

# Coming back to the first love

Through out my life, being around many different people groups and talking about God or finding out perspectives/views that people have of God or Christians I've unfortunately come to learn that there is a majority of people that don't want anything to do with Christianity because Christians are generally viewed as self-righteous people who love to judge others but hypocritically practice the same things. If you don't believe me, I urge you to go and speak to many different people groups and bring up the idea of God, not in a way of trying to convert them but simply a conversation just to see their perspective of God... now when I say hypocritically practicing the same things, I challenge us to ponder upon this because a lot of us.. myself included have very different understandings or standards of what the "same things" means...

So I will resort that standard to the best living source, The Bible. All sin no matter how great or small we think they are, are in reality all the same before God but I do want to categorized them into some main points that Jesus Himself spoke about. We've talked about this before but I think it's a good refresher.

## **Lust/Sexual immorality**

- Sex before marriage/fornication
- Adultery/ Sexual acts done while married
- Pornography - Homosexuality
- Looking at a man or woman with lust

- Any possible sexual sin that one can commit falls all under this title of Lust/Sexual immorality.

### **Murder**

- Hatred - unforgiveness of any kind – gossip
- Slander/ speaking ill of another person when they are not present... we all fall short of that so easily

### **Covetousness**

- Eager to have more, especially what belongs to others
- Unrighteous gain, fraud,
- I find it odd when Christians think its ok to break the law to make more money or think its ok to use other people as a stepping stone for more selfish gain... this all falls under covetousness

There are plenty more examples I can give but im going to keep this part short....

So why am I talking about this?

Well two reasons... 1) if we look to condemn anyone around us for a sin they're committing but actually end up practicing the same thing because what we all do falls under the same standard before God, then we turn out to be absolute hypocrites, which brings me to my next point... we so called Christians are called to walk in light, love, be the salt and even have a this aroma about us.

**Ephesians 5:1-7     Walk in love**

**“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting (finding humor in foul language, putting others down for the sake of humor or sexual innuendo), which are not fitting (its not fitting for someone whos called to be the light to partake in the foolishness of words like a unbeliever and it’s not a religious thing... we are not to conform to the things of the world), but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ( remember what pastor preached last week, its not a believing problem some of us have, it’s a obedience problem) Therefore do not be partakers with them.**

**Matthew 5:13-16     We are the salt**

***“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt lose its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let you light so shine***

***before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”***

Dear friends we are called by God to be Holy and we will talk how to practically do that but I want to speak on the importance of why God needs us to be Holy... because it might not be the reason you think we do... were not called to be Holy just so we can try to prove to God how good we can be or obedient we can be or how Christian we can be, which this thinking almost always leads to focusing on the external and we end up doing things in a religious or legalistic way. But were called to be Holy out of love for the people of this world! And Well get into that more here shortly...

Lets zone in on salt for a moment here, bible speaks of us being the salt of the earth. So salt is used for preservation, it makes something bland and makes it full of flavor, im sure we all know when someone cooks and doesn't use enough salt or no salt at all the food no matter how pretty it looks is absolutely worthless and not really that good when consumed, we seeing the bigger picture yet? Salt is a symbol of lasting concord (harmony between people or groups) salt protects from the process of decay or rotting.. do we see why Jesus refers us to being the salt of the earth? We are the ones who are called to bring flavor to this world, were called to bring harmony between people groups, we are called to preserve the world from decay and rot but we do we see these days?! What are we Christians doing these days?! We pointing fingers are politicians, the corrupted, the gays, the unbelievers, the evil and blaming them for all this darkness happening in the world when guess what?! We are actually the problem! Were the ones who are at fault for letting it get this bad! Why? We are called to be the salt and the light! We have

become bitter and flavorless Christians who end up doing the opposite of what the bible is teaching us... and heres the harsh reality that Jesus speaks of! ***if the salt lose its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men*** . if we lose this flavor, God cant use us, and man does not need us what so ever!

