fulfill our longings on our own. And we discover that help we really need has a name, and his name is Jesus.

These awakenings are not just something that happens when we initially find our way back to God; finding your way back to God is a life-changing moment, but it's also a life-growing process, and just because we're home doesn't mean that everything is magically "fixed."

Luke 15:21

Even after all these unmistakable signs of the father's love and grace, the son's opinion of himself doesn't catch up with his new reality – his new identity.

Shame keeps us from embracing our true identity

(4) The Awakening of Love

Ring, Robe, Sandals

Luke 15:22

- Robe: a symbol of rest
- Ring: a symbol of security
- Sandals: a symbol of acceptance

When we awaken to love, we come to live in the reality that our true identity is a beloved son or daughter of our heavenly Father.

“Define yourself radically as one beloved by God. This is the true self. Every other identity is illusion. God’s love for you and his choice of you constitute your worth. Accept that, and let it become the most important thing in your life.” -Brennan Manning, Abba’s Child

God, if you are real, make yourself real to me. Awaken in me the awareness that I am your unconditionally loved child!

Ephesians 1:3-8 NLT

Romans 8:1-2

Romans 8:37-39 NLT

As we continue our journey back to God, we must push back anything that tells us we are not accepted by the Father!

“Every time you feel hurt, offended, or rejected, you have to dare to say to yourself: 'These feelings, strong as they may be, are not telling me the truth about myself. The truth, even though I cannot feel it right now, is that I am the chosen child of God, precious in God's eyes, called the Beloved from all eternity, and held safe in an everlasting belief.'” –Henri Nouwen, *Life of the Beloved*

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the Lord teaching you lately through this series or in other areas of your life?
2. What are some obstacles you have to receiving the love of God? Why?
3. How does the meaning of the robe, ring and sandals deepen your understanding of the Father’s love?
4. Look at *Ephesians 1:3-8 NLT*, *Romans 8:1-2*, *Romans 8:37-39 NLT*. How do these verses help you to awaken to the love of God?