**Ephesians 5:8-14    Walk in and as the light**

***“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for what ever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says; awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”***

***You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:14-16***

We are the light of the world, we need re-evaluate ourselves and ask ourselves, are we radiating light? Can that light be seen by those

who are walking in darkness? If we're not experiencing moments where strangers notice there's something different about us, maybe seeing that there's a shimmering hope in our eyes and lives and how we live them then like I said, we need to turn towards that relationship with Christ and spend time in His presence in secret. Maybe some of us are spending time in that light, and asking God for more of Him and desiring to be filled with His glory and light but what are we doing with that light? Do we want it just to make ourselves feel Holy and good? Are we only showing this light here in this church? The bible says a city set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand and it gives light to all who are around, we are called to utilize this light to far more than the borders of our church or homes and families. How else will those who see only darkness come to finding hope and glorify the Father in heaven.

When you've spent time in His presence daily, the troubles that come your way don't even knock you down, your worries, fears start to stand afar because all you want and need is Him and the way you choose to love... any how you choose to love, and the people you choose to love, stands out the most... and just like that people notice this light about you... when you're filled with this joy and hope people start to notice. There was a time in my life when I was a rehab program and for four months all I did everyday and almost all day was spend time in His presence... and I remember when my wife and mom came to visit me and we to a restaurant and I remember just being so filled with the joy of the Lord and love and I would notice that the people around me noticed something strange about

me, mind you I wasn't being loud or anything in that matter, we were at the mall and a man walked up to me and started asking me who I am and what is different about me... then I started to realize what was going on, it was that light of God within me, from the time I've been in His light. Now this was about 4 years ago... and its no coincidence that this topic is brought up and not just for the church but definitely for me... because when I think about my life right now and evaluate my love for God, I have veered away from making it all about the Him and just loving Him.

I want to read then use my person life to explain it.

### **Revelation chapter 2:2-5**

**“I know you 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; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My names 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; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place- unless you repent.**

What's interesting is at the beginning of my walk in full surrender to God, I remember as if it was yesterday spring of 2022, these verses were given to me as a warning, at the time I did not understand why the Holy Spirit was highlighting this to me since I was still in that first love, but over the last couple years this verse has continuously rang in my heart from time to time and now I fully grasp what it means

and why the Lord has been pressing it into my heart... so we see here its written in revelations towards a type of church and its circumstance, I relate to this quite a bit and I believe we can too. Dave albert explained it a bit before but I will again. So here is a church, working, laboring, doing it with great patience, hating evil and those who practice it, testing spirits and false prophets or apostles, actually finding them as liars not just assuming or talking about it but actually making an action and finding them as liars, persevering with patience and working for the name of Christ not themselves and have no grown tired of it, not burning out but still on fire, all these awesome things they are doing! Things that we could probably get better at! But Jesus has something against them.... They left that first love... by doing all the things that are asked of them, focused so much on just doing things for God they've forgotten about that deep personal connection with God, that first love with God. Why does God refer to the "first" love and the importance of coming back to that first love? Well let's just think about any relationship, I'm sure you know where I'm going with this. When you first fall in love with someone, what is the only thing that's written all over you face when you're around that person... a grin that's from ear to ear... no one can separate you from that person you've fallen in love with, the only thing that rings in your mind is that person and how much you love them, everything else in this world has just melted away... God in His deep love, being a jealous God wants this from us! He wants this from me! He created us to have this beautiful relationship with us, He lived, was hated, beat, crucified on the cross to have this relationship with us, He longs for us this love for Him. I can't imagine how it breaks His heart as we His



children continuously choose to love other things over Him. I've fallen short of this and it breaks my heart and I ask of you dear friends let us come together as a church and look to where we have fallen, remember where God has pulled us from, where He has saved us from, there were times where we were so far from Jesus and so close to hell, but God in his mercy and Grace patiently waiting for us with His arms wide open to come and fall in love with Him.

But what do we do... we make so many negotiations... a little bit of drinking, little bit of these relationships, bit of entertainment, gossip, maybe a lie here or there, dishonest work or money, and I'm not saying all these are sins but when all done collectively with our boundaries or moderations we get so blinded and deceived by this world's delights and when an unbeliever comes into our life looking for help and we're blind there are one of two things that happens. They come into our lives and we don't even recognize that they need help or want help and instead we criticize or condemn them because deep in our heart we practice the same things but remember we're blinded so we don't see ourselves but they can see us, that mirror analogy we spoke about before, if we're not looking into a mirror and haven't for a while and thinking we're looking good, I can guarantee you we're not. But they see us and see we're not in order ourselves and that unbeliever will walk away disgusted by the hypocrisy not wanting anything to do with what this so-called Christian stands by. Or the other situation might happen, which I think is equally worse but we've been so focused on addressing the legalism or religiosity that we missed this part. Unbeliever comes into our life, needing help, and us Christians who've been coming to

church for a while, who should have the biblical answers with the evidence to back it up and bring to life and help others not only know by our words and knowledge that there is a God who sets people free but should see it in our own daily lives!

## **2 Corinthians 5:12-21 says**

**“For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have an answer for those who boast in appearance and not in heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; or if we are of sound mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us; we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

We are ambassadors for Christ, call to carry out the message of reconciliation, representing Christ, in other words we the people, the new creation are the light, the salt of the world! Why are we still trying to live for ourselves, why are we still trying to put on the old selves, why have some of us never even given ourselves to Christ as bondservants, the big question that I've continuously pondered upon is this... do I love God? Do I long to be with Him, to live for Him? many times I've come to really disliking the answer that comes to mind, because we know that what we love we become slaves to and there's times where my heart or love for God has been tested and found guilty of having a greater love for things of this world than for God. We've talked about this from the very beginning of this series, have we given ourselves up as bond servants/ as slaves to Christ, for its not done out of obligation but out of an act of love for God...

Dear friends there are many people In this world who are lost with no hope or despair or purpose... they are actually looking and its so heartbreaking when these people turn to our churches and or Christians of America an we are in somewhat even worst conditions than they are. We need to comeback to this first love with God, all of this, these ministries, services, walk with God, first and foremost is all about Him, we need to be in that communion, that personal relationship with Him above all else, in everything we do we do for God and in thanksgiving with God and we will see the fruit of the Spirit work in us and through us when we just give up the most difficult thing to God.. our time, intentional time. Not going into the presence to ask for anything, not going in His presence or word just

for knowledge, simply going into His presence just for Him and only Him. In this matter I promise you change begins to happen in the heart and out comes the light. I cannot stress this enough of how important it is to make it all about Him, with out that we will by no means be able to do anything with such impact for the kingdom of heaven.

The band can come forward as I come to the end of the message.

This message that was on my heart to share, all leads up to this chapter and these verses...

### **Romans 8:1-7**

***There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus*** (in who? Christ Jesus. Those who abide in Him and allow the word to abide in them John chapter 15. So those who are in Christ Jesus, abiding in His word through obedience, we can walk in freedom and no condemnation, I find it rather interesting as you read the word and believe in what God says that power of the Word literally breaks any condemnation or lies of the enemy that he's placed in my mind) continuing... ***who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit*** (Who walk according to what? The Spirit... being in Christ, abiding in Him helps us walk daily in the Spirit, Spiritual discipline is crucial for our daily Christian walk, without it we tend to fall into walking by the flesh) . ***For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that It was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on the account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be***

***fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.***

(have you noticed the moment we slowly veer away from our daily discipline of abiding in His word and start to live and think by the flesh how chaotic life seems to get, we start to worry so much, doubt, stress or get depressed and it just leads to this death. But the moment we just start our day daily pursuing that love for God that day tends to be filled with life and peace.) ***Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.***

Dear friends, may we not take this series, these sermons lightly, I don't want us to walk out these doors the same as we came in... We are called, we are chosen, we have been set apart. We have been blessed for and bought with a price, called to holiness, called to be His disciples and be the lights in this dark world leading by example. I'm not perfect nor have I perfected this message at all, but I plead with you, follow me as I follow Christ in this journey back to that first love. Let's all fall deeply in love with Jesus again where it's visible that all we want is Him.

We'll dim the lights and prayer teams will come forward... as we come to prayer and worship, I plead with you. What is the Holy Spirit speaking to you today, what is He asking of you.... Do not ignore the conviction. If you haven't surrendered your life to Him do it, if you've

fallen out of that first love lets pray together and work on pursuing that together. Come receive prayer. Amen.